



Who are project managers?

Strategically, they set direction, provide support, anticipate and remove obstacles.

They carry all responsibilities associated with the project and its deliverables.

Basic attributes (or values) of the person

These are the qualities that a person is expected to possess when entering the job.

The will to manage and lead, conceptual and analytical thinker, adaptable, results-oriented (want to get things done), able to influence others, flexible, energetic, positive and confident, competitive, demonstrates initiative, innovative, creative, proactive (self-starter), focused, and a risk-taker.



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PROJECT MANAGEMENT Competencies



The following document consists of a list of generic core competencies related to project management. The list identifies competencies that would be required to (1) understand the business environment; (2) know how to manage the people involved in the project; and (3) apply the technical/administrative aspects of the project. This list of generic project management competencies is derived from input received from Canadian employers and managers who are members of the Project Management Forum. It is meant to serve as a guide in discovering the right balance of skills for anyone who is working or interested in the profession of project management. The list may help identify the needs of an employer, the qualifications of an employee, or the areas of potential development for trainers and educators. How this list is used, and how the competencies are measured, is left entirely up to the individuals concerned with the profession since their needs are unique.

Traditionally, project management was concerned with the technical implementation of a project. However, companies increasingly are using project management techniques to plan and structure a project from the outset (or strategic front end). Therefore, a mix of competencies is required to be able to move a project through the various life cycle phases of concept, development, implementation and finally, post-project review. Depending on the phase, some competencies will be required more than others. This list captures the project management competencies that would be required for the full spectrum of the project. While an experienced project manager may personally bring several of these competencies to the project, the project team as a whole should possess most, if not all, of the competencies listed. However, because all projects are different, a skill that is required in one industry may not necessarily be as important in another.

What is a competency?

A combination of the experience, knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities that a person brings to a job.

Part I: Business Environment

These are the competencies that a project manager needs to understand in order to operate in the environment effectively. These competencies should be considered in tandem with the management and technical competencies listed below.

Business Literacy—Ability to understand the line of business or company, to take the business vision and translate it into the project vision.

Corporate Procedures & Tools—Ability to understand established policies and procedures and corporate tools; how to apply them to the project.

Institutional or Corporate Culture—Ability to recognize and understand the corporate culture and its impact on the project.

Organizational Structure—Ability to understand and work within the corporate organization and team structure.

Part II: Management Competencies

These are the "soft skills" or people-oriented competencies that would be required of any manager, but are especially important for project managers dealing with a project team (superiors, staff and consultants) and external stakeholders (clients, other third parties, media outlets, regulators).

Communications—Ability to produce clear status reports (clear writing and verbal skills), communicate tactfully and candidly, simplify jargon, make clients aware of all issues, be an excellent listener.

External Issue Management—Ability to identify, analyze and prioritize issues external to the project and develop mitigation plans.

Financial Acumen—Ability to understand how decisions affect the bottom line; knowledge about general financial and accounting principles and practices that impact operations; knowledge about the links between operations and the company's financial performance is essential to create value for all stakeholders of the organization.

Leadership—Ability to motivate project members, to set achievable objectives, to maintain a positive outlook, to take responsibility, to make decisions, and to provide constructive feedback.

Learning and Knowledge Management—Ability to keep abreast of technological change, to learn from and reflect on the past, to ensure effective training & development of team members, to find most expedient way to develop new skills and knowledge required to undertake new projects.

Negotiation—Ability to undertake continual adjustments with stakeholders in a persuasive manner, to keep the project on course by use of positive win/win negotiations.

Organization—Ability to find a place for everything so that needed tools, resources and data are easily accessible, ability to create and maintain a clear team structure.

Problem Solving and Decision-Making—Ability to analyze and define a problem, evaluate alternatives, find a solution, understand how and when to make a choice.

Relationship Management—Ability to consult and provide advice; to facilitate discussion and resolve conflict; to develop relationships with key project stakeholders; to recognize and deal with other cultures; to establish trust, credibility and respect; and to be willing to give more than to receive.

Strategic Thinking—Ability to analyze the future impact of decisions by taking a big-picture approach, to strategically position the project within the business to relate to short and long-term objectives.

Team Building—Ability to assemble the team with the right mix of skills, then "create" the team, understand and know how to share information, coach members, delegate responsibility, promote support and interaction.

Time Management—Ability to manage competing priorities effectively, to be resourceful and to use time as resource to make up or extend.

Part III: Technical Competencies

These have been traditionally considered the main competencies required by the project the results of which the project manager will be accountable. For every project, a project execution plan is required, and the following competencies will be needed to bring the project to fruition.

Budget Planning—Understand and know how to perform cost/benefit analyses; use sound rationale; ensure that all factors are included; maintain focus on budget; consult with client and mgmt if estimated final costs are close to or above budget.

Client (or Customer) Focus—Understand who is the client and what are the client's needs; ability to provide realistic expectations; to reach agreement with client from outset of project.

Contract/Procurement Management—Understand and know how to use purchasing project tools, how to create contracts with clear and agreed to terms and conditions, and how to administer contracts.

Environmental, Health & Safety Management—Understand and know how to comply with all regulations; implement a positive attitude toward health and safety in design and execution of the project; ensure safe deliverables.

Hand-over Management—Understand and know how to coordinate, implement, test and deliver a project in order to produce an effective working system (or a successful product).

Information Management—Ability to manage project documentation (technical and management) and data (or information) requirements.

Issues/Change/Assumptions Management—Ability to control and implement a process of change when needed; document and track issues; monitor assumptions and make decisions in a timely manner; understand and use problem solving techniques.

Risk Management—Understand how to assess, document and manage internal and external project risks; develop contingencies and mitigation plans.

Project Controls and Process Management—Understand and know how to use standard project management tools & techniques to schedule, plan, track and correct project performance; know how to make effective use of technical and management methodologies.

Quality Management—Understand how to obtain and ensure quality results (or products) for total client satisfaction, ability to take corrective actions and perform verification of project standards, effectively.

Resource Management—Ability to identify and make optimal use of resources.

Scheduling Management—Ability to organize the work in a logical way so that it is executed effectively; manage the schedule.

Scope Definition—Ability to establish a clear scope, define the extent of the project; what's in, what's out, set up and understand approval procedures.

