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May 2004 Issue 5

Welcome to Project Management Tip-Offs.

Issue 5 is mainly dedicated to project management qualifications and you'll be pleased to know it doesn't feature any advertisements for expensive courses!

The results are in from our survey as well as recent news about the Chartered IT Professional. We also share with you the Arras People skills framework - a good framework to use then you're deciding on new training or career development moves.

For any feedback or comments please get in touch at: tipoffs@projectmanagementnewsletter.co.uk

Get the previous editions at: [Project Management Tip-Offs](#) [Click Here](#)

Project Management Qualifications - your views

By Lindsay Scott, Senior Consultant Arras People

In early March 2004 we kicked off the most comprehensive survey ever created in relation to project management qualifications. Our original article ([Issue 3](#)) looked at different reasons why employers look for qualifications and accreditations in prospective employees. As ever, there's a right to reply - so we asked you "Why is it important to you to have a qualification like this?"

This survey gives a great insight into what your peers and "competitors" think about the many qualifications out there and could also help you select the right accreditation in the future.

As competition increases in the marketplace, more and more project management practitioners and support personnel are looking for that extra something that gives them a competitive edge. Experience in a particular vertical market, blue-chip organisation or high profile programme to name but a few approaches. Our research has shown that employers also look at qualifications and accreditations as a differentiator when choosing their next employees or contractors. In our latest survey, over 100 programme, project and project management support practitioners told us what qualifications they had chosen and more importantly why. The feedback shows that the project managers and project office support personnel are certainly equipped to meet the needs of employers in 2004.

Over 68% of professionals have gained qualifications and accreditations in their chosen field, PRINCE2 being the resounding choice for the project management professional, in both the Foundation (41%) and the Practitioner (39%) accreditations. Deciding to choose PRINCE2 over other accreditations may seem an easy choice considering over 50% of newly advertised role specify that PRINCE2 qualifications are a must!

Other reasons include:

- Requirement of the company - PRINCE2 is the methodology used
- More courses available for PRINCE2 than any other
- Fairly easy to gain PRINCE2 accreditations - paid course and exam
- Worked within a project already using PRINCE2 - easy move to take the exam
- A definite requirement for public sector project manager roles

The motivations of going that extra mile to gain qualifications are not all about hard cash and impressing prospective employers, over 27% believe the main motivator is personal development - it allows a good blend of theoretical and practical experience which allows development in your career and improves your project management abilities.

Unfortunately a third of respondents are unsure as to whether having an accreditation brings them any benefits at all but for others, "...immediately been able to introduce many areas of PRINCE2 to my job", "adds credibility to my role" and "it has helped me use a common language with other PM's" are just some of the perceived benefits.

PRINCE2 may be the accreditation of choice today, but hot on the heels are both the PMI (14%) and APM (15%) accreditations. Again more people opt for the APM in the UK, PMI being predominantly more US based, but both based on the Body of Knowledge. People opting for one of those accreditations are driven more towards a need to gain core project management skills rather than a prescribed framework or methodology.

While there seems to be abundance of choice for projects managers, the project office support professionals out there have to settle for a more limited choice. The ISEB PPSO foundation and advanced accreditations are the only ones available for project support people at the moment, but increasingly people are turning to PRINCE2 to supplement their career development.

View our article on "Are chartered professionals the way forward?" for further information about where next for project management and qualifications

Qualification Links

Many accreditations to pick from and here are the organisations websites to find out more about them:

[Project Management Institute \(PMI\)](#)

[Association for Project Management \(APM\)](#)

[Information Systems Examination Board \(BCS\)](#)

[APM Group \(APMG\)](#)

[Chartered Management Institute \(CMI\)](#)

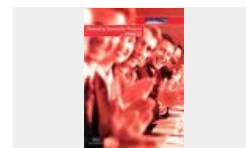
[Office of Government Commerce \(OGC\)](#)

[Open University](#)

PRINCE2

Foundation Level - for project team members, exam of 75 multiple choice questions to be answered in 1 hour. Gains the foundation certificate

Practitioner Level - for people applying the PRINCE2 methodology - need the foundation level - 3 hour exam, 3 questions - essay based. To maintain the practitioner status you need to refresh every 3 to 5 years



PMI

CAPM - Certified Associate in Project Management - equivalent to foundation level or member of project team (not PM) - degree or diploma PLUS minimum work hours apply - 150 multiple choice questions in 3 hours - computer based

Survey Results in Full

1. What role do you currently perform:

Programme Manager - 16%
Project Manager - 52%
Project Support - 30%
Other roles - 2%

2. Do you currently have any programme / project management or project support qualifications?

Yes - 68%
No - 32%

3. What qualifications do you have?

APM- APMP - 15%
APM - APMP Pract - 1%
APM - CPM - 0%
ISEB Cert PM for IS - 5%
ISEB Dip PM for IS - 0%
ISEB PPSO Foundation - 7%
ISEB PPSO Advanced - 2%
PRINCE2 Foundation - 41%
PRINCE2 Practitioner - 39%
PMI CAPM - 0%
PMI PMP - 14%

Other qualifications included: PRINCE, AMA Project Management, MBA, OGC Managing Successful Programmes, Open University Project Management, ITIL Service Management

4. Main motivators for choosing these qualifications over any of the other choices? The most popular answers:

Company Policy/Company Choice - 30%
Most Recognisable Qualification (PRINCE2) - 28%
Most requested in job advertisements (PRINCE2) - 10%
Most recognised in the US (PMI/PMP) - 10%
No choice (no other qualifications in PPSO) - 5%

5. Please pick the statement that closely matches your motivation for taking a qualification?

Gives me an advantage when applying for new roles - 17%
Shows a commitment to my career choice - 18%
Demonstrates that I possess a good foundation of experience and training- 27%
Shows that I am a fully competent PM Professional - 20%
Because everyone is doing it and I must remain competitive - 6%

6. Has the qualification been beneficial to you in any tangible way?

Yes - 22%
No - 11%
Unsure - 31%

For the respondents saying yes to this question, the most popular answer was "it has added credibility and professionalism in my role" and "without it I would not have been able to secure contracts or roles"

7. What has been the main motivator in NOT gaining qualifications?

Time - 34%
Cost - 24%
Perceived Value - 21%

8. Do you intend to gain a qualification?

Yes - 51%
No - 13%

9. Do you think you have ever missed out on an opportunity or promotion etc by not having the right or any qualifications in project management?

Yes - 45%
No - 54%

In future issues of Project Management Tip-Offs we continue to look at some of the answers given in the survey - especially the reasons why you think you have missed out on promotions and opportunities at work.

Are chartered professionals the way forward?

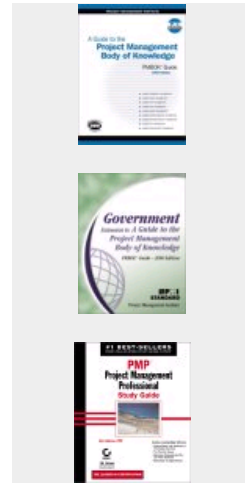
By Ian McKenzie, Senior Consultant Arras Services

Recent news reports from the government on IT project management is full of bad news;

"Fewer than one in five of all IT projects in the UK can be considered truly successful leading to billions of pounds being wasted every year on IT systems" and "Projects are often poorly defined, codes of practice are frequently ignored and there is a woeful inability to learn from past experience", are just some of the quotes from recent articles entitled "[Report exposes failure of IT project management](#)" and "[Billions of pounds wasted every year on IT systems in the UK](#)" from Computer Weekly.

Even MP's are adding to the debate about the way forward for government IT projects, and adding ammunition to the debate is another [recent report](#) - this time from the RAoE (Royal Academy of Engineering) and BCS (British Computer Society) on the challenges of complex IT projects. This has paved

PMP - Project Management Professional - degree and 4500 work hours and experience within the five process groups - between 3 and 6 years experience - 4 hour exam - 200 multiple choice questions



APM

APMP - Association for Project Management Professional - 2 parts to exam - 100 multiple choice and second paper with 8 questions must answer five of these - 4 hour exam in total

APMP - Association for Project Management Practitioner - need the previous accreditation - attendance at an assessment centre - written work, case studies and an interview

APMP - Association for Project Management Certificated Project Manager - for people managing projects - full member of APM - three stage process (1) application form, self-assessment form, a written example of project you've managed (2) written account becomes a full project report (3) interview

Chartered Professionals

[BCS Homepage](#)

[Chartered Status Benefits](#)

[Fees](#)

[Points Scheme](#)

the way for the BCS to announce their new Chartered IT Professional membership, a recommended award that people managing complex projects and programmes for the government should have.

Our research from the recent qualification survey showed that many project managers gained PRINCE2 accreditations because its the most recognisable in the market place today and surprisingly a smaller number (7%) because it enabled them to both gain employment in and operate within the public sector.

So does this mean the project manager may have to shift their focus from PRINCE2 and associated accreditations to that of a chartered professional, or is it just another hoop to jump through to get more work within the public sector? How do you feel about shelling out more money out of your pocket to gaining new accreditations and training?

The new Chartered IT Professional may even be a welcomed move, a new grade that will distinguish the "PRINCE2 tick-in-the-box" project managers from the hardcore professionals?

Arras People will be talking to our public sector clients over the coming months to see if this new award really will make an impact within local and central government funded IT projects.

Is it black or white?

By Chris Wood, Diabolo

The skills involved in configuring and applying a plan is always a balancing act of what should be done and what has to be done. The former is generally driven by the rules and regulations of the company, client or government, and comprises their own interpretation of best practise and local culture.

The application of this part of any plan is a clever combination of skill and luck. From the inside, it makes perfect sense and is a very clear way to predict requirements and measure progress. From the outside it is a black box process that has little meaning and can only be sensed by some tangible changes in its area of impact. The other side of the balance is what effort is put into bridging the gaps between all the interested parties.

A mix of skills including politician, dictator, and used-car salesman are required to keep all the stakeholders on-board and working with you rather than against. It is the management of these intangible white spaces around the tangible plans that determine success or failure.

So which way do you lean? Black box or white space? Process or people focus? Where do you apply your grey matter?

About Diabolo

Diabolo promotes an innovative dynamic approach enabling change in organisations by connecting hard-headed business skills with the human spirit and values. Combining our collective knowledge and experience, we have created some powerful frameworks for business thinking. We call these Diabolo Journeys. We use a highly visual technique to guide clients through complex processes with clarity of thought. By combining tried and tested coaching and consulting practice with graphics, we have developed a suite of Diabolo Journeys covering many business issues."

Chris Wood is a Director of Diabolo

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[New Survey announced - exploring the role of project co-ordinator and project support - take part today!](#)

Careers

Careers - qualifications edition

So you're thinking about taking a exam....

One of the main issues for people considering taking new qualifications or training courses is the associated costs involved, especially if you have to dig deep into your own pocket. So you have to make sure that the choices you make will be beneficial to you or you may just as well throw that money at any course provider passing.

Most people are aware of how to maintain your own career development plans: identify your needs, create the plan, execute your plan and record your progress. Simple! But what if you're unsure of what your needs actually are. A couple of options are open to you, each approach not costing the earth.

1. Take each area of project management in turn (consult the PMBoK for example) and assess truthfully which areas you know you're lacking skills in.

2. A less painful approach - use a skills framework or skills gap analysis to help you focus on the areas you're lacking in and also determine where you want to be (the OGC site has a lot of information in this area - see the links)

Arras People also have a skills framework which has been put together over the years of working within the project management arena, this may provide you with a good starting place when beginning to think about your career development needs > [arras people skill framework](#) <

Tipoff

"It's OK to fail with a plan, but without one is unforgiveable"

Who said this?

Scam Warning

We had an email from one of our readers warning about a recent email that attempts to scam job-seekers out of cash for administration charges in relation to jobs

The Scam o Rama site tells you more as well as all those other scam emails you're likely to receive

> [Go here](#)

Skills Framework

[Skills Framework from the OGC](#)

[Maturity Matrix from the OGC](#)

[Skills Analysis Tool from the OGC - available soon](#)

Arras People

> [Skills Framework](#)

See our own skills framework for project management

Who's hiring who?

Another excellent guide to writing your resume, and with a focus on areas like "Qualifications Brief". You've got the qualifications but now you need to make sure all your resume works for you.



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About Arras People:

Latest update from Arras People - the project management and project office recruitment specialists.

Arras People have continued to grow, gaining numerous new clients on a regular basis. These clients are in sectors such as local authorities, police, IT, business consultancy and more recently banking and central government. The market has grown significantly since the beginning of the year and has taken time to solidify its position over late March and early April; however growth in the number of opportunities has risen with strong predictions for project related roles through the rest of the year.

Arras also has put in place a number of major plans this month, we will be kicking off our new website development project (and yes we have the project plans in place!) and we are moving to our new head offices this summer. The summer months look set to bring exciting opportunities for us and for you.. Happy projecting!

As ever, if you have any comments or feedback on the newsletter (even just to say like it or loathe it) we'd really appreciate it.

We'll be back with the next issue in June - bye for now.

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