

Seven Strategies to Advance Your Career with Project Management

By Michelle LaBrosse, PMP®, Chief Cheetah and Founder of Cheetah Learning, and Kristen Medina, PMP®, Co-Author

Every single one of us does projects - it is how we achieve any goal in our life. How well you do those projects decides your overall success in life. Project Management is not just for people who want to climb high up the corporate ladder; it is a critically important life skill for everyone who wants to make the most of their existence. According to the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the typical person is only working at 50 percent of his or her potential. Even making a modest improvement in how you do your projects can help you quickly rise above the mediocrity. Here are seven strategies for doing projects that can help you advance in your career and with your other important life goals.

1. “Right” Sized – Which reality would you prefer?

A. I find the best way to work with what I have to get the job done, and I pick the right projects based on what and who I have available to work with. It’s amazing what we accomplish.

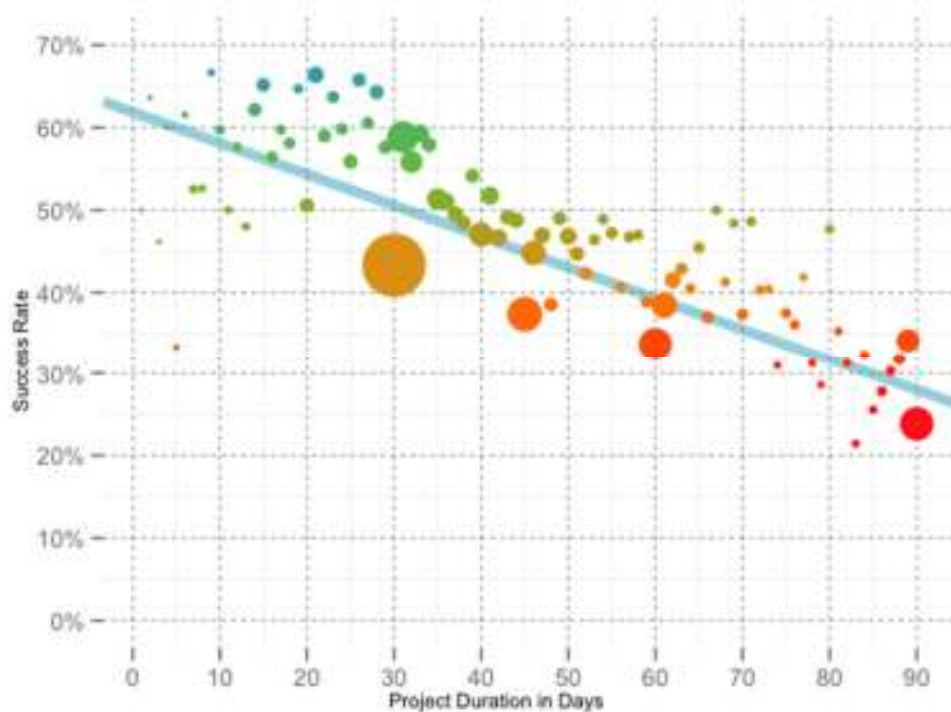
B. I could do better if those around me would do their jobs better, and I don’t have the resources I need to do my job as well as I could.

C. I don’t have enough authority and can’t do my job that well because people in authority don’t know what my job is.

If you chose "A", then you want to live in a reality where you focus on your circle of influence, rather than your circle of concern. Your circle of influence comprises the things in your life that you have control over, while your circle of concern includes things that you don’t have control of. To “right size” your circle of influence, don’t give any power to the things in your life over which you have no control, as that is a sure way to become disengaged from your work and your life.

2. Make Someday TODAY – A study done by [KickStarter](#) found that the more time was given to do a project, the less likely that that project would ever be completed. They even created a nifty graph to demonstrate this phenomenon:

Project Duration vs. Success Rate



(www.kickstarter.com)

When you give yourself a tight timeline, you will be amazed at what you can accomplish. The closer you are to a deadline, the more you will focus on the deadline and complete the tasks necessary to finish.

3. **Leverage Your Strengths** - According to a [2012 Gallup survey](#), when Americans use their strengths more, they stress less. Still, the study finds, only 1 in 4 adults live and work in an area that capitalizes on their strengths. When you work from your innate strengths, time becomes irrelevant while you intently focus on the task at hand. This is called being in a state of “[flow](#).” What are your areas of strength where you achieve the state of flow?
4. **Accept Imperfections as Perfect** – While attention to detail is important, being a perfectionist can often do more harm than good. Perfectionism can hurt when you wait to know everything there is to know before starting to pursue a goal. In project management there is a term called “progressive elaboration.” This means that you will become aware of what you need to know as the project progresses, even if your knowledge is minimal at the start. Recognize that your imperfections are perfect for you at this moment – and go after your goals anyway.

5. **Destroy Distractions** – Business Week reported that distractions cost US businesses \$650 billion a year. After you identify the biggest distractions in your life, you need to work hard to rid yourself of these addictions, just as if you were quitting smoking or coffee: with patience and diligence. You can learn how to improve your ability to focus amidst all the distractions of our time - it's just like any other skill you can learn and master.
6. **Attract the “Right” People** – The quality of your life depends greatly on the quality of your associations. Social capital - the people you know and the connections you have with them - is a very important source of capital that you need to cultivate throughout your life and your career.

As important as attracting the right people is interacting with them in a way that engages their strengths. When you learn how to engage with people's innate strengths while leveraging your own, every interaction (also known as a “negotiation”) becomes an opportunity for creative collaboration where you can create more by leveraging each person's strengths than you could by going it alone.

7. **Reduce Risk** – We all have different levels of risk we can tolerate in our lives, and this seems to change on a moment-by-moment basis. Instead of worrying about risks, you can get more done when you manage them. Risk management is a continuous process in which you identify, analyze, implement strategies to mitigate, and communicate key information about risks. When you are able to both increase your tolerance for risk AND reduce risks, you can finish your projects faster while using fewer resources.

These are seven key strategies you can put into use today to create more success for you in all areas of your life. The [Cheetah Certified Project Manager Program](#) can help you earn a credential that demonstrates your knowledge, confidence, and reliability in taking on projects that are right for you and can create value for others, fast. In this 50-hour, three-part program, you learn your innate strengths and how to leverage those in three important domains: how you learn and where you place your focus, how you do your projects, and how you negotiate. When you successfully complete this program, you earn the right to call yourself a Cheetah Certified Project Manager. Contact us (jeancoach@cheetahlearning.com or 888-659-2013) to learn more, or [click here](#) to register today and get **\$400 off** when you use promotion code **7Strategies2013**.

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.

Recently 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.

Michelle’s articles have appeared in more than 100 publications and websites around the world. Her monthly column, the [Know How Network](#), is carried by over 400 publications.

She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School’s Owner/President Management (OPM) program and holds engineering degrees from Syracuse University and the University of Dayton.