

Press Release

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A Missing Discipline in the Profession: Why Project Business Deserves Its Own Standards and Credentials

MUNICH — The project management profession has spent four decades refining how organizations run projects inside their walls. Yet by conservative estimate, 20 to 30 percent of global GDP is generated by projects that cross corporate boundaries — projects performed by contractors for paying customers, often through multi-tier networks of suppliers. More than half of practicing project managers worldwide work in this cross-corporate environment, and almost none of the established credentials were designed for it.

The Project Business Foundation, a non-profit think tank founded by Oliver F. Lehmann, has spent the last several years arguing that this gap is not a footnote but a structural blind spot in the profession. Its response is the Project Business Professional (PBP) qualification and certification — a credential explicitly built for the realities of customer–contractor project work, where margin, contract, scope of work, and stakeholder alignment across organizations are first-order concerns rather than afterthoughts.

"Internal-project frameworks teach project managers to deliver to a sponsor," Lehmann says.

"Project business teaches them to deliver to a counterparty — someone whose interests are partly aligned and partly opposed, governed by a contract. That changes everything: the role of the schedule, the meaning of scope creep, the politics of change requests, the ethics of margin. The PBP exists because that body of knowledge needs its own home."

The PBP qualification is delivered through Accredited Education Partners as a two-day trainer-led seminar based on the Project Business Compendium, with the certification exam administered at the close of the second day. Its curriculum spans four areas familiar to seasoned practitioners but rarely treated together: project management for project business, commercial management, contract and legal fundamentals, and the organizational and interpersonal dimensions of cross-corporate work. PMI credential holders can claim 14 PDUs for the qualification course.

For the project management literature, the more interesting development may be conceptual rather than commercial. The PBP body of knowledge formalizes a vocabulary — temporary profit centers, project supply networks, cross-corporate stakeholder geometry — that the academic and practitioner press has been circling for years without consolidating. PM World Journal readers will recognize many of the underlying ideas from Lehmann's long-running column on project business; the PBP is the structured form they now take.

Whether the credential becomes a fixture of the global PM landscape will depend on adoption by employers and on the rigor of the examination over time. What is already clear is that a profession that has long acknowledged the customer–contractor divide in private now has a public artifact built around it.

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About the Project Business Foundation: The Project Business Foundation is a non-profit think tank serving organizations and professionals engaged in cross-corporate project business — projects in which customers, contractors, and partners collaborate under contract. It offers two credentials: the Project Business Professional (PBP) for practitioners, and the Approved Consultant and Educator in Project Business (ACE) for trainers, coaches, and consultants. More at project-business.org.



About Oliver F. Lehmann: Oliver F. Lehmann, MSc, ACE, PMP, is the founder of the Project Business Foundation, a long-standing contributor to PM World Journal, past president of the PMI Southern Germany Chapter, and the author of *Situational Project Management* and *Project Business Management* (Taylor & Francis).