

# PMP Certificate & Experience – No Dichotomy but Synergy

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In a recent article published on LinkedIn, *“The PMP - How it Ruined Project Management”*, by Stuart Hamilton, the PMP certification has been described as a harmful factor on the system for evaluating personnel qualification.

The article presents many truths concerning the lack of value that companies confer to experience and qualification and the ever-growing burden of documentation procedures. These facts have been acknowledged by the more than 26,000 “likes” recorded by the article on LinkedIn platform.

Nevertheless, the association of the PMP certification with the lack of appreciation for high qualifications is misleading. It should be noted that a PMP certification from the Project Management Institute (PMI) is only granted after having documented at least 7,500 hours leading and directing projects and 35 hours of project management education. Thus, PMP certified project managers are not inexperienced.

A PMP certificate on its own, just as learned terminology with no practical background may bring little value. Likewise, experience honed in long-term projects as a technical expert does not necessarily make of everyone a good project manager (PM). A certification brings value by sharing a standard terminology for the coordination of activities across different organizations and beyond the border, apart from other advantages. This coordination of activities requires excellent communication, organizational, and leadership skills that are not always held by the experts in the matter.

I would like to establish a parallelism between this topic and software development. There are many people stepping in software endeavors without any certification, and many of them are highly qualified and successful without holding any professional title. However, it will be nonsense to state that a certification granted to a professional software developer endangers software development by favoring unqualified personnel in a selection process.

Companies may enable inexperienced people to step in an area of knowledge based on personnel certifications rather than on their particular qualification due to cost constraints or simple function requirements. That does not add or withdraw value to a professional certification. It just depicts inadequate personnel selection procedures far beyond the held titles in case the person required further hands-on experience that was missing. Thus, a certification in any area of knowledge does not *per se* guarantee that the accredited person has the required skills for any jobs in that area. There are projects that require higher experience and multidisciplinary knowledge.

The optimal scenario is to have both, PM skills and experience at least in the main area of knowledge for the relevant project. Nonetheless, PMs should coordinate multidisciplinary teams and could hardly be an expert in all the involved areas of knowledge. That is a very relevant aspect to take in account when you build the project team.

Therefore, PMP certification is not threatening PM professionalism or expertise as no other type of professional certificate would do. Experience enhances PMP competence as well as PMP certifications optimize standardization. This is no dichotomy but synergy.

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