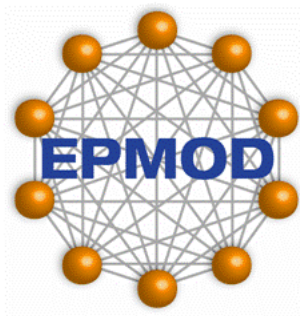


## **Improving Organizational Performance & Boosting the Bottom Line Using EPMOD'S Network Centric Management Approach**



### **An EPMOD White Paper**

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## **The EPMOD Network Centric Management Approach**

### **Introduction**

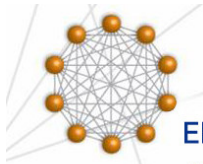
Network Centric Management is a business communications and management approach that facilitates strong horizontal and vertical teamwork among key holders of responsibility within an organization, while making sure that the pursuit of customer commitments remains aligned with strategic business objectives. This management approach has been proven effective in successfully achieving objectives on undertakings of all sizes and complexities, long before the introduction of the Internet.

With today's unlimited access to the Internet, it is now possible to expand the reach of this approach to connect all team members, from top to bottom of any organization, with a shared work plan and dashboard, enabling an evolutionary shift from centralized micro-management of undertakings to a new paradigm of empowered, self-managing virtual teams. Within such teams, each manager with responsibility for achieving critical objectives at any management level becomes an information manager armed with the means to rapidly collect, share and disseminate information to all parties affected by a potential change. The enabling software that supports this paradigm shift is called SynapMod®, a new structured communication network for business applications. Using SynapMod, senior executives can gain much greater visibility into the status and progress of any/all undertakings for which they're responsible, and can move from static, "rear view mirror" hierarchical reporting to real time, multi-level dashboards providing bottom-up insights and updates from self-managing teams, individual team members, and senior executives alike.

This new structured communication network permits organizations to easily implement the powerful Network Centric Management approach throughout their entire organization and supply chain – regardless of team members' locations or business affiliations. The significant benefits derived from the Network Centric Management approach lies in its ability to bridge the communications gaps between executives and those tasked to realize the executive's responsibility - at every level of management - for achieving their organization's mission, goals, and strategic objectives while balancing limited resources and consistently meeting customer needs. The results to be gained? Drastic improvements in organizational performance, a significant boost to the bottom line, increased employee and customer satisfaction, and enhanced business-to-business capabilities.

### **The Problem Being Solved**

Too frequently, businesses and governmental agencies experience huge time and cost overruns on undertakings, especially those involving disparate organizations and dispersed team members. *In today's competitive global business environment, managers are expected to manage complex teams that may include many individuals from different business units, as*

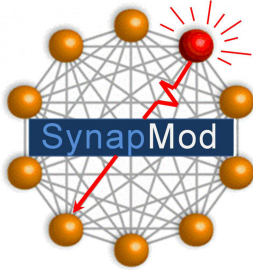


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*well as outsourced subconsultants, suppliers, and vendors distributed around the globe – but have no effective tool for easily communicating with others outside of their local department or business unit. These gaps in communication result in executives lacking the visibility needed to quickly identify and respond to issues that can have an adverse affect on strategic projects and/or the entire organization.*

## **The Solution**



SynapMod, an Internet-based structured communication network now in beta testing, provides an intuitive means to bridge these communication gaps on all undertakings involving individuals within disparate organizational units, without costly and time-consuming training. By enabling easy, direct communication among all team members working on interrelated tasks, SynapMod supports the Network Centric Management (NCM) approach, helping managers to be more effective and making sure all project team members are informed of, and aligned with, the organization's overall business strategy and objectives. It also leverages the talents of an organization's employees by empowering team members to take responsibility for achieving expected results and by supporting innovation at all levels of the organization, enabling a culture of self-managing, super-performing teams.

## **How SynapMod Supports the NCM Approach**

The NCM approach involves obtaining negotiated personal commitments from the individuals jointly responsible to achieve specific results at varying levels of management. These individuals, the results expected, and person-to-person interfaces among those with interdependent deliverables (predecessor and successor events) define a structured communication network through which the deliverables and interface objectives are coordinated and managed. This becomes the "communications backbone" that is built into SynapMod - along with a shared, multi-level work plan and dashboard - and aligns individuals managing the "vertical" functions (necessary to maintain the enterprise and meet organizational goals) with those managing the "horizontal", customer-focused activities. Together, the NCM approach and structured communication network provide the basis for easily updating project information - via real-time, personalized dashboards - and sharing the bottom-up information provided by individual team members with upper level managers, who then have the relevant and timely information they need to meet the dual challenges of effectively running day-to-day operations and responding swiftly to internal/external changes that can have long-term effects on the entire organization.

The Network Centric Management approach encompasses much more than just project management; it addresses the needs of the entire organization by supporting improved communication, integrating performance planning and monitoring, and supporting individual



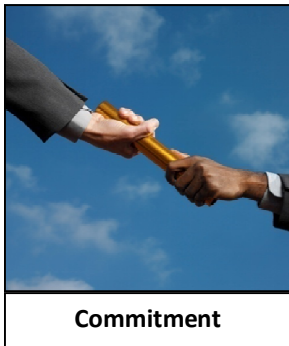
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and organizational development. Using this approach, individuals are encouraged and enabled to easily and effectively collaborate across organizational boundaries to achieve shared goals, rather than focusing primarily on their functional or departmental interests. Individuals responsible for enterprise-wide processes, such as procurement or quality control processes, and their staff, can also become integral members of project teams while still meeting critical “vertical” business goals and compliance requirements.

### **Keys to the Implementing the Network Centric Management Approach Using the SynapMod Structured Communication Network**

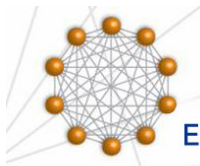
There are two keys to the Network Centric Management (NCM) approach. First is the responsibility breakdown - a process that is distinctly different from the traditional work breakdown employed by those using conventional tools such as Microsoft Project. Within the NCM approach, work objectives are broken down into a series of responsibilities assigned to and accepted by individual performers who are fully “in the loop” regarding the impact of achieving their objectives on the overall organization.



The project or task owner/manager provisionally assigns a responsibility to an individual. That individual - and his/her business unit head or departmental manager where appropriate - then must commit to the assignment and provide a promised date of completion; only then does the *commitment* become part of the plan.

In the work breakdown, the project or task owner/manager identifies the interrelationships among tasks and also flags critical milestones - tasks that must be completed before another set of tasks can begin, or tasks that are contractually defined. When an individual plans how they intend to meet their commitment, they can indicate predecessor events that must be completed prior to beginning their effort. This enables the predecessor event to be reflected in the overall plan as a dependency, and all affected by any actual or proposed change to that activity can be easily and immediately informed so they can determine if the change might affect their own workflow and commitments. If a critical predecessor promise date is in danger of being missed, automatic notifications to those affected allow for swift corrective action to be taken within the team.

The structured communication network thus recognizes the relationships between individuals responsible for, and committed to, achieving the objectives of interrelated tasks in the context of the overall effort. With the NCM approach, everyone is truly enabled to do their jobs. Project work plans are not complete until fully-informed individuals have promised that they can deliver the expected results in the expected time frame. If, during the implementation phase, inevitable changes occur that might affect their ability to meet those commitments, they



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commit to immediately informing their superiors so potential impacts can be analyzed and plan or resource adjustments can be made quickly.



**Communication**

The second key to the NCM approach is to enable real time person-to-person *communication* through the SynapMod structured communication network, which enables all individual performers to identify and communicate potential changes to the plan directly with others working on interrelated tasks, allowing for quick collaboration to resolve issues before they become crises.



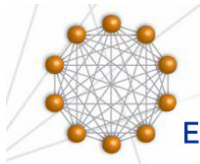
**Collaboration**

SynapMod creates a structured communication network that ties together individuals within self-managing teams that have interdependent activities, so that a person updating information on his/her task knows that anyone else being impacted by changes to their plans will automatically receive the information and be able to easily *collaborate* to resolve any conflicts. It's possible that a change in one promise date doesn't necessarily impact another's commitment date, or that others can come up with their own solution to resolving the issue. As long as the problem can be solved without affecting a critical milestone or adding unplanned resources, the business unit heads or departmental managers need not be distracted by it. Anyone with a need to know also automatically receives the information, alleviating communication gaps inherent in the current hierarchical organizational environment.

inherent in the current hierarchical organizational environment.

In contrast to the immediacy of communications using a structured communication network, current systems and tools such as Microsoft Project require all information to flow through one manager of the overall work effort, which can bottleneck activities and delay critical project progress updates and issue resolution. These traditional, critical-path based tools put the project manager at the center of the switchboard, with the responsibility for all communications among the many project team members. SynapMod, on the other hand, is like a modern telecommunications system, in which any node in the system can communicate directly with any interrelated node without going through the central switchboard. With these linkages established, work teams spread across multiple locations have the tools to self-manage to a degree never before possible.

Personalized dashboards show each individual the status and progress information needed for informed decision-making on all undertakings in which they hold responsibilities. Using SynapMod®, individual performers can quickly update changes to their task information (changes to promise dates, financial performance indicators, resource adjustments, internal issue messages, and/or external risks identified), or can propose a recommitment if one of



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their commitments is in danger of being missed - and know that all affected team members will automatically receive the new information in real time. This targeted, bottom-up information is also automatically updated in managers' dashboards up the chain of command, to a level that matches senior managers' needs, interests, and decision-making authority, and provides them with the capability to drill down to the source of the latest information update, including messages indicating why a change to the original plan may be necessary.

SynapMod

Welcome Paul Scanlon of EPMOD Consulting  Logoff

Users
 Groups
 Clients
 Programs
 Projects
 My Account
 Admin

**My Account Menu**

- [My Dashboards](#)
- [Project Manager](#)
- [Task Dashboard](#)
- [CEO Dashboard](#)
- [My Contact Info](#)
- [My Preferences](#)
- [My Password](#)

### Paul Scanlon's Personal Dashboard

Welcome to SynapMod Paul Scanlon! Listed below are your tasks.

Arrange By:  Promised End Date  Project Name  Task Name

Task Name	Project Name	Scheduled End Date	Promised End Date	\$	🕒	★	⚠️	🚫
Finalize Manual	Saftey Development Mgmt System	12/01/2007	12/01/2007	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Test Data Feeds	SAP Payroll Integration	12/04/2007	12/04/2007	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Install T45 Switches	Allvac Helpdesk Transition to ATI	12/07/2007	12/07/2007	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢
Review project plan with vendor	Active Directory	12/10/2007	12/10/2007	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Create cost estimate	IT Reference Library	12/31/2007	12/31/2007	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢
Rollout hypercare	Saftey Observation Tracking Rollout	12/31/2007	12/31/2007	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
ATI West	Project Coordinator	01/07/2008	01/07/2008	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡
Exton-Ivyland Consolidation	Project Manager	01/31/2008	01/31/2008	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Print server consolidation	Project Manager	02/15/2008	02/15/2008	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢

Budget
 Timeline
 Resources
 Issues
 Risks

The value of the structured communication network increases with the size of the effort and the sharing of limited human resource skills with other programs, projects or business activities. As a result, the entire organization achieves results with greater focus on quality, customer satisfaction and strategic alignment, and with far less micro-management, fewer crises, and better control of costs.



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## **Summary Of Benefits**

Using the NCM approach and supporting structured communication network, information is sent directly to those who need it, not up to the top and back down again. Communication gaps are eliminated by linking people to the targeted information they need, when they need it. It encourages commitment to business objectives and promotes collaboration among people who can see how they fit into the pattern of the enterprise as a whole. Potential delays that affect planned outcome commitments can often be resolved by those affected at various management levels.

People and commitments are connected, not just tasks and activities. This enables people at all levels to see their own piece of the action in context, to appreciate how their own actions impact on others and how they likewise are impacted. It strengthens collaboration and teamwork, and enables organizations to develop and adapt dynamically, free from the constraints of conventional tools that are too slow or cumbersome to rapidly respond to changes that can adversely affect a strategic project or the overall organization.

Using SynapMod, the Network Centric Management approach can be applied to processes and enterprise management as a whole, not just to specific projects. SynapMod provides links across projects, processes, and functions, and strengthens collaboration across traditional boundaries.

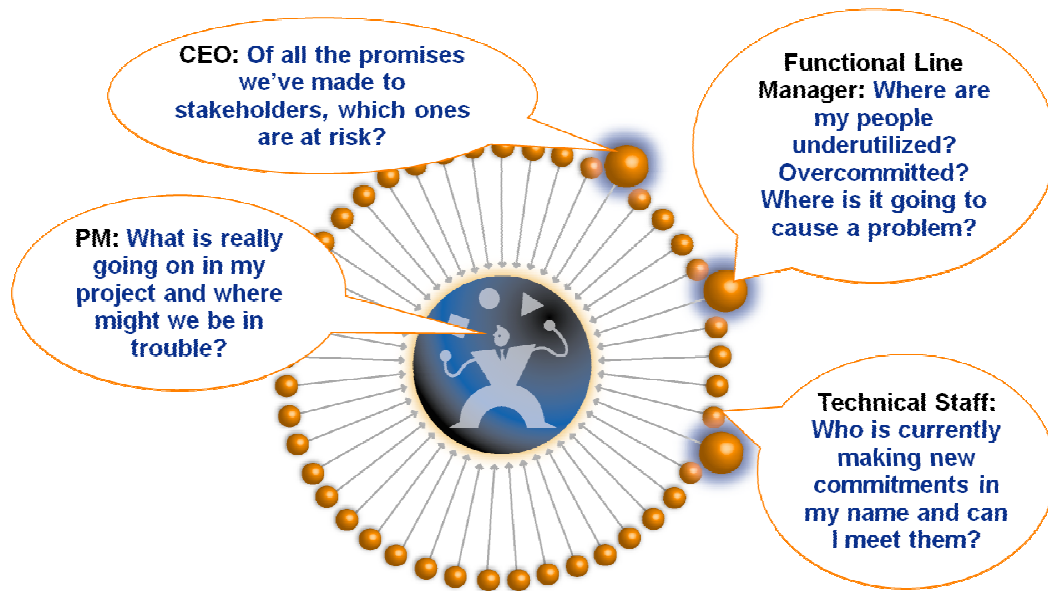
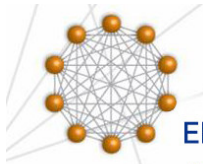
SynapMod can be implemented without disrupting current operations. It enhances existing systems, working with them, not against them.

It is useful for all work, from the simplest work effort to the most complex project.

Because the information is accumulated in a structured manner, senior executives and holders of responsibility at each level can see the “big picture” from their viewpoint, in real time, at any moment...in time to take effective action and facilitate effective implementation of the organization’s business strategy.

**Our research has found no other product that provides all of these benefits.** With Network Centric Management, the enterprise as a whole operates in a more cost-effective manner. Managers do not need to intervene in problems that can be solved at lower levels; they become free to focus on issues appropriate to their level – resolving issues before they become crises, allocating resources, coordinating across business units, etc. This makes for better management decisions and better use of expensive management time.

With Network Centric Management, managers no longer have to wonder...



***What is really going on in my assignments and where might we be in trouble?***

They can see inputs daily from the performers, showing what individual tasks and subtasks have been completed. And they know potential problems will be surfaced and dealt with before they impact on critical milestones.

The worries continue up the line. Because managers aren't able to give them complete and timely information, executive managers are kept awake by this question:

***Of all the promises we've made to stakeholders, which ones are at risk?***

With Network Centric Management, executive managers no longer have to worry - they have access to up-to-date information on all work assignments and can zero in on any potential problems that require their attention.

Meanwhile, in the functional units of the organization, functional managers are wondering:

***Where are my people underutilized, where are they over committed, and where is it going to cause a problem?***

With Network Centric Management, functional managers no longer have to be concerned. Upcoming resource conflicts or shortages are apparent, so that functional managers can adjust resources as needed.

And at the level of the individual performer, there is this worry:

***Who is currently making new commitments in my name and can I meet them?***

Individual performers no longer need to wonder...instead, with Network Centric Management, individuals make the commitments on their own behalf, and they have simple tools to plan, monitor, track, and manage those commitments across multiple assignments.