

Three Metrics You Need to Know to Measure the Effectiveness of Your On-Site Trainings

By Michelle LaBrosse, CCPM, PMP®, PMI-ACP, Chief Cheetah and Founder of Cheetah Learning

Project Managers, and especially certified Project Managers, know first-hand the value of quality training for their own professional development and effectiveness. Being a PMP, after all, requires PMs to pursue ongoing education to maintain their credential. The Project Management Institute's recent *Pulse of the Profession* report further confirms the value of PM training; in their 2015 study, they found that "80 percent of high-performing organizations offer ongoing training for project managers."¹ Training isn't valuable only for individual employees, then; it improves the performance of a whole organization.

Project Managers also know, however, that not all training programs are created equal. How, then, can organizations and their leaders evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the trainings they offer? Here at Cheetah Learning, training evaluations ultimately need to measure real-world results. For Project Management training, we find there are three key metrics of training effectiveness: bottom-line financial measures, exam pass rates of employees, and employee effectiveness. We'll explore these in the case of Cheetah's own evaluation of the effectiveness of one of its most popular courses: its Cheetah Exam Prep® for PMP® Exam program held on-site for corporate clients.

First Metric: Bottom-Line Financial Measures

To evaluate how well our on-site PMP training helps the financial bottom line of our corporate clients, Cheetah tracks the profitability and growth rates of these organizations. Since we have provided regular trainings for many of our publicly traded corporate clients for ten years or more, we were able to examine the historical data on their organization's profitability and growth alongside the on-site trainings we provided to that organization each year based on their publicly available annual reports. We were not surprised to find that 90% of Cheetah corporate clients increased their profitability and that 85% of them increased their growth rate in the year immediately following retaining Cheetah Learning for their on-site PM training needs.

Regardless of the type of training program your organization brings on board, measuring the long-term effects on your company's profitability and growth is crucial to evaluating that training's effectiveness. This metric is most reliable when you are able to measure the effectiveness of training programs offered regularly over a long period of time.

Second Metric: Exam Pass Rates

A second, crucial metric that we here at Cheetah use to measure the effectiveness of our on-site accelerated PMP prep program is perhaps the most obvious: how many employees who go through our program actually *pass* the exam (and pass it the day after they complete the course). To track this, we keep in close contact with all of our program alumni to find out if they passed the exam and what their next career moves are. This is built into our program, as we refund the money of those who do not pass. Through these efforts, we have found that while the first-try pass rate for the Project Management Professional (PMP)® exam is estimated to be approximately 60 percent, 98 percent of students who go through Cheetah Learning's Cheetah Exam Prep® for PMP® Exam program pass the test.

Even if your training program does not culminate in an exam like the PMP, you can still use an exam format to measure the training's effectiveness. Good trainers could (and should) end their program with a knowledge assessment to see how well employees that went through their program assimilated the information presented.

¹ <http://www.pmi.org/Learning/professional-development/Career-Central/tips-to-measure-PM-training.aspx>

Third Metric: Employee Effectiveness

Lastly, in between the “macro-level” measures of an organization’s finances and the “micro-level” exam scores of employees who go through a training program, organizations must assess employee effectiveness. Here at Cheetah, we strive to provide training that does more than give people the knowledge to pass the PMP exam; we also want to influence them to tap into their unique strengths that allow them to reach their potential in their careers. One way to measure this, we’ve found, is with the concept of self-efficacy.

A recent study looked at the effect of taking a PMP exam prep program on Project Managers’ sense of “self-efficacy” - that is, their self-perception of their abilities to accomplish a task or goal. Self-efficacy strongly influences how well people actually perform in their work. The study measured the self-efficacy of 111 Project Managers before and after taking a PMP exam prep course (95 percent of survey participants took Cheetah Exam Prep® for PMP® Exam) to see how this course affected students’ perceptions of their own abilities. The research showed people felt a stronger sense of self-efficacy after taking Cheetah’s course. This was no surprise to us, as Cheetah specifically designs its programs to increase students’ self-efficacy. Still, it was nice though to have this validated by a third party.

The types of metrics you choose to evaluate the effectiveness of your organization’s training programs will, of course, depend on the trainings your organization uses. But regardless of whether these are high-stakes trainings that require employees to pass a globally recognized certification exam where everyone’s reputation is at stake (including the organization’s), or lower-stakes trainings focused on soft skills, measuring the effectiveness of training programs is the best way to know which trainings are adding value to your organization - and which need to be either improved or eliminated.

To learn more about Cheetah Learning’s on-site Cheetah Exam Prep® for PMP® Exam program and how to bring this award-winning training to your organization, contact the company at (888) 659-2013 or info@cheetahlearning.com.

About the Author:



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is an entrepreneurial powerhouse with a penchant for making success easy, fun, and fast. She is the founder of [Cheetah Learning](#), the author of the Cheetah Success Series, and a prolific [blogger](#) whose mission is to bring Project Management to the masses.

Cheetah Learning is a virtual company with 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide. To date, more than 50,000 people have become “Cheetahs” using Cheetah Learning’s innovative Project Management and accelerated learning techniques.

Michelle also developed the [Cheetah Certified Project Manager \(CCPM\)](#) program based on Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality profiling to help students master how to use their unique strengths for learning, doing projects, and negotiating. CCPM graduates are able to choose the right projects and complete those projects “cheetah fast” based on their personality. They also learn how to leverage others’ strengths which significantly improves overall project team performance. When an employer has a cadre of CCPMs on staff, they achieve whatever they set out to achieve in record time. This is why over 90% of Cheetah’s clients experience an increase in both profitability and revenue within the first year of retaining Cheetah Learning for their Project Management training needs.

Honored by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), Cheetah Learning was named Professional Development Provider of the Year at the 2008 PMI® Global Congress. A dynamic keynote speaker and industry thought leader, Michelle is recognized by PMI as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the world.