

JANUARY 2011

New PMBOK-based Applied Project Management Class (based on the PMBOK) to Be Offered In the Fall!

One of the drawbacks of studying for the Project Management Professional (PMP)[®] certification exam is the fact that most project managers don't experience the PMBOK Standard in practice. PMP certification requires us to learn the concepts of running a project using the tools, techniques, and methods described in the PMBOK. To address this issue, we have developed a brand new course! Applying the PMBOK will take you step by step through a project from beginning to end using PMBOK concepts. The class will also explain how the five process groups work together to integrate the seemingly disparate parts of a project. Registration for Applying the PMBOK will open in April. We hope to see you in class this fall!

DECEMBER 2010

PMP Passing Percentage History

If you took the PMP exam for example in 2003, you had to correctly answer the 137 questions out of 200 (i.e 68.5%). After the new 3rd edition of the PMBOK was introduced in July of 2005, the PMI changed the passing percentage for a few months to a staggering 81%. Well, soon after introducing this new passing percentage, the PMI had to go back to the drawing board and revisit their decision. The number of candidates passing on the first attempt took a dramatic drop and PMI changed the passing score once again, this time to 61% in December of 2005. The good news was that the PMI backdated the new requirement of 61% to June of 2005, therefore those hopefuls who had "failed" the exam at the 81% requirement were now successful at the new 61% goal!

Too many changes, I agree. In any case, if you're studying to take the certification exam today, the passing score is 61%. We recommend taking the exam as soon as you can, you never know when they're going to change the passing percentage again!

OCTOBER 2010

Getting In Shape To Take the PMP Exam

When we think of studying for an exam, we usually focus on studying, reading and learning the material, in this case the PMBOK Guide. While studying is important, we often times forget to consider the importance of getting into the right frame of mind to take an exam. To get our mind in peak performance, it's important to have a healthy diet, body and restful mind.

An article on alternet.org finds that certain foods can make you smarter. Some of the foods mentioned are: avocados, blueberries, wild salmon and eggs. Foods that drain your brain are carbohydrates, corn syrup and alcohol.

Another important part of getting your mind in shape for an exam is regular exercise. Studies show that people who exercise are able to concentrate and think better on an exam. Exercise also helps alleviate the stress associated with studying for a difficult exam like the PMP.

So another formula to know for the exam, a combination of proper diet, exercise and intense studying will equal PMP success!

SEPTEMBER 2010

Maintaining Your Hard Earned PMP Credential

It's no easy task getting PMP certified but luckily the PMI makes it a little easier to maintain the credential once you've earned it. All PMPs are required to participate in the Continuing Certifications (CCR) program to maintain active status on their certification. PMPs

must record 60 PDUs (Professional Development Units) within a three-year period. Once the three-year cycle is complete, another cycle begins.

There are a variety of ways to earn PDUs. The 5 PDU categories are: formal academic education, professional activities, courses offered by PMI's R.E.Ps or PMI's chapters/ communities, courses offered by other education providers and volunteer services.

Don't miss the boat on maintaining your credential! If you don't log and record 60 PDUs within the three-year cycle, the PMI will seize your credential and make you take the exam again to re-qualify!

AUGUST 2010

What's the difference Between the PMP® and CAPM® Exam?

The PMP exam certification is a well-recognized and respected credential in the Project Management industry discipline. However, for those who don't have the industry experience, or meet the education requirements required to qualify for the PMP exam, the PMI introduced the CAPM (Certified Associate in Project Management) exam in 2003.

The CAPM certification is designed for junior project managers and the exam has only has 150 questions (as opposed to 200 questions). The CAPM exam is generally easier, as the questions are not situational. The requirement to qualify for the CAPM exam is 23 hours of education (as opposed to 35 hours for the PMP exam) or 1500 hours of education on a project team.

The CAPM certification is good for 5 years, but after 5 years, the CAPM student will have to re-take the exam! The idea is that student should have built up project management experience during those 5 years and they are now eligible to upgrade to the PMP certification.

Those preparing for the CAPM exam can take PSU's PMP Exam Prep

class to help them prepare. The content of the class will more than prepare CAPM candidates for the exam.

JULY 2010

Why Become A PMP®?

PMI®'s Project Management Professional Certification program has increased in popularity over the last few years. Today there are well over 200,000 PMP®s around the world in over 100 countries. The certification has a good reputation in the industry and many companies are even modeling their project management practices around the PMBOK® standard.

We worked at a local company recently where the company's management all have their PMP® certifications and are encouraging all Project Managers to get certified. In this company, it is essential to become certified in order to be able to speak the same language as the other project managers in the company. Preparing for the PMP® exam gives the professional project manager a solid understanding of PMI®'s methodology of project management.

The exam introduces the students to some useful tools and techniques and spells increased success in the job market. Numerous studies have concluded that those who have PMP® certification increase their chances of getting the job versus those who are not PMP® certified. The certification allows the student to update their skills and increases the student's confidence on their ability to perform the duties of a project manager.

More information about the PMP® exam is available at the PMI® website at www.pmi.org.

How to Study for the PMP Exam

By Balbinder Banga, PMP

This is a regular series of articles on the PMP Exam. Please check back monthly for information, tips, tricks and general comments!

This month we answer the question: **How to Study for the PMP Exam?**

A few months ago, a student (Tim) sent me feedback about how he successfully passed the PMP® exam. Tim said he found the exam quite simple. He took the exam two days after completing my class and never even read the PMBOK®!

His comments made me think about how unique we are with our study strategy. While Tim is a rare breed, no two people are alike in their prep strategy. Some trends I've noticed, however, are that, unlike Tim, 99% of people need to read the PMBOK®. Additionally, most people need a supplemental book to go along with it since quite a bit of the test information on the exam is not in the PMBOK®. Most also need a prep class to help interpret, organize and make sense of the abundance of testable information on the PMP® exam. Prep classes also help you focus on the "need to know" information and can dramatically reduce the time it takes to get ready for the exam.

To summarize:

1. Read the PMBOK®
2. Read at least one supplemental book
3. Take a [PMP Exam Prep course](#)
4. Study, study, study!

Why Do People Fail the PMP Exam?

By Balbinder K. Banga, PMP®

This marks the first of a regular series of articles on the PMP Exam. Please check back monthly for information, tips, tricks and general comments!

This month we answer the question: **Why do People Fail the PMP Exam?**

According to deepfriedbrainpmp.com, only 60-70% of the people who take the PMP Exam pass the first time around! We are happy to report a MUCH higher success rate for PSU's PMP Exam Prep

Students!

Deepfriedbrainpmp.com conducted a random poll of 500 people to find out why so many people fail the exam. Here are the results:

1. They simply did not prepare enough (28%)
2. Their real world project management is different from the PMI (21%)
3. They don't have real-world project management experience (17%)
4. They don't use the right study materials (13%)
5. They don't read the PMBOK Guide Properly (11%)

For those of you thinking of taking the exam, turn the above list into a list of "must haves"!

Thoughts on the PMP Exam

By Balbinder K. Banga, PMP

As we start the New Year of 2010, we have our resolutions, and some goals, for the New Year. For some of you, getting your PMP designation might be one of those goals.

I've been teaching the PMP class at PSU for a few years now and the most exciting and fulfilling part of my job is to hear students' success stories. Whenever I get an email from a student telling me they've successfully obtained their PMP certification, I feel ecstatic. Kind of like Jillian Michaels on the Biggest Loser, the contestants are the ones who have lost the weight but she shared their journey.

I have seen so many people walk into the classroom with gloomy eyes. They are overwhelmed with the notion of having to go through a 450+ page book, chock full of dry, not-so-fun reading and memorization. Most students have been out of school for some time, have full time jobs & families, and other community responsibilities. Studying for the PMP exam comes after all that.

Passing the PMP exam is not rocket science. However, it is a difficult exam that requires a focused study plan, along with significant effort

and commitment. Through our research, experience and feedback from students, we've been able to develop a formula that has a proven success record.

There are three key characteristics in students who have been successful in passing the PMP exam on their first try. First, they worked to develop a deep understanding of the PMBOK content. Second, they possess the ability to answer tricky multiple-choice questions. Third, they have the drive and are strongly motivated to succeed. A combination of these, (along with our PMP prep course at PSU) will greatly enhance your probability of PMP success.

I wish all of you a prosperous New Year! For those who wish to become certified PMPs this year, let's make it happen!