

PRESS RELEASE

In an AI Economy, Judgment Is the New Job Security: PMI Refreshes the PMP® Certification to Validate the Skills That Outlast the Tools

As AI churns through technical skills at record speed, the updated Project Management Professional (PMP)® exam, launching 9 July, focuses on the durable and enduring capabilities employers can't automate

PHILADELPHIA, July 9, 2026 — Roughly half of the technical skills a professional relies on today could be obsolete within five years, and in an economy reshaped by AI, uncertainty and skills scrutiny, employers are placing greater value on project professionals who can turn strategy into results. Launching today, the updated [Project Management Professional \(PMP\)®](#) exam, the most trusted professional certification for the project management profession, is built to validate the skills that survive the churn of tools and technology. The updated certification arrives at a moment when certified project talent is emerging as a critical business asset and demand for project talent is accelerating. Organizations will need up to 30 million new project professionals by 2035, and employers are increasingly hiring for proven execution over pedigree.

As Dr. Kelly Heuer, VP of Learning at PMI explains, “We view professional capability on a spectrum: perishable skills, the specific tools, platforms and techniques that are essential only for today; durable skills, the frameworks and fluency that travel intact from one tool to the next; and enduring capabilities, the judgment and mindsets that compound across an entire career. AI is accelerating the decay of the perishable skills while raising the premium on durable and enduring skills.”

For over 40 years, the Project Management Professional® certification has been the gold standard and this next iteration continues to reiterate its critical place in driving impact for professionals and organizations working to drive up project success. “Organizations are looking for people who can do more than manage task completion,” said Pierre Le Manh, CEO and President at Project Management Institute. “Today, professionals are being asked to prove they can navigate ambiguity, align complex stakeholders’ expectations, and think critically to turn ideas into outcomes. This is how you deliver impact in the modern world of work. Using AI tools on its own is not enough to deliver project success.”

Why the Distinction Matters Now

As AI and automation reshape work, organizations need project professionals who can turn change into clear direction, aligned teams and measurable results. PMI® research shows that execution excellence is now a corporate priority.

- CEOs cited their top barrier to reinvention is a disconnect between planning and execution (35%), closely followed by a failure to continuously upgrade talent for the future (34%).¹
- Project professionals who manage complexity effectively are five times more likely to increase project success, highlighting that workers who proactively build modern project skills gain a significant competitive edge.²

The refreshed PMP exam helps professionals build the skills to thrive in a fast-moving world, turn change into opportunity, and lead projects with confidence. The new exam places greater emphasis on business alignment, strategic decision-making, sustainability and real-world delivery in AI-powered environments. It is designed to validate the capabilities organizations increasingly prize: structuring work, clarifying ownership, orchestrating stakeholders, measuring impact, and maintaining momentum when conditions shift.

“We continue to evolve the PMP certification so it remains the most trusted skills validation for project professionals - rigorous, relevant and aligned with how work is changing,” said Le Manh. That relevance is landing at a moment when the broader labor market is rewarding demonstrable skills over pedigree alone.

The Market Is Rewarding It

Demand for the PMP certification is climbing as workers look for credible ways to stand out in a disrupted job market. In the first five months of 2026, PMP certifications granted increased by 36% year over year. And the payoff is measurable: PMI [research](#) shows U.S. professionals holding a PMP certification report a median salary of \$135,000, nearly 24% higher than those without it.

The latest global customer survey conducted by PMI found that satisfaction with the PMP certification remains strong:

- 69% of PMP certification holders say it gives them a competitive advantage.
- 83% say it enhances their resume.
- Among those certified within the past 36 months, 75% reported at least one career benefit from earning it, including increased confidence in decision-making (53%) and new career opportunities (40%).

For Kauser Ali Bandukwala, a construction project professional, the PMP certification was a reset button after a layoff: “I kept seeing openings for project management roles, realized I had been doing the work all along, and chose the PMP certification because it was accessible and let me validate my skills quickly. After two months of study I passed, pivoted into construction project management, and haven’t looked back.” For Ordonna Sargeant, an adjunct professor of project management at Metropolitan College of New York, it changed her earning power: “Earning the PMP

¹PMI 2025 CEO Quantitative Survey includes responses from 300 senior executives across regions and industries for the *Manifesto for Enterprise Agility* research.

² PMI Pulse of the Profession 2026, [Driving Success in Complex Projects: From Navigating Tasks to Navigating Systems](#).

helped me move into a six-figure bracket and advance with confidence.” And for Krista McCalley, a Project Manager at Insight Global, it accelerated a career pivot from a new coordinator role to a project manager promotion within nine months.

The updated [PMP](#) exam is available beginning 9 July 2026.

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