

Managing Projects Across BordersSM

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is “Managing Projects Across Borders” (MPAB)?

The **Managing Projects Across BordersSM** series enables program managers, project managers, and other professionals to master the challenges of cross-cultural project management and collaboration. The workshops in the series teach the competencies needed to:

- master the many challenges of communicating across distances, languages, and cultures,
- avoid misaligned expectations across international project teams and internal/external stakeholders,
- initiate projects effectively by leveraging cultural differences rather than letting them become obstacles, and
- successfully execute projects in spite of differences in values and work styles.

2. What is the “Managing International Projects” workshop about, and who should attend?

This workshop teaches participants how to tailor team communication to expectations and preferences, initiate international projects effectively, master the virtual team challenges of distance, culture, and languages, and execute the right strategies to anticipate, prevent, and/or resolve conflicts.

The following participant groups will find this workshop highly valuable:

- Project managers working with international project teams
- Project managers working with foreign collaborative development or outsourcing partners
- Team members assigned to international projects.

3. What is the “Negotiating and Working with International Customers, Suppliers or Partners” workshop about, and who should attend?

This workshop teaches participants the rules and best practices needed to master complex cross-boundary situations. It addresses the special requirements of influencing and negotiating in other cultures as well as the complex relationship and conflict management skills involved in establishing productive relationships with international customers.

The following participant groups will find this workshop highly valuable:

- Project managers working with foreign customers or with collaborative development / outsourcing partners
- Program managers overseeing an international project environment that includes foreign stakeholders and/or customers
- Others involved in an international project environment that includes foreign stakeholders and/or customers, for instance business development managers, relationship managers, operations managers, or functional domain managers.

4. I would like to take both “Managing International Projects” and “Negotiating and Working with International Customers, Suppliers, and Partners.” Is there anything I need to consider?

The order in which you take the two workshops is not critical. However, the first day of each track covers the same content: the cultural differences and their relationship to an international project success. If you attended one MPAB workshop, you can safely skip Day One of the next one.

5. Do the MPAB workshops include case studies and exercises? Which countries and cultures do the MPAB workshops address?

MPAB workshop time balances group discussions (large and small) and application exercises in which participants apply the skills taught to actual business situations. The MPAB workshops include a number of different case studies, some of which extend across several practice sessions.

The workshops cover a wide range of cultures, with examples geared specifically to those that are of highest interest to participants. Application exercises include role plays involving Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Hungarian, and Korean nationals, as well as case studies and other practice with examples from several other cultures. In addition, time is provided for participants to ask specific questions about international groups with whom they are most concerned.

6. How will I personally benefit from attending the “Managing International Projects” workshop? How will my company benefit from sending me?

Individually, you will communicate more effectively, identify potential problems and conflicts before they affect project success, achieve more productive teamwork across your international project team, and improve the overall planning and execution of your projects. You will avoid some of the common and costly errors that project managers make in working with different cultures: errors that sometimes cost you time and goodwill, and sometimes cost you the project.

Your company will enjoy considerable returns on the investment from better forecasting, higher resource utilization, and significantly higher project success rates.

7. How will I personally benefit from attending the “Negotiating and Working with International Customers, Suppliers and Partners” workshop? How will my company benefit from sending me?

Individually, you will communicate more effectively, improve your ability to influence and negotiate with foreign customers, suppliers, and partners, build stronger international client relationships, and resolve conflicts with customers, suppliers, and partners in a productive fashion.

Your company will enjoy higher project success rates because of better partner alignment and stakeholder support. In addition, they can expect more favorable negotiation outcomes as well as substantially higher levels of customer satisfaction and supplier productivity.

8. What do past participants say about MPAB workshops?

The first MPAB workshops have been conducted in May 2005. Many have been held since then. The feedback from participants has consistently been extremely positive when measured against the highest standards. When asked whether they would recommend the workshop they took to others, 100% of participants said “yes.” Frequent comments include “best workshop I ever attended” or “I hope that my co-workers and my boss can come.”

9. Who teaches the MPAB workshops?

Sue Freedman, Ph.D runs Knowledge Work Global, a Dallas based management consultant specializing in technology based organizations. Sue has helped US and foreign owned fortune 500 companies implement and upgrade project management practices, build cohesion and loyalty across geographically and functionally diverse groups, implement systems to track technical and leadership competence, and enable employees responsible for new product development and other complex, time sensitive work to collaborate more efficiently and more effectively.

Sue teaches Project Management and Organizational Behavior in the graduate MBA program at the University of Texas at Dallas, School of Management. She is a founding member the Virtual Collaboration Research Group at the University of North Texas, co-author of *“Beyond Teams: Building the Collaboration Organization”*, published by Jossey-Bass, and is a frequent presenter in national conferences in the area of collaboration, leadership, and organizational and team design for projectized organizations. Sue formerly served as manager of organizational effectiveness at Texas Instruments and vice-president of organization effectiveness for large real estate investment trust.

Lothar Katz leads international business consultancy Leadership Crossroads, helping clients improve their global business success. He is a former Vice President and General Manager with Texas Instruments, where he managed large distributed product development organizations across the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Australia, and served in project management roles from individual project team member to executive sponsor. Originally from Germany, he has worked with employees, customers, outsourcing vendors, and other partners in more than 25 countries around the world and has lived in the United States and in Europe.

Lothar teaches Global Project Execution at the University of Texas at Dallas, School of Management, and is a member of the Asian American Citizens Council in Dallas. His book *“Negotiating International Business: The Negotiator’s Reference Guide to 50 Countries around the World”* was published by BookSurge Publishing in 2006.

10. What minimum work experience are MPAB workshop participants expected to have?

MPAB participants should be familiar with all fundamental project management practices and should have at least two years of actual project management experience either as team members or project managers. Being a certified PMP® is advantageous, but it is not a prerequisite for the series. Having personal experience in an international project environment is a great advantage and may make the learning experience more valuable.

11. Do the MPAB workshops follow the practices described in PMI’s Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®)?

Yes. The MPAB workshops were originally developed and conducted in cooperation with the University of Texas at Dallas, whose Project Management Program is accredited by PMI. All MPAB workshops are based on the practices described in PMBOK®.

12. Which areas of project management as defined in PMI’s PMBOK® are addressed in the MPAB workshops?

“Managing International Projects” focuses primarily on these project management knowledge areas: Integration Management, Scope Management, Time Management, Cost Management, Human Resource Management, Communications Management, and Risk Management.

“Negotiating and Working with International Customers, Suppliers and Partners” focuses primarily on these project management knowledge areas: Integration Management, Human Resource Management, Communications Management, Procurement Management.

13. Will I get a certificate for attending a MPAB workshop?

Yes. You will receive a certificate from the University of Texas at Dallas.

14. I am a Project Management Professional (PMP), certified by the Project Management Institute (PMI). Can I get credits for my continuing professional education by attending MPAB workshops?

Yes. Attendees of MPAB workshops earn 24 PDUs for each three-day workshop.

15. How long are the MPAB workshops?

“Managing International Projects” and “Negotiating and Working with International Customers, Suppliers and Partners” are each three days long. Workshop days usually start around 8:30am and end around 5pm, which includes about 1.5 to 2 hours for lunch and breaks.

16. Are MPAB workshops also being offered on-line over the web?

Yes. Please see www.managingprojectsacrossborders.com/online for more information.

17. Do you customize these workshops for internal audiences?

Yes. The Managing Projects Across Borders program is most effective when customized for the audience and the business involved. For in-house workshops, the designers/instructors meet first with leaders and representatives of the target audience to align expectations and understand key business challenges. Topics and activities are then selected to meet the needs and achieve the goals of audience involved. Depending on the level of customization needed, new examples or case studies are created and different countries or cultures are included or emphasized. In-house workshops often include specially designed activities to address cross-cultural collaboration issues the target audience is facing.

18. Can I copy MPAB materials and give them to my colleagues or friends?

We sometimes give special permission for distribution of specific articles and tools, if they are produced as is, with all references included. Unless otherwise noted, copying any of the MPAB materials without written permission from the copyright owners is prohibited by law.

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