

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Successful programme managers need to exhibit effective leadership, display above-average interpersonal and communication skills and possess the rock solid technical ability across planning, control and risk-mitigation functions.

But there are also the “*it factors*” - those softer skills that differentiate great programme managers from the middle of the pack.

So what are these “*it factors*” and how can one develop them?

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS THEIR GOAL

The Association for Project Management posits there are two types of leaders in programme and project management: transactional and transformational. The transactional leader is all about getting from Point A to Point B, while the transformational leader helps “people succeed in their own right and become leaders themselves.” Which one will you be?



THEY STRIVE FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Our popular Agile Programme Management (AgilePgM®) Foundation Course, enables mid-career professionals to hone their skills by mixing “traditional project management methodologies with agile methods to ensure continuous alignment to a changing business environment.” It’s this focus on up-leveling abilities, especially in agile environments, that puts certain programme managers ahead of the pack.

COACH VS. CONTROLLER

The most successful programme managers will adopt a coaching mentality versus what might have been described in the past as ‘command and control’.

“A leader provides constructive and immediate feedback on the performance of individuals and encourages feedback on their own performance,” says the Association for Project Management. “To enable continual improvement, lessons learned will be shared and success celebrated. Leaders can act as a coach and/or mentor to team members to promote personal growth and development.”

EMPATHY IS EVERYTHING

Speaking at the Agile Australia 2017 conference, keynote guest Esther Derby aimed to explore “a different definition of leadership” among project/programme professionals. Her pitch was that project and programme managers must have the ability to “enhance” their environment “so that everyone is empowered to contribute creatively to solving the problem(s).”

And she’s not the only one thinking along these lines.

Increasingly, companies are discovering their best leaders exhibit high emotional intelligence. In fact, one survey by The Economist found that while C-suite execs were off focusing on honing their hard skills the rank-and-file actually wish these leaders would instead spend their time working on their so-called softer skills.

Tell us: What skills have been the most impactful in your career? How can a programme manager take the next step and transform their organisation?

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