



The Significance of a Single Word

*By Don Schulz
Chief Operating Officer*

Changing the name of a business is a serious and meaningful decision. One that is never taken lightly and one that must be done with purposeful intent and thoughtful consideration.

For the better part of a decade, Pacific Project Management grew to meet the changing needs of commercial real estate. As the company evolved, it developed new capabilities with every new client and team member. We built our business with a commitment to deliver upon our values of service, trust, innovation, honesty, and leadership. In doing so, we transformed not just what we did but how we did it.

The decision in the summer of 2020 to change our name to Pacific Program Management (PPM) was in response to that transformation. We decided that we had outgrown our name and wanted to better reflect the totality of our business and the evolution of how we now serve our clients. We wanted our name to better reflect both our present and our future.

KNOW WHAT YOU DO

The main driver any organization should consider when thinking about a new name is if changing it advances its business goals. Most businesses evolve over time with new people and new capabilities. As markets shift and new opportunities arise, a thriving business adapts and shifts with it. Sometimes those shifts happen slowly over time and you can find yourself suddenly operating under a name that does not adequately reflect where those shifts have taken you.

For us, we needed to do a deep dive into understanding the fundamental difference between two important words: Project and Program.

In simple terms, project management is the effective execution and delivery of a discrete, uniquely defined project, typically measured in accordance with predefined requirements. The mindset is fundamentally linear. It is often tactical and typically bound to a single project with a focus on managing the tasks and resources required to deliver that single project. It is critical to the success of any commercial real estate endeavor and requires skill and experience.

Program management moves beyond the tactical to the strategic. It looks past the scope of a discrete project and focuses on the client's broader, enterprise-wide, desired outcomes. It is not task-oriented, but results-oriented. It is less linear, and more matrixed. The mindset is fundamentally based on strategy. Rather than concentrating on the right tactical steps and tools needed to deliver on pre-defined plans, program management thinks strategically about governing the process, monitoring dependencies, communicating expectations, and proactively managing change, all to ensure clients' goals are achieved.

In other words, program management is the strategy in which project management is executed.

So, while we still fulfill project management needs, we do so within the context of a bigger picture. And we have done so for some time now.

***“Words have power.
Our decision to change a single word in our
business name is significant.
Not just for our business, but for those we serve
— our people, our communities, and our clients.”***

To clarify even further, let us look at how project management and program management approach commercial real estate needs differently.

Project Management	Program Management
Manages a single project that may or may not reside within a complex system.	Manages multiple, on-going, interdependent projects or a highly complex single project.
Looks at a single, discrete project and the necessary tasks.	Looks at a larger portfolio or grouping of tasks and projects that are interdependent.
Focuses on the fulfillment of a clearly defined discrete project with a beginning and end.	Focuses on higher value-add and strategic-level activities that support the success of a portfolio of projects to better achieve business goals.
Manages tasks.	Manages relationships and interdependencies of tasks.
Responds to client specific requests and fulfills those requests with attention on the process.	Partners with clients to define the best path to achieve larger goals with a focus on the outcome rather than the process.

This process helped us to define with more clarity what we felt was likely true. We had outgrown “project” and needed to shift into defining ourselves by “program”.

KNOW WHO YOU ARE

It is not enough to know what you do when you enter into a name change exercise. You also must understand who you are. What drives your business and your people? What is your unifying purpose?

PPM is in the business of reimagining the potential of workspace to reimagine and unlock the potential of the people and businesses occupying that space. Whether fixed or mobile, we work with businesses to clearly define their goals and help them effectively implement solutions to optimize the value and impact of workspace in their business operations to maximize their people’s and company’s potential.

PPM and other program managers operate with high degrees of complexity and ambiguity. These complexities may include things such as numerous competing stakeholders, a diverse portfolio of building types, uses and locations, or a large enterprise with multiple business units all occupying the same real estate with different needs. It may include immature organizations with little to no clarity on business strategy, established decision-making processes or real estate plans. It may be a mature company going through a merger or acquisition that is driving a high degree and volume of organizational change and ambiguity.

To succeed in these environments, one must clearly identify and aggregate these complexities into a defined, interconnected program and then effectively govern them to provide optimal outcomes. Such an approach delivers solutions that meet business goals, not just building goals.

As we look back on one of the most complex and challenging years in recent history, we know that PPM is poised to handle whatever the future may bring. We not only have the skills to execute at the highest level, but we have the strategic mindset to see opportunities where others see obstacles and find solutions in the most challenging situations.

And the best way to reflect that is under the name Pacific Program Management.

WHAT'S IN A NAME, ANYWAY?

Words have power. Our decision to change a single word in our business name is significant. Not just for our business, but for those we serve – our people, our communities, and our clients. It is an acknowledgement of how our business has evolved and where we see ourselves going in the future.

This year may invite the opportunity for more businesses to reevaluate what they do and why they do it more than most. Coming off a year of unprecedented uncertainty, soul searching is inevitable.

For those who think it may be time to reconsider if their name represents who they are today and where they are going, start by examining the meaning of your current moniker. When was the last time you really thought about what your name meant? Chances are, you have simply let the name roll off your tongue out of habit for years. If there is any aspect of your name that you might think is no longer accurate, examine it. Think about it in context of alternative names. Lay those ideas out next to each other as we did with “project” and “program” and imagine how those differences apply not just to what you do, but why you do it.

Be sure to include your people in the process and remember, small changes have big impacts. Don't enter the process lightly but with open eyes and a real commitment to better understanding the future of your business and everyone you serve.

##



About Don

Don Schulz is Pacific Program Management's Chief Operating Officer. Working from a philosophy that successful real estate programs are rooted in people-centric workplaces, he drives PPM's firm-wide operations and strategy implementation, provides creative approaches to systematize and enable company growth, develops leaders and industry leading client service platforms, and inspires a culture aimed at reimagining and unlocking the potential of people and their workspace. Don can be contacted at don.schulz@pacificpmg.com.