

From Reactive to Strategic: Enactus Shifts Gears

Alex Perwich, President of Enactus United States, recognized he had a problem. “We have 30+ major events to plan, a small staff with little project management expertise and no detailed replicable project plans,” he said.

As a result, his staff was “living in quadrant one of Covey’s time management paradigm.” He wanted to shift focus to quadrant two “where planning and strategy happen. If you don’t have quality program/project management to get ahead of the power curve, you spend all your time putting out fires and reinventing the wheel.”

Time Management Matrix

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	I. Crisis Pressing problems Deadlines	II. Relationship building Strategy Planning
NOT IMPORTANT	III. Interruptions Popular activities	IV. Busy work Trivia Time wasters

Based on *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey

Perwich connected with RefineM through the Project Management Institute (PMI). “Adding project management capacity internally was prohibitively expensive, so I decided to bring in a third party provider. RefineM demonstrated they had subject matter expertise in project management. They are experts at what they do.”

RefineM began working with Enactus to develop project management best practices, including a master project plan initially focused on Enactus’ largest event, the United States National Exposition, involving over 4,000 participants. As the master plan matured and evolved, smaller events were incrementally added to expand the plan’s reach. A RefineM project manager was assigned to Enactus to oversee the progress.

Transitioning to a systems oriented approach was a “heavy lift,” said Rachel Mobley, VP, Marketing Communications & Operations. But she said staff appreciates that they are getting time back as they gain efficiencies and meetings are increasingly shorter and fewer. “As a nonprofit, we run a slim operation and we all wear many hats. Now that we have systems in place to keep our projects organized and on track, it has greatly reduced the last minute scramble. It’s been a real pressure reliever.”

Most of all, Mobley is relieved to know that Enactus’ knowledge capital no longer only resides in the “heads” of the staff. “Before, nothing was written down,” she said. “We now have the comfort of having documentation in place.”

As for Perwich, he is pleased to now present RefineM as a key component of Enactus’s organizational chart. “As a contractor, RefineM brings us a very important capacity that we were missing,” he said. “We are continually improving with their help. This story highlights the fact that, as an organization, you can’t stop because you don’t have the people or capacity in place. And, as it turns out, project management lends itself well to outsourcing.”

“Project management lends itself well to outsourcing.”

- Alex Perwich, President, Enactus United States

Client Results Summary

With 30+ major events to plan each year, Enactus’s small staff was overextended and constantly putting out fires. To shift the staff’s focus from reactive tasks to proactive strategies, Enactus’s leadership outsourced its project management to RefineM. RefineM put project management best practices to work for Enactus, allowing the staff to operate more efficiently.

About Enactus United States

Enactus is a nonprofit dedicated to inspiring students to improve the world through entrepreneurial action. Enactus provides a platform for teams of university students to create social enterprise ventures. An annual series of competitions allows teams to showcase the impact of their ventures and to be evaluated by business executives serving as judges.

About RefineM LLC

RefineM helps organizations turn their project management capability into a competitive advantage by carefully listening to needs, helping to implement highly optimized project plans, deploying simple but effective tools and techniques, and training and mentoring project managers and teams.

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