

# Executive Summary – Project Management Talent Survey 2014

The inaugural UK project management talent survey conducted by ESI International aimed to uncover career trends specific to the profession. While the survey had over 1,270 respondents from the project management profession with varying levels of experience across multiple industry sectors in the EMEA region, we selected data solely from the 405 responses stemming from project professionals in the United Kingdom, to offer a bird's eye view of the state of the profession.

Aside from career trends, the study also revealed critical issues such as project management (PM) professionals' time-to-proficiency, understaffing challenges and the factors impacting PM salary development.

Our survey found the larger the project, the more likely it was that organisations experienced understaffing issues and expected it to be harder to find suitable talent. For project professionals, salary and time-to-proficiency were directly impacted by the size of their commissioned projects. Small, low-risk projects took project managers an average of five months to meet proficiency standards; it took them seven months on medium-risk projects and an average of nine months on large-scale, highly integrated projects. It was also found that training had a positive influence on both the speed of proficiency and salary levels, although there was not always a direct correlation between credentials and higher wages.

## Training Pays Off

Our study found that just five days of annual training leads to an acceleration of proficiency, which in turn, leads to higher possible salary levels. Project managers, whose average annual salary is £37,915, found their ability to manage small projects was accelerated on average by five months with five annual days of training; for project managers of medium-size projects, whose average annual salary is £58,744, proficiency was accelerated by nine months with training; and for project managers of large-scale projects, whose average annual salary is £63,494, their ability to manage projects was accelerated by 13 months through training.

increase in productivity and an 8.5% improvement in customer satisfaction just 60 days after project management training had been completed. 66% of the trainees themselves reported training-related job performance improvement.

In several industry-specific surveys, ESI found that training improved communications, job performance and customer satisfaction across a wide range of sectors. Three out of four respondents in the finance, manufacturing and oil & gas industries reported a significant increase in effective communications. More than half in each sector claimed that training had substantially improved their productivity as well.

## Understaffing Challenges

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate how difficult it is to find and hire suitable, experienced project managers to work on the different types of project run by their organisation. Not surprisingly, when broken down by project size, hiring challenges became more acute the more complex the projects were for which managers were hired. While 36% of respondents claimed that small projects were difficult to staff, 67% of respondents claimed difficulties for staffing medium-size projects and 88% of respondents claimed staffing difficulties for large-scale projects.

## Building on What You Have

The right training at the right time is a wise investment. In a similar salary trend survey in the United States, ESI International found that the return on investment (ROI) for training entry-level new hires was about 500%. Even for more experienced employees, training existing talent led to a significant increase in productivity, as shown in ESI's 2012 ROI survey. Businesses reported a 10%

## Supporting Proficiency in Project Organisations

According to the *Global State of the PMO 2013* study conducted by ESI International, the Project or Programme Management Office (PMO) has been validated as a career-crucial body for project managers in Europe. PMOs that actively engage in learning sustainment and measure workplace performance have shown to be the most involved in structuring the career path for project management professionals. The success rate of organisations with PMOs that provide career development has also been shown to far exceed those without, according to the study. PMOs play a crucial and strategic role as they help steer PM professionals to deliver value for their organisations. They also provide greater scope for career development and prospects that help contribute to overall salary improvement.

## Obtaining Professional Certification

Certification has a varied impact on project managers' salary development. In our survey, we asked if respondents were in the process of obtaining or currently have a certification. Two-thirds responded favourably. Of those with certification, two out of five had the PMP. PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner was the second most common certification amongst UK respondents.

As a recent survey conducted by Arras People suggests, however, certification should not be confused with competence. Over half of employed project managers without any credentials whatsoever were found to earn more than those with an APM-related certification. As ESI's survey has shown, training impacts salary, but not every credential does.

Our research shows that staffing challenges faced by organisations today are best addressed by developing talent internally rather than hiring from the outside. There is a definite cost and time advantage to developing and nurturing project management professionals. Working with the talent you have, by creating an appealing career path, can increase the likelihood that organisations will reap the rewards from their staff investments.

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## About ESI International

ESI International is a global, project-focused training company. Our clients tell us that we're better and different because we take them beyond traditional training to achieve sustained, measurable results. Our staff/professionals are dedicated and passionate about enabling organisations to improve vital skills to achieve great things now and prepare them for what's next. We do this by putting you in control of how you manage your projects, your people and your contracts and bringing certainty to your commitments. We are built to make you better.

Website : [www.esi-intl.co.uk](http://www.esi-intl.co.uk) • Email: [enquiry@esi-intl.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@esi-intl.co.uk) • Tel: +44 (0)207 017 7100

