

CM vs. PMP - What is the difference?

Written by: Enrique Ruiz, CM, PgMP | May 12, 2015



What is the difference between these two internationally recognized certifications? The **Institute of Certified Professional Managers** (www.icpm.biz) issues the **Certified Manager (CM) credential** and the **Project Management Institute** (www.pmi.org) issues the **Project Management Professional (PMP) credential**. Why should you choose one, or both? I am both CM and PgMP (Program Management Professional, which is the next step after Project Management Professional, PMP) certified and serve as a Regent (board member) and Learning Partner (program administrator) for ICPM. Both of these certifications require an investment in time and money. They will supplement, or complement, any existing education, experience or career aspirations that you currently possess. The main question to answer regarding which credential to pursue, however, rests in your personal career aspirations. Do you want to be in charge of a project from inception to completion (or pre-established project) and create a structure that is proven for greater success? Maybe you are already working for an organization and need a skill set that will position you to become a team leader or maybe a better manager? Many government and large commercial programs require PMP certification. The reason for this is that budgets are large and customers want a proven structure in place that will help a project start right and run smoothly with little or no surprises and predictable results. The language used by PMP savvy users is consistent with most end objectives. It is clearly understood internally

by the organization and by the customers they serve. If you are the type of individual where the buck stops with you, and you want full responsibility, the PMP may be a good choice to consider. The PMP certification offers proven elements, techniques and structure that are documented in the *Project Management Body of Knowledge* (PMBOK). This foundational standard is based on years of lessons learned, across a wide variety of industries, to help you achieve project success:

- **Project management roles, relationships and project lifecycle**
- **Organizational influences**
- **Project management processes**
- **Scope management**
- **Time management**
- **Cost management**
- **Quality management**
- **HR management**
- **Communication management**
- **Risk management**
- **Procurement management**
- **Stakeholder management**

Of course, having the tools in your toolkit do not guarantee success if you do not know their proper place, implementation idiosyncrasies and challenges. More importantly, do you have the leadership skills to drive direct reports or a cross-functional team to deliver projects within the constraints of schedule, budget, and scope? No matter what your industry, you are in the people business when you have to manage, communicate and motivate.

The ability to deal with people is as purchasable a commodity as sugar or coffee and I will pay more for that ability than for any other under the sun.

John D. Rockefeller, American business magnate

In contrast, the CM is a general management certification for aspiring managers or those that want to become better managers with increased responsibility. The CM not only covers the project management disciplines noted above, but it also gives you the “how” and “why” in key areas to help you enhance managerial competency and leadership potential.

- **Management role and responsibilities**
- **Developing as a leader**
- **Effective communication**
- **Solving problems and ethical decision-making**
- **Customer service**
- **Planning for goal achievement**
- **Organizing work, relationships, and teams**
- **HR management-staffing, training, and appraising**
- **Managing a diverse workforce**

- **Leading and motivating people**
- **Controlling and quality management**
- **Business environment - law/risk management**
- **Economics in business**
- **Using information technology**
- **Understanding accounting**
- **Managing accounting and financial information**
- **Networking and mentoring**
- **Coaching and feedback**
- **Motivating Employees**
- **Managing change, conflict, and misbehavior**
- **Time and stress management**

The pursuit of the PMP involves knowledge of the above but the focus is more on the “tool” versus the development and application of the people skills (soft skills) needed for team success. If you are looking for a comprehensive managerial certification to help you reach the next level of your career, then the CM may be the best choice for you. Both the PMP and CM certifications require a foundation of education and experience. The PMP requires a secondary degree (high school diploma, associate’s degree, or the global equivalent) with at least five years of project management experience, with 7,500 hours leading and directing projects and 35 hours of project management education OR a four-year degree (bachelor’s degree or the global equivalent) and at least three years of project management experience, with 4,500 hours leading and directing projects and 35 hours of project management education. The CM certification is more flexible, allowing you to earn points based on your education, management training, certification (including PMP) and work experience. You can receive experience points even when you do not have the official title of manager or leader. Both certifications are available in self-study, online and classroom formats at price points that vary with the amount of instruction and the breadth of training components. I have found utility in both certifications in my career. The PMP is useful in managing large-scale operations for government and commercial clients that need the requisite expertise to start-up a project and maintain a productive business rhythm cadence. The CM certification focuses on the human element by developing a foundation in interpersonal skills that will reward you in **any** enterprise (small to large), making it another good choice to add to your portfolio. Once you have earned either of these credentials, you can market yourself through email, business cards and correspondence using the CM or PMP credential after your name (or both as in my case) within your company or with prospective employers. I wish you the very best in your personal success, and in the organizations you will go on to lead.

About the Author

Enrique Ruiz, CM, PgMP



Enrique 'Rick' Ruiz is President of PositivePsyche.Biz Corp, a management consulting and training firm in the Washington DC area. He earned an MBA in the UK and has led large diverse teams in Canada, Mexico, United Kingdom and across the US. Rick is PgMP and CM certified, has managed a one billion dollar program (100% customer satisfaction) and an operation up to 15,000 people strong, is an inventor (1 patent, 2 pending) with a family of six children and is an author of six books including *Wisher*, *Washer*, *Wishy-Washy* (a new approach to viewing motivation).