

KEEP YOUR PMP STUDIES SIMPLE AND FOCUSED

Result:

I passed my PMP with a “Proficient” score in all the 5 Knowledge Areas, in my very first attempt.

Lessons Learned:

1. Start with a Plan. Plan on what to read, Plan on your study schedule, Plan on your exam date. Keep your plan brief so that you are able to stick to it.
2. Keep your studies simple and focused. Read ONE book thoroughly, following all instructions in the book to the dot. Use the PMBOK guide as a reference guide all long. It is not essential to read / study more than one book / same book twice, if your first reading is thorough.
3. Attempt mock exams especially the Simulators that offer 200 questions to be answered in 4 hours (*without a pause*). It prepares you for the real test, in every aspect.
4. Review & analyse your mock exam results. As mentioned earlier refer the PMBOK guide all along while understanding your results.
5. Join a forum to raise queries / doubts & read about experiences. Very soon you'll be the one to answer queries 😊
6. Prior experience working in a project team is a valuable knowledge asset.

My Story:

In Jan '13, I had joined PMI as a member with intent to appear for the PMP exam soon. I had commenced my studies with the PMBOK guide but wasn't able to progress due to increasing commitments on the work & family front and also due to the PMBOK writing style. In my opinion the PMBOK writing style doesn't encourage reading since it doesn't explain the content in simple terms.....well at least not in the earlier chapters. My studies just ended abruptly.

In Nov '14, I decided to re-start my studies. However based on the learning from my past experience, I decided to take-on a simple-to-read book and bought Rita Mulcahy's PMP Exam Prep – 8th Edition.

I read this book once thoroughly over a period of 3-4 months, taking all the tests at the end of each chapter; I couldn't devote more than 1 – 2 hours each day. While reading through this book, I also browsed the internet to check other tools & means of studying / understanding.....something which could guarantee me success in the PMP exam. Of the many websites I browsed, Shiv Shenoy's PM Exam Smart Notes (PMESN) was the most appealing.

In early Mar '15, I joined Shiv's PMESN blog. Through his blog Shiv had explained all the major concepts in brief & simple-to-understand language. Shiv also had made sincere recommendations to try the PM Prepcast & PM Exam Simulator. I decided to follow Shiv's recommendations after some free trials.

By mid-Mar '15, I scheduled my PMP exam. I fixed the exam date for 23-Jun-15 after taking into consideration external influences (*work, family, etc.*) that could impact me in any way during the one week before the exam.

By mid-Apr'15, I had purchased both the PM Prepcast & PM Exam Simulator & began listening to the podcasts every day. It took me quite a while to complete listening all of the podcasts. I believe, I must have followed every tip in the podcast right from sequencing the chapters to listen, to visiting

the Prometric exam centre a week before the exam day, to taking the exams at the end of each Knowledge Area, etc.

One week before the exam day, I took off from work. I had completed listening to all podcasts and was now ready to activate my purchase of the PM Exam Simulator. Every morning I took one of the nine exams offered in the Simulator & by afternoon I would be analysing the results. It took me more time to analyse the results. I not only reviewed questions where I had answered incorrectly, but also looked at my correct answers, just to ensure my understanding was aligned.

On 23-Jun-15, after resting well the night before, I reached the exam centre one hour before my scheduled exam time; my exam was scheduled at 9:00 AM. The trip to the exam centre a week before had made me aware of all logistical issues that I would have had to deal with, had it been my first trip. I had kept the required identification documents ready overnight.

After all necessary checks, I was guided to my desk where I would take the PMP exam online. Once the online instructions were done, I commenced my brain-dump. My brain-dump was limited to listing the 47 processes in order and writing all the mathematical formulas for Earned Value analysis.

I started with quite a few questions being marked for review, but steadily began to answer subsequent questions. There weren't many ITTO related questions, although many were situational & quite a few required math. I maintained my speed as I had during the mock exams. I believe the tests in the Simulator fell somewhere between at par & slightly tougher than the real PMP exam.

I had 45 minutes for reviewing all my answers; I completed my exam well before time.

After taking the survey, at the end of the exam, the screen displayed a message congratulating me on passing the exam. Before leaving the exam centre I was handed a result sheet which stated my proficiency levels. I was extremely delighted to notice then that I had achieved "Proficient" result in in each of the 5 Knowledge Areas.

Thank You:

A few primary contributors to my success whom I wish to convey my heartfelt thanks:

- Cornelius Fichtner & his team for PM PrepCast & PM Exam Simulators. These immensely helped with my preparation for the PMP exam.
- Shiv Shenoy for his PMESN blog. The notes on his blog are extremely good revision tools. Also I wouldn't have learned about PM PrepCast had it not been for Shiv!
- PMBOK Guide & Rita Mulcahy's PMP Exam Prep
- Friends & Family for their motivation & sacrifices.

