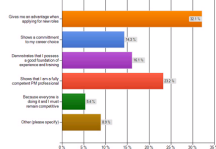


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### Featured Article

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



Nearly 60% of Project Managers state that the project management qualifications they've obtained have proven to be beneficial in a tangible way.

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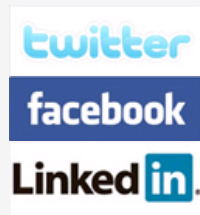
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### Blogs

- [Some Job Searching Hints Beyond Your CV](#)
- [The many types of programme and](#)

### Greetings!

Last month, Project Management Tipoffs spoke with you about the economic climate and the uplifting effect on the delivery of projects. Our August newsletter delves further into the ways that individuals are coping and rising above the economic situation, one of those being continuing professional development, or CPD. We further delve into training & qualifications, giving you a glimpse at the issue from both the trainer and the individual's side while weighing both sides of an educational opportunity that can be education unto itself. We continue our series of book reviews, this month delving into "The Invisible Candidate", and as always, a chance for one reader to win the book of the month. Our Q&A comes from a reader who concentrates on qualifications as they relate to his direct experience in the field of project management.

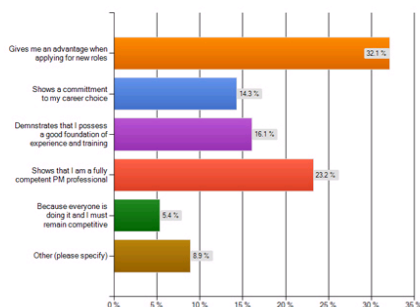
### Current Professional Opinions on Project Management Training & Qualifications

Project Managers and budding PM professionals seem convinced that obtaining a project management qualification has led or will lead to an improved career path.

Those are the general findings of the recent Arras People's Qualifications Survey, which closed Monday after a week of exposure to a variety of project management-friendly social media, including [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and in Arras People's own blog, [How to Manage a Camel](#).

The survey, which combined direct yes/no questions with a variety of chances for respondents to comment freely, turned up some intriguing results, mainly with regards to the importance of project

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



management qualifications as they relate to project managers today. When asked "Please pick a statement that closely matches your motivation for taking a qualification", over 85% of respondents gave answers that reflected on the enhancing virtues a PM qualification provides (i.e. 'Gives me an advantage when applying for new roles', 'Shows that I am a fully competent PM professional').

Perhaps most intriguing were the responses to the question, "Has the qualification been beneficial to you in any tangible way?" Nearly 60% of respondents answered 'Yes', while 18% answered 'No' and 23% stated they were 'Unsure'. Some 'Yes' responses would seem to speak to the importance of project management hiring personnel place on qualifications. For instance, one respondent commented that they answered 'Yes' because 'I was told by my current employer that they would not have interviewed me for a PM role without some evidence of a PM exam'. This respondent was not alone: In all, 68% of 'Yes' respondents who added a comment stated that they answered that way because qualifications improved their ability to get hired or interviewed.

- [project office professionals](#)
- [The Standard for PPM Professionals in the New Decade](#)
- [Taking the PRINCE2 exam? - PmTips](#)
- [PMP Certification is not enough - PM Hut](#)

**Websites**

- [ProjectOffices](#)
- [pposig](#)
- [Pearce Mayfield](#)
- [The Invisible Candidate](#)
- [Project Challenge](#)

**Podcasts & Vodcasts**

- [The PM Podcast](#)
- [Project Shrink](#)
- [Best Management Practice - PRINCE2:2009](#)
- [pmstudent.com - PMO Summit 2008 w/Cornelius Fichtner](#)
- [PMO Podcasts for Executives & Managers](#)

**Arras on Twitter**

- [projectmgmt](#)
- [PM\\_StrayDogg](#)

**Training & Qualifications**

- [OGC](#)
- [APM](#)
- [PMI](#)
- [PRINCE2](#)
- [P3O](#)
- [ISEB](#)

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**Arras People**



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Arras People sponsors the pposig conferences

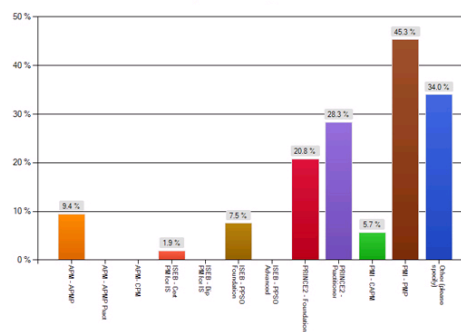
But more surprising is the amount of people who answered 'No' to this question - 41% of our survey takers either don't think that their qualifications have been beneficial or

are unsure about how much of a role they play in their career's path. It correlates to the uncertainty of the quality within the job market at the end of the day - the experience and the on the job "know-how" may speak just as highly for candidates as the certificate in the office.

Couple that result with figures tabulated in response to another Yes/No question, and one can begin to understand the polarization that project management qualifications bring. The question in question is **"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?"** The majority of respondents (55%) responded 'No'. Another monkey wrench in the polarisation element is that other factors have been blamed by the respondents for their missing out on promotions, like:

- 'vocal communication', 'right place, right time, right contacts', 'lack of defined path for advancement', 'experience' (some variation on 'experience' was given many times as an answer), 'depth of business experience in a particular sector',
- 'None related to training'

Which qualifications do you have?



A contingent of respondents agreed that there were a variety of reasons that hindered their ability to add qualifications to their CV. When asked **"What has been your main motivator in NOT gaining qualifications?"**,

21% responded 'Time', 31% answered 'Cost', and another 19% blamed 'Perceived Value'.

As polarising as qualifications in project management may be, there can be little doubt that recent hiring practices would suggest that qualifications could be more emphasis in the future than less. When asked, **"Do you intend to gain a qualification?"**, 47% of respondents answered 'Yes', while a mere 12% said 'No' and 40% said 'Not Applicable'. Some, though, seemed almost apologetic about it, feeling certification has been driving down the perceived importance of practical real-world experience.

"Sorry to say, but I will need a cert(-ification) to demonstrate my knowledge if I need to move to another company," said one respondent.

Another added, "(The) project management field has grown cert happy. Certs (are) preferred to actual experience and success."

**Continuing Your Professional Development in 2009 - It's Not Just About Training Courses**



As we are heading towards the back end of the year we have been through an interesting time - the media can't help but report the doom and gloom which has had an even greater impact on employers spending. If only we could have a few more headline-grabbing celebrity break-ups and pandemics, we might see the country back on its feet a little sooner than anticipated!

The ext pposig event on the 16th & 17th September is focused on PMO Maturity. The two day conference covers;

**PMO Maturity** - Using Organisational Maturity Models to understand how weaknesses and improvements in PMOs are identified

**PMO Structures** - Explore the challenges that organisations will have to face in establishing or re-energising PMOs

**PMO Assessments** - Understanding the scope and value of performing PMO self assessments

**PMO Roles** - Greater awareness of P3O guidance and typical roles & services

**Developing Your Team** - Through identifying and reinforcing the key issues in establishing a professional PMO team

**Developing Yourself** - Identifying key skills and competencies that are required to improve your professionalism

A must for any PMO professional

[For further details on how to book...](#)

Providing Real Practical Help to Unemployed Project Managers

**JobSearch Support Service for Newly Unemployed Professionals**



Arras People have been working with Job Centre Plus across the country to provide practical help and advice to project managers who are currently out of work

There's further in-depth details on how to access the service via [the blog](#) or via [the website](#)

Please pass along the details to any friends you know who may be able to benefit from the service

We've got testimonials to back up the quality of our service:

However in the mean-time here's how can you maximise your potential for the future when employers are being frugal with the training spend. It's an opportunity to open up your skill set and progress your career path - whether you plan to stick with your company for the foreseeable future, or to jump to a new challenge as the market picks up.

As a start make use of your corporate and individual memberships, the [APM](#) have a number of events taking place across the country who welcome their members to attend, learn and share project management related subjects. Other organisations such as [Best Practice Showcase](#) have free events and [Project Challenge](#) can be an interesting event as it hosts free seminars and the stands hold a great deal of information regarding what is new within the project arena.

**Share your knowledge:** Inevitably within any organisation there will be a diverse range of project related people working across the various functions, some may be more focused on finance, others on project controls and some in strategy to name a few. All these roles will involve different levels of skills and knowledge, why not instigate a knowledge-share group, sit down with your manager and discuss the benefits of a weekly workshop where the project teams can take turns giving presentations and practical seminars. Past experience of these unofficial sessions has personally lead to better stakeholder communications and increased knowledge of software capabilities which directed a more formal weekly knowledge-share session where value management and benefits realisation knowledge and techniques were shared across the teams and later put into practice.

**Online resources:** Make use of the online resources available to you, the company budget may not extend to visiting events that charge - however most of these groups tend to post the presentations online after said event. The [PPSO SIG](#) (Programme and Project Office Support Special Interest Group) being a shining example of this, is very keen to share its presentations and has an online tool [here](#). Use the tools and don't be afraid to approach individuals should you have further questions - LinkedIn or twitter are great tools for contacting authors and presenters, in my experience professionals who are content to donate their time to present at these events are more than happy to discuss the minutia individually - so get in touch!

These are just a few ideas how to get your CPD (Continued Professional Development) back on track assisting the progression of your career and personal development whilst budgets are tight. Keep abreast of the project management community by keeping an eye on the likes of [OGC](#), [APM](#) and [PMI](#) websites and the good project management related blogs. Don't be afraid to share your own experiences thus sharing your knowledge with like minded professionals.

## Making Distinctions Within P3O To Better Understand an Emerging Management Approach

from Patrick Mayfield



'P3O' stands for 'Portfolio, Programme and Project Office'. It is a management approach that has emerged strongly in recent years, particularly as the concepts and then practice of Programme Management and Portfolio Management have become embedded across the world.

To understand P3O, first we need to make clear distinctions between the portfolio, programmes and projects and why these distinctions matter.

### The Portfolio

Within any organisation there will be all kinds of change going on; some managed as projects; some as informal initiatives or campaigns; some as the coordinated grouping of projects and changes to achieve major outcomes (these latter known as 'programmes').

Often a senior manager will have no real idea how large the sum of all the changes are at any given time, how much this all costs, whether all the changes are aligned to current strategy, and whether the use of resources is the best it can be. Answering these questions can be a large task that holds the tension between offering the 'big picture' for

"Generally informative and professionally led discussion with some good tips - Many Thanks!"

"I would like to personally thank Mick Hides for all his sympathetic council and professional career advice, in my book he is a credit to Arras People."

## ESI Offers £250,000 in Scholarship Opportunities



ESI International, a worldwide trainer and consultant in project management, will launch a £250,000 scholarship programme for out-of-work technical professionals beginning on 1 Sept.

ESI's Stand Out Scholarship funds will cover the majority of course fees for approved candidates, who may choose up to three courses from ESI's project management, programme management, business skills and business analysis curricula. The programme opens 1 Sept. and will run until 31 Dec., or until funds have exhausted.

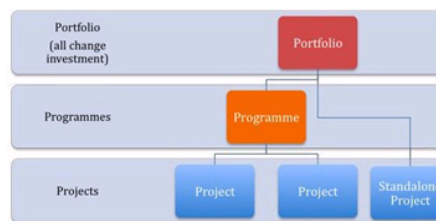
Arras People [applauds ESI](#) for their commitment to fighting back against the credit crunch and provide opportunities for project professionals across the globe. Details on the campaign are available [here](#).

investment decisions in changes, and the detail, for example of knowing what resources are being used - and therefore being denied to other changes. This is tackled using 'portfolio management'.

## Programmes

A programme is used to orchestrate otherwise-separate projects towards a particular step-change in capability and performance.

Very unlike projects (e.g. IT and buildings, HR and process modeling) can come together and the programme ensures there is joined up delivery of a transformed capability. Benefits from these changes are consciously realized as part of the programme.



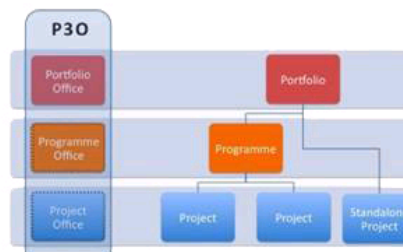
## Projects

Projects have been around since pre-history. Yet one of the recent conclusions from research is that, comparing like-for-like projects, the more successful ones are shorter and simpler. In the past projects have floundered because they have attempted to do the rather more complex and divergent work that we now do as programmes. Projects are at their best when they can focus on delivery, and when what is to be delivered is both clear and changes little during the life of the project.

## P30

Enter P30. When a P30 is carefully tailored and from the start demonstrates that it adds value, it becomes a powerful enabler of change by providing a governance backbone to all three levels.

P30 offers a menu of benefits that an organization can choose from in deciding what kind of P30 it needs. When it comes to P30, one size does not fit all.



## P30: Missing Link, Gold Mine or Glue?

From the courses I've personally delivered, I've got a very positive response to P30. It generates some stimulating discussions on our 2-day course and emerges in the minds of our delegates as the 'Missing Link' in Best Management Practice about change through programmes and projects.

Recently, a group of consultants I trained in the Netherlands, agreed that the Guide was a Gold Mine of nuggets that they could immediately offer their own clients.

Whilst in the UK, a public sector senior manager said to me: "The P30 model is the 'glue' [between portfolio, programme and project management]."

P30 is creating a growing 'buzz' and a growing community of enthusiastic practitioners.

**Patrick Mayfield** formed Pearce Mayfield Associates in 1994, whilst he was on the team that managed the delivery of PRINCE2®, the UK Government's globally-acclaimed best practice project management method. He is an accredited PRINCE2, MSP™ and P30® and Change Management, and now takes on the role of Chairman of the company. Patrick is a regular speaker at conferences on topics such as PRINCE2, MSP programme management, Mind Mapping, creativity and problem-solving. More recently, he was one of the authors of the 3rd edition of the MSP Manual published in September 2007. He regularly writes for his blog, [Lessons of a Learning Leader](#).

## Book Review - The Invisible Candidate



by **Tony Haley**, available through  
[theinvisiblecandidate.com](http://theinvisiblecandidate.com)

See details on how to win this book below

Just this week on the radio, there had been a jobseeker telling the interviewer all about the 700 jobs they have applied for which had resulted in 11 interviews but still no luck in landing a new job.

The interviewer duly noted that the jobseeker really needs to get some help because they must be doing something wrong. The "Invisible Candidate" is not merely for the hapless serial applier of jobs but for any current jobseeker in the UK that wants to stand out from the crowd and beat the competition to their dream job. Anthony Haley's book is current (the advice given is all in line with the current economic downturn), practical common sense, and crucially brings tools and techniques that are sales in nature, but translate beautifully to the business of getting a job. The "Invisible Candidate" is so called because:

*"If you are busy sending out your CV and attending interviews but are not having any success in getting a job, you might be the Invisible Candidate. .... Are you even looking for a job where 70% to 80% of jobs exist? A combination of these two factors is making you invisible"*

"The Invisible Candidate" is like having your own job coach: Haley's style is straight to the point and he obviously has many years of experience that all makes perfect sense (especially at the senior end of the market as a head-hunter). It is for this reason that I felt that the "Invisible Candidate" would appeal to the project management marketplace: This book is about seizing the opportunity, understanding your skills and experiences to provide the necessary motivation to lift yourself above "today's dysfunctional job market" to get the job you really want, rather than just any old job to pay the bills.

Haley's approach essentially utilises sales skills to sell yourself and you may think that sounds like nothing new. But we still see in the marketplace people relying too much on job boards to find positions, outsourcing of your own CV writing to companies that may or may not have your best interests at heart, and, like the opening paragraph, some people still using methods that fail to land themselves a job.

The "Invisible Candidate" takes the reader through the job hunting process from where to find your ideal position (over 70% of vacancies are never advertised), plus self analysis to understand who you are, what you're worth and what you've got to offer. It's a technique that is straightforward with a very powerful outcome for any jobseeker. Of course the CV is covered, and mirrors the advice I always give out, too; "You will need several versions of your CV to suit different companies so do not be concerned with how many". Remember: this book is all about making yourself visible to the employing organisation and Haley's common-sense approach should be heeded by everyone when creating your CV.

Practical advice continues through making calls to the organisations you would ideally like to be working for, the importance of interview etiquette and surprisingly, good sections on the psychological, including use of NLP and the importance of body language in "business meetings" (Think of interviews like business meetings, a two-way street). The book also takes the reader through first and second interviews, psychometric testing, the offer process and counter offers, all with the tools and techniques to make you, the jobseeker, the most visible and likely candidate for the job. The "Invisible Candidate" leaves the reader feeling empowered in the job hunting process: it is all about both taking control and being in control throughout the entire process. Sometimes this might mean walking away from a potential opportunity, but at least the decision is firmly in your corner (indeed Haley gives a great insight into how the UK recruitment market works and how organisations deal with the business of employing people; sometimes you know when it's better to walk away!)

This book is not for the jobseeker who wants to carry on applying for vacancies on job boards and the national press, sending the same old "me too" CV with cover note that says not very much at all. This book is for the jobseeker who wants to be proactive in their search; who is not scared of trying new techniques that may very well take you out of your comfort zone; who is looking for a much more professional

approach to the whole business of job hunting. The "Invisible Candidate" is more about acquiring life skills primarily for job hunting but ultimately, you will be left with new skills which can be used throughout your professional career.

I particularly liked the quote in the book (of which there are many), which sums up the "Invisible Candidate" and whether, as a project manager, you should grab a copy;

*"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them" - Mark Twain*

#### **Want a chance to win this book?**

Let us know in 100 words or less what was the most frustrating thing you've discovered when trying to find a job, [email us](#) and you could be in with a chance of winning.

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#### **Q&A**

***I am an "Electrical Project Manager" of some 35 years experience. I am somewhat puzzled as to why quite a few Companies ask the agencies to only request candidates with a degree.***

***I firmly believe there is a lot to be said for experience gained on site and NOT in the classroom. What are your thoughts?*** - Tony

Tony, thanks for your questions and comments. I 100% agree with you: there is a LOT to be said for experience gained on the job, but think about this situation from the company's point of view for a minute.

The company is looking for the best employee for the job and to do this they first draft a job specification. The job specification outlines the key responsibilities that the new employee will carry out should they be successful in getting the job. The job specification is where your experience, gained in your current job and previous career, should be closely matching the criteria.

Let's assume that you have greater than 80% of what they've outlined in the job specification. Now let's move on to the personal specification - this is where the company have outlined their requirements in terms of education (there's that degree again!), professional qualifications, specific skills (like project management) and the more personal / soft skills. You may not have the degree, but are you hitting greater than 80% of everything they're looking for in the personal specification?

Let's assume again that yes; you're looking like a great candidate who, on paper, looks like you have the necessary career history to back up the demands of the job specification. Equally your professional accreditations combined with project management ability and evidence of strong personal skills make you look like a great fit for the company.

But the company are saying "but we can't invite him in for an interview because he doesn't have a degree!" Wrong! The company would make an exception; it's as simple as that.

Often using criteria like "must have PRINCE2" or "must have a degree" are used as a means to filter candidates out of the process. It's a useful tactic to employ if you have hundreds of applicants for each vacancy because it's a clear Yes / No, tick in the box activity. It's also easier for some recruitment agents, too, because it's a lazy recruiting method: It means they don't have to look through all the applicants who applied (recruitment software makes it easier to pull out the degree holders over the non degree holders)

You might find that having been shortlisted and interviewed for a position, you may still come across the degree barrier. Companies still need to choose the right employee for the job after all the interviews. If you and another applicant are both very close in the running, but the other applicant has the degree, you may lose out at the last hurdle.

So what can you do to overcome some of the "must have a degree" objections?

- Ensure you're applying for jobs where you know you have at least 80% of what the company is advertising for
- Make sure your CV is top notch; key achievements to blow your

competitors (other applicants) out of the water, clearly articulated skills, clear benefits on what you can offer the company and leave the education part on the second page so the reader has to read the important parts of your CV first

- If you don't have a degree, consider some classroom based learning - your professional qualifications. Experience gained on the job coupled with a professional accreditation / certification is such a powerful combination
- Consider new methods of finding a position. Learn to go direct to a company and bypass the usual methods of recruitment agencies. You will be much more in control of the application process and, more importantly, will be better at selling yourself and handling the objections raised about your lack of a degree.
- Coming back to your question: "I firmly believe there is a lot to be said for experience gained on site and NOT in the classroom." I agree and so do most employers, so make sure your experience is just what that employer is looking for

Got a question for us, [contact us](#) today

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Sincerely,

**ARRAS PEOPLE®**

Arras People - Project Management Recruitment