
**Secrets of Passing The Project
Management Professional (PMP®)
Certification Exam The First Time**
Based On PMBOK 4th Edition

Dr. Keith Mathis

**The Mathis Group, Inc.
106 Lakeview Woods
Eureka, MO 63025
1-800-224-3731
www.pmexpertlive.com
www.themathisgroup.com**

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What Is The PMP® Certification?

The PMP® certification is an international certification under the guidance of The Project Management Institute (PMI®). It is based on an intensive test after meeting a stringent guideline of 4,500 hours of project management experience if you have a college degree and 7,500 hours if you do not.

This credential is designed to allow project managers the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise and understanding of project methodology and processes through a comprehensive international test. The PMP® (Project Management Professional) is a certification obtained throughout the world as a respected standard in project management.

The PMP® certification verifies that a project manager has demonstrated comprehensive study and understanding the various theories and models of project management and how they can be applied within any organization or industry. By using these theories and models, project managers reduce the possibility the project will fail, be hindered, or run over budget and schedule.

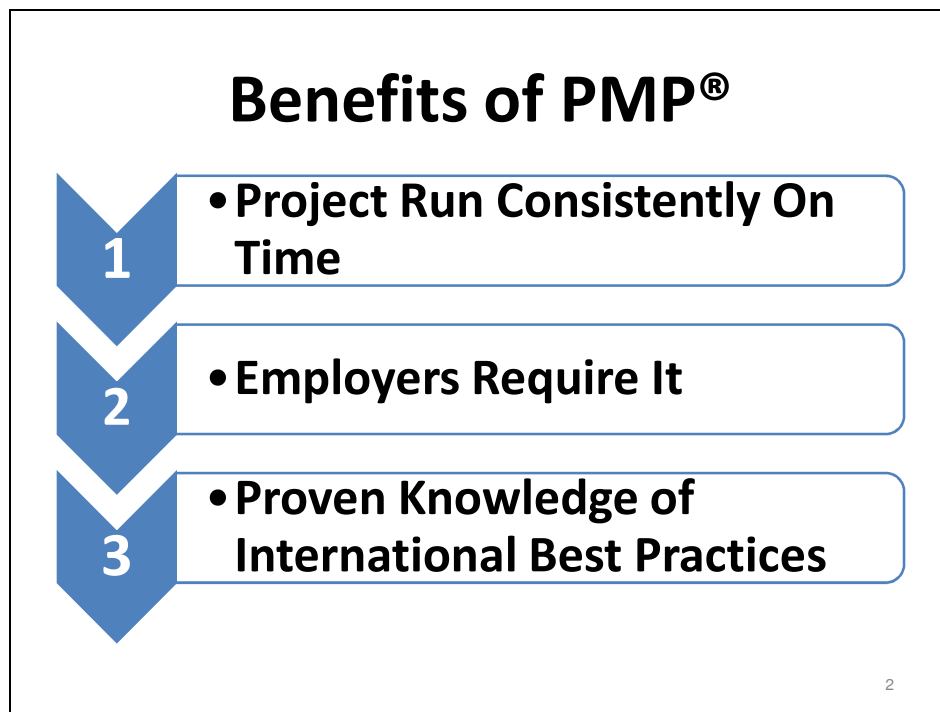
Today, many project managers are just now hearing of the PMP® certification; however, it is the number one credential in North America and is in great demand by all industries. If you are considering consulting or if you want to run government projects, this certification will be the standard demanded by all industries and organizations.

This credential does not guarantee that a project will be 100% successful, but it does demonstrate that an individual understands all the various techniques and international best practices that can be used to run a project and reduce its potential risk of failure.

The PMP® certification uses the *PMBOK® (Project Management Body of Knowledge 4th Edition)* as their standard in best practices of running projects. PMI® is the governing body overseeing the certification and is the driving force for aligning these processes and models to be more standard and efficient than ever before.

What Are The Benefits of Possessing The PMP® Certification?

The benefits of possessing the PMP® certification can range internally, externally, and monetarily for each participant.



1. Projects run consistently on time and budget

Projects which run late and over budget are frustrating to everyone involved. When individuals are taught project management best practices, they have expert knowledge in ways to get a project back on track or in preventing problems from occurring in the first place.

Project management education helps everyone involved in the project—from top management to the front line employee who is working on a project. Methodology like *PMBOK*® allows everyone to know exactly what should be happening in the project and creates a joint effort in pushing the project forward.

For these reasons it is important for everyone to be trained and understand project management methods.

2. Employers who require their employees to possess this credential

It is common to find employers stating they prefer or require a PMP® certified project manager to apply for a job opening. This credential is still optional for

some positions; however, within the next three years you will discover that many of these same jobs will mandate that the project manager be PMP® certified. Many government agencies have been given 12 months to have all project managers PMP® certified.

This certification can also influence the income potential. Project managers who have their PMP® are consistently being offered more money than those who are running projects with experience alone. In one of our seminars, a student told us he was applying for a job and was waiting to hear from the company. During one of our breaks he received a call telling him he was hired. In the conversation, the new employer happened to ask what kind of training he was attending. When he was told it was for the PMP® boot camp, the employer informed the man that his salary would be raised \$3,000 if he passed the PMP®. Just a few weeks ago, one of our clients was pleased to tell me that he had been offered a \$30,000 raise to come to work for another organization after only five weeks of possessing his PMP®. These examples show the monetary value of possessing this credential, however, in no way guarantees that a person will receive more money or get a raise. In some cases, your employer will not pay for the PMP® nor will they give you a raise.

3. Proven International Best Practices

The final benefits for the PMP® certification is that the participant knows they have measured up and passed an international certification exam. The PMP® certification is one of the hardest tests you will experience. It is a comprehensive test focusing on the theories and models of project management, and it shows that you have been able to demonstrate yourself to be successful in a testing environment. Knowing you have passed a comprehensive test and certified internationally can boost your confidence. It shows that you understand what should be taking place on a project to make it successful and to prevent crisis.

No one can guarantee every project will be on time and budget. However, having the PMP® proves that you have been exposed to the best practices which have benefited projects internationally. These best practices have been used in every type of industry and project with great amounts of feedback. In every case, projects are consistently completed closer to the original deadline with the most solid documentation available.

What Are The Requirements For The PMP® Certification?

The following chart shows the educational requirements, the levels of project management experience, and the project management education needed to qualify for this credential.

When preparing for eligibility, it is important to make sure that you document verifiable hours due to the possibility of an audit. It is PMI®'s policy to conduct random audits to verify the information claimed by applicants.

Full Name	Project Management Professional
Project Role	Leads and directs project teams
Eligibility Requirements	High school diploma/global equivalent 5 years project management experience 35 hours project management education OR Bachelor's degree/global equivalent 3 years project management experience 35 hours project management education
Steps to Obtaining Credential	application process + multiple-choice exam
Exam Information	4 hours; 200 questions
Fees	US\$405 PMI member (US\$555 non-member)
Credential Maintenance Cycles and Requirements	3 years; 60 PDUs

(PMBOK®, 4th Edition)

The following flowchart will walk you through everything that should take place in preparation of the PMP® certification.

One of the first things you should do is download the *PMP® Credential Handbook* from www.PMI.org. This book will give detailed information on the PMP® process and how to document your hours and experience.

It is now time to begin collecting data on all projects from the past three to six years. In addition, you will need to document your exact roles, responsibilities, and number of hours you served in each of the five process groups for the given project. This information will be needed when you fill out your electronic documentation. Collecting all of this ahead of time will speed up the process and give you a more detailed and complete history of experience and education for submittal.

Calculate your project hours to make sure you have the minimum number needed to qualify for the credential. It is also recommended that you go back through your notes and verify the data you will be submitting.

Sample Chart for Collection of Project Data

Project Name	Dates of Project	Initiating	Planning	Execution	Monitoring and Control	Closeout

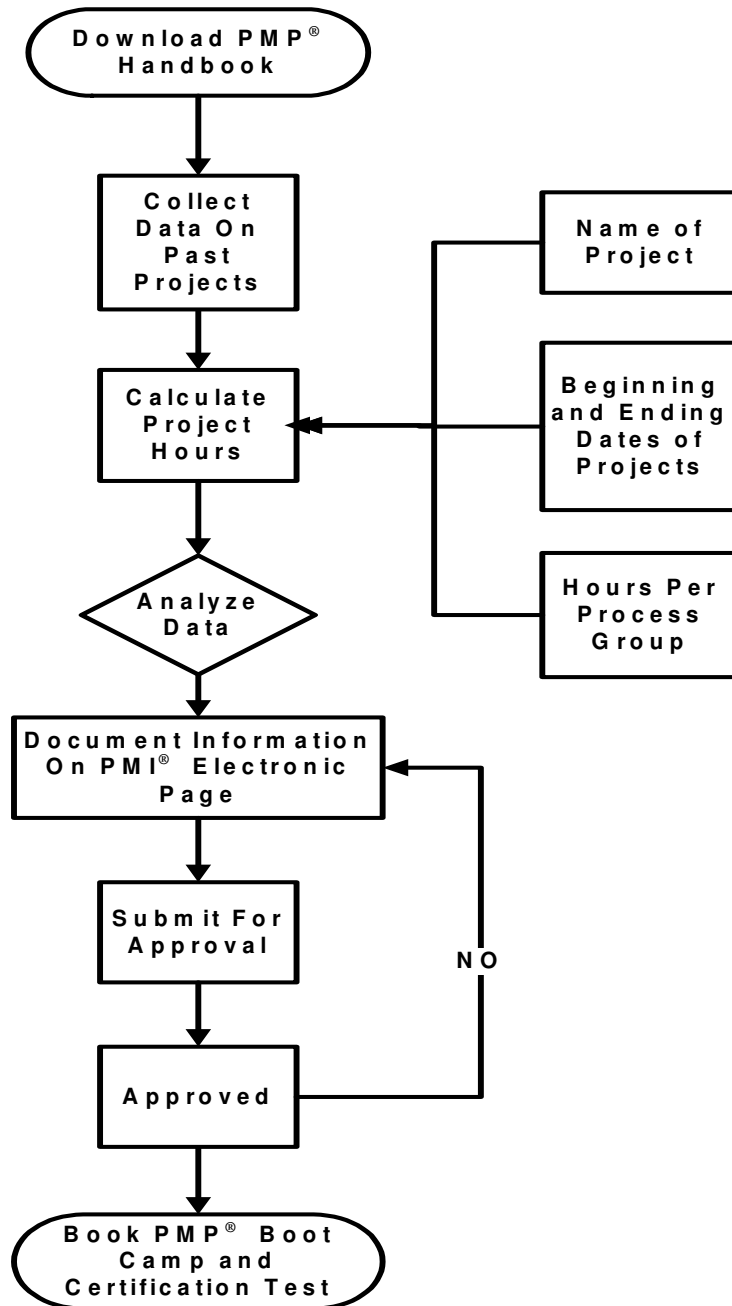
Take all the information you have collected and document it on the electronic pages provided to you by PMI®. This is a tedious process, so it is important to make sure that you have all your records accurate and fully documented prior to submission. Oftentimes, people overlook their calculations and try to submit two projects for the same dates and time periods. This needs to be watched closely to prevent any type of hesitancy on PMI®'s behalf to validate these hours.

Once you have completed the electronic documentation, submit everything to PMI® for evaluation and feedback. This normally takes five to seven days; however, there are times when PMI® may ask for additional information or clarification. When this happens, it advantageous to make sure you gather requested information as fast as possible so as not to delay the approval process.

Once you have been approved to take the PMP® certification test you will be given a link to the testing sites. You will pay Project Management Institute for the test prior to contacting the site. Normally, there is more than one testing site in a

city; however, it has been reported by many participants that they have struggled in gaining access to take the test as quickly as they would like. If you have completed a PMP® prep course, which will be discussed later, it is to your advantage to take the test as soon as possible. In most cases, the longer the participants wait to take their test after a PMP® Exam Prep boot camp or an intensive study the more questions they have a tendency to miss, which reduces the chances of passing the PMP®.

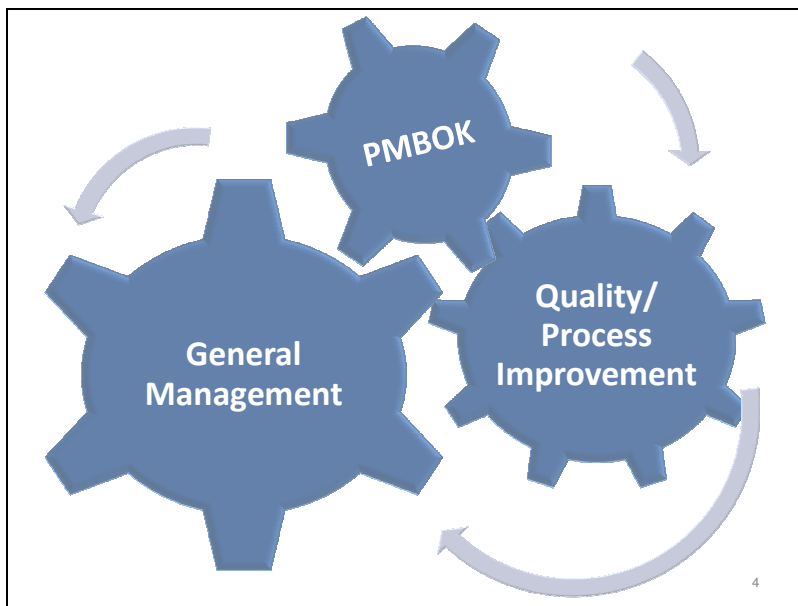
Passing The P M P



What Is The PMP® Certification Test Like?

Your PMP® certification test will cost \$405.00 if you are a PMI® member and \$525.00 if you are not. You will actually save \$25.00 by joining PMI® and then signing up for the test. All fees for the PMP® certification will be paid to PMI® and they will notify you of your approval and give you a link of approved testing sites in your area.

The PMP® certification test consists of 200 multiple-choice questions in a timed atmosphere of four hours. The electronic system will grade only 175 questions and will discard 25 pre-selected questions. The test focuses on *PMBOK*® as its foundational information for about 80% of its content. The other 20% is based upon areas such as quality, process improvement, and general management of people and teams.



The certification test is taken at a testing site in your local community. This type of test can be very intimidating if you have not taken a test in this environment. Many individuals are nervous due to the atmosphere and to the amount of pressure to pass this test the first time. Most sites will have numerous security cameras focused on you to prevent any chance of cheating. Each individual is given a pencil, two pieces of paper, and a calculator. Most participants are asked to empty their pockets and lock all items up in a locker until the end of the four-hour test. The test itself is computerized, and you are expected to have a no-talking environment. You also normally have 15 minutes to become comfortable with the system and this time does not count against you.

Test questions may be short or as long as half a page. Most tests have scenario questions in which you are asked to make a decision as if you are a project manager. The challenge in a scenario question is that you have a limited amount of information and, in most cases, are asked to draw a conclusion based on what you would do. Almost every scenario question has two good answers, and you must analyze which is the best answer for this question based upon the *PMBOK*[®] philosophy.

The system is set up to only score 175 of the 200 questions—the other 25 questions are test questions being considered for future test banks or just junk questions. You must score at least 61% in order to pass the certification. Do not let this low percentage give you a false impression on this test. Many project managers with years of experience have failed the test taking the low percentage for granted. You must know more than project management; you must know the *PMBOK*[®] way of life.

The following chart is a general rule of thumb on the number of questions which will come out of each section. However, remember that PMI[®] changes things periodically and these figures are only used to give you an idea of the number of questions.

Process Group	Potential Number of Questions
Initiating	19 questions
Planning	40 questions
Executing	47 questions
Monitoring and Controlling	37 questions
Closing	16 questions
Professional and Social Responsibility	16 questions

Make sure the materials you are using to prepare for the certification are current and in line with the PMP[®] exam. Be very careful with free tests downloaded from the internet. Some sites are still using testing material which is over 6 years old. Because the exam and *PMBOK*[®] are updated every few years, it is imperative that the material you are using is updated as well. We have seen participants come in with the wrong edition of *PMBOK*[®], which actually confuses them and increases their chances of failing the test due to wrong preparation. The current PMP[®] Exam is over *PMBOK 4th Edition as of July 1, 2009*

Lastly, you will find out whether or not you pass the exam before leaving the testing site. This allows you the excitement of knowing that the work is behind you or the opportunity to come up with a plan for when you will retake the test. You can only take the test three times unsuccessfully, and then you are required to wait 12 months before retaking the test.

10 Avoidable Reasons Why People Fail

Many people do not want to hear that they might fail a certification such as this, but it happens every day. The reasons below will give you an idea of what must be overcome in order to pass the PMP® certification.

1. Participants did not take the test seriously

The PMP® certification is extremely hard and difficult. Most participants consider it to be one of the hardest tests they have ever taken. Even though this is emphasized in boot camps, there are always those individuals who think that this must be an overstatement of the test. Make sure you do adequate preparation before taking the PMP® certification test.

2. Organizations do not use PMI® processes in real life

Using *PMBOK*® and PMI® processes at your organization gives you an advantage in understanding how the process is integrated and how projects should run effectively. When organizations follow *PMBOK*® processes, you already have 20 to 30% of the knowledge needed to answer many of the questions which will be on the test.

This does not mean that a person cannot learn those processes if their organization is not using them daily. We have individuals in training every day who are exposed to PMI® processes for the first time, and they have successfully completed and passed their certification on the first attempt. What this does mean is that an individual must take the necessary time and effort to understand and become an expert in the PMI® processes and the *PMBOK*® guide.

3. Inadequate preparation

Participants who have been extremely fortunate in academic circles will struggle with the PMP® certification. Many will attempt to take the test the first time with the assumption that they will be able to distinguish the correct answer since it is a multiple-choice test. What they fail to understand is that this multiple-choice test normally has two possible answers. PMI® desires for their certified project managers to know the difference in those answers and pick the better of the two. Do not expect to find questions and answers that you can distinguish the proper response, unless you have conducted deep preparation and analysis of the PMI® processes and the *PMBOK*® guide.

4. Not reading the question in detail or understanding what is being asked

Taking a multiple-choice test is somewhat different than other testing methods. This test will give you a scenario and ask for a response. This means that each participant must fully understand exactly what is being asked of them prior to responding. One of the best ways to handle this is to read the question three

times prior to answering it. Each time ask yourself, “What do they want to know?” Do not make assumptions or speed through the questions.

This is extremely important and difficult due to some questions being quite long. As you begin reading these large scenario questions, it is important for you to not get sidetracked with all the information and data that has been thrown in. One of the best suggestions for scenario questions is to read the question first. When you read the question prior to the scenario, you will look for the most important data that is going to fulfill the answer in a shorter period of time. With a little practice, this will become extremely easy for you prior to test day.

5. Not prepared for the testing environment

The testing environment surrounding the certification can be very intimidating to those who have not attempted other certifications. The testing site will have 15 to 20 people taking a test at the same time. You will sign in and show identification. While you take the test, video cameras are watching your every move. If you are not prepared for this it can be extremely daunting. Some participants have even said they felt so much pressure due to the environment that they got nervous and missed several questions.

6. Participants fail to be in the test taking mindset

Being prepared for the test and knowing the material is extremely important. In addition, each participant needs to be primed and ready for an intense experience during the certification test. This means that you will have already studied the needed material. You have used flashcards, practice tests and conducted all reading. You must walk in with a positive mindset that you can pass this test and are planning on giving 110% toward that goal. Unless a participant walks in thinking that they can pass the test and they have done proper preparation, this will be a wasted effort.

Participants must be prepared to change from topic to topic in a short period of time, as well as moving from definitions to applying the material to a certain situation. The test will not ask straightforward questions, but it desires you to apply the PMI® processes and the *PMBOK*® in various situations.

7. Participants did not create a progressive study plan

To prepare for the PMP® certification, it requires making sure you not only study but that you study the correct material. Most individuals have indicated that a study plan connected to various topics and definitions is helpful. In addition, the study plan should include practice tests that are similar to the PMP® certification exam. Unless you are willing to include tests in association with the studying, it is unlikely you will be fully prepared on test day.

When taking practice tests, some individuals verbalize that they are shooting for the 61% need to pass the PMP® test. Let me remind you that the conditions during your study time and the conditions for the test at the testing site will be

vastly different. You will be more nervous and have more anxiety on test day. You should be scoring in the range of 85% or higher on practice tests. If you are scoring 60 to 70% on the practice tests, you are not ready to take the PMP® certification. When an individual scores 85% or higher on all practice tests, assuming those tests have the correct processes, information, and data that aligns with the current *PMBOK*®, he or she will not be too surprised with anything that comes out on the certification test.

A progressive study plan will allow you to learn the five process groups and be able to recall each of them, which is imperative for this level of a test. Participants must be able to recall all of this information, as well as all knowledge areas, to have any chance of passing the PMP® certification.

8. Participants study the wrong material

There is a great deal of material floating around about how to pass the PMP® certification. Some websites will give you 200 questions for free and numerous handouts to assist you in your study preparation. The only problem is that some of that material is absolutely wrong. Some questions, which are still on the websites, are from older versions of *PMBOK*®. In addition, some of the so-called advice is contrary to what PMI® tells you about the certification itself.

9. Waiting too long between the boot camp and taking the test

One of the best things you can do is to be ready to take the exam as soon as possible after completing a boot camp. This increases your possibility of passing. However, there are many boot camps which encourage you to take 30 days to study. This makes no sense. If a boot camp is created to prepare people for the PMP® certification, then they need to be ready to take the test soon afterwards.

10. Allowing anxiety and nervousness to control and dominate during the test

It is understandable for you to be nervous when taking an international certification test. This is common to everyone; however, it is important not to allow your nerves and anxiety to become uncontrollable during the test. While taking the test, some will be nervous at their stomach throughout the four hour endeavor. You must be able to control yourself and your nerves or you will not be able to think correctly and answer the questions accordingly.

Becoming extremely depressed and frustrated due to questions you do not know may cause you to immediately change your answer. Our suggestion is to mark those questions for review and return to them later after the frustration has passed.

12 Test Taking Strategies

Test taking strategies vary depending on the individual and how much experience and exposure he or she has to standardized tests. The PMP® certification is an international test, which can be intimidating due to its formality and its security.

The following strategies can be used to assist you in obtaining a higher percentage when taking the certification test.

Strategy #1 - Make sure you have sufficient time to study so that you are well prepared for the test.

Studying for the PMP® certification and being fully prepared prior to taking the test is of most importance. This certification test should not be taken lightly with the idea that you can pull answers off the top of your head. This test requires current information from the *PMBOK*® fourth edition. If you have studied other *PMBOK*® editions, understand that definitions and processes have been updated and changed. Studying previous editions might actually cause you to miss many questions on the test. The questions are phrased so the novice project managers and those with limited knowledge of *PMBOK*® will stand out.

If you are not going to attend a prep course, it is highly recommended that you spend several weeks preparing for the PMP® certification and get familiar with the processes, terms, and all knowledge areas. You must be able to recall *PMBOK*® information instantly or you are not ready for the test. Later in this report you will be given specific focus areas for detailed preparation.

Strategy #2 - Eat lightly before the test. This will give you energy and help you focus.

Eat a light snack prior to entering the testing site. The PMP® test is estimated to take four hours, and many individuals will notice a drop in their blood sugar during that time. You are not able to bring food or drink into the testing area. Therefore, it is very important that you are not preoccupied with hunger and are able to think clearly. One word of caution about eating prior to the test—make sure it is a snack-sized portion and not a large, heavy meal. After eating a heavy meal, you have a tendency to become sleepy and sluggish which will reduce your chances of passing.

Strategy #3 - Prior to beginning the test, transfer all formulas and relevant information to the provided blank paper.

As part of the preparation for the certification test, you will memorize formulas for earned value, communication, PERT and other calculations which may appear on the test. One of the easiest things for you to do is transfer all formulas from your memory to one of the two pieces of paper that have been provided to you by

the testing site. This will allow you to use the formulas as needed, as well as make sure you do not get confused during the test.

In addition, if you created a mind map of all the processes while studying, you can draw it out at this time. In fact, everything you think might be forgotten before you complete the test can be transferred to paper instantly. Transferring hard to remember information is one of the most helpful things you can do so you do not become confused.

Strategy #4 - Monitor the clock so that you can better pace yourself.

Monitoring the clock can be important for people who are slow in their test taking skills. You may spend a great deal of time on a question because of the enormous amount of reading. If a question looks as if it is going to take longer than expected guess an answer, but mark it for review at the end of the test when you have more time. In this test, you must finish within the four hours, and you must answer every question. All questions that are not answered are automatically scored as incorrect. It would be better to guess an answer than to leave it blank.

Strategy # 5 - Keep a positive attitude throughout the test and stay relaxed; if you start to feel nervous take a few deep breaths.

Because standardized tests can be very intimidating, it is easy for people to get discouraged when coming across a series of hard questions. During the test, make sure you attempt to keep your mind and thoughts positive. Do not decide the fate of your test based on four or five hard questions in a row. The test score is based on the test as a whole. You do need to pass each process group in order to pass. If you notice you are struggling with negative thoughts, use a break to get some water and reshape your attitude. If you are in the middle of the test and you start hearing a voice inside saying you are going to fail, this must be stopped immediately!

Strategy # 6 - Always read the whole question; do not make assumptions about what the question might be asking.

Research indicates that one problem test takers have during multiple-choice tests is they do not read the entire question prior to answering it. In many cases, it is clear that the test taker made an assumption of what the question was asking and answered based upon that assumption. With multiple-choice tests, you should ask yourself what the question is really asking.

In addition to determining what the question wants to know, it is also important to understand the full content of each scenario question. There are times during the exam when you will read one-fourth to one-half a page of text and then answer a question based on that scenario. At times, the question asked is extremely easy compared to the depth of the scenario you have just read. Sometimes they purposely ask something opposite of what you anticipate.

Unless you are able to read the scenario in its completion and the question thoroughly, you will overlook something important.

Strategy # 7 - Look for keywords in each question.

One of the most common mistakes when taking the PMP® test is overlooking key words which are very important to understanding the question. Key words can be a variety of things such as definitions, process types, or even special emphasis on one part of the question over another. Unless you have the ability to spot them, you will give an answer which is not in line with *PMBOK*®.

One of the best ways to pick out keywords is to read the entire question and then go back over it to pick out those words which have the strongest meaning. Then read the question once again putting the emphasis on the areas which are the most important. This allows you to get the main emphasis of the question.

Multiple-choice tests examine your ability to read carefully and thoroughly as much as they test your ability to recall information. Watch for words which redirect the question such as “all”, “always”, “never”, “none”, “few”, “many”, “some”, and “sometimes”. These words can be thrown into any question and change its meaning.

Strategy # 8 - If you do not know an answer guess, but mark it for review. Go on with the rest of the test and come back to it later.

Gaining information as you take a multiple-choice test is very important for areas that might be unclear. As you read each question, you will discover an emphasis in all the areas of *PMBOK*®. Sometimes you will pick up definitions or processes that will help you with other questions. If you are unsure about an answer, make your best guess, but do not leave it blank. Mark it for review so you can return later to see if this is the best answer based on what you now know. Your certification test is computerized, and you do have the capability to return to those questions you marked. As you proceed through the test and learn new information, you can return to those questions and make a more calculated answer.

Strategy # 9 - Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers; this way the choices given on the test will not throw you off or trick you.

One of the best techniques for making sure you answer the question correctly is to think of an answer in your head prior to reading all the possible answers given. As you read the answers, you can gain confirmation on your thought and increase the probability that you are correct. It does occur that someone reads all four answers only to have each of them sound correct.

Strategy # 10 - Read all the choices before choosing your answer.

Reading all the choices increases the chance that one of the possibilities will jump out to you. In standardized tests, it is normal for you to notice one answer

appearing to be somewhat different from the others. For example, you might be listing theories and notice that one of the answers is not a theory but a process.

Strategy #11 – Scenario questions require you to examine them differently.

Scenario questions are some of the most difficult to answer. Here are some guidelines which will assist you in gaining the best understanding of the situation:

1. Read the last two sentences of the scenario question first. By reading these, you will find out the main content of the question and what it is actually asking.
2. Make sure you understand what is being asked. The scenario may give you a lot of information which means nothing to the question to throw you off.
3. Expect many details which must be disregarded. Eat the fish and spit out the bones. There are a great deal of bones placed in scenario questions.

Strategy #12 - When you are finished and have time left, look over your test. Only change an answer if you misread or misinterpreted the question.

When you are finished taking your test this is probably one of the most vulnerable times of the entire certification. Test takers make a big mistake by rereading every question. Many will second guess themselves and change a good answer to a bad. Do not change an answer unless you know it is 100% wrong. Your best answer is normally your first response.

A good way to handle this is to only return to those questions which you know were a 100% guess. To change your answer on those is okay. Holding back from changing an answer will be one of the hardest things for you.

In conclusion, it is very important for you to make sure that you understand and follow each of the testing strategies. As you follow them in detail, it is possible for you to increase your potential of passing by as much as 20%. Those who have failed their PMP® admitted they violated at least one of these strategies and changed as many as 40 to 50 answers. You should be different and fight the urge.

Memorization

Memorization is needed for test preparation. Areas such as formulas and processes might need to be memorized so you can answer very specific questions about each. However, do not think that you must memorize every section of *PMBOK*[®] for testing purposes. It is much better if you have a solid working knowledge of *PMBOK*[®] so you can handle situation questions correctly.

Reading Comprehension

Many participants are surprised at how much reading is required for some of the questions. It is easy to be frustrated in getting the most information so you can select a correct answer.

The technique below will assist you in having a better understanding of what is being asked. Reading techniques require practice in order to be able to use them at will.

REDW strategy

- Read
 - Examine
 - Decide
 - Write
- **Read** the entire paragraph to get an idea of what the paragraph is about. You may find it helpful to whisper the words as you read or to form a picture in your mind of what you are reading. Once you have a general idea what the paragraph is about, go on to the next step.
 - **Examine** each sentence to identify the important words that tell what the paragraph is about. Ignore the words that do not pertain to the solution of the question. Many of your questions will be filled with ancillary information and data which has nothing to do with the answer but is there to overload you with facts.
 - **Decide** which sentence contains the words that best describe the main idea of the paragraph. The sentence that contains these words is the topic sentence. The other words are supporting details for the main idea.
 - **Writing** will constitute making your selection on the computer. After deciding which answer fits all the requirements of the question, choose that answer.

Focus Areas To Study

As you prepare for the certification, it requires that you spend a great deal of time in certain areas of knowledge transfer. The amount of preparation depends on how well you know the *PMBOK*[®] and how closely you run projects to that standard. The PMP[®] certification has a database of between 6,000 and 7,000 questions that are used to test individual's knowledge of project management.

Because of this large database of questions, it is possible for two people to take the test at the same time yet their test is very different. It is also possible that your test will emphasize something more or less than someone else's. Participants become frustrated because they spend so much time studying only to have one or two questions come from a particular focus area. We will recommend some focus areas which have a tendency to be included in most certification tests. These areas might be emphasized more or less on your test but a thorough knowledge of these will increase your chances of success. It should be understood that if you do not know this foundational information, you will not be able to understand the questions and how they pertain to project management in real life.

Definitions

Definitions and an understanding of how they are used in context are very important for the PMP[®] certification. Definitions are found in the back of *PMBOK*[®] and are used in questions to make sure that the participant understands exactly what the definition means as well as how it is used within a project. Participants must understand definitions from the *PMBOK*[®] vantage point not their internal culture.

5 Process Groups

You will need to understand the five process groups of initiating, planning, executing, controlling and closing and what actually takes place under each. Some try to confuse the five process groups with the nine knowledge areas.

Inputs, outputs, processes and tools

Many of the questions will include very specific information on the inputs, outputs, processes and tools of a particular knowledge area. As you look at each of these, it allows you to gain a great understanding of how the project management processes are driven toward completion.

Many of these processes must be understood in a detailed manner. Some individuals will haphazardly read *PMBOK*[®] and think that the questions will be easy and can be answered with a general understanding of each knowledge areas. However, this is not enough to pass the test. You must possess an expert understanding of each and be able to distinguish one from another. It is

common to have a question where you need to distinguish one knowledge area from another in order to select the correct answer.

Experts in quality and their writing

Quality is a concern for any project and is very important for project managers to understand. Details on quality processes such as Isikawa, Deming, Crosby, and Juran will help in many of the quality questions. Most of these questions revolve around quality processes, quality improvements, and continuous quality. Even though these areas might not be as emphasized in *PMBOK*[®], they are very important for understanding the background of quality.

Types of organizations

In today's environment, organizations are making changes to accommodate projects and allow the project manager to have more control. *PMBOK*[®] has great writing in the early chapters detailing the various types of organizations and how they can influence your individual project. Understanding the difference between each type of organization is going to be a key in understanding some of the test questions. For an example, if you do not understand the difference between a projectized organization compared to a matrix model organization, it is going to be very hard for you to answer the question. You must be able to distinguish between the various models with only a few descriptions.

Each of the 9 knowledge areas

There are nine knowledge areas in *PMBOK*[®]. If you examine page 43 in *PMBOK*[®] 4th Edition, you will gain a great understanding of all of the knowledge areas and how they work together in an integrated fashion.

Each knowledge area has detailed inputs, outputs and tools. It is very important to understand what each of these are in relation to the specific knowledge areas and make sure that you can distinguish them from one another. Since 80% of the questions will come from *PMBOK*[®], it is important for you to be able to distinguish the difference between each of the knowledge areas and the five process groups.

Ethical responsibility

Ethical responsibility has become very important in the last several years as we have seen major corporations act in questionable manners. PMI[®] has placed a great deal of emphasis in this area in relationship to projects. You will experience numerous questions revolving around what is ethical and the responsibility that project managers have in being ethical at all times. It would be good for you to read all the ethical and social responsibility sections in *PMBOK*[®], as well as to go to www.PMI.org and download any of their amended components. The ethical scenarios can include both projects here in North America as well as the world. PMI[®] is asking project managers to give strong ethical leadership, which is a good role model to follow.

Although we have emphasized several focus areas, it in no way guarantees that they will be on your test. As we have explained earlier, due to the enormous size of the question database revolving around the certification, these are only focus areas to give you some structure and direction in being able to pass the PMP® certification.

Why Attend A PMP® Boot Camp?

Since most people have not been exposed to an international certification exam with this level of intensity, it is easy to think this it can be passed without any help. This is true if a person has the capability of reading *PMBOK®* and retaining much of the information and if your organization is using *PMBOK®* processes. However, for those individuals who are not good at taking tests or have a high tendency of being intimidated when placed in a stressful situation, it might be good to consider taking a PMP® boot camp.

The following benefits will help determine which boot camp best fits your learning style and training goal.

Concentrated knowledge exchange

The PMP® boot camp allows each participant the means to have a concentrated effort at understanding all the processes, models, and theories associated with *PMBOK®*. Your instructors have the capability of giving you tips, techniques, and focus areas to get you ready for the questions you will experience. If you are one who struggles with retaining information, this concentrated boot camp allows you to be coached with hours of information, teaching techniques, flashcards, and practice tests to increase your understanding and ability to recall this information.

Tips and techniques are verbally given

Gaining insights into the PMP® certification through individuals who have taken it in the past is extremely helpful. It allows you to be mentally prepared for the certification and the atmosphere in which it is given. Boot camps will not give you the actual test questions, but will provide similar styles of questions to give you an idea how they are asked and phrased. In addition, the boot camp will assist attendees to be able to regurgitate the information when needed during the test. Remember, you are giving back information based on *PMBOK®*, not based on your actual work environment.

Specialized discussions take place in the course

Discussions during the boot camp assist each participant in fully understanding the processes presented by *PMBOK®*. These discussions allow you to understand the sequencing of process flow, as well as to hear others discuss how they keep each process or knowledge area straight.

Practice tests allow you a true measurement of your current skills

Practice tests are very effective in preparing people mentally for the PMP® certification. Some organizations will give the participants a barrage of multiple-choice tests to prepare for the certification. Each organization has their own philosophy based on what has worked for them. However, at The Mathis Group we have discovered a technique that uses both right brain and left brain learning which increases the recall factor during the test.

It is necessary for participants to be able to recall information as needed. Using right brain and left brain techniques allow participants to store the information for when they need it.

Scenario questions allow the participant to answer questions based on actual situations

Scenario questions are extremely effective for demonstrating analysis and understanding of all the project management processes. One mistake people make in preparing for the PMP® is they assume the questions will be clearly illustrated with a right or wrong answer. The surprise is that almost every question can have two correct answers. Remember, you are picking which is the most correct answer according to *PMBOK*®. Scenario questions can be as long as a fourth- to half-page in length and will ask what a project manager should do in a specific situation. The certification test goes beyond regular definitions and processes. PMI® wants to make sure that a project manager can analyze the situation and determine the appropriate steps of action to fix a problem or prevent a crisis from getting worse.

Scenario questions must be planned for because it requires a high degree of reading comprehension and time since each question takes longer to answer. Many people miss these questions due to moving at a faster pace than is recommended to gain the real message. A key when answering scenario questions is to read the last two sentences prior to reading the entire paragraph. This gives you the opportunity to anticipate what the question is asking as you read the entire paragraph.

Choosing The Right Boot Camp

Choosing the right boot camp can be very difficult in a day when hundreds of organizations are clamoring to be the best in getting you ready for the PMP® certification.

As you search for a provider, you will be surprised to find a variety of formats that will give you this information. Some local PMI® chapters will assist you in preparing, normally at a very reasonable fee. The positive side of using a local chapter is that you have people who love project management and are committed to the *PMBOK*® way. The negative side is they may struggle in teaching and presenting the material and, oftentimes, do not offer any guarantee.

It becomes extremely difficult to distinguish which organization you should use and who should be trusted. The following list of questions should be considered when selecting a PMP® Exam boot camp.

Does the organization teach other registered courses on project management?

The reason to look at organizations who teach more than just the PMP® certification is to find an organization which is truly committed to project management models and theories. When you find an organization that only teaches the PMP® boot camp, you have found someone who could be going after that one course solely for monetary reasons. It is possible they are not really trying to educate people on the topic of project management, nor are they really expanding the usage of its principles. This can be a problem when they are asked questions which are beyond the exam prep course and *PMBOK*®. Reputable firms will have seasoned professionals teaching their boot camp and are able to not only answer questions which revolve around *PMBOK*®, but also give information from years of experience.

Is the organization used by other reputable organizations to teach project management and PMP® Exam Boot Camps?

Conducting research allows you to see if the organization offering PMP® boot camp training, as well as other project management courses, will allow you to see the depth of their reputation. For an example, if you research The Mathis Group, you discover that we are being used by many government agencies such as FAA, FCC, USDA, the Department of Defense, have a five-year GSA contract and a multiyear contract with the States of Missouri and Kansas. In addition, we have done training for PPL (Pennsylvania Power and Light) for their technology and power plants, as well as many other construction organizations. We have been running public and onsite seminars for years using the PMP® Boot Camp and over 38 individual project management courses.

We are an organization who is committed to training and educating others in project management, and we have spent years building a reputation which is anchored to this topic. Make sure that whomever you use as a provider will do more than just take your money.

How long has the organization been in business?

The PMP® boot camp is in great demand today with tens of thousands of people desiring the certification. Organizations who have been in business for years understand the industry and the development of *PMBOK*®. This focuses on whether the organization really is committed to building a long-term educational impact. Some organizations are short-term focused and only do boot camps for the profit. The Mathis Group has been providing training on project management since 1993 in all types of industries and project types.

How many trainers do they have with project management experience?

The size of the organization is not always important; however, you should ensure that the organization can provide project management training for your workers in a reasonable amount of time. Many organizations providing training might only be a one person shop. You can see severe time limits when facing the need to educate a large work staff of several thousand. For example, we have eight highly experienced trainers which have been hand selected to provide training to any of our customers. This allows us the capability of efficiency and quickness in providing training as the customer needs it.

Do the guarantees focus on passing or your money back?

When picking a boot camp, you need to look for an organization that is going to do a couple things. First, are they going to teach a broad view of *PMBOK*® and make sure that each knowledge area has been examined? Second, they should guarantee that you are going to pass the PMP® certification test. If an organization is unwilling to give you a strong guarantee, you probably should consider someone else. A guarantee which only allows you to return to a PMP® Boot Camp for free is not a strong enough guarantee.

Does the PMP® Boot Camp provider pay for your second and third exam?

It is important for you to see what the provider will do if an individual does not pass the PMP® the first time. Many providers will allow an individual to attend another boot camp for free; however, they do not pay for any other tests. At The Mathis Group, we guarantee that if an individual does not pass the PMP® the first time we will pay for the second test. If the individual does not pass the second time, we will pay for the third test. If the individual does not pass the third time, we will return the remaining seminar money. However, do we allow people to attend seminars again free? Yes! Do we coach people? Absolutely! We do all of the above as well, but we want there to be no mistake that we believe we will help you pass the PMP®. You are looking for a guarantee that monetarily holds the provider accountable and does more than just allow you to attend another seminar. The Mathis Group not only guarantees the face-to-face PMP® Exam

Prep Boot Camp but is one of the few who will also pay for your retake whether you take our face-to-face or online course.

What is their percentage of first time passing?

The percentage of passing the PMP® the first time is important because it tells the success factor of that provider. It is not uncommon for most of the providers to state 90% have passed with their training. The question we should be asking about is whether this is a percentage based on the first time a person took the test. Look for an organization that has a high passing percentage the first time through, rather than the third time.

The Mathis Group has an 86% first time passing rate and 99.7% overall success rate. Very seldom do we have anyone who even needs the third test, let alone fails it.

How are the daily activities structured?

The structure of the day makes a difference to learning and learning styles. For example, how many practice tests will be given to get the participants ready for the PMP® certification? How will the material be taught and what about breaks? In four days, individuals will take 25+ practice tests in our PMP® program. In addition, the last test taken will be one which covers all knowledge areas. In addition, we give each participant an online practice test they can take after the boot camp to prepare once again before they take the actual PMP® certification.

Do they demonstrate quality by their teaching techniques and classroom interactions?

The last question to consider when looking for someone to teach the PMP® boot camp is if they demonstrate quality by their teaching techniques during class interactions. Class interactions can be defined as how the facilitator treats the participants during the boot camp. Many may think this does not matter, however, in the adult learning model it is very important that participants be treated with respect and dignity during the boot camp.

Some individuals can be intimidated during the boot camp due to the teaching style of the instructor. For example, one method which is very intimidating for the adult learner is the Socratic Method of teaching. The Socratic Method focuses on putting people on the spot by asking a series of questions of why a situation happens a particular way. This method, though effective in some situations, can be very intimidating. There have been times when the Socratic Method is used that participants drop out of the class and never finish the four-day boot camp.

This is not a style we use.

The type of atmosphere which works best is one where everyone has the opportunity to ask questions and to interact within a safe environment. This means allowing them to talk about what they do and do not know without being

made to feel stupid. During the practice activities, they are encouraged rather than belittled for what they do not know. If there are areas they are struggling with they are instantly paired with another class member or instructor to teach that technique. The goal is for the participant to learn the material in a safe environment and pass the certification test.

In conclusion, it is very important to pick the proper provider for a PMP® boot camp for your staff. The above guidelines were given only as a means of trying to provide and expand your education in looking for provider. As you begin your search, you will discover there are many great providers who care deeply about your employees and whether they pass the PMP® certification. Many will be exciting in their presentation of the material, and they will provide substantial guarantees so that you feel comfortable using them.

Thank you for reading this report and considering the PMP® credential. If you have any questions about the PMP® Exam Boot Camp or any other registered project management courses please contact us.

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Keith Mathis, Ph.D., PMP

**Speaker, Trainer, and Seminar Leader
Specialist in Project Management,
Organizational Behavior and Development**

**The Mathis Group, Inc.
106 Lakeview Woods
Eureka, MO 63025
1-800-224-3731
(636)-938-5292 Fax
keith@themathisgroup.com
www.themathisgroup.com
www.pmexpertlive.com
GSA: GS10F0383M**

PMI® Registered Global Education Provider

Over the last several years, Dr. Keith Mathis has emerged as one of the most effective business trainers in the field traveling throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and South America. His provocative, informative, humorous presentations on a variety of organizational development topics are demanded by progressive companies. An animated and often electrifying platform speaker, Keith never merely talks to an audience, but he also seeks to involve them in his presentations through high content and numerous illustrations. Intellectually demanding of himself, Keith demands no less of his audiences!

As a consultant who specializes in organizational behavior and development, he comes with thousands of presentations to every kind of organization. He is flexible by teaching in full day formats, multi-day conferences or one-hour keynotes for conventions.

He is founder of The Mathis Group, based in St. Louis, Missouri. His work includes teaching corporate America skills on topics such as: teambuilding, leadership, motivation, conflict resolution, project management, supervision, performance appraisals, goal setting and numerous other organizational proficiencies. His problem solving expertise provides him with the ability to help companies in the solving of the most complex difficulties.

Keith continues to expand his knowledge base and practical advice by teaching. He serves as an adjunct professor of business/management at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, teaching Consulting, Public Speaking, Total Quality, Project Management, Management, Communication, Customer Value, Leadership, Marketing, Organizational Behavior, Strategic Planning, and Group Dynamics.

Keith has authored numerous training programs as well as magazine and newspaper articles. His book *Dinosaur Tracks: Modern Leadership Strategies for Changing Employee Performance and Behavior* was published by Equippers Press International.

Keith holds a B.A. in Behavioral Science, a M.S. in Management, and a Ph.D. in Administration Management. He is certified as a PMP® (Project Management Professional) and a COI (Certified Online Instructor).