

Program Manager Mentor/Protégé Program

The **Program Manager Mentor/Protégé Program** is a structured, long-term development system designed to prepare Team Leads, Managers, and emerging leaders to assume full Program Manager responsibility.

It is broader than traditional management training. The program develops the participant's ability to understand the business, manage customer relationships, lead internal operations, grow professionally, oversee people and contracts, and contribute to the financial and strategic success of an account or program.

The complete program is organized around **four Core Competency Mastery Areas**, supported by **36 individual learning and development modules**.

Each participant begins with a self-assessment, works with a mentor to identify gaps, creates an individualized development plan, and builds proficiency through formal learning, practical assignments, coaching, and demonstrated experience.

The four Core Competency Mastery Areas

1. Business Management

This mastery area develops the participant's understanding of how an organization operates as a business. It moves the participant beyond managing tasks and employees toward understanding the commercial, financial, organizational, and strategic context in which decisions are made.

It contains eight modules:

Marketing

Understanding how organizations create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that provide value to customers, partners, and the broader market.

Ethics

Understanding the organizational standards, principles, values, and norms that guide individual and corporate behavior.

Accounting

Understanding how financial transactions are recorded, summarized, analyzed, and reported.

Organizational Behavior

Understanding human behavior within organizations, including the relationship between individuals, teams, leadership, culture, and organizational structure.

Finance

Understanding funding, capital, financial resource allocation, business value, budgeting, costs, profitability, and the financial consequences of management decisions.

Operations

Understanding how an organization uses its people, processes, systems, and assets to produce and deliver value.

Economics

Understanding the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, along with the economic forces that influence customers and organizations.

Strategy

Understanding how senior leaders formulate and implement major goals and initiatives based on organizational resources, market conditions, risks, and the internal and external environment.

Together, these modules help the protégé understand not only how to operate a program, but also why the organization makes particular decisions and how the program contributes to larger business objectives.

2. Customer and Business Relationship Management

This mastery area develops the ability to understand the customer's business, shape demand, manage expectations, coordinate services, support change, and create measurable value.

It contains eleven modules:

Standards

Understanding and applying relevant industry and customer standards and frameworks, including ISO, COBIT, ITIL, SFIA, NIST, and other applicable models.

Demand

Identifying, surfacing, and shaping customer demand for the provider's services, products, and capabilities.

Exploring

Working with customers to identify, examine, clarify, and rationalize potential needs and opportunities.

Servicing

Coordinating resources, integrating activities, and managing customer or business-partner expectations throughout service delivery.

Value Harvesting

Ensuring that completed services, projects, and business-change initiatives produce the intended results and that the organization recognizes and realizes the value created.

Strategic Partnering

Developing a relationship in which the provider and customer share common goals and focus jointly on business-value realization rather than only transactions or service metrics.

Business IQ

Learning to speak the language of the customer's business and understand its industry, ecosystem, mission, financial drivers, priorities, and operating pressures.

Portfolio Management

Balancing demand and investment across time horizons, business units, risks, rewards, projects, programs, infrastructure, and service categories.

Provider Domain

Developing a strong understanding of the provider's services and functions, such as the Service Desk, desktop support, server administration, development, infrastructure, and related capabilities.

Powerful Communications

Understanding communication styles and characteristics, building influence, expressing ideas clearly, and adjusting messages to different audiences.

Business Transition Management

Understanding the people and organizational side of change, including stakeholder urgency, key roles, change concepts, clarity, adoption, and the management of transitions.

This area teaches the participant to connect service delivery with customer success. The Program Manager is expected to understand what the contract requires, what the company promised, and what customer stakeholders actually believe success should look like.

The source program specifically directs the Program Manager to ask major stakeholders what successful operations should look like at 90 days, six months, twelve months, and beyond. Those expectations are then mapped alongside contractual obligations and proposal commitments.

3. Learning and Growth

This mastery area ensures that the participant continues to expand professional knowledge, acquire recognized credentials, gain broader experience, and demonstrate increasing leadership maturity.

It contains ten modules:

Mentorship Program

Active participation in the Mentor/Protégé relationship, including goal setting, coaching, progress reviews, development planning, and practical application.

HDI Support Center Director

Development of advanced service and support leadership knowledge through the HDI Support Center Director curriculum or certification.

PMI Project Management Professional

Development of formal project-management knowledge and, where appropriate, attainment of the PMP credential.

Business Relationship Management Professional

Development of formal business-relationship-management knowledge through the BRMP framework or certification.

Integrated Service Management Essentials

Development of an integrated understanding of service-management practices and how they work together across organizational boundaries.

Certified Customer Experience Professional

Development of formal customer-experience knowledge and, where appropriate, attainment of the CCXP credential.

Sales and Business Development

Learning how opportunities are identified, qualified, developed, proposed, and converted into responsible account or organizational growth.

Cross-Training Leadership Assignments

Serving in leadership assignments on other contracts, accounts, programs, or operational areas to broaden experience beyond the participant's normal environment.

Continuous Learning

Participating in books, courses, seminars, conferences, symposiums, and other structured learning activities each year.

Thought Leadership

Learning deeply enough to provide useful answers to important customer questions and communicating those insights in formats the intended audience will consume.

This section recognizes that Program Manager development cannot occur only through classroom training. Participants must continue learning, apply what they learn, broaden their exposure, and increasingly contribute knowledge to others.

4. Internal Business Process Management

This mastery area develops the participant's ability to work effectively within the company's internal operating structure and manage the processes that support customer delivery.

It contains seven modules:

Human Resources

Understanding the policies, systems, and practices used to manage people, including onboarding, performance management, coaching, employee relations, compensation, promotion, reassignment, and termination.

Business Development

Understanding the internal tasks and processes used to identify and implement growth opportunities within and between organizations.

Recruiting

Understanding how candidates are attracted, screened, interviewed, selected, approved, hired, and onboarded.

Contracts

Understanding the management of agreements with customers, vendors, subcontractors, and partners, including obligations, modifications, deliverables, and compliance.

Compliance and Governance

Understanding the organization's approach to governance, risk management, controls, accountability, and regulatory or contractual compliance.

Research and Development

Understanding emerging technologies, evolving practices, innovation, experimentation, and Agile initiatives that may improve services or create new capabilities.

Leadership

Developing the judgment and capabilities required to lead an organization, program, department, or major business function.

This mastery area ensures that the Program Manager understands how work gets accomplished inside the provider organization. A PM cannot manage a customer program effectively without knowing how to obtain staff, administer contracts, engage Human Resources, comply with company controls, support growth, and navigate internal leadership structures.

How each module is assessed

Every one of the 36 modules is evaluated across four separate dimensions:

Dimension	What it evaluates
Knowledge	What the participant understands through education, training, certification, self-study, or on-the-job learning
Skills	How effectively the participant can apply that knowledge in practice
Behaviors	Whether the participant consistently demonstrates the expected professional and leadership conduct
Experience	The depth and duration of the participant's practical exposure

Each dimension is scored at one of three levels:

Score	General meaning
0	No demonstrated knowledge, skill, expected behavior, or meaningful experience
5	Working or competent capability developed through learning and regular application
10	Advanced mastery, recognized expertise, consistently exceptional behavior, or extensive experience

The four scores are combined to produce a module score of up to 40.

The maturity classifications are:

- **Initial: 0–10**
- **Defined: 11–30**
- **Optimized: 31–40**

This structure prevents the assessment from treating knowledge as competence. For example, someone may hold a certification but have little practical experience, or may have years of exposure without demonstrating the required behaviors. The four-dimensional assessment makes those differences visible.

Individual development process

The program is not intended to give every participant the same standardized course sequence. Instead, the assessment establishes the protégé's current maturity in each module.

The mentor and protégé then use the results to:

- Establish short- and long-term professional goals.
- Identify specific competency gaps.
- Prioritize the modules requiring development.
- Select appropriate training, certifications, readings, and assignments.
- Arrange opportunities to observe or perform Program Manager work.
- Document plans and comments for each module.
- Review progress at regular intervals.
- Reassess maturity after additional learning and experience.

The four mastery areas do not have to be completed sequentially. Development can occur simultaneously across several areas and should be aligned with the participant's role, existing capabilities, customer requirements, and organizational objectives.

The program document estimates that fully developing proficiency across the complete model may take **three to five years**.

Practical Program Manager development

The Mentor/Protégé guide provides much of the practical curriculum used to develop the four mastery areas. Participants are expected to learn through actual Program Manager activities, including:

- Creating a First 90 Days Plan.
- Reviewing contracts, proposals, pricing volumes, and deliverables.
- Mapping customer requirements against company promises.
- Planning and managing contract transitions.
- Conducting discovery and operational assessments.
- Developing immediate, short-, mid-, and long-term improvement plans.
- Managing employees and subcontractors.
- Recruiting, hiring, onboarding, coaching, and evaluating staff.
- Managing SLAs, performance measures, risks, and reporting.
- Preparing and delivering Program Management Reviews.
- Managing customer and executive relationships.
- Supporting proposals and account growth.
- Understanding staffing costs, overtime, revenue, and profitability.
- Leading meetings and documenting action items.
- Communicating effectively with executives, customers, employees, and peers.

The guide also includes practical templates for meeting agendas, weekly and monthly status reports, Performance Improvement Plans, Post-Incident Reviews, and career development.

The intended outcome

The program is designed to produce a Program Manager who can operate across all four mastery areas rather than functioning only as an operational supervisor.

A fully developed participant should be capable of:

- Understanding the business and strategic context of the program.
- Connecting customer needs with provider capabilities.
- Managing contracts, commitments, expectations, and outcomes.
- Leading employees and coordinating internal business processes.
- Managing service quality, risk, reporting, and improvement.
- Understanding the financial health of the program.
- Identifying appropriate growth opportunities.
- Managing organizational and customer change.
- Communicating credibly with technical, operational, financial, and executive audiences.
- Continuing to learn while developing other leaders.

In practical terms, the program is a **multi-year Program Manager apprenticeship and competency-development system**:

Four Core Competency Mastery Areas → 36 underlying modules → four assessment dimensions → individualized development plans → mentored application and demonstrated proficiency.

The older Mentor/Protégé guide supplies the lessons, assignments, practices, and tools. The PM Self-Assessment supplies the overall competency architecture used to evaluate and guide the participant's development.