# Steve Garfein's reflections on Professor Steyn's paper

This review will address two aspects Professor Steyn's paper: 1) the position of chief portfolio officer (CPO); and 2) structuring the enterprise portfolio.

## Chief portfolio officer

The program management office (PMO) is widely recognized as an organization where the aggregation of programs and projects takes place. When taken to the enterprise level, it is an enterprise PMO (EPMO). This leads to the question, what is the difference between the director of an EPMO and the chief portfolio officer? The main difference, in this reviewer's opinion, is the director of the EPMO is not a member of the executive leadership team (ELT), but rather briefs the ELT from time to time, whereas the CPO is a permanent member of the ELT.

## CPO versus chief strategy officer (CSO)

Steyn writes: "The CPO should come from the ranks of program structure where a cross-functional mindset is cultured and will significantly support the CEO, chief financial officer (CFO) and chief operating officer (COO) with strategic appraisals and reviews at the executive leadership level."

Breene, Nunes and Shill (2007) write: "In the past few years, the number of CSO appointments has surged." Like the CPO, the CSO is a member of the ELT. However, the scope of the CSO charter is both wider and deeper than that of the CPO. It involves strategy development and execution. CSOs are seasoned executives with a strong strategy orientation who have typically led major initiatives or businesses and worn many operating hats before taking on the role (Breene, Nunes & Shill 2007). CSO's wield authority and have a complex range of skills to make strategy happen (Breene, Nunes & Shill 2007). Which leads to the second aspect of Steyn's paper.

## Structuring the enterprise portfolio

Whereas the CPO provides strategic appraisals and reviews at the executive level, the CSO role begins with the strategy development process and extends all the way to execution. In many ways, the CSO is the alter ego of the CEO for strategy development and execution.

In Figure 1 an ongoing operations portfolio has been added to the four portfolios described by Steyn in his paper. The figure represents the domain of the CSO who has a charter that includes assisting the CEO in assuring projects are aligned to strategy and, ultimately, that strategy is executed to plan, including ongoing operations. The concept of strategic throughput was developed by the author of this review based on the work of Cabanis-Brewin and Pennypacker (2006).

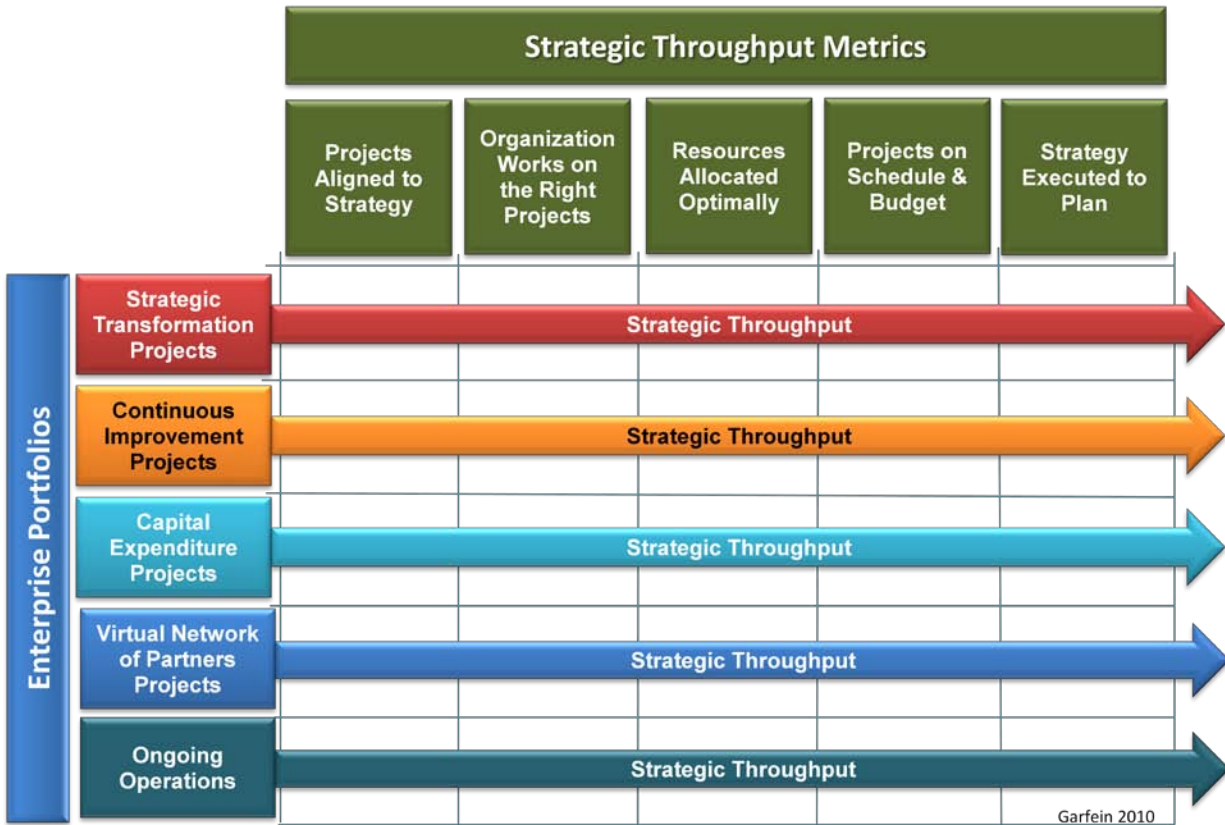**Strategic Throughput and Enterprise Portfolios**

**Figure 1.  Role of the chief strategy officer, from strategy development to execution across the range of enterprise portfolios, including ongoing operations**

## In summary

The addition of a CPO to an organization's leadership team will elevate the importance and continuous visibility of portfolios, programs and projects in this world of increasing complexity.

In large organizations the position of CSO should be considered. It might even be beneficial in very large organizations to have both a CPO and CSO as permanent members of the ELT.

## References

Breene, R., Nunes, F. & Shill, W. 2007, The chief strategy officer, *Harvard Business Review*, October 2007.
Cabanis-Brewin, J. & Pennypacker, J. 2006, Best practices for aligning projects to corporate strategy, *Proceedings of the PMI Global Congress 2006*, Seattle, WA.
Garfein, S.J. 2009, Closing the gap between strategy and results: expanding strategic throughput, *Proceedings of the PMI Global Congress*, EMEA, Amsterdam.

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