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## Case Study

Establishing and operating a Project Management Office

## Background

A large community hospital in Ontario has embarked on a seven year, \$100M journey to transform the way health care is delivered. The initiative is known as THINK, (Transforming Healthcare to Integrated Networks of Knowledge). The hospital established a patient-centred vision and a community services model which frames the long-term direction of the hospital. THINK consists of approximately 30 projects spanning clinical processes, business applications, patient and internal portal, learning and knowledge content and tools, and technology infrastructure with a staff of 20 project managers and a total team of 100 consultants, developers, and clinical informatics. The hospital, in the Greater Toronto Area, has 4,000 employees primarily in two hospital locations.

The THINK initiative is sponsored by the Board of Directors with active oversight by the CEO and various vice-presidents.

The broad span of projects with multiple objectives, stakeholders and innovative solutions comprise a portfolio with challenging project management goals to deliver projects on time and on budget with an adoption rate high enough to realize the anticipated benefits.

## The Solution

We established a Project Management Office and developed processes and standards for each project to maintain the rigour and discipline necessary to ensure consistency among the various projects. For example, the Project Review and Approval Process was created with a “gating” process where each project progresses from the initial concept to a fully documented solution and business case in a Project Charter.

Once the project management processes were established, a portfolio management tool was implemented, Rational Portfolio Manager (RPM). This tool was initially used as a document repository and to provide project tools like Work Breakdown Structure. The project managers also use the tool to generate biweekly status reports and to manage project risks, issues, and actions. RPM is also planned to support the management of THINK costs and benefits.

The “health” of the portfolio is examined monthly for each project and for the program as a whole. “Seven keys” are evaluated using a green, yellow and red traffic light approach and actions are developed to move to “green”.

The portfolio management approach took approximately 12 months to develop and implement with significant benefits to improved management information, improved cost and benefit control, and overall improved quality and timing of project deliverables.

A key lesson learned is to manage program costs closely from the very beginning (year 1) of the initiative using a financial management tool, not multiple spreadsheets with limited consistency and audit trail.

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**Note.** This engagement was conducted by ProFitness Advisors Group Partner Bob Ferguson while an employee of IBM Canada Ltd.

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