

R.E.P. and PMP®: Six Letters That Spell Project Management Success for IBM

IBM is the world's largest technology services company and is ranked by *Business Week* as possessing the most valuable technology brand in the world, ahead of Microsoft and Google. And if you look inside the success of the world's most famous acronym, you'll find two others at work: R.E.P. and PMP®.

IBM has been a PMI Registered Education Provider (R.E.P.) for ten years. It currently employs more people with the Project Management Professional (PMP)® credential than any other organization in the world.

Read on to learn how participation in the R.E.P. program and employing PMP credential holders help IBM deliver tangible value to their business, from increasing operational efficiency to aiding business development.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

For almost a century, IBM has shaped the way business works. But by the early 1990s, consecutive years of billion dollar losses led some to conclude that it would become a casualty of the personal computer revolution that it had helped create.

IBM senior management determined what it would take to succeed in a world where customers wanted integrated solutions, rather than individual products.

THE NEED FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT

They identified project management as "the key to reliably delivering commitments" and the lack of it as "a major factor in failure, contributed to by the entire organization."

They declared IBM a "Project-based Enterprise," one whose success relied upon project management providing tangible benefits in two areas: making internal operations more efficient and providing external value to its customers.

THE NEED FOR EXCELLENCE

In order to achieve this transformation, they created the Project Management Center of Excellence (PM-COE), which would work with senior executives, business units and individual employees to establish project management as a core competency across their global enterprise.

Their first challenge? Creating a single consistent global project management approach, the IBM Worldwide Project Management Method (WWPMM). Their first stop? *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*, to provide its foundation.

THE NEED FOR THE PMP® CERTIFICATION

When IBM decided to create their own internal project management certification, they again turned to PMI, by making the PMP® the fundamental

eligibility requirement for their internal program. Since then, they have seen the value of this decision borne out, time and again.

- Performance: 90 percent of IBM's PMP® certified project managers report that the certification helps them in their jobs
- Profitability: The number of troubled projects with documented root causes in project management has decreased by 25 percent.
- Growth: "Corporations recognize PMI certification as the standard for the skills and expertise that a project manager needs to have," says John Marrine, Worldwide Project Management Profession Leader at the PM-COE. "They'll ask us how many PMP credential holders you have. Do you have PMPs with experience in our line of business that can be put on this project?"

IBM PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

- 150 instructors world wide
- 100,000 student days of education delivered annually
- Delivered online and via traditional classroom
- Multi-level curriculum
- Delivered in 34 countries around the world
- Recognized with multiple awards

“When people think of IBM, people think of PMI. And that’s where you go to get project managers. Being an R.E.P. helps IBM be able to document the quality of the project management services that we offer to clients.”

Sandy Steinruck, PMP®, Project Management Curriculum Program Manager, Certified Executive Project Manager, IBM

Being an R.E.P.:

THE NEED FOR CONVENIENT ACCESS

Ironically, simply being successful can pose one of the greatest barriers to building and maintaining employee skills. As organizational success increases, time decreases, and employee development is often a casualty.

“Our students have businesses to run,” says Sandy Steinruck, PMP®, a 30-year employee of IBM who joined the PM-COE as Curriculum Program Manager in 2000. “They have projects to manage, they need to make money for IBM; they don’t have time to waste.” Ms. Steinruck

WHAT IS AN R.E.P.?

A PMI Registered Education Provider (R.E.P.) is an organization approved by PMI to issue professional development units (PDUs) for its training courses.

Courses offered by R.E.P.s are preapproved for contact hours in fulfillment of certification eligibility requirements, as well as PDUs to fulfill the continuing certification requirements for PMI credentials.

The R.E.P. program has been designed to enhance the ongoing professional development of PMI members, those credentialed through PMI and others in the project management profession.

For more information visit:

PMI.org/REP

speaks from experience, as she has to track the Professional Development Units (PDUs) required for both her PMP® and IBM internal certifications. “Becoming an R.E.P. was an educational decision. It’s to our benefit to have the best project managers – being an R.E.P. helps us make it easier for our employees to get and maintain their PMP®, the highest credential in project management.”

THE NEED FOR COST CONTROL

In these difficult times, organizations may consider reducing financial support of employees seeking third-party education... thereby risking the organization the very benefits that education and certification can provide. By offering PMI R.E.P. courses in-house, IBM is able to reap the benefits of employee education and certification without incurring the high external training costs.

THE NEED FOR QUALITY

“Being an R.E.P. is an indicator of the quality of the education we provide,” says John Marrine. “Our courses qualifying for PDUs means our employees know they are able to get a more formal training in project management.” This is not an idle claim. In addition to receiving multiple awards, the “Basic Level” of IBM’s curriculum has been recognized by George Washington University as being the equivalent of their Master’s Certification in Project Management.

WHAT ARE PDUs?

Professional Development Units (PDUs) are used to quantify approved professional development activities.

PMI credential holders must earn a set amount of PDUs to maintain their credential as part of PMI’s Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR) Program.

For more information:

PMI.org/ccrs

THE BOTTOM LINE

The truest measure of IBM’s success as a Project-based Enterprise, their integration of the PMP® and their R.E.P. status can be found in their balance sheet.

In 2009, in the face of a challenging economy, IBM had a record year: record pre-tax earnings, record earnings per share, record free cash flow.

For a glimpse at the role project management played in this success we can look to no higher a source than Samuel J. Palmisano, IBM’s CEO, Chairman and President. In a letter to shareholders, he attributed their performance to two primary factors: strategic and operational discipline and the high value of their position in the market.

It’s no accident that those factors match the company’s original mandate for project management at IBM.