Project Manager Development Paths

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Project Managers Learn by Doing

What do they learn from practice and how?
What influences their development?
How can we improve the progress in their development?

Agenda

1. Objectives & research approach
2. How & why do people become project managers?
3. What characterizes their professional development?
4. How to stimulate professional development?
Polling question 1

How many years of PM dedicated education & training do project managers have, on average?

A. Much less than one year
B. About one year
C. More than one year
Project Managers Learn by Doing …

…What do they learn from practice and how?
…What influences their development?
…How can we support their development?
1 Objectives & research approach

Methods
- **Semi-structured interviews**
- *Personality tests*
- *Brief survey*

Sample
- **Male: 68% <> Female: 32%**
- **Dutch: 77% <> British: 23%**
- **B&C: 48% <> IT: 32% <> Other: 20%**
- **Average age: 43 years**
- **Average work experience: 19 years**
Polling question 2

*What is the dominant vocational interest of project managers?*

A. Social  
B. Creative  
C. Enterprising
2 How & why do people become project managers?

How:
“I drifted into it…” “I just did it…”
“Information about career? No…”

Why:
“Getting to results…” ,“Working with a team”,
“Variety in challenges…”

Enterprising vocational interest: “Something that requires assertiveness, persuasion, leadership”
Polling question 3

What do project managers learn first of all in practice?

A. Planning methods & tools
B. What is expected of the PM
C. Project governance
3 What characterizes their professional development?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First experience taught me ...</th>
<th>What is expected from me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recurring issues were ...</td>
<td>Contradicting views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later experiences taught me ...</td>
<td>What I am really good at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I mastered gradually ...</td>
<td>Bridging &amp; Reflecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My most difficult challenges ...</td>
<td>Responsible without authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which support helped me most ...</td>
<td>Mentoring by line manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How I see my future ...</td>
<td>Coach young PM’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Polling question 4

*What helps project managers *most of all* in their development?*

A. Training in PM techniques & tools  
B. Regular exchange of experiences with colleagues  
C. Regular audits of their projects
4 How to stimulate professional development?

- *Learning experiences occur mostly by coincidence*
- *Support comes mostly from line managers*
- *Most helpful support: sharing experiences with colleagues*
- *Support missing: guided project evaluation*
- *Hindering in development: lack of choice in next assignment + unclear career policy*
Thanks for joining this webinar
Questions?
Final Comments

Publications:

- Monograph is available: **Project Manager Development Paths**
  - **Sponsored Research monographs are available to members for free download.**
  - **Monographs can also be purchased at the PMI Store on PMI.org.**

*This study was funded by the PMI Academic Resources Department. For more information, please visit:*

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