

## Webinar Q&A: Developing Your PM Competencies Roadmap - 5 Steps to Success



### Views from a Global PM Expert - Your Questions Answered!

Following the webinar – “*Developing Your PM Competencies Roadmap – 5 Steps to Success*” Some of you raised some great questions, which our presenter LeRoy Ward has kindly offered to answer.

This webinar discusses how developing an enterprise-wide project management capability is serious business, one that has the potential for significant return on investment (ROI). This presentation also includes the ROI results of some of ESI's existing clients who have attained successful results while mapping their PM competencies with their organisation.

#### About your Topic Expert

LeRoy Ward, Executive Vice President – ESI International, is an industry veteran with more than 30 years project and programme management experience, and has authored numerous articles and publications including Dictionary of Project Management Terms. A dynamic and popular speaker, he presents at industry conferences worldwide.

#### Hear attendee comments :-

*“LeRoy has a lot to offer about Project Management and his approach is very simple and easy to understand. I would enjoy more webinar's by him about his experience.”*

*“Its a great experience thanks a lot.”*

*“Thank you. I really enjoyed LeRoy, the topic and the charts!”*

*“Excellent presentation - motivational/inspirational for PMs/PMOs.”*

*“I would like again to commend LeRoy, he's the most motivating and entertaining speaker I've heard. I am highly interested in doing more webinars or have more exchanges with him. I'm in need of such a professional knowledge and support, toward my PMP exam.”*

**Q:** Who is usually put in charge of ‘PM competence development programmes’ at large organisations (10,000 employees and more) and why? A senior PM within the organisation, a Manager of PMs, or rather a higher executive?

**LeRoy:** In our years of experience the initiative is largely driven by a senior business unit head who is responsible for project management in the organisation. That person typically seeks out the HR professionals in the organisation to plan and execute the project. Ultimately, the Head of HR, in consultation with this key business leader (s) make the decisions.

**Q:** Could we have practical example on 360 degree evaluation?

**LeRoy:** One of our clients based in Sweden used our PM360 assessment instrument for their project managers. Our instrument looks to see what ‘behaviours’ the project managers are manifesting. For example, I may ‘know’ how to build a Work Breakdown Structure, but am I really doing this as part of my project? The instrument will pose a question such as: The project manager develops a WBS for each of his or her projects.....the selection



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of answers will be along the lines of Never, Sometimes, Often, Always... The project manager will answer based on his or her perspective of what he believes he does; and four or five other people who know the PM's work will also answer. In reviewing the ‘individual’ report, we can see how the PM rated himself compared to how others rated him. For example, he may think he's doing it, but if four other people say he is not then there is a significant disconnect. The individual report is helpful for the PM and his managers but a ‘collective’ report of all PMs indicates to us the bigger picture view of what is going on in the organisation. In addition to each of these kinds of questions,

we also ask, how important is it that the PM do these things.....interesting question, because this tells us that someone might be doing something, but others might opine that it is not all that important he should be doing it.

**Q: What about if the HR manager is very weak, not interested in PM?**

**LeRoy:** In cases such as this the need for PM is completely divorced from an interest or lack thereof from an HR executive. If the business has the need to improve PM, and if the PM community is overseen by an executive with significant power and authority in the organisation, the work will ultimately get done. To be sure, it's always better to have an HR exec aligned with the overall direction, but I have never worked in an organisation where an HR executive has more power and influence than an exec running a major operational unit or a P&L organisation.

**Q:I used excel to build a project plan, kept it simple and got buy- in from everyone in the company!**

**LeRoy:** Many folks use Excel and for certain, small and uncomplicated projects, can be an appropriate tool. Once a project reaches a certain size Excel fails miserably simply for the fact it cannot be used to design a network diagram, has very limited reporting capabilities, and is, in essence, a total manual operation. Use it for very small projects, but learn a real PM tool for projects where one has a need to apply more best practices in project management.

**Q: What about the technical competency for PM for solutions?**

**LeRoy:** Great point. Many project managers work in technical areas and in fact have technical backgrounds. Competency development for PMs focuses on just that: project management, not technical management or proficiency. In many organisations there are training requirements and applications in the technical field. Project management is separate and distinct from that. So, for example, I have seen where many large organisations have a separate training and development function for their IT organisations. As one would expect, many of the programmes offered there are technical in nature. However, the organisation will also offer project management training programmes for their IT folks.

**Q: How do we build a culture (mindset) of project management inside a place that has no knowledge about it? how do we show them it is essential?**

**LeRoy:** This can be a long hard journey but can be done with the right group of executives and other key stakeholders leading the effort. The answer is too long for this forum, but I'd very much like to suggest that you read the book 'Leading Change' by John Kotter, Professor Emeritus of Harvard University. It outlines an 8 step change management process that works, is pragmatic, and can be used for any organisational change effort.

**Q: how do I apply for PM 360 or PM Appraise?**

**LeRoy:** Please see answer to Question 2 above. If you need more specific information please contact ESI. We have plenty of examples of application we can share with you.

**Q:It is a common belief that "Competencies come by experience and not through training" Also "Training is a fringe benefit for the employee" - what are your comments?**

**LeRoy:** I don't know if I can say with any authority that it is a common belief that competencies come by experience and not through training. To be sure, our clients want their project managers to be competent, yet, they struggle with the best way to go about it. In our view knowledge and skills are the building blocks of competency. If they are missing, then competency can be difficult, but not completely impossible to achieve. I believe competency is built in multiple steps and in multiple ways. To be sure, there is an enormous emphasis on application of knowledge and skills because that's what competency is...can we actually do the task? In my more than 20 years at ESI I have seen competency taught in the classroom; granted that is not the real world, but it can be done. However, it must be continually applied outside the classroom to raise the level of competency someone has learned.

**Q:Is there any statistic with PMP which identifies the percentage of certification exams sponsored by organisations vis-a-vis self sponsored? I believe the self-sponsored certification is more.?**

**LeRoy:** If you are asking are there organisations who have their own certification programmes for their PMs and do not use the PMP or other formal credentials I would say I have seen a few. However, many of the clients we work with who have their own internal certification programme will often make it a requirement that the individual earn the PMP before moving a particular step in the career path.

**Q: how effective are the training effectiveness measurements, I mean do they really help to quantify results? do they succeed to convince managers of the importance of training? or are they considered another extra cost?**

**LeRoy:** We have done numerous training effectiveness measurements, some as large as for 5,000 participants. Our experience shows that most executives recognise that the information collected is a very good indicator of ROI and view it more as an 'order of magnitude' rather than any absolute number. We always recommend to our clients that they view the data as 'evidence' of effectiveness (or not) rather than absolute 'proof.' Proof is a much harder thing to achieve, and quite frankly does not need to be the standard. Executives seem to be willing to pay for such assessments if they know it will be done by a reputable group who will provide honest results.

**Q: How do you deal with senior PMs who do not wish to share skills or knowledge?**

**LeRoy:** There are two routes one can take in this instance. One can appeal to the ‘human’ side of this type of person (if, indeed they have a human side). One can approach them and say something such as “Nigel, I’m really struggling with this project. I know you’ve done this many times before, and I could really use your help or guidance. If I don’t get this right, I’m going to find myself in a terrible position with respect to my boss.” If Nigel has an ounce of humanity in him he should help you. If his answer is something like “They don’t pay me to teach grunts like you Project Management. I learned on my own and so should you,” then it’s time to escalate the issue to the manager. Organisations in today’s world simply should be ensuring that knowledge management and experience should be shared among employees, either formally or informally.

**Q: How important is to have a Project Management career ladder/path in order to link it to PM development efforts?**

**LeRoy:** A career path is really an excellent way to link competencies to experience and levels within an organisation. People can see themselves easily in the framework and where they need to go to get ahead, to learn more, and to gain more experience. However, not all organisations are sufficiently large to put into place such a framework because it takes time and has to go through HR to be approved. That said, it is not altogether necessary. If one understands the different types of projects in the organisations, they will be able to associate what level of competency will be required for each category and work to become proficient in those areas.

**Q: I work in an education organisation, heading the professional development. I actually believe that teachers should be project managers; it is an essential skill they would need to prepare courses as small projects. Where do I start to scale down the PMP’s skills competency framework to fit their needs?**

**LeRoy:** We do this all the time with smaller clients. Our view is quite simple in concept. In order to manage a project, regardless of its size there are only a handful of deliverables that need to be produced. The larger the project the more deliverables, but the following are the essentials:

- Project Charter
- Project Requirements
- Work Breakdown Structure
- Network diagram (time)
- Cost estimate
- Risk Management Plan
- Communications Plan
- Good reporting requirements

With the above in place you’re well on your way to managing the kinds of projects your group probably engages in.

**Q: In your experience, how many competencies constitute the minimum for a successful PM? Can you list the most important ones?**

**LeRoy:** There is no set number, and different models have differing perspectives on the approach. We often find that when an organisation identifies its own, they tend to go overboard and identify too many. We align fairly well with the PMI competency standards so I would suggest you view their approach and you would have an understanding of how we think about the topic.

**For more information, call +44 (0)20 7017 7100 or email [enquiry@esi-intl.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@esi-intl.co.uk) or visit [www.esi-intl.co.uk](http://www.esi-intl.co.uk)**