General Business Job Classification in CareerBuilder.com
Requiring Project Management Skills

by
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**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to identify the baseline level of General Business jobs within CareerBuilder.com that require project management skills. The specific research question(s) to be answered in this study is/are as follows:

1) The relative number of jobs on CareerBuilder.com within the General Business job classification requiring project management skills and experience.

2) The academic level requirements and certification associated with those jobs.

This paper is intended to quantify the number of general business jobs requiring project management skills and experience out of all the general business jobs, as well as the academic requirements associated with the project jobs.

**Review of Related Literature**

In this study we are primarily concerned with discerning jobs that require project management skills from those requiring normal operating skills in the “General Business” job classification. According to the Project Management Institute (PMI 2008) the difference between normal business operations and project work differs primarily in that operations tend to be ongoing and repetitive, using the organizations existing personnel, processes, and procedures; while projects are temporary and time-bound, undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.

In addition to requiring special skills, project work also represents a level of change in an organization – that is, implementation of a project represents a “future state” that is different than the “current state” of the organization. In the author’s experience, change can be caused by both internal and external factors such as: governmental/regulatory changes, competitive pressures,
environmental changes, technological advances and obsolescence’s, new products and services, reorganizations, and so on can spur the need for organizational change, and thus the need for ongoing project work as the organization responds to such change.

Why is it important to make this distinction? As Vandoren notes from the Standish Group’s annual Chaos Report, somewhere between two-thirds to three-quarters of all projects fail outright or do not fully meet their objectives for scope, budget, schedule, or quality. Thus the need for skillful use of project management tools, techniques and processes – although not a guarantee of success, certainly a predictor. Furlon further adds:

“Owing to inadequate implementations of project management (PM) procedures and processes, many large information technology systems (ITS) projects failed to deliver its promises. Also, many of the failures in the implementation of large ITS projects around the world have been attributed to inadequate PM action.”

Nwachukwu identifies the cure for this malady as Project management. He sees the project managers role as a “technical expert to take charge and control events on the project implementation process.” Though as Holz notices, while project management qualifications and certifications exist, project management from a human resource career perspective has largely been ignored. Project management is largely still viewed as a skill set rather than a job classification – this can be seen in the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2010) where project skills are listed largely under “manager” type functions and not as separate job classes (e.g. no job class of project manager or project leader is identified). Yet, as we will see later in this paper, fully one out of 4 jobs in the General Business job classification require project management skills and experience, many of which have project manager type job titles.
As more and more businesses find value in structured project management, the need for qualified project managers should also increase. Feldman\(^1\) notes that seven out of ten companies in a recent InformationWeek Analytics survey use formal project management methodologies. Feldman\(^2\) also notes that companies are beginning to recognize the value of organizing their projects into portfolios and programs to better ensure success across the enterprise. Wittmann (2010) and Singh (2009) both support the need for greater project management discipline by implementing a formal project management office (PMO). Baca further identifies the strong tie between using consultancy services and the need for strong project management skills, further increasing demand for qualified project managers.

**Methodology**

Using the search capabilities on the CareerBuilder.com site, jobs in the General Business job classification were searched on 11/23/2010. Criteria included all jobs within the U.S. and posted within the last 30 days. The resulting 8,861 jobs served as the study population. Sub searches were then done using the keywords: “project management” to produce 2,326 jobs requiring project management skills. A further division by academic requirement: 2 year degree or less, 4 year degree, and Graduate degree. A sample size was then determined using an online calculator:

[http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm](http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm)

92 detailed job offerings(descriptions) were then reviewed to ensure that the contents matched the search criterion for a valid project management job as well as to verify academic...
accreditation levels and PMP certification requirements. No jobs were found in the sample that didn’t match the associated search criteria.

Presentation of Data

Figure 1 - PM vs. Non-PM Job Skills

As shown in figure 1, approximately 1 out of 4 general business jobs now require project management skills. Of the 2,326 jobs requiring project management jobs, 57.9% required up to a 2 year degree, 40.6% required a 4 year degree, and only 1.5% required a graduate level degree. Additionally, it was found through sampling that approximately 8% preferred or required full Project Management Professional (PMP) certification.

Conclusion/Implications/Recommendations

A person lacking project management skills is potentially eligible for only 75% of the available job postings in general business; whereas, a person with post-secondary education plus project management skills/experience increase their potential general business job prospects by 25%. However, it does beg the question as to, “Where does one get project management training
and experience when first starting out?” There seems to be a need for post-secondary education in project management that fills the gap between no experience and full PMP certification. The current alternative for the prospective applicant is self-study or study through a professional organization, or by looking for job opportunities where some project work experience can be acquired – not the most desirable avenues when seeking employment.

PMI provides an initial certification called Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) that is intended to cover entry level project management but it requires 24 hours of external study and several hundred dollars in exam fees; however, an 1-2 credit class as part of a 2 year or 4 year curriculum could prove just as valuable to students entering the workforce and could be financially assimilated more readily by the student as part of their overall education. As a result of this research, it seems that further research into the viability of offering a project management class in a post-secondary education is warranted. It is also recommended that students seek out different means to obtain project management skills and experience in order to better their chances for employment.

**References**


Feldman² J., Mar 8, 2010, Get Your Projects In Line, InformationWeek. Manhasset: Iss. 1259; pg. 32, 3 pgs
Furlong S., Al-Karaghouli W., 2010, Delivering professional projects; The effectiveness of project management in transformational e-government initiatives, Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy. Bradford: Vol. 4, Iss. 1; pg. 73

Hölzle, K., Dec 2010, Designing and implementing a career path for project managers, International Journal of Project Management. Kidlington: Vol. 28, Iss. 8; pg. 779

Nwachukwu C., Aug 2010, Living up to Information Technology's Promise; A Project Management Implementation and Performance Perception, Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research In Business. Belleville: Vol. 2, Iss. 4; pg. 84, 20 pgs


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**Pts. Given for Each Section**

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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
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Accurately describes the study

Clear and understandable, related to the research

Clearly stated and covers all questions to be answered
_5_ Methodology (Procedures of the Study) – 5 pts.
Clear, complete and appropriate methods used to gather data

_10_ Review of Related Literature – 10 pts.
The size of population surveyed was outstanding.
Adequate # of sources, sources related to the topic; clear and understandable writing

_8_ Presentation of Data and Discussion – 10 pts.
Data presented in text and in tables was clear and understandable
Although the pie charts depicted some of the data quite vividly, some of the other data presented in test form should have been put in a table to make it more understandable.

_10_ Implications of Study (Conclusions and recommendations) – 10 pts.
Drew logical conclusions based on the data gathered

_2_ References – 5 pts. References did not follow APA style manual as indicated in the assignment instructions
Used appropriate style manual, references were complete and accurate

Note: ½ point will be taken off for each grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity of writing error

- ½ pt. -- started a sentence with the numeral 92
- ½ pt. -- the word “managers” needs to be a possessive, i.e. project manager’s role

__44___ Total Points = 2 points on the Conversion scale (See below.)

A = 45 pts. or more = 3 pts. on 3-point scale
B = 40-44 pts. = 2 pts.
C = 35-39 pts. = 1 pt.
D = 30-34 pts. = 0 pts.
Note: ½ point will be taken off for each grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity of writing error