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PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TRANSFORMATION

55% of Our Projects Ran Over Budget — and Our Delivery Margin Had Fallen to 24%

KeyDelta stood up a PMO and rebuilt the delivery methodology at a PE-backed cybersecurity firm, restoring project predictability and profitability within six months.

CYBERSECURITY SERVICES

MID-MARKET

PMO OVERHAUL

DELIVERY MARGIN RECOVERY

91%
CLIENT RETENTION

+27 pts
ON-TIME COMPLETION

+8 pts
DELIVERY MARGIN

-45%
SCOPE OVERRUNS

+8 pts
UTILIZATION RATE

THE SITUATION

A mid-market, PE-backed cybersecurity services firm was hemorrhaging cash on delivery. Projects consistently exceeded scope without corresponding revenue, SOWs were treated as suggestions rather than contracts, and customer satisfaction was eroding. The organization had the talent to win deals but lacked the operational discipline to deliver them profitably.

- Project scope creep was endemic — over 55% of projects ran over budget with no change order process
- Utilization was low (68%) due to lack of predictability and over-staffing of problematic projects
- Delivery margins had compressed to 24%, well below the 32–35% industry expectation
- Client retention was declining toward 82% as dissatisfaction mounted from missed timelines and scope confusion

THE APPROACH

KeyDelta worked with the PE sponsor and executive team to install VOOCs-based delivery discipline, replacing heroic project management with systematic rigor.

- 1 Foundation: Define Delivery Standards**
Mapped all active projects and created a single standardized delivery methodology. Every new engagement got a formal SOW with defined scope, timeline, and resource plan. This required confronting legacy practices and retraining teams that had operated autonomously.
- 2 Visibility: Stand Up the PMO**
Implemented weekly project health reviews (RAG status, budget vs. actual, scope change tracking) and monthly delivery scorecards. Problems became visible before they became crises. Every project got a dedicated PM with decision authority and accountability.
- 3 Accountability: Change Order Discipline**
Installed a formal change order process tied to revenue recognition and margin impact. Scope expansion requests were no longer absorbed — they were resourced with additional fee, descoped, or timeline-extended. Commercial posture shifted from accommodation to clarity.
- 4 Scale: Playbooks and Governance**
Documented the delivery methodology in playbooks, templates, and checklists. Created a governance model so delivery discipline persisted independent of any single PM or leader. Quarterly business reviews with clients replaced ad-hoc status calls.

THE RESULTS — 6 MONTHS

<p>PROJECT ON-TIME COMPLETION</p> <p>45% → 72%</p> <p>Predictable delivery restored confidence with customers and allowed better resource planning</p>	<p>CLIENT RETENTION</p> <p>82% → 91%</p> <p>Improved delivery performance and transparent communication stemmed attrition and built renewal confidence</p>	<p>DELIVERY MARGIN</p> <p>24% → 32%</p> <p>Scope discipline and change order rigor recovered margins without pricing increases</p>	<p>BILLABLE UTILIZATION</p> <p>68% → 76%</p> <p>Better project predictability allowed smarter staffing and reduced bench time from over-provisioning</p>	<p>SCOPE CREEP INCIDENTS</p> <p>55% of projects → 10% of projects</p> <p>Change order discipline meant scope expansion was rare, visible, and revenue-neutral</p>
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WHY IT WORKED — THE KEYDELTA VOOCs LENS

<p>V VISION</p> <p>One delivery standard, consistently executed. A single methodology every project followed from scoping through closeout — replacing the model where PMs invented their own processes.</p>	<p>O OUTCOMES</p> <p>Every process change tied to a metric from day one. On-time completion became the north star. Margin recovery was measured weekly by project. Scope adherence moved from aspirational to tracked and reported.</p>	<p>O OWNERSHIP</p> <p>Every project got a single PM with clear P&L accountability. No committees. Change order authority was explicit — PM and sales leader reviewed, decided, owned the outcome.</p>	<p>C CADENCE</p> <p>Weekly project health reviews surfaced issues before they became crises. Monthly delivery scorecards gave leadership visibility into trends. Quarterly business reviews with clients replaced ad-hoc firefighting and shifted the conversation from problems to partnership.</p>	<p>S SCALE</p> <p>Playbooks, templates, and checklists replaced tribal knowledge. The delivery methodology worked — and kept working — without depending on any single exceptional PM or leader. Onboarding new projects took days, not weeks.</p>
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“We didn’t fix this by hiring better project managers. We built a delivery system that works regardless of who’s in the chair. That’s what scales.”

— OPERATOR-ADVISOR REFLECTION · KEYDELTA ADVISORY

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