

## **The Importance of Project Managers to Be Formally Trained and Certified in Project Management to Be Competent <sup>1</sup>**

**Michael Marshall, PhD**

Throughout my 40+ years in the real business world advancing up through all levels into senior leadership and later in life with interactions with project managers, I have met many very knowledgeable and competent project managers, but I have also met incompetent project managers.

I have always inquired about all of them individually about their actual level of competence, effectiveness and how and where they acquired the competence and where they did Not gain the needed competence.

### **In all cases, the competent project managers had several things in common**

1. They had received formal specialized training and certifications in project management
2. They seek out progressively, every few years or yearly , to retrain in additional formal project management programs and gain more competence & acquire current certifications
3. They are personally driven to keep their competence at the leading edge and take great personal pride in such but Not egotistical and a Not a 'know it all mentality'
4. They are personally self-critical and constantly self-evaluating their competence & effectiveness level
5. They actively seek out ideas and suggestions from others to consider and incorporate into their project management work, projects, and responsibilities
6. They were always on the lookout for anything that could affect their projects and responsibilities' and ready to improve and adjust for anything and at any time
7. They were active in project management associations and groups to acquire new ideas, advancements and constantly improving competency
8. They were always reading project management books, magazines, journals, and news to gain more competency and keep current with all

### **In cases of incompetent project managers, these individuals had several things in common.**

1. The Opposite of, all of the above

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Having a college or university degree did not seem to be an important factor in competency for any of the project managers.

Unfortunately, many colleges and universities do not incorporate project management as a Mandatory subject or class and often, classes do not even include this subject into their classes.

Project management competency applies to most subjects and disciplines.

This is a failure of colleges and universities, and the teachers and professors.

When I teach leadership, sales, marketing, and management classes, I always include project management into my classes as a core part, to try to insure some competency in this.

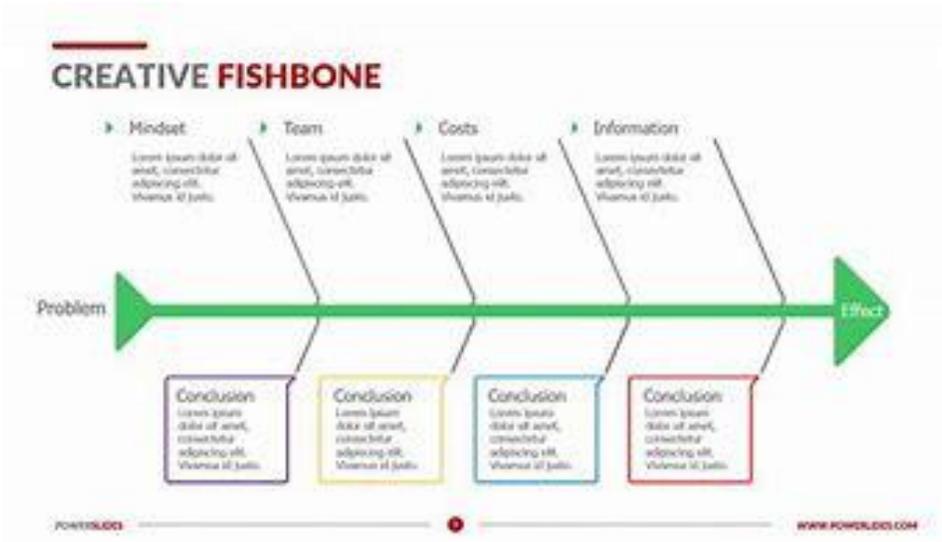
Formal research projects and actual applications of competencies in project management are required in my classes that I teach.

Classes that I teach are on both MBA graduate degree and bachelor degrees undergrad levels.

I often utilize what is sometime called the fish bone charts to teach project management that includes sequential thinking with critical assignments and timeline.

Students can easily learn from this.





Per internet online definition;

‘Sequential reasoning refers to a person’s ability to mentally process and organize information.

A person with high sequential reasoning skills can automatically shuffle and organize large amounts of information. Because these people can logically add, sort, store and retrieve information easily, they often don’t feel the need to write down ideas or have their physical surroundings organized in a structured way.’

Many people struggle with sequential thinking which is needed for project management. This needs to be trained.

Project management requires all to be written in an organized method listing all actions needed by who and at what time and in what sequence to assure completion successfully in a scheduled timely manner.

This skill and competence need formal training and continual training with certifications. In the classes that I teach, we thoroughly discuss the above 8 things of characteristics of competent project managers and how project management competency is needed in many jobs and positions, Not just the project manager position.

Recently, I purchased a house under construction that was several months overdue from completing on time. I met with the project manager assigned to the new houses going in the specific subdivision and community.

They were quiet, did not talk much, did not discuss anything and could Not have a conversation on any of my questions and concerns.

When I visited the construction site every two weeks, I found problems and mistakes that should have been caught and fixed two to three weeks ago. These mistakes and corrections needed now created more problems and delays. When I brought these things to the project managers attention, the individual would come up with excuses and say the problems are known and now being conserved how to fix and correct.

Every two weeks, we would have a 10-minute conference telephone call to review what has been done with the house construction and excavations. Sometimes the project manager would say, 'nothing has been able to get done' and other times they mentioned one or two things accomplished.

The very next day, I would drive several hours to look at the house and each time I would find many things actually done, far more than the project manager was aware of but often had several mistakes in workmanship and problems. These things I brought to the project managers attention. These things should have been uncovered and found daily by the project manager and maybe even prevented if the project manager was onsite reviewing and inspecting all, daily. Materials and supplies were often delayed with most of the time due to not being ordered early enough for longer lead times. Workers doing the work often were not available due to not being put on their work scheduled early enough. Obviously, you know that this project was not going well, had problems that could have been avoided, completion was being delayed and the project manager was struggling with the project responsibilities. All of this made them nervous, defensive, frustrated and stressful, causing more problems.

After two months of me reviewing all with the project manager, they did improve and they became positive seeing accomplishments and success; but it is a shame that my efforts and attention were needed to help train the project manager on such fundamentals.

I found out from others, that this project manager recently graduated from a top-level well-known university nearby, with a master's degree in civil engineering and they did their internship with this builder and construction company. At this university tuition for undergrad bachelor degrees cost \$14,000/year and \$56,000 for four years to complete it. Master's degrees grad level cost \$13,000/year and \$26,000 for 2 years to complete it.

I went online with this university to look at their program and the courses taught in this program and found that the project management course was an Optional class, Not a Mandatory class.

I wonder how effective the internship was, did this individual take the project management class at the university, and will this builder construction company send this individual to formal project management training and certification.

Project Management expertise and competency is needed in all businesses, occupations, positions, subjects, products, services, markets, industries and areas.

Leadership and management need to support and insist on continual training and certifications in project management for their project managers and all personnel and staff that have project management responsibilities.

In today's business world, there are many good professional online programs and trainings available, even.

Conscientious project managers and others who do some project management as part of their job responsibilities, need to seek out formal continual training and certifications in project management and personally do everything possible to expand their competency, continually.

## About the Author



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**Michael Marshall** has over 40 years of business experience to senior leadership levels and advisory/consulting in many markets and industries, national and global, with responsibilities in sales management, marketing and business development along with a PhD in business, MBA and degrees in psychology and social human behavior before teaching internationally at university level (China, Korea, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, United States) and US Embassy. He has over 58 professional business certifications to keep highly competent. Michael continually seeks out knowledge with additional education, trainings, research, and experience, to keep on the leading edge of business effectiveness and business development. He has over 48 international publishing's on many business and business development subjects.

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