



Department of Defense 2014 Study of Program Manager Training and Experience

Brief to the Hot Topic Training Forum
August 21, 2014



OSD Study of PM Training and Experience

- **Purpose of this Study**
- **Methodology**
- **Responses to 22 Program Manager Challenges**
 - Training/Experience: “Sufficient” vs “Not Sufficient” or “Uncertain”
 - 2014 vs 2009
- **Findings**
 - Area 1. The Topics of Training
 - Area 2. The Methods of Training
 - Area 3. Acquisition Experience and Careers
- **Recommendations**
- **Summary**



Purpose of this Study

- Discuss the training, qualifications, and experience of Department of Defense (DoD) program managers (PMs) responsible for managing engineering development and production programs.
- Identify opportunities to improve the training and experience of future program managers of major acquisition programs through
 - Additional training
 - Improvements in training and/or
 - Additional experience requirements for program manager candidates.
- Serve as an update to a similar study conducted in 2009.
- Respond to Joint Explanatory Statement to accompany the FY14 NDAA:

The Senate committee-reported bill contained a provision (sec. 803) that would require the Secretary of Defense to submit an updated version of the 2009 Department of Defense report titled: "OSD Study of Program Manager Training and Experience" not later than 120 days from enactment of this Act.



Methodology

Interview Questions

- Was the acquisition training sufficiently practical and comprehensive to enable you to manage or deal effectively with each of the 22 major challenge areas?
- What acquisition experiences or assignments are necessary/desirable to prepare future program managers for the challenges they will encounter on major acquisition programs?
- Has the training and experience of functional support staff been adequate?
- Are you aware of rewards for a program manager who completes an acquisition program on or below budget?
- Are you aware of penalties for a program manager whose program exceeds its budget?
- Are you aware of rewards for a program manager who undertakes and achieves cost reductions on a program?

Recommendations

- 5 Short term
- 3 Long term



Findings

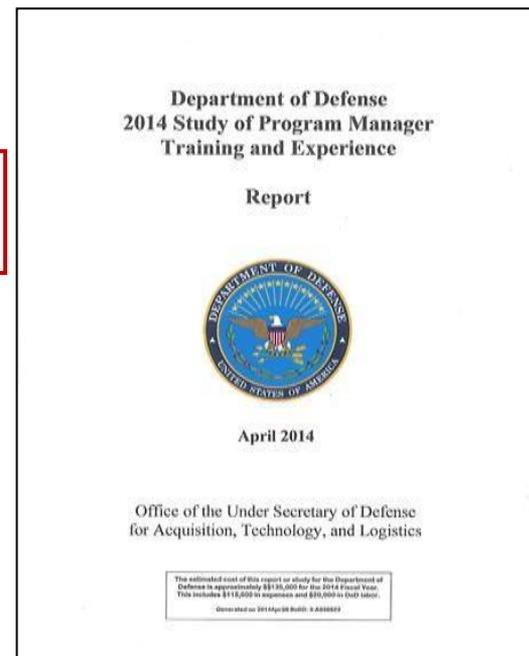
- Topics of Training
- Methods of Training
- Acquisition Experience and Careers



- Over 1,000 comments
- Yielding 14 Findings



- **59 Participants** (USA, USAF, USN, USMC)
 - 73 % Military
 - 27 % Civilian
- Hour long telephonic interviews
- Not-for-attribution





Comparison of PMs' Challenges 2014 vs. 2009

Percentage of 2014 vs 2009 program managers answering "yes" to "Was the acquisition training sufficiently practical and comprehensive to enable you to manage or deal effectively with [each of these 22 PM challenges]?"

<u>Challenges</u>	<u>"Yes"</u>		Difference between 2014 and 2009
	<u>2014</u>	<u>2009</u>	
Performing/Using Earned Value	81%	37%	+44
Understanding and Using Government Financial Reports	75%	55%	+20
Systems Engineering Process Challenges	71%	53%	+18
Dealing with Technical Requirements	64%	51%	+13
Attaining Technical Requirements	56%	43%	+13
Responding to Inquiries from Outside DoD	56%	53%	+3
Conducting Test and Evaluation	56%	51%	+5
Managing Risk and Opportunity	56%	49%	+7
Implementing Logistics/Product Support	56%	45%	+11
Responding to Directed Changes in Schedule	56%	41%	+15
Responding to OSD Inquiries	54%	55%	-1
Dealing with Contracts on a Program	53%	59%	-6
Overseeing Contractor Performance	53%	31%	+22
Responding to User Requirements	51%	41%	+10
Responding to Military Service Inquiries	51%	63%	-12
Understanding & Using Contractor Financial Reports	49%	39%	+10
Developing Cost Estimates	44%	27%	+17
Responding to Directed Changes in Funding	42%	43%	-1
Conducting Source Selections	39%	45%	-6
Dealing with Cost Growth	32%	14%	+18
Managing Software Development	24%	25%	-1
Implementing Cost Controls	24%	25%	-1
Average	52%	43%	+9

15 challenges in the list received "yes" from >50% of the interview participants.

15 challenge areas showed positive trend (more "yes" responses).

7 challenges received "yes" from < 50% of the interview participants.

7 challenge areas received fewer "yes" replies.



Findings: Area 1 - Topics of Training

- i. PMs describe training courses (PMT 352, 401, and 402) as significant positive contributions to preparation for assignments as PMs of major acquisition programs. Regardless, there is a need for additional and more detailed case studies and examples.
- ii. PMs express a need for additional Should Cost training in greater depth and clarity, containing examples of conducting / using Should Cost and Earned Value applications.
- iii. PMs express a need for more examples and exercises in software management training that describe metrics for measuring progress, common causes of failures, and ways to avoid them.
- iv. PMs express a need for additional training and skill development in dealing with acquisition cost growth. Training needs to include information on causes of cost growth as well as knowledge and skill development on how to avoid and minimize cost growth.
- v. PMs express a need for deeper and more comprehensive training in industry operations, including information on incentives and financial reporting.
- vi. PMs express a need for more practical training and practice sessions in conducting comprehensive oversight of contractor performance that include realistic examples and case studies portraying the challenges encountered, steps to be taken and avoided.



Findings: Area 2 - Methods of Training

- vii. DAU courses are strong contributors to program manager acquisition knowledge and skill. Nonetheless, PMs describe the need for **more “hands-on”** practical training and “how to” **best practices**.
- viii. A strong majority of PMs repeatedly cited a need for greater content depth and more applications.
- ix. PMs ask for additional short, focused training sessions (of 1-2, 2-3 days) across multiple topics and functional areas, tailored wherever possible to the specific programs to which the PMs will be assigned or are currently working.
- x. PMs suggested and/or implied that other institutions (Naval Postgraduate School, University of Virginia, University of North Carolina, University of Tennessee, PMI, etc.) may offer OSD/DAU benchmarking opportunities for program manager training.
- xi. PMs did not indicate they were using DAU mission assistance (formerly known as Performance Support) - targeted training, tailored training, and consulting, and knowledge sharing (KS). These valuable learning assets allow the acquisition workforce access to focused assistance and information 24/7.



Findings: Area 3 - Acquisition Experience and Careers

- xii. There is a continuing basic need for early and more aggressive career planning and implementation for ACAT I/II PMs, both military and civilian, to ensure they acquire knowledge and experience from preparatory assignments and experiences necessary for proficient management of ACAT I/II acquisition programs.
- xiii. More rigorous personnel screening is necessary to select PM candidates with business, engineering and technical backgrounds and skills needed to produce more proficient PMs.
- xiv. Aside from personal satisfaction of a job well done, most PMs are unaware of any incentives for completing an acquisition program on or below budget. Correspondingly, they are unaware of any penalties for completing acquisition programs above budget although, when the amount over budget is significant, PMs are perceived as likely to be removed from their positions.



Recommendations - Near Term

1. Develop/incorporate more case studies, simulations, exercises based on field study
 - Benchmark other universities/training orgs for proven practices
 - Cover topics highlighted in this study
2. Expand and advertise Outreach and Mission Assistance
 - Just-in-time training and consulting
 - Workshops should cover topics highlighted in this study
3. User-friendly knowledge sharing for lessons learned, proven practices, successes
 - Used as resource for teaching & searchable by practicing PMs and staffs
4. Clearer, more tangible recognition, incentives & promotion opportunities for outstanding program management
5. PMs should receive required training prior to arriving at assignment. OSD should track waivers.



Recommendations - Long Term

1. Establish means to track acquisition experience
 - In the interim, seek means to document acquisition OJT and experience
2. Designate military officers into acquisition earlier in their careers
 - Too little opportunity for adequate development to be MDAP PMs
3. More aggressively manage civilian acquisition workforce
 - Rewards and encouragement for civilians to broaden experiences and seek PM positions



Summary

- There has been a substantial improvement in a number of key areas since 2009; areas needing improvement have been identified.
- Additional/better training is needed for software management, cost control, and understanding industry.
- DAU courses are believed to be strong contributors to program manager acquisition knowledge and skill – but training could be improved with more specific examples, case studies, and best practices.
- There is a need for greater career management to ensure PMs have requisite training and experience before leading large, complex programs.
- As with the 2009 report, results will help guide the best use of limited resources.



Questions??

