

### **Which learning methods work best to develop skills of project management and leadership?**

There is no formal, accredited qualification for project management in the Pharma/Biotech sector. However, training and development can help to polish the particular skills required.

These are typically not technical, neither are they restricted to process management.

Most project managers in the sector have a background of scientific and technical experience; further development in this area is rarely necessary. It is the people skills, as well as a level of comfort with complexity, uncertainty and influencing without direct authority, that are vital.

For some, these are natural abilities. Others will never acquire them. For most however, some development activities pay benefits – but it can be confusing as to which type of intervention works best – sometimes, sending people away on a long and expensive course is a waste.

**The following pages in this document explain this and will help you to plan development. Note also that we are delighted to discuss and advise. Contact us at any time – using the contact form on our website [www.ppmlid.com](http://www.ppmlid.com)**

## Notes on terminology:

### Managers/leaders

We do not distinguish sharply between 'project manager' and project leader'. In some areas of the organization, these roles are occupied by different individuals, and in other areas a 'project manager' is the only role heading up a project and team.

However, we can distinguish between project *management* and *leadership*. We do this mainly in order to explain to people that both capabilities are important. Our philosophy is that anyone in charge of a project should be expected to display elements of both.

### Development can be addressed by:

- **Training**

By this we mean a classroom session, and we typically run a class of 2 days duration that features a mixture of process and people issues. We try to blend input from the tutors with small team discussions, simulations/realistic exercises and where relevant, practice and role play work. Training usually achieves a step increase in knowledge, plus some boosted skills and techniques that can be applied directly in the workplace.

- **Project Team Sessions**

Another very successful way to develop capabilities with the full project team – say at an extended team meeting, or a special session for example when it is wrestling a particular issue. This achieves buy-in from the team, enables real feedback to the project leader, and may produce more permanent improvements in capability.

- **Coaching**

By this we mean a one to one session for each individual. The key focus of this is not 'mentoring' (giving advice from a position of senior expertise). Rather in our coaching we aim to enable the learner to gain insights into their own capabilities and especially to identify and remove barriers that are preventing them from personal change. We don't hold back from useful advice but a coaching session is mostly learner-focused. Coaching achieves an increase in confidence and prepares someone to apply much more difficult (for them) skills in the real situation.

- **Assessment**

It is important to raise self-awareness about current strengths and development needs against capabilities that are required for effective project management. This can be done using a combination of assessment tools and discussions. We have some straightforward online assessment tools, which are available via our web site. These give a simple readout of ratings in what we think are the critical project management capabilities (we will send you a working demonstration for you to evaluate).

**This list of critical capabilities is set out overleaf, together with our view on which learning interventions will work best for them.**

## Learning methods for critical capabilities of project managers

Which capabilities do we think are critical?	Skills likely to be acquired following a Training class	Can be addressed, with a Project Team Session	Confidence and attitude likely to be developed via Coaching	Personality trait – quite difficult to affect
<b>Mindset oriented to project working</b>				
Handling ambiguity			■	
Taking on leadership without authority	■		■	
Persistence with complex problems			■	■
Organization mindset*			■	■
<b>Leadership Style</b>				
Communicating vision and goals	■		■	
Empowering experts in the Team	■	■	■	
Toughness with goals			■	■
<b>Process Skills</b>				
Leading systematic decisions/risk analyses	■	■		
Leading meetings	■	■	■	
<b>Knowledge working</b>				
Team learning	■	■		
Actively transferring learnings			■	■

Key:

■ - most important intervention to achieve capability

■ - can help also

\*The type of organization model one feels truly comfortable in – a *bureaucracy* (strong vertical hierarchy), a *market/customer* focused culture (objectives dominate), an *empire* (power dominates) or a *network* (connections and interconnections are most important)

