

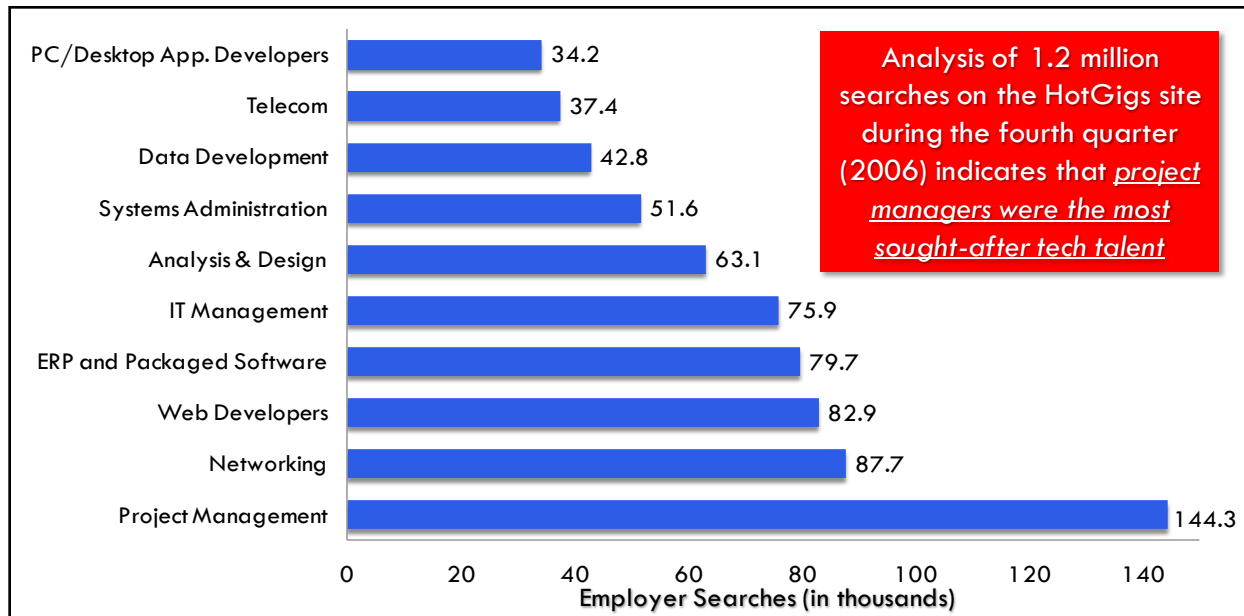
# Is a Career in Project Management Right for You?

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*Michael D. Taylor*

## Project Managers are the Most Sought-After Tech Talent (Information Week, March 20, 2006)



### A Career in Project Management

The need for project managers has never been greater than it is today. Many corporations are looking for trained project managers who can fill the gap between executive managers and the “techies.” This means translating corporate goals into doable projects while speaking the “languages” of both the key stakeholders and the project members.

### The Demand is Increasing

Caitlin Kneram of Salary.com points out that “In the business world, project management is a high level skill, and a demanding career choice. Project managers are key employees in every industry and all types of companies, all over the world. Project Management itself is rapidly becoming one of the most important processes within a company. The number of PMs has risen considerably as companies have begun to realize the valuable benefits they bring to the business.”

Kneram continues, “Project management pays off for companies and it's becoming increasingly

more evident, ‘statistics show there is a higher risk of failure without a project manager, and oftentimes there can be more cost overrun and repeated projects.’ This is why PMs are important when resources are scarce and time is limited, and they cut down on waste and conflict because they “provide good planning up front and improved communication between different groups.”

### Critical Skills

All kinds of projects can benefit from a project manager, from constructing a car to releasing a new software program; managers ensure that projects are completed on time and on budget. Their demanding work requires strong skills in leadership, risk management, team building, and the ability to manage the business aspects of a project.

### The Accidental Profession

Many corporations today will assign the management of a project to someone with superior technical and leadership abilities. The

individual then “inherits” the job as project manager, often without any training. They become project managers accidentally. Unfortunately, without proper training, many project managers hit a wall in their career advancement. Proper project management training is vital.

Kneram continues, “It is important to realize that very few people start out as straight project managers. If you are interested in starting down the project management path, you can start out by vying for key or assistant positions



on a project team and through these types of roles you will gain the experience and knowledge necessary. Start off by getting as much experience in as many areas as you possibly can. Over time you will find yourself taking on more leadership roles and eventually start leading projects of your own. Working in smaller companies will allow you to take on more roles and get more hands-on experience in different areas than you would in a larger company. This will also allow you to determine if project management is the right career for you.”

## How to Get Started

To jump-start your career in project management, [UCSC Extension in Silicon Valley](#) offers professional certification in project and program management. Its PPM certification is one of the profession's most recognized and respected. Many corporations are now starting to require the certification for employment or advancement as a PM. The most successful, upper-level PMs will also have formal business training, usually in the form of an MBA, or a Masters Degree in project management. It is important that PMs also have some financial background or knowledge so that they are able to understand and plan for project

budgeting.

Salary and compensation information for project managers can be found at: [www.projectmgt.com](http://www.projectmgt.com).

## Why UCSC Extension in Silicon Valley?

University of California Santa Cruz Extension in Silicon Valley has been approved as a Global Registered Education Provider (GREP) by the Project Management Institute (PMI). UCSC Extension is the South Bay's only institution of higher education to hold this distinction.

Our project management courses have been approved by three major universities for credit toward a Master's Degree in Project and Program Management.

Our staff of highly qualified instructors is one of the best in the nation.

Most students attend our classes because of referrals—by those who have taken the classes and have found them to be highly effective in their every day working environments.

Our courses are geared toward practical application, not high-sounding theory.

Students completing the Project and Program Management Certificate Program have had a high success rate in passing the nationally recognized PMP examination.

Many of our in-class courses are also offered online, so students can take courses at either our Cupertino facility, or at home working around their schedules.

Most of our courses are offered during weekday evenings from 6:30 to 9:30 PM, and Saturdays, so students don't have to miss work.

You won't beat our low costs.

## Contact Information

For more information about the UCSC  
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