10 Tips for Passing the PMP® Exam...the Second Time

By Andrea Brockmeier, PMP
Watermark Learning

If you are reading this, it may mean you did not pass your PMP® exam. You are not alone. It is a difficult exam, and I have never heard anyone say it was easy. While you may feel discouraged, I encourage you to consider using the study time you have already invested to take another go at it. Many PMPs earned their credential after more than one attempt. Hopefully you will consider trying again. If you choose to retake the exam, here are some suggestions:

1. Focus on the processes in the Process Group that your exam results indicated you were *Below Proficient*. Re-read those sections in the PMBOK completely. Review Annex A1 to help you think about the processes within each Process Group collectively.

2. Make sure to take lots of practice tests such as those in our PMP Online Study Exam before your next exam, and work at getting 80% or better. Part of the challenge of the PMP exam is interpreting complex, situational questions and applying your understanding of best practices to solve the scenario-based questions.

3. Take "speed tests." As you take practice exams, be sure to time yourself. A challenge for everyone is the short time allotment in the exam, and it helps to know how fast you answer questions. The actual PMP exam includes 200 questions that must be completed in 240 minutes. Some questions will take more time than others, but on average you only have 1 minute and 12 seconds per question.

4. Make sure you answer questions according to how the PMBOK organizes project management. If a question seems to differ from real life, don't answer the question according to your experience. Instead, answer as the processes described in the PMBOK would suggest.

5. Be solid in your knowledge of the processes, their inputs, tools/techniques, and outputs. Practice writing them out as a starting point for understanding them. You might also consider taking our PMP Prep Class that we offer virtually or at sites across the US in which students receive materials to assist with this exercise.

6. When you re-sit for the exam, make sure you follow test-taking best practices. For example, did you change many of your answers after going through them the first time? Remember: Your first answer is almost always best, unless you have misread the question or are certain of a mistake in your answer. If in doubt, go with your first answer.

7. Develop an approach to answering the questions, such as the 7-step approach presented in our PMP Prep Class (Read question, Glance at answers, Read setup, Eliminate details, Read setup, Think about answer, Look at answers). Have a plan for how to tackle the exam.

8. Consider the benefits of a study group as part of your preparation. The best way to learn something is to teach it to others, and study group participants are eager to learn. Working in a study group provides opportunity to share and confirm understandings of tools and concepts. They are also a great source of support and encouragement to see things through to the end – and celebrate successes when members pass the test!

9. See our web site for additional [PMP and CAPM preparation resources](#) that can help you prepare and pass.

10. Retake your exam soon. It is very easy to lose focus in your exam preparation with all the other things that require time and attention. I hear often from people who have to ramp up again after months away from studying and it takes them more time than if they had stuck with it the first time. Stay focused and do it now rather than postponing it.

We hope these tips help you plan your retake. We offer best wishes on passing it the second time. Let us know how it goes if you retake the exam and [give us any feedback](#) about our tips.

Visit http://www.watermarklearning.com/certification/project-management-training/pmp/
or write to info@WatermarkLearning.com.