

# Professional & Social Responsibility

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Although the *PMBOK® Guide* does not include a chapter dedicated to professional and social responsibility, it is an important aspect of a project manager's job. Project managers are responsible for upholding the standards of the profession as their actions can have positive impacts on the project and the organization, as well as on the profession as a whole. If someone with a PMP certification does not act professionally and ethically, the credibility of the certification and the practice of project management is diminished. For this reason, concepts related to professional and social responsibility are tested throughout the exam. Be aware that professional and social responsibility should be part of everything a project manager does, from project initiating to closing.

To study this topic, read and make sure you understand the concepts discussed in this chapter. Be honest with yourself about what you know and do not know, and identify gaps in your knowledge. It's important to know that these gaps do not make you an unethical project manager. We all have gaps we need to fill.

In addition, you should review and understand PMI's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct ([pmi.org/codeofethics](http://pmi.org/codeofethics)) since many questions on the exam relate directly to that code. The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct breaks down professional and social responsibility into the following categories:

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Fairness
- Honesty

Do these four categories seem difficult? If asked if we are responsible, respectful, fair, and honest, most of us would, of course, say yes. But can you think of a time when you did not complete all your responsibilities? How many times have you been disrespectful or unfair? Hopefully we do the right thing most of the time, but none of us are perfect. This chapter discusses some important points about these categories, and it will also address two other important topics not specifically covered in the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct that can help you on the exam: the ethical application of project management, and PMI-isms related to professional and social responsibility.

**The Ethical Application of Project Management** Are you honest? Most people are essentially honest, but we all have our moments. For example, have you ever agreed to and started work on a project without being reasonably sure the end date could be met? Is that honest? Is it ethical? People often do this without ever labeling it as being dishonest or unethical. For the exam, however, you need to understand that part of professional and social responsibility is the ethical application of project management in the real world.

Did you know it is unethical to provide a project schedule that you do not believe to be accurate? It is also unethical to waste company resources because you have not properly planned a project. And it is unethical to manage a project without a project charter or a WBS. These are serious issues in the real world, and they are serious for the exam.

So why is the lack of such project management activities unethical? Think about the impact project management tools, such as a charter or WBS, have on a project. Not having a project charter affects your project and, at the very least, causes increased costs and wasted time. Not having a WBS means that some of the scope will likely be missed. When it is discovered later, that work will cost more to complete than if it had been included in the project from the beginning. Does this sound realistic? If not, you may not fully understand the benefits of these tools and should review them again in this book. Practice using these tools on your projects to experience the advantages for yourself. To correctly answer exam questions about ethics, compare what you should be doing on your projects with what you are currently doing, and note any discrepancies.

Project managers must understand the project management process in order to do the right thing.

Some organizations do not give their project managers the authority needed to get projects done. For example, is it ethical to skip identifying an approach (plan-driven versus change-driven) to a project management plan? Imagine a situation in which the project manager only has the authority to write reports and transmit them to others. This lack of authority means no one is directing the integration of the work. As a result, the project will likely be late and people working on the project will waste valuable time in rework. To uphold the standards of the project management profession, project managers have a professional responsibility to obtain the authority necessary to manage the project.

Now let's think about unrealistic project completion deadlines or milestones. Have you experienced an unrealistic schedule constraint? Many project managers with unrealistic deadlines just implement the project the best they can and wait to see what happens regarding the timeline. Some will move forward with the project and force resources to make the deadline by working overtime. Many studies have shown this is not an ethical solution to the problem for several reasons. For example, the more overtime team members work, the less productive they will be and the lower the quality of their work will be. This impact to quality will mean higher costs, diminished stakeholder engagement, more rework, and extra time. Does this scenario meet the expectations of professional and social responsibility for our projects?

Professional and social responsibility requires project managers to handle unrealistic schedule problems up front. This may mean saying, "You have requested that the project be completed within six months. Our analysis makes us certain that we can meet that due date only if we adjust the scope, cost, or quality on this project. If we cannot make any changes, the project will be completed in eight months." Or it may mean telling the project sponsor to assign the project to someone else.

Professional and social responsibility may also mean saying, "I am sorry you do not want to support my efforts in planning the project and want me to start producing work right away. As part of my PMP certification, however, I am ethically bound to do project management for the best interests of the project and the company. This means I must have a project charter and, at the very least, a high-level work breakdown structure." Project managers are required to stand up for the right process.

Consider this scenario from another perspective: tailoring your project management. Not all projects require the same level of application, use, and detailed approach to project management. Have you been in a situation in which strictly adhering to all project management best practices wasn't the most appropriate or efficient approach? Perhaps the project was short in duration, the size or the importance of the project did not make it critical, or the best approach to planning and managing the work was a change-driven approach. To meet the expectations of professional and social responsibility, tailoring project management efforts to fit the needs of a project and its team members is necessary. By tailoring the approach and work

of project management to fit a project, the best solution is created within the structure of how you plan and manage the project, which can prevent issues such as delayed delivery of business value, rework, overspending, missed schedules, and miscommunication. It is the project manager’s responsibility to analyze each project they are given to determine the best approach, and to tailor their work to determine the best combination of inputs, tools and techniques, outputs, and processes to manage a project based on the best interests of the project and its organization.

Did you notice the attitude illustrated in the statements in the scenario described on the previous page? Do you have such an attitude? A project manager is required to be assertive and in control. For the exam, make sure you understand this assertive, proactive attitude as well as what it means for what a project manager should and should not be doing. Attitude is extremely important, and the expectation for project managers to be assertive and in control applies to project managers in every country and culture.

**PMI-isms Related to Professional and Social Responsibility** We discussed PMI-isms and their impact on the exam in the first chapter of this book. You need to be aware of PMI-isms related to professional and social responsibility as well. You may encounter a question on the exam that talks about the relationship of a PMP certification holder to PMI and how that person should not only encourage others to practice good project management as outlined by PMI but also invite their organization to see the benefits of a PMP certification. The exam may also include a question that assumes you are involved with PMI as a chapter member or chapter officer. These types of questions are relatively easy if you maintain the PMI focus described in the following points:

- You will not get involved with PMI to promote your own business.
- You have a duty of loyalty to PMI. When acting on behalf of a PMI chapter, you will keep the best interest of PMI in mind—not your own best interests.
- When contracting for services for the chapter, you will provide equal access for all to submit proposals and not keep the work for your own company or your friends. You will also practice ethical contract management in relation to all contracts and contract reviews.
- You will not let anyone cheat on the application for the PMP exam.
- You will not let anyone copy PMP exam prep materials or perform other illegal behavior.
- You will not disclose PMP exam questions.

**Categories of Professional and Social Responsibility** Now that we’ve discussed the ethical application of project management as well as PMI-isms related to professional and social responsibility, let’s look at the four categories in PMI’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Read the following list, and make a note in the right-hand column of any areas where you have had problems in the past. The topics you have had difficulty with are the ones you should think about a little more.

Remember that ethics is a messy topic, and no one is perfect. This simple exercise will help shorten your study time and keep you more focused on what you need to know for the exam.

Responsibility—Ownership of Decisions and Actions	Areas Where I Have Had a Problem
<p>Make decisions based on the best interests of the company and the team, as well as society, rather than your own best interests.</p> <hr/> <p>Only accept assignments you are qualified to complete.</p>	

Responsibility—Ownership of Decisions and Actions	Areas Where I Have Had a Problem
If you are given a project to manage that is beyond your qualifications or experience, make sure the sponsor knows of any gaps in your qualifications before accepting the assignment.	
Use tools, techniques, and processes to efficiently plan a project in order to use organizational resources (people, materials, equipment, facilities, money, etc.) as best you can.	
Do what you say you will do—including completing projects on time.	
Acknowledge your own errors.	
Respect confidentiality requirements and protect proprietary information—including obeying copyright laws.	
Uphold laws.	
If you witness or are aware of unethical decisions and/or actions, or even potentially unethical behavior, report it to management and to those the behavior affects.	
Report violations of PMI’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct when you have factual proof of the violation.	
Respect—The Appropriate Treatment of People and Resources	Areas Where I Have Had a Problem
Maintain an attitude of mutual cooperation.	
Facilitate distributed teams; engage and invite ideas and best practices to be shared among team members to better the project.	
Respect cultural differences.	
Do not gossip or say things that could damage another person’s reputation.	
Engage in good faith negotiations.	
Avoid approval of overtime as a way to solve scheduling problems as people deserve an appropriate work life balance.	
Respect others.	
Be direct in dealing with conflict.	
Do not use your power or position to influence others for your own benefit.	

## Fairness—Being Objective and Making Impartial Decisions

### Areas Where I Have Had a Problem

Act impartially without favoritism, nepotism, bribery, or prejudice, and frequently stop to reexamine your actions to make sure you are being impartial.

Continuously look for conflicts of interest and disclose them.

Do not discriminate against others.

Honor your duty of loyalty to those companies and organizations with whom you are affiliated.

Do not use your position for personal or business gain.

## Honesty—Understanding the Truth and Taking Action Based on Truth

### Areas Where I Have Had a Problem

Try to understand the truth.

Be truthful in all communications, including making sure the information you are using or sending out is truthful.

Work to create an environment in which others tell the truth.

Do not deceive others.

Now let's take a more detailed look at some of the points in each category.

### Responsibility—Ownership of Decisions and Actions

- Make decisions based on the best interests of the company, rather than your own best interests.** This one sounds simple, doesn't it? But be careful. If the exam were to pose a direct question on this topic, everyone would get it right. But most questions on the exam are not so direct. For example, what about a situation in which you discover the project is suffering because you have not created a project management plan, and you worry that if you tell management about the problem, you will look bad or lose your job? In such situations, the correct answer is to deal with the issue hurting the project and put the project's needs before your own. This is an easy rule to remember, but it can be difficult to apply.
- Only accept assignments you are qualified to complete.** Can you imagine telling your manager that you cannot take an assignment because it requires the control of cost on a project and that you're not qualified to manage costs? It is smart to make sure you can handle a job before it is assigned to you, but situations in the real world may be much more complex than those described on the exam.
- Ensure proper project planning.** The ethical application of project management includes upholding your responsibilities to legal and/or regulatory compliance to ensure a project is properly planned, and using all the organization's resources (both physical resources and team members) efficiently. It also includes having a reasonable scope definition on which to base a project management plan. Use project management best practices to plan the project and determine the appropriate life cycle and approach (plan-driven or change-driven, for example) using tools such as the project charter, WBS, and network diagram.

- **Protect proprietary information.** Do you know someone who made a copy of something that was marked “not to be reproduced” and then gave that copy to someone else? Do you know that such materials are considered proprietary items and copying them could be a violation of copyright laws? Such actions are also likely violations of PMI’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Because this is an area many people have misconceptions about—and because it is a concept frequently tested on the exam—we’ll explain it in more detail. Make sure you understand the concept of protecting proprietary information.

International copyright laws give the owner of a copyright the exclusive rights to make copies of the relevant work and to create derivative works. It is illegal to infringe upon these rights—that is, to use the copyrighted work in certain ways without the owner’s permission. For example, without the copyright owner’s permission, no one may copy or reproduce any part of a book, create new material based on or incorporating any part of a book, or sell or distribute copies of a book except in limited instances covered by the Fair Use Doctrine.<sup>1</sup> A copyright notice is not required on the document for something to be considered copyrighted.

Copyright laws are international, which means that people can be prosecuted for copying works by authors outside their country. Know that the exam may test to see if you understand what actions are ethical in terms of the use of copyrighted materials.

Assume all documents, software, applications, articles, books, training materials, and every other work created by someone else are considered proprietary information and copyrighted. The general rule is to not copy without written permission from the author.

When you are working with copyrighted materials, you should be mindful of the following issues:

- If you need another copy of software, does the software license give you permission to simply make a copy, or does it require you to purchase another copy?
- If you are a contractor asked to create a copyrightable work, who owns the copyright—you or the company that hired you to create it?
- If you are an employee and create a work, do you own the copyright or does your employer?

These are some basic issues confronting project managers who deal with copyrighted works. Before taking any action that could result in copyright infringement, a project manager should ask questions to make sure they understand the situation, and possibly seek legal counsel or approval.

- **Report unethical behavior and violations.** What would you do if someone in your company told you that they do not follow a certain company procedure? The correct answer is to report the person to those responsible for the policy.

Do you agree with this answer? Many people find questions like this challenging, so let’s look at why the ethical choice is to report the violation. You are probably not the one who created the policy and are therefore not the best person to explain the reasons behind the policy. If you attempt to explain it to the person, you could misrepresent the policy and cost the company time and money. It is best to leave such things to those responsible for them. Does your role and responsibility seem simple or clearer now? Questions on the exam may discuss situations in which the project manager must immediately report violations of policies, laws, or ethics to a manager or supervisor.

The easier questions on this topic typically involve a situation in which someone violates PMI’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Review questions related to reporting unethical behavior carefully before answering them. Also, know that you’re expected to help create an environment in which project team members can report ethics violations without fear of repercussion.

## Respect—The Appropriate Treatment of People and Resources

- **Maintain an attitude of mutual cooperation.** For example, think about your interactions with resource managers. They are responsible for managing team members as well as physical resources; they must also balance the competing demands of projects (yours and others) and ongoing business



operations. Are you in the habit of going to them and asking for the immediate assignment of the resources you need for your project? This action is contrary to the concepts of respect and maintaining an attitude of mutual cooperation.

Put yourself in the shoes of a resource manager for a moment. Resource managers are usually evaluated based on how well they do their own work, not how well they support projects. They have their own needs and responsibilities. A project manager has an ethical responsibility to provide resource managers with advance notice regarding what resources a project needs and what the impacts to the project will be if those resources are not available. The project manager must also provide a realistic schedule, so the resource managers know when their resources will be used. That information enables the resource managers to better manage project work with their other work. This scenario is an example of both mutual cooperation and the ethical application of project management in the real world. For exam questions related to this concept, you will need to know the proper use of project management tools, techniques, and practices, all of which allow you to request resources and communicate accurately regarding resources.

Now let's look at the team. Do you consider the reputation of each of your team members to be in your hands? How well the project goes will reflect on their careers. If a team member believes the project will be unsuccessful, the individual will more than likely remove themselves from as much work on the project as possible so it does not tarnish their reputation. The project manager has a duty to team members that includes making sure there is a realistic schedule so they know when they really need to complete work on the project, providing a reward system, seeking out their opinions, asking them to contribute to the development of the project management plan, and providing formal and informal training as needed so they can effectively work on the project. Team members also need to help control the project. This is another example of the ethical application of project management in the real world.

How you choose to communicate with others also falls under this topic. Would your team members or stakeholders be surprised if you asked them about the best way to communicate with them about various topics? Such actions should be commonplace. Asking these types of questions not only shows respect for the other person, it also helps you effectively plan communications.

- **Respect cultural differences.** Another part of respect as it relates to professional and social responsibility has to do with cultural differences. Cultural differences can mean differences in language, values, nonverbal actions, and cultural practices. If you do not plan how to handle these differences and do not monitor and control their impacts, they can easily impede the project.

One major cause of cultural differences is ethnocentrism,<sup>2</sup> which is the tendency for people to look at the world primarily from the perspective of their own culture. Ethnocentric individuals take the viewpoint that their own group is the center of everything.

It's not just people from different countries that can have cultural differences; individuals from different regions of the same country may have cultural differences as well. Even organizations can have cultural differences around issues such as roles and responsibilities, divisions or work areas, and expectations of employees.

Project managers need to take actions to diminish the negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts of cultural differences. Such actions include:

- Embrace diversity. Cultural differences can make a project more fun.
- Prevent culture shock<sup>3</sup> (the disorientation that occurs when you find yourself working with other cultures in a different environment). Thorough research and training about different cultures will help prevent culture shock.
- Expect cultural differences to surface on a project. Have a plan in place to help the team and project grow and move forward during these times. This might involve educating the team about inclusion and respect, and giving them a process to follow to get help or answers if necessary.

- Use clear communication to the appropriate people and in the right format, as outlined in the Communications Management chapter, to prevent cultural differences from becoming a problem.
  - Uncover cultural differences when identifying stakeholders, including differences in work ethics and practices.
  - Ask for clarification whenever a cultural difference arises.
  - Discuss the topic of cultural differences at team meetings as needed.
  - Follow practices in use in other countries when appropriate—as long as they do not violate laws.
- **Engage in good faith negotiations.** Think about your experiences in the real world. Have you ever witnessed someone negotiating with another party when you know they have no intention of entering into a contract? Or have you watched someone negotiate a provision in a contract they have no intention of honoring? What about someone presenting information as a fact when the person knows the information is untrue? How about someone trying to strip out all of a seller's profit during contract negotiations? These are all examples of people not negotiating in good faith. Negotiations can and will impact the buyer/seller relationship; acting in an unethical way can have more than one negative affect.
  - **Be direct in dealing with conflict.** The topic of conflict is discussed throughout this book and is primarily covered in the Resource Management chapter, but an important aspect of professional and social responsibility involves dealing with conflict. As a project manager dealing with conflict, it is inappropriate and unproductive to complain or talk about a conflict or about others involved in a conflict behind their backs. Do you see this happening in the real world? Although such behavior is common, a project manager has a professional responsibility to deal directly and openly with the other party and say to the person, "What you have done has caused a problem. Can we discuss it?" This can be easier said than done. Imagine that the person causing the problem is powerful or uninterested, or that the person is your manager. Regardless of the situation, questions on the exam expect you to address conflict directly and openly.
  - **Do not use your power or position to influence others for your own benefit.** Have you ever said to yourself, "How do I get this person to do what I want?" This could be a violation of professional and social responsibility if you are trying to influence others to do what you want, rather than what is right or most appropriate in a given situation. Project managers cannot use their power or position to pressure others for their own benefit.

## Fairness—Being Objective and Making Impartial Decisions

- **Act impartially without bribery.** So, what is bribery? Is it bribery if someone asks you to pay a fee in order to bring machinery through a city? How about if someone requests a payment for police protection?

In many countries, fees for services such as protection and bringing machinery through a town, or fees for issuing permits and other official documents, are allowable and are not considered bribes. Payments to convince a government official to select your company for a project are bribes, however. Many companies have policies or codes of business conduct to help prevent bribes and other illegal activity.

Consider what you should do about other types of payments. Would it be appropriate to accept a car or vacation as a form of payment? These forms of payment are probably not allowable. Thomas Donaldson, in *The Ethics of International Business* (Oxford University Press, 1991), suggests a practice is permissible if you can answer no to both of the following questions:

1. Is it permissible to conduct business successfully in the host country without undertaking the practice?



2. Is the practice a clear violation of a fundamental international right?

Fundamental rights include the right to food, a fair trial, nondiscriminating treatment, minimal education, physical safety, and freedom of speech.

There may be a few exam questions on this topic. If you think you need help to understand it more fully, see the exercise later in this chapter.

- **Continuously look for conflicts of interest and disclose them.** A conflict of interest occurs when a person must make a decision or take action that could help one person or organization while hurting another person or organization to which they have a duty of loyalty. For example, “If I help my friend, I hurt my company,” or “If I help this organization, I hurt my own company.” Because the exam does not always ask questions that are direct and clear, you might see a question that provides a detailed description of a situation even though all you really need to understand is that there is a conflict of interest. So, what do you do when there is a conflict of interest? You should disclose it to those affected, and let them decide how to proceed. If something appears to be a conflict of interest, it should be handled as if it actually is a conflict of interest.

What does it mean to continuously look for conflicts of interest? This practice involves more effort than simply noticing conflicts of interest when they arise. It involves frequently sitting down and reviewing the project for areas that have the potential to create such conflicts, and identifying how to avert or reduce the number of conflicts. You need to be proactive in this effort.

- **Do not discriminate against others.** Discrimination seems to be all around us. People discriminate against those from different economic backgrounds (rich and poor), against those from a different area of the country or world, and against others based on race, religion, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation, etc. Professional and social responsibility requires us to treat others fairly and not discriminate.
- **Do not use your position for personal or business gain.** Most people realize that someone working for the government should not use their position to obtain wealth. But what about people who join organizations (such as PMI) not to help promote the organization’s mission, but to gain business from other members of the organization? It is a violation of professional and social responsibility to use your position for personal or business gain.

## Honesty—Understanding the Truth and Taking Action Based on Truth

- **Try to understand the truth.** The truth is not always easy to find, especially when you are running around managing projects. Someone may tell you something that they perceive to be the truth, but there might be more to what is really going on. We often simply accept what people tell us and do not spend time seeking the whole truth. When you think of the many activities on a project and the different people involved, you can see how important it is to accurately understand a situation.
- **Be truthful in all communications, and create an environment in which others tell the truth.** Do you ever hide the fact that a project is in trouble? Do you say that you can accomplish some piece of work or a whole project when you are not really sure if you can? If so, you might have some issues with scenarios on the exam that test or require truthful communication. If we stretch the truth or outright lie, our team members will start to do it, too, and we will not have fostered an environment in which others tell the truth. As a result, the project and those involved in it, including the project manager, will suffer.

If everyone starts being untruthful, how will you know what information you can trust? Imagine you provide a schedule to the team that you know to be unreasonable or unrealistic and do not inform the team. They quickly realize the schedule is unreasonable and, as a result, do not cooperate with you or tell you what is really going on. When you take the exam, you need to understand the consequences of such actions. The consequences of being untruthful include poor cooperation and less accurate information from others.

**Exercise** Let's try to put it all together. Look at the following situations and determine what to do.

1. Your management has told you that you will receive part of the incentive fee from the customer if you can bring the project in early. While finalizing a major deliverable, your team informs you that the deliverable meets the requirements in the contract, but will not provide the functionality the customer needs. If the deliverable is late, you know the project will not be completed early. What action should you take?

2. You are asked to make a copy of a magazine article and include it in the internal training and support materials for the new software being created as part of your project. You see the article has a copyright notice. What is the best thing to do?

3. Your company is in competition to win a major project for the government of country X. You are told you must make a large payment to the foreign minister in order to be considered for the project. What is the best thing to do?

4. You provide a cost estimate for the project to the project sponsor. He is unhappy with the estimate, because he thinks the cost should be lower. He asks you to cut 15 percent off the project estimate. What should you do?

5. In reviewing the draft of the monthly project update report published by the project management office, you notice another project manager is exaggerating his project's status. You know this project manager is being untruthful because a deliverable due to your project is estimated to be delivered in two weeks. He is reporting the delivery has already taken place. What do you do?

6. You have three sellers bidding on some of your project work. You have worked with one of the sellers (X) before and know they do excellent work. The project manager from company X calls to ask for clarification on the RFP you sent out last week so they can better address your needs. What do you do?

7. As stated in situation 5, a project manager is exaggerating his project's status. You notified him of the inaccuracy, but he still did not change his monthly update. What do you do now?

8. You and a friend from college regularly attend your alma mater's sports games together. Your company has hired the firm your friend works for to do some work on your project. Your friend is not in the division that is working on your project, nor is she involved with any of the work. Your friend calls excitedly and says that due to her efforts this year, she has gotten two tickets to the division football game from her manager. She wants you to go with her. Should you go?

9. You have been asked to give a presentation about your project's status to senior management in your company and to the external customer. The day before the meeting, you realize a delay in delivery of some critical materials will cause a two-month delay in the critical path. You do not have time to work out a plan to get the project back on track before the presentation. You are sure the delay can be made up and don't want to scare the customer unnecessarily, nor do you want the extra work that will be required if you present the information now. What should you do?

10. You have successfully guided your project team through four of five phases of your project. Testing went especially well due to a subject matter expert's earlier input, which helped avoid a critical threat from occurring. At the quarterly senior management review, they specifically comment about how well you are doing with the project so far, especially with testing, and congratulate you. How do you respond?

**Answers** The answers depend on the exact wording of the choices, but generally:

1. Review the situation with the customer; review what is required in the contract.
2. Ask the copyright owner for permission.
3. Refuse to make the payment; it appears to be a bribe. If the exam has an answer that suggests you consult with your legal department to get a recommendation for the best course of action, that could be the best answer unless the scenario implies you have already done this.
4. Look for options such as compressing the schedule, reestimating, or changing scope.
5. Hold the project manager accountable by notifying him of the discrepancy and reporting accurately on your own project.
6. Either provide all sellers the additional information or do not provide the information to the project manager from company X.
7. Report the other project manager's dishonesty to both your manager and his.
8. Most likely no, because this could be perceived as a conflict of interest, which must be avoided. If a similar question appears on the exam, look carefully at the answers, however. It's possible an alternative correct answer might be to disclose the situation to your manager and the sponsor and ask for permission.
9. You should present the current status of the project, without downplaying or minimizing the effect of the delay. You cannot bury the bad news in an effort to avoid conflict. You need to present the information, along with your planned approach for developing possible solutions to the problem, and provide the customer with a timeline for when they can expect an update.
10. You need to give credit to the subject matter expert and let senior management know the expert's input helped ensure the testing process went smoothly. You cannot take credit for the good work of others, nor can you pass blame down to others.

Professional and social responsibility can seem easy at first, but it can quickly get complicated. This is an important topic to understand, not just for the exam but also in the real world. Unethical and unprofessional behavior hurts the project, the organization, and the profession. As project managers, and especially as PMP certification holders, we have a responsibility to uphold the standards of the profession and prove the value project management brings to all who benefit from successful project results.

## Practice Exam

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1. A project manager is being considered for a particular project that will deal exclusively with global virtual teams. He only has experience with local teams. What should he do when discussing the opportunity with the sponsor?
  - A. Since the project manager has managed many projects and teams, it does not make any difference that the new project involves global virtual teams. He should tell the sponsor he has the relevant experience.
  - B. The project manager should avoid any conversation regarding the types of teams involved so the sponsor does not know he lacks experience in this area.
  - C. The project manager should point out to the sponsor that he has not had experience with global virtual teams, and then explain why he thinks he is a good fit for the project anyway.
  - D. The project manager should point out to the sponsor that he has not had experience with global virtual teams and therefore must decline the assignment.
  
2. A project manager gathered data to perform earned value calculations on his project. He used the results to report to management that the project is under budget and on schedule. After reporting this information, he discovered the base figures he used in the calculations were incorrect, as they came from an old copy of the project file that had not been updated. What should he do now?
  - A. He should contact management and tell them to expect some changes in the next reporting period as things are starting to look gloomy.
  - B. He should contact management to make them aware of the error, provide the correct information, and explain how he made the mistake.
  - C. He should use the correct figures to calculate the information when it is time for the next report and ignore the fact that he reported incorrect information.
  - D. He should tell management that he received incorrect data from team members, resulting in an inaccurate report.
  
3. A project manager is working with a seller on a project that is time-sensitive due to government regulations requiring it to be completed by a certain date. She learns one of the sellers has bribed a subcontractor to work on this project instead of fulfilling previous commitments to other projects. What should she do?
  - A. She should report the offense to management and to the project managers of the affected projects.
  - B. She should not do anything because this is the seller's problem. The project manager herself didn't do anything wrong.
  - C. She should report this to other subcontractors.
  - D. She should resign from the project so as to remove herself from this type of activity, but keep her discovery to herself rather than cause problems.

4. You are in the middle of a new product development project that has an NPV of \$10.5 million. The schedule performance index (SPI) is 0.99. There are strict rules in your publicly traded company regarding risk, quality, and procurement. You discover the previous project manager made a \$3 million payment that was not approved in accordance with your company policies. Your relationship with the sponsor is strained, as you've had to request changes because the previous project manager didn't have a complete project management plan. The sponsor and the previous project manager are good friends outside of work and coach your daughter's sports team together. Luckily, the project cost performance index (CPI) is 1.2. What should you do?
  - A. Contact your manager.
  - B. Put the payment in an escrow account.
  - C. Bury the cost in the largest cost center available.
  - D. Ignore the payment.
  
5. You are staffing a project in another country, and the project leader from that country has recommended a project team that consists of members of the project leader's family. Your first course of action should be to:
  - A. Inquire if hiring through family lines is common practice in the project leader's country.
  - B. Review the résumés of the individuals to see if they are qualified.
  - C. Ask the project leader to provide additional names of people unrelated to them.
  - D. Use a different project leader to prevent problems later in the project.
  
6. When checking the calendar of a team member to schedule a meeting, you see she has scheduled a meeting with a key stakeholder that you were not informed of. This stakeholder has been vocal in her concern that her requirements for the project have been ignored and that she doesn't think you are a good project manager. You know that the stakeholder and the team member are friends outside of the organization and that their children are in school together. Your organization's PMO has a policy stating that the project manager is to be informed of, and invited to, all project-related meetings. This is a functional organization that has struggled with communications and stakeholder participation. You have heard that the team member thinks the PMO policy regarding notifying and inviting the project manager to all meetings is intrusive and gets in the way of effective communications with stakeholders; she has also complained that project managers are not available because of multiple projects and too many meetings. She doesn't feel trusted, and is frustrated. Her complaints have been reported to other departmental leaders, and the PMO has been asked to review the policy. The best approach would be to:
  - A. Avoid mentioning it to the team member but continue to watch her activities.
  - B. Notify the PMO about the problem.
  - C. Address the concern with the team member's manager.
  - D. Address the concern with the team member.
  
7. Your team member is three days late with a report. Five minutes before the meeting where the topic of the report is to be discussed, she hands you the report. You notice some serious errors in it. What should you do?
  - A. Cancel the meeting and reschedule when the report is fixed.
  - B. Go to the meeting and tell the other attendees there are errors in the report.
  - C. Allow the team member to do the presentation and remain silent as the other attendees find the errors.
  - D. Cancel the meeting and rewrite the report yourself.



8. A manager has responsibility for a project that has the support of senior leadership as it will fulfill a strategic organizational objective. From the beginning, you (the project manager) have disagreed with the manager as to how the project should proceed and what the deliverables should be. You and she have disagreed over many issues in the past. Your department has been tasked with providing some key work packages for the project. What should you do?
  - A. Provide the manager with what she needs.
  - B. Inform your manager of your concerns to get her support.
  - C. Sit down with the manager at the beginning of the project, attempt to describe why you object to the project, and discover a way to solve the problem.
  - D. Ask to be removed from the project.
  
9. A large, complex construction project in a foreign country requires the movement of heavy equipment through crowded city streets. The officials in the city know that you have a large, complicated project and that staying on schedule and within budget is important to your company. You have coordinated moving equipment in other countries for other projects without problems. To ensure the equipment is transported successfully, your contact in the country informs you that you will have to pay the local police a fee for coordinating traffic. What should you do?
  - A. Do not pay the fee because it is a bribe.
  - B. Eliminate the work.
  - C. Pay the fee.
  - D. Do not pay the fee if it is not part of the project estimate.
  
10. You are responsible for negotiations with all potential government subcontractors, of which there are many, on an important highway project. A major negotiation with a potential subcontractor is scheduled for tomorrow. Theirs was the lowest starting bid, and included a new approach that could make this project less expensive than other similar projects already completed. You have serious reservations as to whether they will be able to deliver as promised—for the cost and in the period of time agreed upon. You have now discovered there is a good chance the project will be cancelled. What should you do?
  - A. Do not spend too much time preparing for the negotiations.
  - B. Keep the negotiations short.
  - C. Only negotiate major items.
  - D. Postpone the negotiations.
  
11. You've been assigned to take over managing a project that should be half complete according to the schedule. After an extensive evaluation, you discover the project is running far behind schedule, and will probably take twice the time originally estimated by the previous project manager. However, the sponsor has been told the project is on schedule. What is the best course of action?
  - A. Try to restructure the schedule to meet the project deadline.
  - B. Report your assessment to the sponsor.
  - C. Turn the project back to the previous project manager.
  - D. Move forward with the schedule as planned by the previous project manager, and report at the first missed milestone.

12. You are halfway through a major network rollout. There are 300 locations in the United States, with another 20 in England. A software seller has just released a major software upgrade for some of the equipment being installed. The upgrade would provide the customer with functionality they requested, which was not available at the time the project began. What is the best course of action under these circumstances?
  - A. Continue as planned; your customer has not requested a change.
  - B. Inform the customer of the available upgrade, and explain the impacts to the project's timeline and functionality if the upgrade is implemented.
  - C. Implement the change and adjust the schedule as necessary because this supports the customer's original request.
  - D. Implement the change on the remaining sites and continue with the schedule.
  
13. You are a project manager for one of many projects in a large and important program. At a high-level status meeting, you note that another project manager has reported her project on schedule. Looking back on your project over the last few weeks, you remember many deliverables from the other project that arrived late. What should you do?
  - A. Meet with the program manager.
  - B. Develop a risk control plan.
  - C. Discuss the issue with your manager.
  - D. Meet with the other project manager.
  
14. You have always been asked by your management to cut your project cost estimates by 10 percent after you have submitted them. The scope of your new project is unclear, and there are over 30 stakeholders. Management expects a 25 percent reduction in downtime as a result of the project. Which of the following is the best course of action in this situation?
  - A. Replan to achieve a 35 percent improvement in downtime.
  - B. Reduce the estimate, and note the change in the risk response plan.
  - C. Provide an accurate estimate of the actual costs, and be able to support it.
  - D. Meet with the team to identify where you can find 10 percent savings.
  
15. You are in the middle of a project when you discover that a software seller for your project is having major difficulty keeping employees due to a labor dispute. Many other projects in your company are also using the company's services. What should you do?
  - A. Attempt to keep the required people on your project.
  - B. Tell the other project managers in your company about the labor problem.
  - C. Contact the company and advise that you will cancel the company's work on your project unless the labor dispute is settled.
  - D. Cease doing business with the company.
  
16. You have been assigned a second project with your new company. This project is a construction project. You have received positive feedback on your performance so far, but are unfamiliar with construction. All the following are your responsibilities as a project manager except:
  - A. Maintain the confidentiality of the customer's confidential information.
  - B. Determine the legality of company procedures.
  - C. Ensure that a conflict of interest does not compromise the legitimate interest of the customer.
  - D. Provide accurate and truthful representations in cost estimates.

17. Although your company is not the lowest bidder for a project, the client has come to expect good performance from your company and wants to award the contract to you. To be awarded the contract, the client asks you to eliminate your project management costs. The client says your company has good project processes, and project controls unnecessarily inflate your costs. What should you do under these circumstances?
  - A. Eliminate your project management costs, and rely on experience.
  - B. Remove costs associated with project team communications, meetings, and customer reviews.
  - C. Remove meeting costs but not the project manager's salary.
  - D. Describe the costs incurred on past projects that did not use project management.
  
18. You are the project manager for one part of a new program in your organization. Four months into a three-year project, your project team has already made some significant discoveries that have led to vastly improved performance and efficiencies on your project. What is the best thing to do?
  - A. Make certain the discoveries are included in the final project lessons learned.
  - B. Make certain the discoveries are reported in the monthly status report.
  - C. Make certain you mention the discoveries at the senior management meeting in two months.
  - D. Make certain you tell the other project managers involved in this program about the discoveries at the weekly meeting.
  
19. You just discovered an error in the implementation plan that will prevent you from meeting a milestone date. Up to this point, your project has been running true to its baselines, and you will be delivering a routine status report tomorrow. The milestone in question is not on the critical path, but it is on a near-critical path. What is the best thing you can do?
  - A. Develop options to meet the milestone date.
  - B. Change the milestone date.
  - C. Remove any discussion about dates in the project status report.
  - D. Educate the team about the need to meet milestones.
  
20. While testing the strength of concrete poured on your project, you discover that over 35 percent of the concrete does not meet your company's quality standards. You are certain, however, that the concrete will function as it is, and you don't think the concrete needs to meet the quality level specified. What should you do?
  - A. Change the quality standards to meet the level achieved.
  - B. State in your reports that the concrete simply "meets our quality needs."
  - C. Ensure the remaining concrete meets the standard.
  - D. Report the lower quality level, and try to find a solution.
  
21. You are the project manager for a new international project, and your project team includes people from four countries. Most of the team members have not worked on similar projects before, but the project has strong support from senior management. What is the best thing to do to ensure that cultural differences do not interfere with the project?
  - A. Spend a little more time creating the work breakdown structure and making sure it is complete.
  - B. Make sure you choose your words carefully whenever you communicate.
  - C. Ask one person at each team meeting to describe something unique about their culture.
  - D. Keep communication short and to the point.

22. You are negotiating with a seller for a piece of equipment on a project with a tight budget. The seller has told you the equipment price is fixed. Your manager has told you to negotiate the cost with the seller. Your assessment is that the piece of equipment has been offered at inflated pricing. What is your best course of action?
- A. Make a good faith effort to find a way to decrease the cost.
  - B. Postpone negotiations until you can convince your manager to change his mind.
  - C. Hold the negotiations, but only negotiate other aspects of the project.
  - D. Cancel the negotiations.
23. A PMP-certified project manager is contacted by PMI and asked to provide information regarding a team member, who is also a personal friend. The PMP-certified project manager cannot think of a reason he would be contacted by PMI about this individual unless someone had reported that this team member has been involved in unethical activities. The PMP-certified project manager has information that would likely support the accusations. He is thinking that the best thing to do is to not respond to avoid the risk that what he says could hurt his friend. This way he is not responsible for confirming or denying the accusations. Is this the right thing to do?
- A. Yes. It is acceptable to just ignore the request and stay out of it.
  - B. No. He is required by PMI's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to cooperate.
  - C. No. It would be better to deny the charges against his friend to maintain the relationship.
  - D. Yes. It is best if project managers support each other in the field.
24. A project manager discovers a defect in a deliverable that is due to the customer under contract today. The project manager knows the customer does not have the technical understanding to notice the defect. The deliverable meets the contract requirements, but it does not meet the project manager's quality standard. What should the project manager do in this situation?
- A. Issue the deliverable, and get formal acceptance from the customer.
  - B. Note the problem in the lessons learned so future projects do not encounter the same problem.
  - C. Discuss the issue with the customer.
  - D. Inform the customer that the deliverable will be late.
25. Your company wants to open a plant in a country where the law stipulates that women can earn only 50 percent of what men earn. Under these circumstances, what should you recommend to your company?
- A. Do not open the plant.
  - B. Meet with government officials and try to get a waiver that equalizes the pay rate between men and women.
  - C. Do not hire women.
  - D. Provide the women you hire with extra work to increase their salary.

26. Three students from another country are working as interns on a project. The project manager has arranged for some games to be played as team-building activities to help develop a stronger sense of team with the group members. At the event where the activities are taking place, the three students refuse to participate, claiming the behavior involved is unacceptable in their country and that they would be very uncomfortable participating. What should the project manager do?
- A. He should tell the students they need to become familiar with how things are done in this country and they must participate.
  - B. He should excuse the students from participating and arrange to discuss with them alternative team-building activities they would be more comfortable with.
  - C. He should report the students to their functional manager and request they be removed from the project since their attitude will have a negative impact on the project.
  - D. He should tell the students they are excused from the activities and to not attend any team-building activities in the future.
27. You are finalizing the monthly project status report due now to your manager when you discover that several project team members are not reporting actual hours spent on project activities. This results in skewed project statistics. What is the most appropriate action to take?
- A. Discuss the impacts of these actions with team members.
  - B. Report the team members' actions to their functional managers.
  - C. Continue reporting information as presented to you.
  - D. Provide accurate and truthful representations in all project reports.

## Answers

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1. **Answer C**

**Explanation** This project will likely involve many issues that the project manager has not had experience with. It is unethical to overtly or indirectly mislead the sponsor about his qualifications. On the other hand, the project manager may have so many skills that would benefit the project that his lack of experience with global teams might not be a major problem. The project manager must make sure the sponsor is aware of his skills, as well as the gaps in his qualifications, so the sponsor has the correct information on which to base a decision.

2. **Answer B**

**Explanation** Although things may be gloomy, this is not a new development, since the report was based on old data. It is unethical for the project manager not to admit his mistake, or to blame someone else for his error. The ethical thing to do is to acknowledge and take responsibility for the error.

3. **Answer A**

**Explanation** It is the responsibility of the project manager to report unethical behavior to management and the affected project managers. Not reporting this knowledge to the appropriate people is unethical.

4. **Answer A**

**Explanation** Putting the payment in an escrow account or burying the cost hides it. Ignoring the payment is not an option. Project managers must deal with potentially unethical situations like the situation described. This payment must be brought to the attention of the project manager's manager.

5. **Answer A**

**Explanation** Ask yourself, what is the root problem? Your first action should be to find out whether working with family members is a common practice in that country, as there is nothing inherently illegal in this activity. Then, review qualifications. You may find it is not necessary to ask the project leader to provide additional names, or to consider using a different project leader.

6. **Answer D**

**Explanation** Not mentioning the issue to the team member is withdrawal. Notifying the PMO or the team member's manager would not be appropriate until you learn the root cause of the problem. Always look for the choice that deals with and solves the problem. In this case, the best course of action is to address your concern with the team member directly.

7. **Answer A**

**Explanation** Allowing the team member to deliver the inaccurate report would penalize and embarrass her. The only choice that does not involve hurting the team member's morale or wasting the time of the other attendees is to cancel the meeting and reschedule when you and the team member have identified and addressed the root cause of the problem with the report.

8. **Answer A**

**Explanation** We assume that proper project management was followed and your opinion was considered during project initiating and planning. Therefore, you need to provide the work as approved by management.

9. **Answer C**

**Explanation** This is a legitimate fee for special accommodations. It is therefore not a bribe.

10. **Answer D**

**Explanation** Postponing the negotiations is the most ethical choice and demonstrates good faith. Why spend time in negotiations if it may be wasted time?



11. **Answer B**

**Explanation** It is not possible to turn the project back to the previous project manager—the previous project manager may have left the company or she may be busy with new projects. That is a form of withdrawal. Moving ahead without addressing the situation also withdraws from the problem, and withdrawal is not the best choice. There are two problems described here: the project is behind schedule, and the sponsor does not know it. There seem to be two possible right answers: restructuring the schedule, and reporting the situation to the sponsor. You should work to get the project on schedule. However, looking only at restructuring the schedule excludes other possibilities, such as cutting scope, which might more effectively deal with the schedule problem. You do not know if the project completion date is critical. What if the sponsor would agree to change the due date? The best choice in this situation is to inform the sponsor of the revised completion time estimate, and discuss options.

12. **Answer B**

**Explanation** Professional and social responsibility includes looking after the customer's best interests. Therefore, ignoring the newly available upgrade cannot be best. In this case, the schedule and scope are already approved, and all changes must go through the integrated change control process. Implementing the change on any of the sites without following the process is not acceptable. The best option is to inform the customer of the available upgrade, and explain the impacts to the project's timeline and functionality if the upgrade is implemented.

13. **Answer D**

**Explanation** You should deal with the problem by discussing it with the other project manager. You can then find out if the other project really is on schedule and thereby confirm or deny your information. Meeting with the program manager or with your manager would be the next step if meeting with the other project manager does not satisfactorily resolve the issue. You might also develop a risk response plan to deal with the risk to your project. First, though, you need to meet with the other project manager regarding those late deliverables.

14. **Answer C**

**Explanation** This is a common problem on projects. If your estimates are accurate, you are ethically bound to stand by them. Management's only option to cut cost is to support the project manager in looking for alternatives related to all project constraints.

15. **Answer B**

**Explanation** Attempting to keep the required people on your project puts your interests over those of your company, so it cannot be the best choice. There is no indication the labor dispute has caused any problems, so there is no need to cancel this work or to cease doing business with the company. The best choice would be to inform others in your company about the labor dispute.

16. **Answer B**

**Explanation** The project manager is neither empowered nor competent to determine the legality of company procedures. The other choices all represent responsibilities of the project manager.

17. **Answer D**

**Explanation** Describing the costs incurred due to project management processes not being used on past projects addresses the real problem by giving the client information they may not have. An alternate choice is to explain that project management and its associated costs are reasons for the company's past performance and success. Project management activities are not optional.

18. **Answer D**

**Explanation** The sooner such discoveries are made known to other project managers, the sooner you can improve the capabilities of colleagues in your company. It is part of a project manager's professional and social responsibility to build such capabilities. After you've updated the other project managers, you can then document the discoveries in the project lessons learned and the status report, especially if that report has a wider distribution.

19. **Answer A**

**Explanation** Educating the team on the importance of milestones is not addressing the real problem. Changing the milestone date is unethical. Avoiding mention of the due date in the status report violates the rule to report honestly. Only developing and reporting options to meet the milestone date solves the problem.

20. **Answer D**

**Explanation** Changing the quality standards or stating that the concrete "meets our quality needs" would be unethical. Ensuring that the remaining concrete meets the existing quality standards withdraws from the problem and is therefore not the best solution. The only possible choice is to report the lower quality level. That choice would involve quality and other experts to find a resolution.

21. **Answer C**

**Explanation** Since this is an issue involving everyone, everyone should be involved in the solution. Spending extra time with the team on creating the WBS is generally a good idea, but it does not specifically address cultural issues. The best choice is to ask one person at each team meeting to describe something unique about their culture. This will lead to better understanding among people of different cultures, and help to avoid potential culture-related problems.

22. **Answer A**

**Explanation** The best choice is to attempt to find a way to decrease the cost.

23. **Answer B**

**Explanation** Ignoring the request from PMI and lying for the project manager do not support PMI's request for information and are unethical actions. PMI's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct requires PMP-certified project managers to report unethical behavior and violations of the code. The PMP-certified project manager is obligated to cooperate with PMI in collecting information.

24. **Answer C**

**Explanation** Issuing the deliverable with the defect does not protect the best interests of the customer. Simply noting the issue in lessons learned does not solve the problem. Informing the customer that the deliverable will be late will cause a default of contract. Although the deliverable meets the contractual requirements, it is best to bring the problem to the customer's attention so an option that does no harm can be found.

25. **Answer A**

**Explanation** Working under these rules would be a clear violation of the fundamental right to nondiscriminating treatment. You should recommend that your company not open the plant in that location.

26. **Answer B**

**Explanation** Insisting that the team members participate is forcing them to do something that is unacceptable in their culture. Requesting their removal from the project penalizes the team members for expressing their cultural preferences, which is not a valid reason to remove them. Excluding them from all future team building does not show respect for their culture, and would have a negative impact on the project. Excusing them from playing, and discussing alternative activities for the whole team with which they would be more comfortable is best because it demonstrates respect for cultural differences.

27. **Answer D**

**Explanation** The project manager's responsibility is to provide truthful project information. You should then discuss the impacts of the team members' actions with the team members. If that does not work, the next step is to report the team members' behavior to their functional managers. In the meantime, the project manager must report the status as accurately as possible.