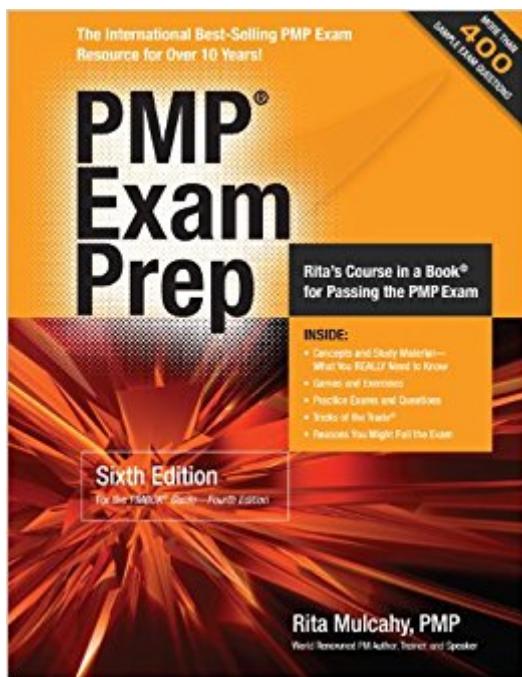


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# PMP Exam Prep, Sixth Edition: Rita's Course In A Book For Passing The PMP Exam



## **Synopsis**

Hundreds of thousands of project managers understand why PMP Exam Prep by Rita Mulcahy, PMP, is a worldwide best-seller. Is it Rita's years of PMP exam preparation experience? The endless hours of ongoing research? The interviews with project managers who failed the exam, to identify gaps in their knowledge? Or is it the razor-sharp focus on making sure project managers don't waste a single minute of their time studying any more than they absolutely have to? Actually, it's all of the above. PMP Exam Prep, Sixth Edition by Rita Mulcahy contains hundreds of updates and improvements from previous editions--including new exercises and sample questions never before in print. Offering hundreds of sample questions, critical time-saving tips plus games and activities available nowhere else, this book will help you pass the PMP exam on your first try.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Just took and passed this exam yesterday. I studied this book exclusively for about 50 hours over the past month. I used no other training materials, no test simulations, no classes - not even the PMBOK! I am fairly experienced, so your hours may vary, but everything you need to pass this test is in this book. First the book from an editorial view: I have taken literally dozens of IT certification exams and have used at least one book for every one. Most technical books, IMO, are written in a very sloppy fashion - typos, grammar seemingly from a language other than English, non-functioning code, etc. Not Rita's book. Rita's Exam Prep is easily the highest quality certification book I have ever read. I found only two errors in over 500 pages of real content! Ok, so now you

know the book is well constructed, highly edited, and you can trust the content to be relatively error-free. Let me now explain about the actual content and how it matches to the test content (it's relevancy, if you will). Rita obviously understands the PMP content and exam objectives exceedingly well. But just as importantly, she understands how to present the material in a way that allows to reader to concentrate and absorb the important points. I have taught before and there is a world of difference between someone who knows the material and one who can actually teach others the material. In my opinion, this book is as good as it gets for those on a self-study certification path. If you follow her study plan, there is no reason for you to fail this exam. Out of the 200 questions on the exam, I would estimate that you should be able to successfully answer 180-190 of the questions with just Rita's book. You only need ~61% to pass, so you should have a high degree of confidence that you will pass this exam on the first try if you read and understand what Rita is presenting to you. One final note: I read where some people thought this book was expensive. This is a high-end certification and has a high-end testing fee to go along with it. You don't want to spend ~\$500 on an exam and then skimp out on test preparation! Many people spend thousands on a class and won't walk away with as much knowledge as what is in this book. For what you are getting, this book is a bargain!

This review is for the April 2009 6th edition of RMC's PMP Exam Prep. Also see my "Project Management Journeyman" Booklist (\* NOTE: updated May 2010 -- both the Journeyman Booklist and this review per 8th value tip below \*). I'm writing this book review with 5 value-points for the reader in mind:(1) List of 7+1 \*VALUABLE\* tips to get more horsepower out of the book faster(2) I used the "harder" PMP book for passing the "easier" CAPM exam(3) use of the RMC learning system with 2 other competitive offerings(4) thoughts on other RMC offerings(5) my experience with the PMBOK v4 PMI CAPM exam in light of the aboveThe PMI PMBOK version 4 was released in 2008, and the CAPM / PMP exams switched over from the now-superseded PMBOK version 3 as of July 2009. Seeking to certify under the latest standard, I looked at 3+ leaders in the field for self-paced PM training (RMC, Kerzner, Heldman) and chose the Rita/RMC book and system as the best overall value hands-down relative to my specific 2-POINT training goal: (a) to be \*solid\* in the PM basics \*well\* beyond your typical CAPM candidate -- but without having to read 8 to 12 different PM books over a period of months to get there; (b) do it for as close to the drive-out price of \$1000 as possible versus the typical PM training program investment of \$2500-5000 elsewhere. I deliberately used the more difficult, much thicker RMC PMP book instead of RMC's CAPM book to prepare for the CAPM exam, and am pleased with the results. And going forward, I also bought

Kerzner and Heldman's PMP books (again, see my PM booklist) and find their different approaches actually complement the RMC program for continued professional development quite well. Kerzner's strength is case studies and color commentary that comes from years of doing PM, teaching PM, and evolving his great book. Heldman's approach is the opposite of RMC: learn thoroughly by doing in the laboratory of the job. Heldman will push you to get good at comprehensive hands-on PM, but unfortunately it will take MUCH longer than RMC's approach for coming up to speed to pass the PMI exam sooner rather than later. \*\*\* RMC is about practical actionable knowledge NOW - and RMC delivers. \*\*\* I'm not saying anything bad about Heldman's approach; rather, I'm saying that the 3 systems (RMC, Kerzner, Heldman) have different approaches that work well together. My proposed reading order is to go through the RMC book 2x-3x and take the test. Next get through Kerzner -- an easy read to fill out one's worldview after paying the price to get through RMC. Finally, if you're a full-time PM, use Heldman's book to round things out. On other RMC offerings, first I'll mention the CAPM online 23-hour course - you'll recall that (in addition to a 4-year degree) PMI requires 23 classroom contact hours in lieu of 1500 documented hours working on a project team for eligibility to take the exam. The online RMC CAPM course is pretty much taken straight from the book but interlaced with video vignettes featuring Rita teaching. A heads-up: don't look for fireworks with the online course. You've actually already experienced the show when you read the book; the online course complements with multi-media feedings for the CAPM candidate and thus satisfies the technicality of the PMI 23 hour classroom requirement. That's it. The price is right. Remember the gift-horse parable and your wallet will thank you. The RMC system also offers an optional 1000+ exam questions database (FASTtrack), and a flashcard drill system. If you're taking the harder PMP exam, then I would strongly recommend atleast the FASTtrack as the RMC PMP book only offers 200+ questions; this is not enough for the PMP. However, for the easier CAPM exam, I found it enough to just memorize the complete Rita Process Chart and few other small patterns cited in the book. Interestingly, both the Rita chart in the RMC PMP book, AND the Process Group .vs. Knowledge Area matrix found in the PMBOK v4 book -- have the same page # -- page 43 ! My experience with the CAPM exam is that Rita was right: know the Rita Chart (and DO all the work in the book from cover to cover, no half-steppin' !) and you largely don't have to memorize Inputs / Outputs. However I'll throw in 2 warnings: (a) read the formal PMBOK book alongside the RMC book on a per-chapter basis for further subtle but important clarities around Inputs/Outputs anyway (but without memorization); (b) the PMP exam is full of experiential questions (qualitative) .vs. the CAPM exam questions are strictly quantitative. So I very much over-studied for the CAPM exam in using RMC's PMP book; but that's okay as my goal was EDUCATION (change one's mentality) and

not just "training" (improve existing mentality). Here are my 7+1 value-add observations and nuggets for getting more horsepower out of the RMC PMP 6th ed book:

**(1) STUDY ORDER - SAVE YOURSELF SOME TIME:** go to a copier and copy the "Difficulty Level" illustration on page 9, then the Knowledge Area bar chart near the bottom of page 99. These 2 drawings should make it clear how you'll want to tackle the book in a way that works uniquely for you. I was then able to alternate back and forth between a "hard" chapter and an "easy" chapter to help sustain my momentum; I also more readily invested more time in the harder chapters.

**(2) PM PROCESSES & PM INTEGRATION CHAPTERS:** PM Processes is the hardest chapter. Trust me when I say this - pay the price here to memorize the Rita Process Chart and the rest of the book becomes a breeze. Next, just skim the PM Integration chapter the first time and save the more in-depth effort for this chapter after completion of the book.

**(3) RISK & QUALITY CHAPTERS:** Read the Risk chapter early in your study sequence because it's the most pervasive of the 9 knowledge areas throughout the entire PM effort. Also read the Quality chapter early in the sequence else the Rita Chart can be ambiguous (e.g. Verify Scope .vs. Validate Scope, or what is QP .vs. QA .vs. QC ?).

**(4) MY TRICK TO EASILY MEMORIZING THE WHOLE RITA PROCESS CHART AND NOT JUST THE PLANNING COLUMN:** I oughta charge \$\$\$ for what I'm about to share here. Rita only advises rote memorization of just the "Planning" group column (because the step-order within the other 4 PM process groups is not strictly fixed, but instead "generally" grouped and "approximately" sequenced). The good news is that "generally" and "approximately" is good enough ! So you can readily memorize all 5 columns for not much more work than memorizing the 1 column - and the results will show on the exam. So I made the following discovery after copying the flashcards pages in the PM Processes chapter (pages 47-57), then cutting them out with scissors and playing the game over several times for 2 hours. RMC does not point this trick out -- so I'm saving you a lot of time and increasing your score with this next secret ! Read carefully: the 5 original PMBOK process group columns (Initiate, Plan, Execute, M&C, Close), using the Rita Process Chart version rather than the PMBOK version, have a total of  $10+24+20+17+8 = 79$  steps distributed across the 5 columns. Working with the RMC PM Process Chapter flashcards revealed that, with no modifications, these 5 long columns will fragment out cleanly into 17 short columns that can each be thought of as "work-packages". These work-packages in turn can be thought of as self-contained pearls on a string that should be strung together in a self-evident logical order. I gave each of these pearls my own custom name for easy recall. The numbering sequence that emerges is: Initiate 55, Plan 5865, Execute 5573, M&C 5552, Close 332. It's easy to memorize these 5 numbers which together are the 17 digits that in turn are the 17 "pearls", and that collectively contain Rita's 79

steps. Visualize being a PM on the job through each pearl as you build the entire chart out over and over again on paper. You'll have the \*entire\* chart down cold in 1 to 2 hours:>> INITIATE formerly 10 steps, now 5+5 steps = 5-step Big Picture, 5-step Make Commitments;>> PLAN formerly 24 steps, now 5+8+6+5 steps = 5-step Project Scope + Equipment + Team, 8-step WBS + Dictionary, 6-step Other Plans, 5-step Finalize;>> EXECUTE formerly 20 steps, now 5+5+7+3 = 5-step Product Scope + Request Change, 5-step Make the Donuts + Uphold QA standards, 7-step Manage Team, 3-step Information I/O;>> MONITOR & CONTROL formerly 17 steps, now 5+5+5+2 = 5-step Measure + Influence, 5-step Change Control, 5-step V&V + Risk + Forecast/Report, 2-step Manage Reserves + Admin Procurements;>> CLOSE formerly 8 steps, now 3+3+2 = 3-step External Closure, 3-step Internal Closure, 2-step Legal Closure.(5) ONCE A DAY -- 5-MINUTE BRAIN-DUMP THE RITA CHART TO PAPER: whadya know, Proverbs in the morning, Psalms at night, and the RITA CHART while in the food-line during lunch !(6) PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT CHAPTER: sorry guys, this chapter needs more clarity and elaboration. It's already the longest chapter in the book but that's okay. The solution is not to argue with the coke machine with 45 cents in the hand and try in vain to buy a 50 cent coke. The solution is to pay the 50 cents and get the coke. Thanks.(7) THE LAST CHAPTER CALLED "REASONS YOU MIGHT FAIL THE EXAM": \*do\* the inputs / outputs exercise after the 2nd read-through (and you DID parallel-read the PMBOK book on a chapter by chapter basis, right ?!). The last chapter brings it all home for sure. Make this the partner chapter with your 2nd passage through the PM Integration chapter.(8) ADDED MAY 2010 -- ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON TIME & STUDY APPROACH: Thank you for your kind posts in response to this review. To answer your questions, everybody learns at different rates. Those with lesser "verbal memory" will take longer to learn from books (.vs. multimedia) than others. Particularly for a CAPM but also for the PMP, on average, you'll want to carve out 4 to 6 weeks (evenings & weekends) and ONLY focus on project mgmt. The net time invested (with 23 hour online course included) will range from 80 to 150 hours. Regardless of the time that you will personally require, it's a mistake to either drag the effort out over multiple months or parallel-study other credentialing efforts. Why? Because with PM you are ALREADY learning multiple subjects at once! PM is an aggregate "discipline comprised of multiple disciplines". This makes it all that much harder to properly \*contextualize\* as it's learned. Contextualization is essential to true education over mere training. So take a month and do this "one thing" very well to the absolute exclusion of all others. Turn off the TV and iPhone; do drive-through or take-out; set clear mini-goals for the complete month; dont be discouraged if 4 weeks becomes 6. LAST TIP: near to your arrival time at #7 above, schedule the exam through Prometric 7 days out for CAPM, and 10-14 days out for PMP

(factor in all those sample test questions first). Your momentum, commitment and focus will be unstoppable.

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