What are the Commonalities and Differences Between Prince2 and Pmbok?

By: John Reiling | **Posted:** 22-01-2008

As the most common standards in the world for the discipline of Project Management, what are the commonalities and differences between the Project Management Institute's "Project Management Body of Knowledge" (PMBOK) and the British government's "Projects in Controlled Environments" (PRINCE2)?

PRINCE2 is a series of Processes, Components and Techniques suitable for any size or subject of project. According to some, it describes what a project manager should do. I would think that a PRINCE2 practitioner must possess knowledge in order to execute on the specified actions! PRINCE2 is most prevalent in the UK, but does have an extensive and growing worldwide following.

The PMBOK is a collection of knowledge areas and process groups. According to some, it describes what a Project Manager should know. I would think that, in order to be effective, a project manager would make this knowledge actionable! The PMI has the largest following - more than PRINCE2 - and is very much worldwide, although more prevalent in the Untied states.

It would seem that a complete Project Manager should have knowledge of both. It would also seem that PMPs (the Project Management Professional certification of the PMI) can earn PDUs by completing PRINCE2 Training. PRINCE2 practitioners do not need to complete the equivalent of PDUs, but do need to take a re-certification exam every 5 years, and are encouraged to access continuing project management information on pm4success.com site, which is accessible only to PRINCE2 practitioners.

There are some thought-provoking studies out there on the topic of how PRINCE2 and PMBOK fit together. The can be found at Advantage Learning, and after registering go to the Member Downloads page. There are 3 white papers comparing PRINCE2 and PMI / PMBOK available, including:

Implementing PRINCE2 in a PMBOK environment

How PRINCE2 can complement PMBOK and your PMP

The Getronics PRINCE2 - PMI / PMBOK Combination Case Study

Testimonials

I've just started a new contract as Project Office Manager and the client was waiting for my PRINCE2 exam result before signing the contract. The training helped me in getting this new assignment and promotion as a Manager.

Nagendra Prasad, Project Office Manager, Corporate IT

I just thought I'd let you know that as a result of passing the PRINCE2 Practitioner exams, I have been able to secure a sizeable Systems Implementation Project Management contract for a Local Authority. In addition, applying the PRINCE2 principles has made such a difference to getting the work done. In earlier contracts it was difficult to convince users of the benefits of strong Project Management disciplines, now PRINCE2 allows everyone to work to clearly defined objectives and in a structured approach.

I would like to add that passing the examination would not have been possible without your excellent training and also your personal input. At the end of the week's training, I felt not only confident in taking the examination, I also felt I had fully absorbed the fundamentals of PRINCE2. Which was not bad considering this was the first week long training course and examination I had taken in 20 years!

I hope your impressive success rate continues – once again my thanks for your help.

Frank Bramwell, Director, Network Associates

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About the Author:
I grew up in Pittsburgh, PA, where I went to Central Catholic High School. I excelled at football and basketball. I went to college at Princeton and earned a BS in Engineering. I then entered a career in industry, working in mining, manufacturing, metal fabricating, environmental services, and othr related industries. Along the way I earned my MBA from Carnegie Mellon. After about 12 years I made a switch into the information technology field, and became a Lotus Notes developer. I gradually moved into project management in that field. Today, I am in the project management consulting field, and have several web sites, including Project Management Training Online, Lean Six Sigma Training Online, and a growing authority site PMcrunch.com.

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