



News Letter

Making project management indispensable for business results®

President's Corner

www.pmi.org.uk
February 2010

It's times like these, I wish I had a Blackberry so I can truly join the ranks of the rat-race, sat tapping away here in the Departures lounge. I feel something of a dinosaur with my laptop! This instalment comes to you from the Departures Lounge, Terminal One, Heathrow after what has been one of my more productive 'PMI' days.



During the course of today I have met with a large UK employer to understand how we can leverage the fantastic work they have done building a career development framework specifically for Project Managers; PMI US colleagues who are over for a couple of days to develop relations with the UK government and a recruitment consultant keen to explore opportunities to work with the Chapter.

In between meetings I've even managed to squeeze in a couple of phone calls with the author of one of the most popular project management texts in the UK on negotiating a deal with their publisher and the possibility of them speaking at PMI UK events during 2010 with a phone call to ESI, our major sponsor to start firming up plans for this year.... who says being a PMI UK Chapter volunteer isn't fulfilling and for that matter fast approaching a full time job! The ESI discussion was particularly exciting as we hope to offer a number of exclusive PMI Chapter training courses during 2010 at heavily discounted rates.

All jokes aside, hopefully this shows the diverse nature of the work we do at the Chapter and the many opportunities to get involved albeit not necessarily all in one day! Note the key themes borne out by today's meetings 1) corporate outreach 2) closer collaboration with PMI Headquarters in US 3) exciting Chapter events with fresh speakers and 4) a heightened focus on professional development. All important aspects of what we hope to achieve during 2010 and beyond.

The Chapter Board has been doing some great work over the past couple of months planning the major initiatives that we will be focusing on during the next year. Throughout this process we have kept a close eye on the Chapters Vision and Mission thus you can rest assured that we always have one eye on how these initiatives benefit our members. Whether this is raising the profile of PMI with your employer or working with PMI in the US to develop a clear roadmap for PMI in the UK. The latter is fast becoming one of my priorities.

Today's meeting with our PMI US colleagues from 'Headquarters' was particularly reassuring as there is clearly a real appetite to work much more closely and leverage the full strength of PMI. I hope to bring you further news on this in due course.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the exciting program of events now available via www.pmi.org.uk. The long awaited calendar for this year is taking shape with some exciting new speakers and the list will continue to grow over the next few weeks. I suggest next time you have a moment you make a point of checking to see which events are planned in your area, particularly as this is a great way of obtaining those much needed PDUs!

Last but by no means, I would like to remind everyone that this year's AGM is planned for 3rd March in London, to be hosted by the London Regional Committee. Not only is this an opportunity to share some of the highlights of this year, including presentation of the 'Volunteer of the Year Award' but it's also a chance to meet with a number of the current PMI UK Chapter Board and raise any questions you may have. The role of the Board is to serve the approx 3000 Chapter members and it would be great to see as many members as possible along at this and the other events we have planned during the year. In the meantime I would be delighted to hear from anyone who has any questions and/or suggestions as to how we can grow the PMI UK Chapter both now and in the future.



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PMI UK Chapter– Events 2010

Upcoming Events

[PMI Supported Event - London - 1 & 2 March 2010](#)

[Midlands & North Event - Macclesfield - 18 March 2010](#)

[Scotland Event - Edinburgh - 22 March 2010](#)

[South West Event - Newport - 24 March 2010](#)

For further information about our events visit <http://www.pmi.org.uk/en/events/all-events.cfm>

SALES/SPONSOR MANAGER WANTED!

The PMI UK is looking for a Sales/Sponsorship Manager to obtain revenue for the PMI UK and International Project Management Day.

This post will be probably part time so if you (or maybe your partner) has a bit of spare time on their hands, due to a career break or maybe maternity leave and would like to earn a few pennies this could be the opportunity for you!

The position will earn commission on sales and reasonable expenses will be covered. Someone with an “Events and Sales” background would be useful. If you are interested please send your cv to service@pmi.org.uk



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Is Project Management a Core Skill and No Longer a Niche Capability?

By Peter Taylor

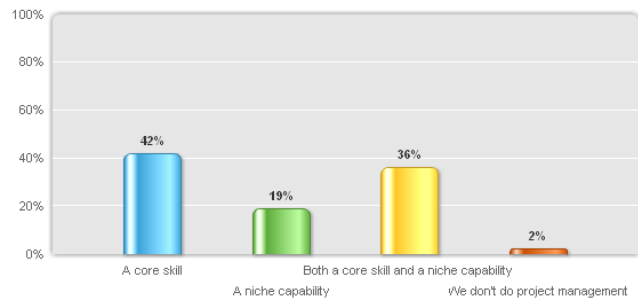
[A smooth sea never made a skilled mariner.](#) English Proverb

Project management is fast becoming the preferred way for companies to get things done. In a global economy project management will make a company more competitive than the traditional methods of managing work. So for all managers there is now the need to understand the dynamics of projects together with the skill and process of project management in order to make the most out their organisation's investments.

The Question

Is Project Management therefore no longer a niche capability, the home of project management office members and external contractors; is it now a core skill that all executives and senior management need to understand? In a recent survey conducted through a LinkedIn survey (poll) That very question was asked, 'Is Project Management a core skill and no longer a niche capability?' to see what a wider community of business people thought.

347 people responded to the survey. Here is the follow up comments that many people left for review.



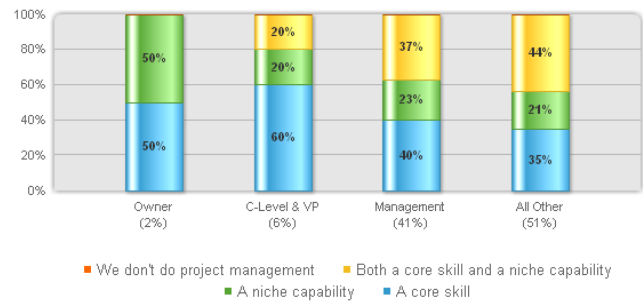
There is a fairly even split between 'A core skill' and 'Both a core skill and a niche capability' with a smaller number believing that it is 'A niche capability'. Guess, it would be fair to say that the survey contributors were divided in their views, and strongly divided in some cases based on the comments exchanged.

Before we analyse the responses in detail there thing to clear up: On LinkedIn it was mentioned the terms 'project management' and profession' in the same paragraph and, inevitably I guess, received some severe reprimands from some quarters.

The Answer

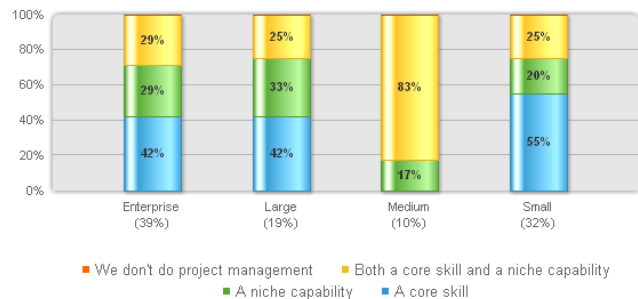
So when the question was asked and' based on people's poll votes and the LinkedIn analysis tools output:

Job Title



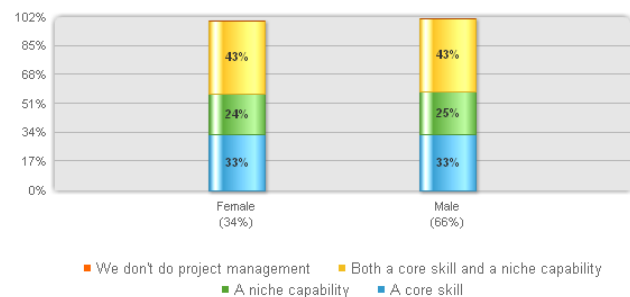
The above chart shows the votes cast by job title. Interestingly it appears that the higher up the organisation the clearer the division between the 'niche' and the 'core' views are. The lower the more there was a view that it was 'both a core skill and a niche capability'.

Company Size



By company size it appears the small and the large/very large organisations have a mixed view but that medium companies either believe or employ those that act as 'both a core skill and a niche capability'. That said 71% of respondents came from organisations at either end of the size scale.

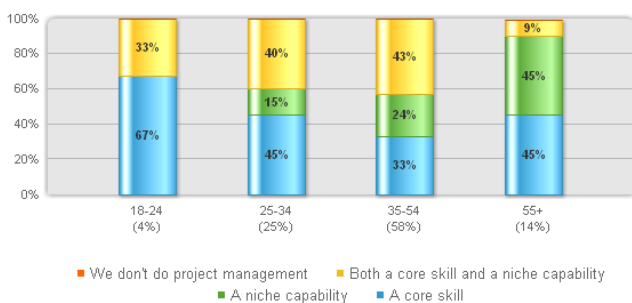
Gender



Is Project Management a Core Skill and No Longer a Niche Capability? - continued

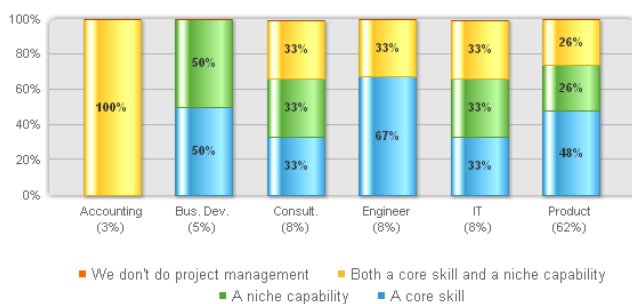
Gender played no part in these results with an almost identical view from both groups. That said it can be noted that the respondents were twice as likely to be men.

Age



So we have looked at gender but what about age? Well the majority of respondents were in the 25 to 54 age range (logical really) and the younger the viewpoint the more likely it was that there was a belief that it was a 'core skill' or the non-belief that it was a 'niche capability'. Was this as a result of the skills being gathered through the education process for business these days; that is project management being taught as one of the range of business skills?

Job Function



And finally a view by job functions where much can be read in to these statistics.

One view expressed was that everything - including project management - follows the same evolution curve from being a niche area with early innovators and adopters, then on to a wider acceptance and adoption followed by late adopters in mass number, resulting in moving the topic to become a commodity and possibly, at some future point, in to a decline. One must assume that project management is on this path somewhere.

Project Management is an interesting anomaly. The practice

of project management has been around since the well before the Romans began massive projects to reshape their world. However, the science and formalization of project management is relatively recent. Most of the current practices of a well trained project manager have been developed over only the past 70 years. So yes, we are on that path of maturity but precisely where I suggest forms the basis for this discussion.

The Argument

So what are the thoughts on this topic? Well, there are three angles to argue:

1) Project Management will always be a niche capability.
It's about the skill and experience of the individual project manager that makes or breaks a project. The need for success means that projects have to be driven by a 'niche capable' project manager. General managers will never have the time, the experience or the training or indeed the skills to manage any project beyond that which is simple in its goals. No executive gets promoted because of their project management skills they get promoted for other reasons. Executives do not need project management skills but project sponsorship and product ownership skills.

2) Project Management is a core skill.
As most evidence is now directing us, that we are moving to the projectification of society, where work is less and less a line activity and delivered in the majority through projects, then it is clearly vital that all managers now need to understand the dynamics of projects and have the basic skills and understanding of the process of project management in order to make the most out their organization's investments. All managers need to think in terms of controlled and carefully monitored delivery of outcomes, against a fixed budget and expectations of a quality outcome i.e. as projects.

3) Both a Niche Capability and a Core Skill
Project management methodology is a 'core skill' that all managers need to be aware of but, the actual project management activity is still a 'niche capability' that requires additional training and experience in order to be successful. Managing a small, simple project is no big deal and most people can do it. Managing a large, complex project with substantial risk, diverse stakeholders, a geographically distributed team, multiple constraints and high stakes is best reserved for real experts. The successful business of the 21st century recognizes the value of 'niche' project managers working under a supportive executive that has a foundation of project 'core skills'.

Peter Taylor is also the author of 'The Lazy Project Manager' book (Infinite Ideas 2009) – for more information or comments on this article or his book, please feedback at www.thelazyprojectmanager.com

Developing Project Management Potential - Part 1

By David Hinde

What skills do you need to be a great project manager? How do you develop those skills using training and coaching? What are the differences between the two development approaches? Which is best? This article among the many will attempt to answer all these questions.

Core Project Management Competencies.

Project management is a challenging role. You sit between upper management giving you demanding targets, and the production teams telling you how difficult it is to achieve those targets. It's rather like being the filling of a sandwich of flak! To cope with this stress, requires a range of skill sets:

- Excellent Communication Skills – The project management role is at the fulcrum point of many lines of communication. These lines go to a range of stakeholders from the business, the user community, a range of suppliers and other parties with vested interests. The project manager has to act as a project telephone exchange ensuring that all these parties communicate with each other in an effective and cohesive way.
- Great People Management Skills. Projects are about getting people to work together. As such the project manager must be able to build effective teams, motivate people to work productively, delegate clearly and deal with the likely conflicts that will occur.
- Emotional Intelligence. Projects bring about large-scale change that people react to in many different emotional ways. The project manager needs to be aware of these emotions both in themselves and others and deal with them rationally. The Project Manager should be a calm rock in the storm of the project environment.
- Political Savvy. Projects can be a political minefield, where there are winners and losers. An ability to identify these two groups and understand what influences them can help the project manager move the project forward.
- Time Management. With a whole array of things to do – often most of them urgent – the project manager needs to be a great juggler of tasks and use their own time as effectively as possible.
- Best Practice Knowledge. A thorough understanding of best project practice helps the project manager to see what should be done at any point in a project's life. It helps to health check a project by comparing it against the best practice and see what is missing.

We could carry on with this list, financial skills are needed to track a project's budget and business case, maybe specialist skills are needed, such as IT, construction or engineering, to understand the project environment, etc. But even the range of skills listed above conveys how difficult the role is to do well and also how challenging it can be to train up a project manager.

To find out more, please read the following articles at <http://www.orgtopia.com/management-blog/>

David Hinde writes regularly about management topics both in his blog and various journals.



Can I take the PMP® Exam even if my title is not “Project Manager”?

By Cornelius Fichtner, PMP

Are you wondering if you can take the Project Management Professional (PMP) ® exam or not?

You might have various concerns regarding the PMP exam such as your designation, size of the organisation and benefits of PMP certification in career development. This article will help to address some of the concerns and help develop an in-depth understanding about how the PMP certification can be beneficial.

YES! You can take the PMP exam even if your title is not project manager. To take the exam you need to have the appropriate authority and responsibility rather than the designation: The PMP certification is a credential for those who lead and direct project teams.

A professional with a PMP certification is recognised worldwide to handle projects with diligence and constructive approach. It certifies your expertise in project understanding, time management, risk management, quality control, leadership, budgeting, communication, documentation and integration. All of these skills add value to the organization.

If your role in the current organisation involves project management and you have proficiency in handling projects and team related issues then you should definitely go for the PMP certification. It provides you with a strong foundation to effectively manage projects. The idea is not to concentrate on the title but on your responsibilities.

Even if your title is not anything close to a project manager, as long as your role involves handling different processes of a project you can go ahead with the PMP certification to be an even more successful project manager.

According to Foote Partners LLC, an IT workforce research company, projects managed by people who are not PMP certified project managers have only 25% success rate in contrast to 75% success rate of projects handled by PMP certified managers.

The PMP certification offers immense benefits for you as well as your employer. As a general rule, holders of the PMP certificate have higher salaries, receive more job promotions and better job prospects. A PMP credential gives you the most sought after appreciation and visibility within your organisation. Hence, your prospects of growth in your current job and getting a new job increase manifold after being a certified PMP.

Employers who hire PMPs are much more confident about the core competencies of their employees in project management. As a PMP you will be responsible for all aspects of a project such as demonstrating knowledge, understanding and leadership to deliver the project within time constraints, resources, scope and budget. Your role will not only be to lead and direct

the project but also oversee project team members.

Here is another area where you can see the importance of role over title: On your application for the PMP certification you need to select one of the following roles:

- Project Contributor
- Supervisor
- Manager
- Project Leader
- Project Manager
- Educator
- Consultant
- Administrator
- Other

So, you are not really asked for the TITLE, you are actually asked for your ROLE. If your role is not included among the options provided, then select 'Other'.

Here are some more eligibility criteria for the PMP certification:

If you have a bachelor's degree you must show a minimum of 4500 hours of project management experience or a minimum of 7500 years of experience otherwise. The experience should span across all the five process groups of initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling as well as closing. However, you do not need to have experience in every process group in every project that you have worked on. You might have joined some projects midway or left some in the middle. All of those projects can be taken into account. However, some experience in all the process groups on any of your projects is required.

You also need to complete at least 35 hours of project management education. This is officially called “35 contact hours”. You will be required to put in the start date, end date, name of the course provider as well as name of the training course when filling in the application form. Pretty much any training that relates to the 9 knowledge areas of the PMBOK® Guide qualifies.

So does your role meet these criteria? Then go ahead and become a certified PMP! It is a step ahead towards enhancing your career and increasing your professional growth. Put yourself in the limelight, and maximize your earning potential without any further delay!

Cornelius Fichtner, PMP is a noted PMP expert who has helped over 8,000 students prepare for the [PMP Exam](#) with his PM PrepCast at <http://www.pm-prepcast.com>.

Universal Laws of Risk Management

By Dr David Hillson PMP

The term “risk management” covers many different types of risk, including strategic risk, financial risk, reputational risk, operational risk, project risk, environmental risk, legal risk, contract risk, or technical risk, as well as corporate governance, business continuity and disaster recovery. While each of these areas has its own special language, processes and techniques, there are some principles which apply to them all. These might be called “**universal laws of risk management**”.

The first law of risk management is that **risk is uncertain**. A risk is something in the future which might or might not occur. This is vital to a proper understanding of risk and its management. Risks do not yet exist, indeed they may never exist at all. They are potential future events or sets of circumstances or conditions. This makes them quite different from things which have happened in the past or which currently exist in the present. Past and present events can be analysed and measured, but future events can only be imagined or estimated. A risk which may or may not exist in the future cannot be experienced directly unless or until it happens. This makes risks different from issues, problems or constraints. In every type of risk management, risk is in the future, which is inherently uncertain.

The second law is that **risk matters**. If they occur, risks will have consequences which make a difference in some way. It is not possible to have an inconsequential risk, by definition. While various types of risk management focus on different sorts of consequence, all agree that a risk must affect something. This is because risks are inextricably linked to objectives. Wherever some field of human endeavour is attempting to achieve something, it is possible to identify uncertainties which might affect the chances of success. Whether the objectives are to achieve good corporate governance, successful projects or business continuity, risk management aims to identify possible future events which could influence those objectives, and to enable them to be understood and managed effectively.

The third law is that **managing risk is a process**. They may have different steps, but all approaches to risk management provide a framework which is designed to maximise both efficiency and effectiveness. Although the details of risk processes are different, every type of risk management has two important parts: analysis and action. Before risk can be properly managed, it must first be identified, described, understood and assessed. Analysis is a necessary first step but it is not sufficient – it must be followed by action. A risk process which does not lead to implementation of actions to deal with identified risks is incomplete and useless. The ultimate aim is to manage risk, not simply to analyse it.

Finally, the fourth law is that **risk is managed by people**. The human aspects of risk management are vital to its success and effectiveness. People implement processes, though we may use machines to automate calculations, to record results, or to generate reports. People set risk thresholds, identify risks, assess the degree of uncertainty and extent of possible impact, propose appropriate responses and implement agreed actions. These require judgements, estimates and decisions to be made in the presence of uncertainty. These judgements are subject to a range of influences, both explicit and hidden, which can significantly affect the outcome. Risk management at every level is exposed to sources of bias arising from overt and covert influences acting on individuals and groups who are trying to make risk-based decisions with imperfect or incomplete information.

Whatever type of risk we face, we have to follow these universal laws of risk management. To manage risk effectively we need to deal with **uncertainty** that **matters**, follow a **structured process**, and take account of the **people aspects**.

To provide feedback on this Briefing Note, or for more details on how to develop effective risk management, [contact the Risk Doctor \(info@risk-doctor.com\)](mailto:info@risk-doctor.com), or [visit the Risk Doctor website \(www.risk-doctor.com\)](http://www.risk-doctor.com).
