

How to Effectively Tackle a Self Study Program

Written by: Sean Forney, CM | April 9, 2015



Self-Assessment

The foundation of my self-assessment was constructed on the answer to the question “why?” Why pursue the CM certification? Prior to enrolling into the CM certification program, I was fortunate enough to already have both a BS in Management, as well as an MBA. But there was something missing. I needed more. When I worked as a clinic manager for a military refractive surgery department (prior to my MBA), I discovered that my managerial skills were somewhat lopsided. Even though I was working on my graduate degree at the time, the combined experiences of education and actual experience were still leaving some gaps in my managerial skill set. After doing a self-analysis, I came to the conclusion that my education alone concentrated on selected specific areas. And with regards to my actual on-the-job experience, I often found myself dropping the ball because I was failing to see the big “managerial” picture. As a result, I began to develop blind spots to the additional, significant components that make up the entire managerial experience. With the “why” answered, I was then ready to search for a way to implement the answer. After much research, I chose ICPM, because I believed (which turned out being correct) they could take away those blind spots.

Environmental Assessment

After being accepted into the CM program, I had to take (what I like to call) a “time inventory”. Based upon my environment (i.e. wife, kids, work, family time, etc.), I had to make (what I also like to call) a “time map”. I had to incorporate a study schedule, not *around* my environment, but *into* my environment. I studied, either on the computer or with the manuals a minimum of 2 hours a day. That, of course, added up to 14 hours a week! To begin my assessment, I spoke with my wife about how realistic or unrealistic my goals were pertaining to completing the program, and I solicited her advice on how to obtain them. *Note: It's always good to get input from all individuals who will somehow be affected by your study plan since they are the primary sources of any possible distractions or interruptions.*

Goal Assessment

I knew that I wanted to finish the program in three or four months. I also knew in order to do this I had to set time goals to help keep me on track. The key element that helped me to stay on course was being FOCUSED. With a realistic environmental assessment, along with a disciplined focus, meeting time goals was attainable. My journey through the CM program has helped me hone the managerial skills that I already possessed, adopt the pertinent skills that I was void of having, and prepared me for the future challenges that I'm sure to encounter, as I progress both as a manager and as a leader.

Takeaways

If you are considering a self-study program to develop and hone your skills, here are a few takeaways:

- **Ask yourself why. Why are you pursuing a self-study program? Will it fulfill your intended goal?**
- **Conduct a time-inventory. Do you have the time and support to successfully study on your own?**
- **Assess your FOCUS. Do you possess the discipline to see the program through to the end?**

The answers to these questions will help you to decide if a self-study program is the right option for you.

About the Author

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