

What is a Construction Project Manager?

To fully understand what is needed to be a good project manager I strongly suggest that you read the handbook, all of it! There are no secrets to success in whatever profession you choose. Here are a few points of interest:

- Know your subject matter with proficiency,
- Organize all aspects of the project; informational logs for shop drawings, requests for information, transmitting information, tracking communications and reporting on collaboration, etc,
- Schedule each activity as a task that can be accomplished over a given period,
- Maintain the quality of your reporting tools as well as timely reporting
- Sustain the value of the reporting by preserving accuracy throughout from start to completion,
- Manage costs with the skill of a controller,
- Know and use contracts to your advantage.

Knowledge of construction is generally acquired by attending a college or university or similar instruction, like tutelage from a respected source. Once out of school or coaching a very important part of a project manager's continued growth is on the job training. Major companies invest in their employees by offering continuing education programs sponsored by qualified individuals. In seeking employment be certain to ask the interviewer what training is available; if you were to accept a position with the company. Understanding what training programs are available to you will help you focus on your personal development and advancements.

To advance from your present position seek out a company that focuses on employee training as a means to strengthen their position in the industry; for you it's a chance to become better prepared for advancement, for the employer the focus is on retention of employees. Companies with formal training programs are serious companies and they believe in success. Success is about financial gain and, for the training you receive, the expectation is that you will work hard to earn a strong positive reputation among the clients you serve; your success means the company benefits.

Draw a parallel between your current position and the position you would most like to have. Compare your duties now with those of the new position. Although you are doing different things you will see similarities in performance and results. This is the first of many building blocks. For a project manager the next likely step is advancement to the project executive level. Some differences in the roles; the project executive manages the preconstruction process, studies the construction documents, focuses on weaknesses on the drawings and guides the development of a comprehensive budget. Examines the site and recommends options for review by the project manager and superintendent to be analyzed in their preparation of a logistics plan. The project executive supports the preparation of the project schedule, by offering input on resource allocations at strategic times throughout construction. The project manager participates with the estimator in developing the budget, works with the superintendent in establishing the most cost effective logistics plan available and prepares cost information on the impact of the logistics plan to the overall project operations. The project manager is also the master of the schedule. Carefully reviewing the plans and referencing company historic data, the project manager begins the line item creation, activity by activity of the schedule. A simple schedule for simple, smaller projects or an all-inclusive "Critical Path Method" (CPM) schedule and project controls for larger projects. Examples of the types of scheduling that apply to larger projects are listed below.

Construction Project Scheduling

- ✦ **Critical Path Method (CPM) Scheduling**
- ✦ **Program Management Schedules**
- ✦ **Preliminary Schedules**
- ✦ **Periodic Scheduling Updates**
- ✦ **Planned and As-Built Analysis Schedules**
- ✦ **Resource and Cost Loaded Schedules**
- ✦ **Construction Project Acceleration**
- ✦ **Schedule Delay Analysis and Quantification**
- ✦ **Total Float Management**
- ✦ **Time Impact Analysis**
- ✦ **Monte Carlo Risk Simulations**
- ✦ **"What if" Scenarios**
- ✦ **Window Analysis**
- ✦ **Collapsed As-built**

When starting out you also want to request that you are paired with a construction superintendent with several years of experience. His strength will be in constructability, how things get built, and scheduling, when things get put into place. From him you will learn more about how physical things are accomplished, preparing you to place "time in motion" for many tasks, ultimately, allowing you added time to spend on advancing your organizational skills.

Honesty is the utmost important thing. Don't look for a job with a company allowing them to believe you know more than you do. Sell your high points and the good you can bring to their company. Let them see confidence. Ask for training opportunities and explain your desire and goals, your self-purpose and interest in making much more of yourself through learning will be impressive and following strong best practices.

Then, give it your all!