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Assessing Project Management Skills
to Develop Career and Training Paths

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Agenda

- ▶ The importance of critical skills in combination with technical skills
- ▶ Core competencies for project managers
- ▶ Gathering information and evaluating to develop a baseline
- ▶ Best practices in gathering information/data
- ▶ Best practices for developing new skills and strengthening current skills
- ▶ Summary
- ▶ Q&A


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A focus on critical skills needed...

- ▶ Required for project management success
- ▶ Higher the position in the organization = critical skills more important than technical skills
- ▶ PMBOK® focus still more on technical skills than critical skills
 - ▶ Interpersonal skills in Appendix G
 - ▶ Project HR Management: limited focus on building the team
 - ▶ Project Communication Management: limited focus on building relationships
- ▶ Organizations focus more often on the technical skills


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Critical skills are good for business...

- ▶ Work with a number of clients – from very small to much larger organizations – has shown that a focus on the critical skills for project managers has enabled:
 - ▶ Increased productivity among team members
 - ▶ Improved time-to-market for products and services
 - ▶ Improved retention of project managers and team members
 - ▶ Reductions in budgets and timelines
 - ▶ Increased customer – internal and external – satisfaction
 - ▶ Improved profitability
 - ▶ Better relationships
- ▶ ...But organizations must provide opportunities for project managers to develop these skills

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 **Technical skills seem easier to gauge...**

- ▶ **Technical skills (think PMBOK®)**
 - ▶ Creating the WBS
 - ▶ Setting up the schedule
 - ▶ Developing the budget
- ▶ **Easier for organizations to measure the “hard skills” of a project manager or project team member**
 - ▶ Either correct or incorrect



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 **Core (critical) competencies of project managers...**

- ▶ **Start with those interpersonal skills identified by PMI® as essential to project management success:**
 - ▶ Leadership
 - ▶ Team building
 - ▶ Motivation
 - ▶ Communication
 - ▶ Influencing
 - ▶ Decision making
 - ▶ Political and cultural awareness
 - ▶ Negotiation




PMI® A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, 4th Edition, Appendix G, page 409

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 **Small Group Discussion** 

- ▶ What critical skills do you find most essential in your role?
- ▶ How do you develop those skills or how have you developed those skills?
- ▶ What were your challenges?




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 **Additional core competencies...**

- ▶ Customer focus
- ▶ Work across boundaries
- ▶ Emotional self awareness
- ▶ External awareness
- ▶ Resilience
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Performance accountability
- ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ Network/relationship building
- ▶ Strategic thinking
- ▶ Contingency thinking
- ▶ Interpersonal understanding
- ▶ Visionary team leadership
- ▶ Professional confidence

Identified through work with clients on developing project management best practices, processes and PMOs.
And frankly...common sense too!


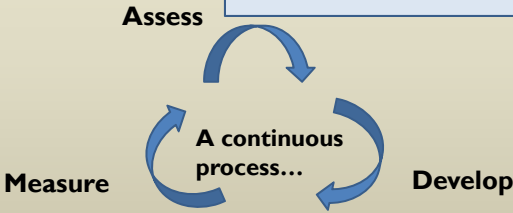
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What competencies are needed...

- ▶ **Competencies**
 - ▶ **Skills:** What are you able to do?
 - ▶ **Knowledge:** What do you know?
 - ▶ **Attributes:** How will you interact with others?


✓ **The combination of Skills – Knowledge – Attributes describe a “highly successful performer” within the organization.**



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How were competencies evaluated....


 **Socializing was key!**

Best Practice

- ▶ Online surveys to gather initial data (subjective)
- ▶ Objective assessments
- ▶ Small group follow up interviews
- ▶ One-on-one follow up interviews to gauge extent to which project manager or project team member possesses the competency or behavior
- ▶ Conversations with team members, project sponsors and customers
- ▶ Conversations with leaders/executives/BoDs in organization
- ▶ Review of past projects within organization

By developing a baseline – able to create strategic development plans and secure the budget

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Let's look at an example...

Performance Accountability: The ability to hold team members accountable to high standards of performance on projects using influencing skills and effective communication.

Communicates high standards to team	Sets clear, consistent expectations and goals with team	Monitors performance of team members; looks for gaps	Holds team members accountable; consequences for unproductive behavior	Takes effective action to address performance issues
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More junior... ...More senior


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Questions we might ask....

- ▶ Describe a time when...
 - You had to emphasize to your team the importance of high standards on a project.
 - You had to confront a team member about his/her poor performance.
- ▶ To probe further...
 - What led up to the situation?
 - What steps did you take?
 - Who was involved?
 - How did the team member react?
 - What was the outcome?

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Let's look at another example...

External Awareness: Understanding of and a broad awareness of information and data related to the business and the customers that enables for improved decision making and the ability to see obstacles early on in the project.

Uses available information or looks to other resources to research issues	Has a broader scope of knowledge and ability to find out information to apply to current issues	Uses a variety of sources above and beyond obvious and digs deeper to make better decisions	Develops relationships to keep information flowing; establishes systems and works with team to help them do same	Requires teams to contribute to resolution of issues and decision making by following set processes, systems, etc.
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More junior... ...More senior

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Questions we might ask....

- ▶ Describe a time when...
 - You learned about your particular industry both nationally and globally.
 - You developed strong networks to gather information on a regular, ongoing basis.
- ▶ To probe further...
 - What led up to the situation?
 - How did you approach the task?
 - Who was involved?
 - What was the outcome?

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Development of strategic learning and development plans..

- ▶ Key component of the learning plans:
 - ▶ Assessments – online and face-to-face
 - ▶ Training
 - ▶ Team building activities
 - ▶ Mentoring
 - ▶ Opportunities to work in other areas of the business
 - ▶ Stretch assignments
 - ▶ Collaboration portal
 - ▶ With just-in-time learning modules
 - ▶ Action planning
- ▶ Are opportunities provided for all levels of project management staff?
- ▶ Length of program considerations
- ▶ Business impact and ROI

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Continuous learning is key...

- ▶ A best practice = continuous learning
- ▶ And not simply training classes...

✓ Challenging projects	✓ Co-project manager responsibilities
✓ Mentoring	✓ Attendance at conferences, industry events
✓ Building networks/relationships	✓ Online resources, blogs, newsletters, portals, discussion portals
✓ Associations/groups	✓ Webinars/podcasts
✓ Action plans	✓ Small group support



**Control your own destiny!
Don't rely on the organization to provide you learning opportunities.**

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 **Development of the team is the project manager's responsibility too...**

- ▶ Provide opportunities for team members
 - ▶ Partner junior with more senior
 - ▶ Enable for work on special projects
 - ▶ Enable leadership roles
- ▶ Let team members to do their jobs
 - ▶ Provide parameters to work within
- ▶ Understand how teams develop
 - ▶ 4 Stages of Team Development

1. Forming 2. Storming	3. Norming 4. Performing
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- ▶ Enable for leadership roles within the project

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 **Summary...**

- ▶ Key success factors:
 - ▶ Make the case for the need for critical skills in addition to technical
 - ▶ Socialize the initiative – including among the project managers!
 - ▶ Gather the data beforehand – information is necessary for long-term success
 - ▶ Use a variety of methods to evaluate skills
 - ▶ Be creative in ways to develop new skills and strengthen current skills



 **Remember...it is a continuous effort.**

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Contact information...

Any questions?

Thank you for your time!

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