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What Employers Are Asking for in PM Job Postings **By Gareth Byatt, Gary Hamilton, and Jeff Hodgkinson**

One of us (Jeff) immersed himself in research for this article by searching open job postings on major sites in order to obtain a picture of the current job market for project management. We took this approach to best simulate the employment search process. It's a good idea to take a 'project approach', the first step being to check a range of program and project posted positions, locally, nationally, and then globally; this will allow you to gauge current employer needs and requirements.

When professionals are looking for new work, they will usually want to look at salary and compensation on offer before applying for available opportunities. We also presume people will be actively networking, contacting recruiting firms, updating LinkedIn profiles and such, but that's not the scope of this article. Our goal is to provide some commentary for our readers on what is being asked of PM's in the current job markets around the world (at a summary level at least), and to let you compare this with your own knowledge and experience as a PM professional.

In today's challenging economic times (acknowledging that the economies of the US, South America, Europe, Australia and Africa are all experiencing different situations), you can't take anything for granted, including your employment. Whether you work for a private or public company or a government or not-for-profit organisation, circumstances beyond your control can occur at any time, causing layoffs, downsizing, attrition, buy-outs, mergers, etc. If you are self-employed, future opportunities could be limited or non-existent.

Without wishing to paint a 'bleak picture', anyone can be susceptible to job loss, and the best advice we can offer is: 'be prepared'. A great example of this can be seen in the film 'Company Men', which dramatizes the effects that sudden layoffs can have at all levels. Keep in mind that the three of us writing this article share a common philosophy of, 'always be prepared through continuous improvement'. We are all multi-credentialed and actively volunteer in our profession because we gain numerous benefits, including professional contacts.

PM positions that are listed today range from the project coordinator to a Director level. Obviously, salaries vary according to such factors as geography, scope of duties, and the industry in question and, for this article, we choose not to comment on compensation or its variations. A recent article in US News stated that employers are increasingly seeking workers proficient in project management; 90 percent of executives surveyed claimed that project management is either critical or somewhat important to their operations, and that roughly 1.2 million PM jobs will be created per year for the next 10 years. This seems to be good news for those in the PM profession, but there will be tough competition for these positions.

PM job postings generally request some technical background and experience specific to the type of business in which the company operates, which is, of course, to be expected – experience will always be a primary factor in hiring process.

We realize that background and sector experience are important, but here we are focusing on the pure PM requirements. Titles and seniority levels aside, we have seen some common themes and expectations (listed below in no order of importance):

- Provide project updates
- Conduct project meetings
- Manage cross-functional teams
- Coordinate cross-discipline teams
- Manage all stakeholders effectively
- Meet project schedule commitments
- Define and achieve target milestones
- Manage risks and issues in a competent manner
- Be "self-motivated" or a highly motivated project manager
- Know how to lead and influence others without direct authority
- Successfully manage several projects simultaneously or a large program
- Deliver projects on time, meeting performance metrics and project objectives
- Manage resources and deliverables to meet both project and company objectives
- Strong interpersonal skills in addition to exemplary writing, speaking and presentation skills
- Experience working with globally dispersed, multi-cultural, multi-lingual teams preferred

Other requirements will often be included – we have not covered each and every eventuality. It is fair to say that many PM postings today state that ‘a PM type credential or certification is preferred.’ Different industries (construction, IT, etc.) tend to ask for some specific certification or group membership. Certification requirements range from ‘preferred’, ‘a plus’, ‘highly desirable’, or in some cases, ‘required’. In some cases, postings suggest that multiple credentials would be desirable, but this is not always the case. Critical as well is the need for relevant experience (we will come on to this later).

If you are a professional program/project management practitioner, you should perform actions that lead to predictive, positive consequences and outcomes. This not applies to your projects and programs but also in your career. What is exceptional today is expected as the norm tomorrow, and the second that you rest on your laurels is the day you fully retire. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to be personally prepared – as the saying goes, ‘only the paranoid survive.’

We have a few suggestions that may help you plan for the time that you need to be ‘competitive’ in the marketplace. Using the matrix below, objectively score yourself in the appropriate column. You may also find it beneficial to print or send this to a few trusted colleagues and ask them to score you. Use the ratings as a baseline; if there are any areas in which you believe need improvement, set a goal to seek out those experiences.

PM Experience Attributes

Requirement	None	Basic	Working	Advanced	Expert	Role Model
Provide project updates						
Conduct project meetings						
Manage cross-functional teams						
Coordinate cross-disciplined teams						
Manage all stakeholders effectively						
Meet project schedule commitments						
Define and achieve target milestones						

continued

Requirement	None	Basic	Working	Advanced	Expert	Role Model
Manage risks and issues in a competent manner						
Be “self-motivated” or a highly motivated project manager						
Know how to lead and influence others without direct authority						
Successfully manage several projects simultaneously or a large program						
Deliver projects on time, meeting performance metrics and project objectives						
Manage resources and deliverables to meet both project & company objectives						
Strong interpersonal skills with exemplary writing, speaking and presentation skills						
Experience working with globally dispersed, multi-cultural, multi-lingual teams preferred						

Having completed the above matrix (and perhaps after obtaining feedback from those that you know and trust), review the common PM credentials and certifications we found in various job descriptions (links for details are provided). Decide if there are any that you either need or plan to obtain. Note: we have not listed all credentials possible, but have focused on those that are most common.

PM Credentials & Certifications

Credential/ Certification Acronym	Credential or Certification Name & Link	I Have It...	I Need It	I Plan To Get It	I Might Consider	I Am Not In- terested
CAPM	Certified Associate in Project Mgmt (CAPM)®					
PMP	Project Management Professional (PMP)®					
PgMP	Program Management Professional (PgMP)®					
PRINCE2 - P	Prince2 Practitioner Level					
IPMA A	IPMA Level A® - Certified Projects Director					
IPMA B	IPMA Level B® - Certified Program Manager					
IPMA C	IPMA Level C® - Certified Project Manager					
IPMA D	IPMA Level D® - Certified Project Associate					
Six Sigma-G	Six Sigma Green Belt Certification - CSSGB					
Six Sigma-B	Six Sigma Black Belt Certification - CSSBB					
ITIL - I	ITIL Intermediate Level					
ITIL- E	ITIL Expert Certificate					
CPPP	Certified Practicing Project Practitioner (CPPP)					
CPPM	Certified Practicing Project Manager (CPPM)					
CPPD	Certified Practicing Project Director (CPPD)					
PMOC	Project Management Office Certified					
PME	Project Management Expert (PME™)					
CBAP	Certified Business Analysis Professional™ (CBAP®)					
RPP	Registered Project Professional (RPP); APM, UK					

If you have decided to improve your experience attribute level and/or to obtain a new PM-related credential or certification, set a goal for yourself to do both. At a minimum, we suggest either improving one skill (perhaps something you can focus on in your continuing professional development at work) and/or obtaining one additional certification which can actively contribute to your self-improvement every year. In this way, you are steadily making real career improvements, learning new skills, and keeping yourself “relevant”, both for the benefit of your current employment and also as preparation for facing an ever-changing and challenging international job market, should you ever be in such a position.

Critical to the decision to hire is the candidate’s experience to match the job required. Individuals always need to bear in mind that they need to continually demonstrate “on the ground experience” that will entice an employer to select them for interview. It is undoubtedly true that “experience counts”. Things you might want to consider are as follows: What is the toughest assignment you have had to manage so far? How can you prove what you have really achieved to a prospective employer? How will you show that you can perform a prospective job better than anyone else?

In conclusion, as we all know, experience that matches the role is always critical and this requires careful thought when applying for a new role (within the organization you work for or elsewhere). We also think there are some common PM skills attributes and also some appropriate certifications/credentials that are mentioned in job descriptions (recognising that different regional geographies and industries will ask for specific credentials that suit their needs). Regardless of your employment status, if you are a PM practitioner, there is a genuine benefit to be gained by continually improving both your experience and/or obtaining a new PM related credential or certification (ideally, with one new certification/year). Amongst other things, this will help maintain your competitiveness in the job market should you ever need or want to try something new.

Article Author Bios as of June 2012

<p>About The Article Authors, Their Roles Their Plans, And Their Goals</p>	<p>Gareth Byatt, Gary Hamilton, and Jeff Hodgkinson are experienced PMO, program, and project managers who developed a mutual friendship by realising we shared a common passion to help others and share knowledge about PMO, portfolio, program and project management (collectively termed PM below). In February 2010 we decided to collaborate on a three (3) year goal to write 50 PM subject articles for publication in any/all PM subject websites, newsletters, and professional magazines / journals.</p> <p>Readership of the articles is continuously increasing and we are fortunate to have assistance from people around the world who have taken the time to translate our articles into Arabic, Czechoslovakian, French, German, Indonesia, Italian, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian for their readers. Our articles are published on websites in 30 countries including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, India, Jamaica, Jordan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, Turkey, UK, Ukraine and the USA.</p> <p>Our mission with these articles is to help expand good PMO, program, and project management practices by promoting the PM profession, to be a positive influence to the PM Community, be known as eminent influencers of good PM practices, and in earnest hope readers can gain benefit from the advice of their 66+ years of combined experience plus the expertise of co-authors who kindly write with us on particular subjects. As of May, 2012, we have been published over 600 times! Along with writing articles, each also champions a role in the overall writing program collaboration process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Gareth manages all requests for additional guest author collaborations → Gary manages the article development tracking and readership metrics → Jeff manages the article distribution and new readership demographics <p>Each of us can be contacted for advice, coaching, collaboration, and speaking individually as noted in our bios or as a team at: Contactus@pmoracles.com</p>
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	<p>Gareth Byatt has 16+ years of experience in project, program and PMO management in IT and construction for Lend Lease. Gareth has worked in several countries and lives in Sydney, Australia. He can be contacted through LinkedIn. Gareth holds numerous degrees, certifications, and credentials in program and project management as follows: an MBA from one of the world's leading education establishments, a 1st-class undergraduate management degree, and the PMP[®], PgMP[®], PMI-RMP[®], PMI-SP[®] & PRINCE2[®] professional certifications.</p> <p>Gareth is a past Director of the PMI Sydney Chapter, he is currently the APAC Region Director for the PMI's PMO Community of Practice and he chairs several peer networking groups. He has presented on PMOs, portfolio and program and project management at international conferences in the UK, Australia, & Asia including PMI APAC in 2010.</p> <p>Email Gareth: gareth.byatt@gmail.com</p>
	<p>Gary Hamilton has 17+ years of project and program management experience in IT, finance, and human resources and volunteers as the VP of Programs for the PMI East Tennessee chapter. Gary is a 2009 & 2010 Presidents' Volunteer Award recipient for his charitable work with local fire services and professional groups. He has won several internal awards for results achieved from projects and programs he managed as well as being named one of the Business Journal's Top 40 Professionals in 2007.</p> <p>Gary is the 5th person globally to obtain the six PMI credentials PgMP[®], PMP[®], PMI-RMP[®], PMI-SP[®], PMI-ACP[®], and CAPM[®]. In addition to these, Gary holds numerous other degrees and certifications in IT, management, and project management and they include: an advanced MBA degree in finance, Project+, PRINCE2, MSP, ITIL-F, MCTS (SharePoint), MCITP (Project), CSM (Certified Scrum Master), and Six Sigma GB professional certifications.</p> <p>Email Gary: Gary@PMOracles.com or contact him through LinkedIn.</p>
	<p>Jeff Hodgkinson is a 33+ year veteran of Intel Corporation, where he continues on a progressive career as a senior program/project manager. Jeff is an IT@Intel SME and blogs on Intel's Community for IT Professionals for Program/Project Management subjects and interests. He is also the Intel IT PMO PMI Credential Mentor supporting colleagues in pursuit of a new credential. In 2012, he earned an IAA (Intel Achievement Award), Intel's highest recognition, with the team for work in implementing an industry-leading private cloud solution.</p> <p>Jeff received the 2010 PMI (Project Management Institute) Distinguished Contribution Award for his support of the Project Management profession from the Project Management Institute. Jeff was the 2nd place finalist for the 2011 Kerzner Award and was also the 2nd place finalist for the 2009 Kerzner International Project Manager of the Year Award™. He also received the 2011 GPM™ Sustainability Award. He lives in Mesa, Arizona, USA and is a member of Phoenix PMI Chapter. Because of his contributions to helping people achieve their goals, he is the third (3rd) most recommended person on LinkedIn with 590+ recommendations, and is ranked 33rd most networked LinkedIn person.</p> <p>Jeff holds numerous certifications and credentials in program and project management, which are as follows: CAPM[®], CCS, CDT, CPC™, CIPM™, CPPM–Level 10, CDRP, CSM™, CSQE, GPM™, IPMA-B[®], ITIL-F, MPM™, PME™, PMOC, PMP[®], PgMP[®], PMI-RMP[®], PMI-SP[®], PMW, and SSGB. Jeff is an expert at program and project management principles and best practices. Jeff is currently focusing on gaining additional expertise in energy efficiency and home energy savings alternatives.</p> <p>Email Jeff: jghmesa@gmail.com or contact him through LinkedIn and/or Facebook</p>

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