Why Vets Should Do These 4 Things to Break into Project Management!

The global demand for project managers is exploding! For example, by 2020, the US will have 6.2 million project management jobs. In Canada, they’ll have 582, 366. And, they’re not alone in this huge need. Brazil is projected to need more than 1.3 million project management roles by 2020, and Germany? 1.6 million. Additionally, China, Australia, and Japan will need 25 million, 375,000, and 2.6 million jobs respectively. This means demand outstrips supply by far.

In July 2013, project manager was the number one listed open position in US healthcare IT2. Additionally, in Canada, senior project manager “was the most commonly advertised senior-level job title across all industries”. Yes, that said all industries. And, in the UK, project managers are enjoying lower unemployment. The conclusion is clear brothers and sisters; if you have the knowledge, skills, and experience, the education, and a project management certification, and you want a civilian-sector project management job, you will probably have one.

And, you will be well paid if you are one!

According to the Project Management Institute’s (PMI) eighth global salary survey in 2014, the average project manager salary across the top 10 highest paying countries is $104,434 USD. In the US, the median base annual salary is $105,0003. And, even if you’ve only ‘worked’ in project management for less than ten years, you still bring home an average annual salary of $97,000! Additionally, these salary numbers increase substantially if you hold a project management certificate. In my humble opinion, that’s well paid, especially considering current military pay rates.

Plus, you already have the experience and skill sets to be one!

The trick is to translate all of your ‘operational’ experience into ‘project’ experience. How can the two be so similar? It is a widely accepted definition that a project istemporary and delivers results unique to it. Using that definition then, a change of command ceremony, an equipment overhaul/update effort, conducting a maneuver, leading a mission in any capacity; it’s all project work. If you were involved at all in any of the thinking, planning, performance, controlling, or closing (think After Action Review here), you were conducting project work! It’s easy to translate your management of the project system: the scope (what we’re doing); the schedule (by when); the cost (how much funding will we need and how much do we have); and the quality (is the enemy removed from the battlefield, is our gear par, are we at strength), and your leadership of the project team (your unit(s) doing the work) using a standard tool, such as the PMI’s Project Management Professional (PMP) exam application. And, we’re used to moving frequently, and globally.

For a great example of a Veteran who made a successful transition to project management, just check out the profile of Tim Dalhouse LinkedIn. Tim is a retired U.S. Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant who’s now a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and Master Training Specialist at [PMProLearn](http://www.pmprolearn.com/). He actively helps Veterans make this transition.

Now, we just need to put it all into a ‘project management package’.

Today’s civilian hiring managers and their Human Resources partners are looking for project management experience (check), education (check, we’ll discuss in a minute if not), and certification (we’ll discuss in a minute). Developing yourself towards this professional development model of experience, education, and certification, produces a well-rounded project manager. So, we need to document each area. Here are the four steps you can take to successfully transition to a civilian project manager:

Step 1: Answer the following questions. If your answers are all yes, proceed to step 2.

1. Do you like working with others more than working alone?
2. Are you able to communicate well and delegate well?
3. Are you truthful and courageous, even when a dress-down is possible?
4. Do you enjoy planning and thinking critically?
5. Are you competitive?

Step 2: If you’ve answered all questions in Step 1 with Yes:

1. Download PMI’s PMP Handbook from URL<http://www.pmi.org/Certification/~/media/PDF/Certifications/pdc_pmphandbook.ashx>.
2. And the PMP Application Form from URL<http://www.pmi.org/Certification/~/media/PDF/Certifications/PMP%20Application%20Form.ashx>and complete them, then submit them.

(Please note: I provide by-appointment phone consults to help you with translating your ‘operational’ experience into project experience on the application as a complimentary service to Veterans. Please Email me atdoctorwright2012@yahoo.com to schedule yours today).

Step 3: Join PMI global and your local PMI chapter while at the PMI Web Site to receive a price discount on the testing fee and the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) purchase price; and to join a new professional network. After all, you’ve just left yours right, we’ll need to replace our support and camaraderie.

Step 4: Prepare to take the PMP exam while you wait for your exam date to arrive. There are many great self-study programs out there. The one I am most familiar with because I used it, is Velociteach’s, and yes, I did pass my PMP exam on the first try, their program’s title. Additionally, there are many fantastic, expert-run PMP prep ‘boot camps’ out there. The advantage of a PMP prep boot camp is that the curriculum usually fulfills PMI’s educational component (check right). The boot camp I am partial to is PMProLearn at <http://www.pmprolearn.com/>, operated by the Veteran I mentioned earlier in this post, Tim Dalhouse. Tim’s course fulfills the education requirement, and he offers a generous Veteran’s discount, a year-long 100% money back guarantee, and a great friend referral program.

So, my transitioning Veteran brother or sister, you’ve already developed the experience and skills you need to be successful as a project manager; you have already done the job! Let me help you document the experience and education you’ll need to prepare to take your place in a highly visible, organization critical, exciting project management role. You’ve earned it.

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