



Business Acumen for Project Managers

How to Thrive in Your Project Management Career

Steven Haines
Founder Business Acumen Institute



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Who We Are



Who we are

Global Training and advisory firm focused on building business acumen for evolving leaders and managers

Mission

To develop the next generation of strategic-thinking, market-focused, results oriented managers and leaders



BAI is an Authorized Training Provider for PMI

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Steven Haines



Former corporate product leader:

- AT&T, Oracle

Founder/entrepreneur/author:

- Business Acumen Institute*
- Sequent Learning Networks

Committed:

- Helping rising leaders and managers master the business of business
- Ongoing research and benchmarking to uncover best-practices



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SELF-ASSESSMENT



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Other Books by Steven Haines



Agenda

Introduction
Fundamentals
Capabilities
Q&A



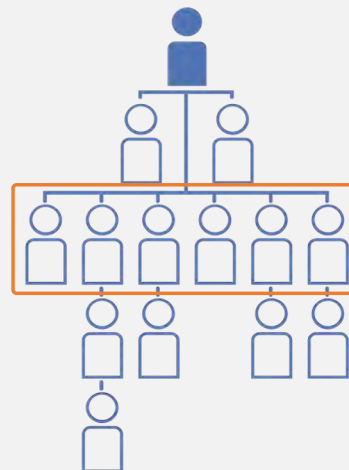
Introduction

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Stuck In The Middle



- Functional experts with deep knowledge need to have broad general business skills with experience in many areas
- This applies to project managers
- Executives want project managers to be ready to move to the next level



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From the Engineering Perspective

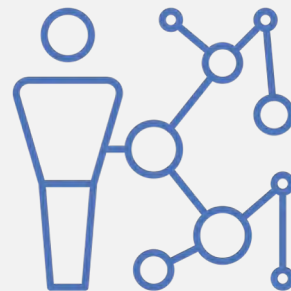
The engineer designed a solution that wouldn't sell



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From the HR Perspective

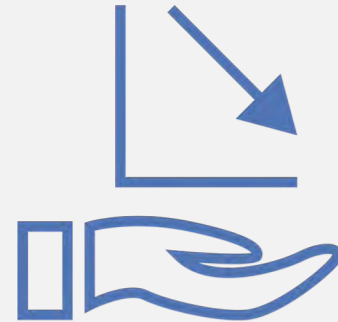
The HR managers hired the wrong people because they didn't understand the work of the departments they supported



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From the Operations Perspective

The Operations manager used capital to improve a process for a product that was losing market share



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From the IT Perspective

The IT group didn't build enough capacity for the number of users of a new business application



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From the Product Management Perspective

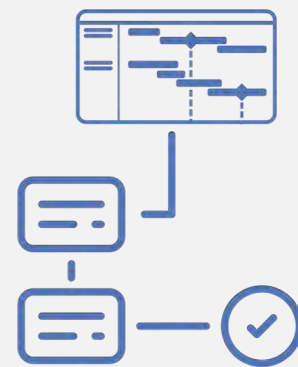
The product manager rushed a business case for a product without the proper research to understand customer needs; the product failed



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From the Project Manager Perspective

The project manager is herding cats to make sure the project deadlines are being met without the full knowledge of the strategic intent of the project



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Functional Experts Need to Know More About the Business



- The Engineering Manager needs to understand customer and market problems to innovate around optional solutions
- The HR leader needs to understand the business in order to contribute to the firm's staffing strategy
- The Operations Manager needs to connect the dots between market demand and factory capacity
- The IT Manager as an internal service provider, needs to understand the requirements of users across the organization
- The Product Manager needs to link customer & market insights to the product strategy and financial performance so that products contribute to the company's bottom line
- **The Project Manager needs to ensure they know how the project fits with the strategic intent of the company and the intended business results to be obtained**

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68%

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68% of project managers surveyed by BAI do not have sufficient understanding of the business impact of projects they've worked on over the past 12 months

n = 344

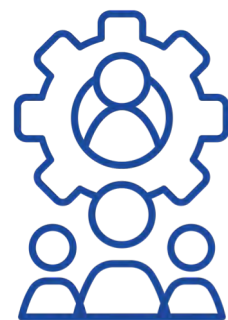
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Exercise: Draw a Picture of a Project Manager



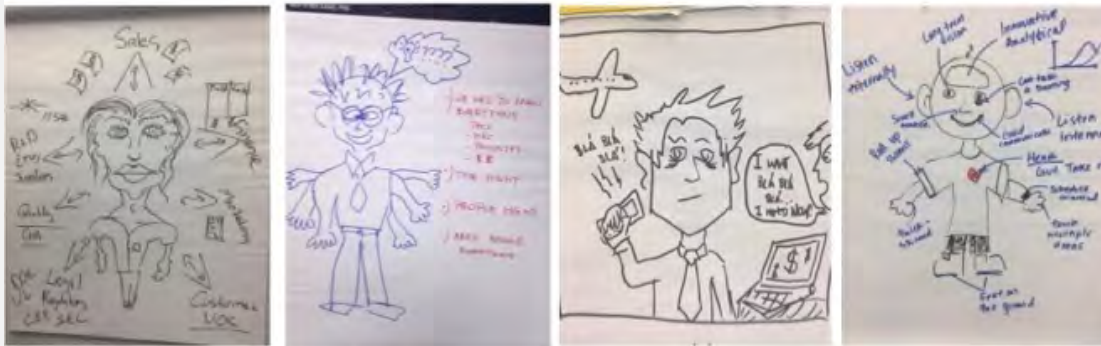
Huddle with a few people around you and draw a picture of a project manager

Use the picture to identify any issues or challenges faced by this person



Challenges Faced By Project Managers

- Meetings
- Updated Deadlines
- Interruptions
- Shifting priorities
- Scope change
- Budget cuts



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The Talent Triangle: The Importance of Business Acumen



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PMI Talent Triangle

Ways of Working: Whether it's predictive, agile, design thinking, or new practices still to be developed, it's clear that there is more than one way that work gets done today.

Power Skills: These interpersonal skills include collaborative leadership, communication, an innovative mindset, for-purpose orientation, and empathy.

Business Acumen: Professionals with business acumen understand the macro and micro influences in their organization and industry and have the function-specific or domain-specific knowledge to make good decisions

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Pathway to the Solution



- How can project managers and project leaders diversify their portfolio of skills and capabilities?
- How can executives recognize what's needed to fortify its management ranks with the needed business talent to drive the organization into the future?



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The Solution



Cultivate Business Acumen!

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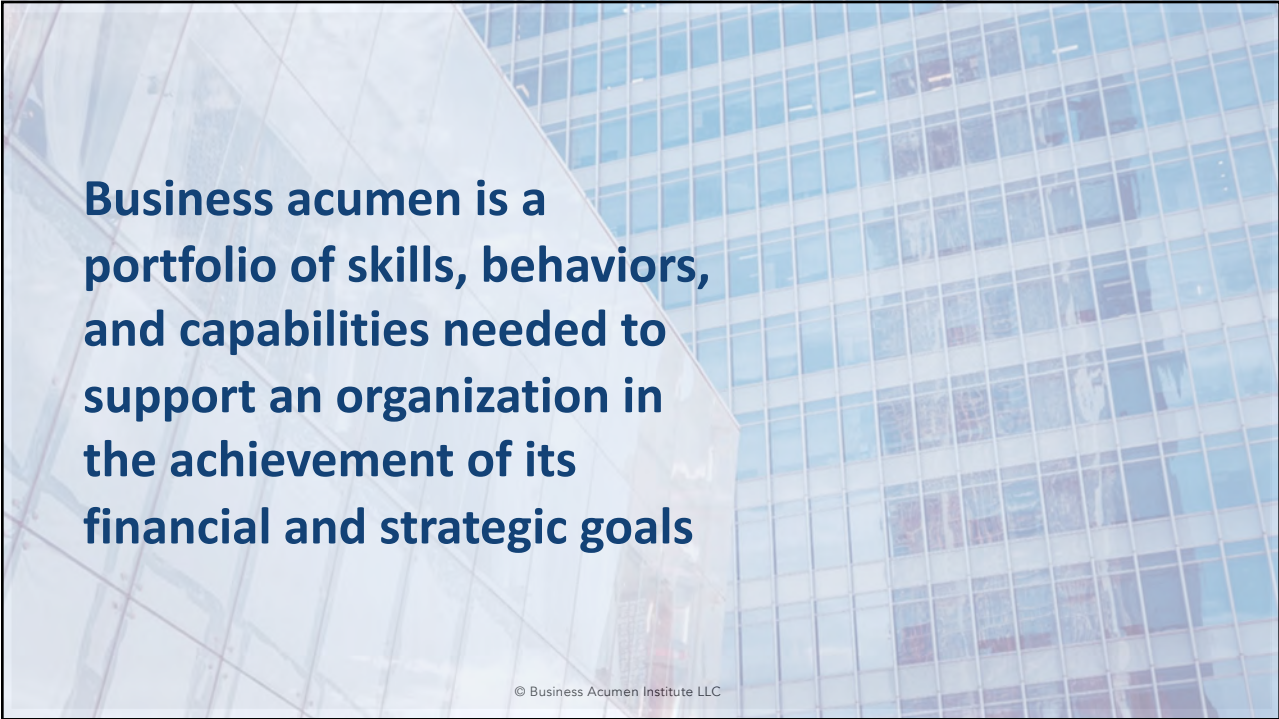
Fundamentals

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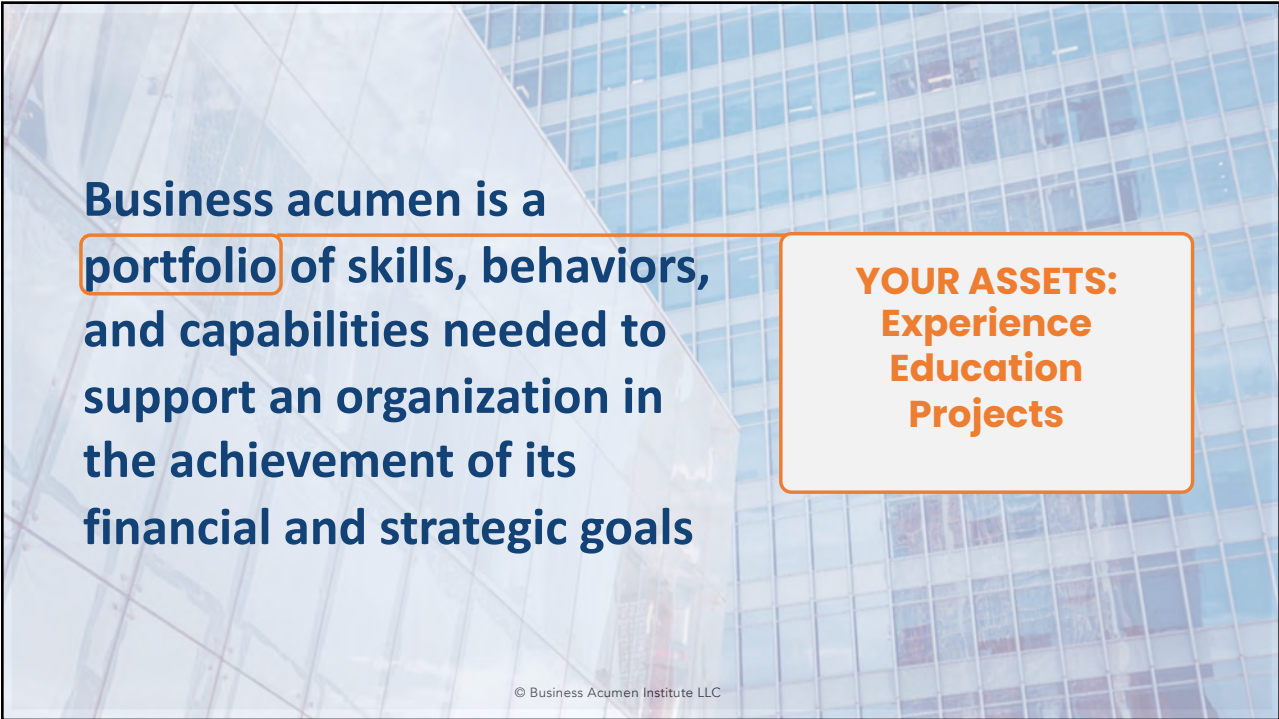
What is Business Acumen?

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Business acumen is a portfolio of skills, behaviors, and capabilities needed to support an organization in the achievement of its financial and strategic goals

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Business acumen is a portfolio of skills, behaviors, and capabilities needed to support an organization in the achievement of its financial and strategic goals

**YOUR ASSETS:
Experience
Education
Projects**

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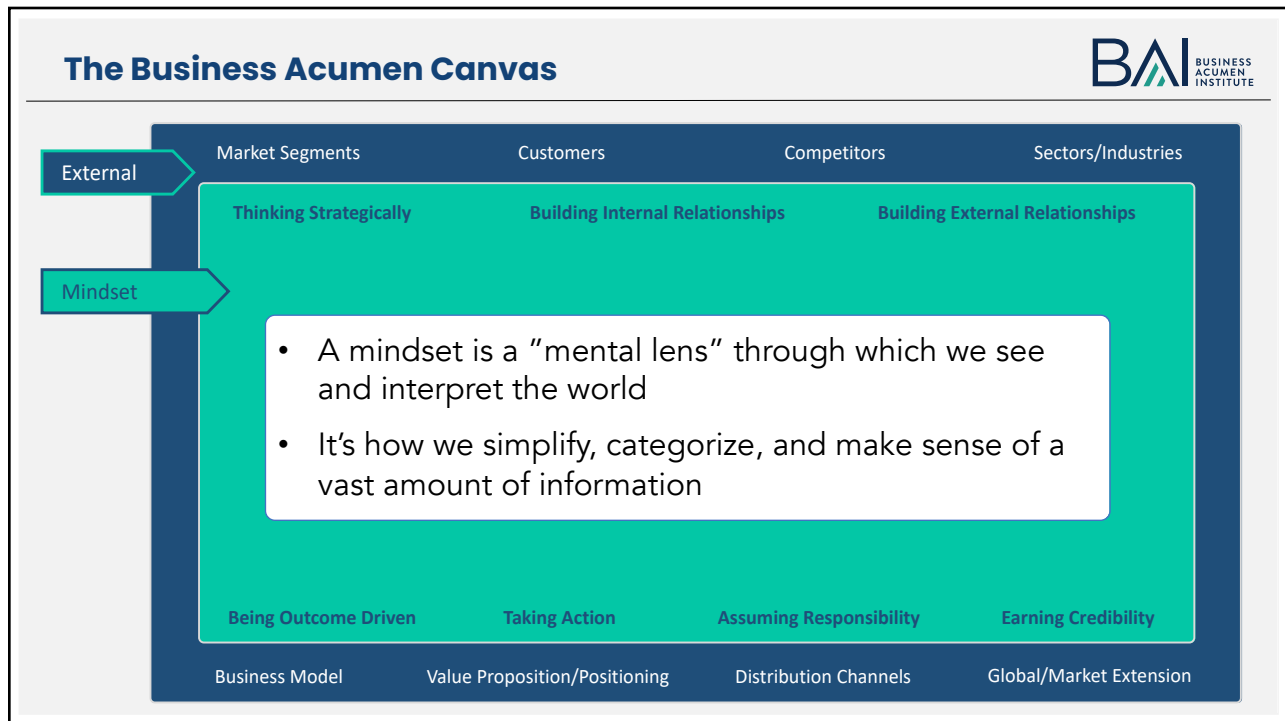
To Build Business Acumen Start With a Blank Canvas

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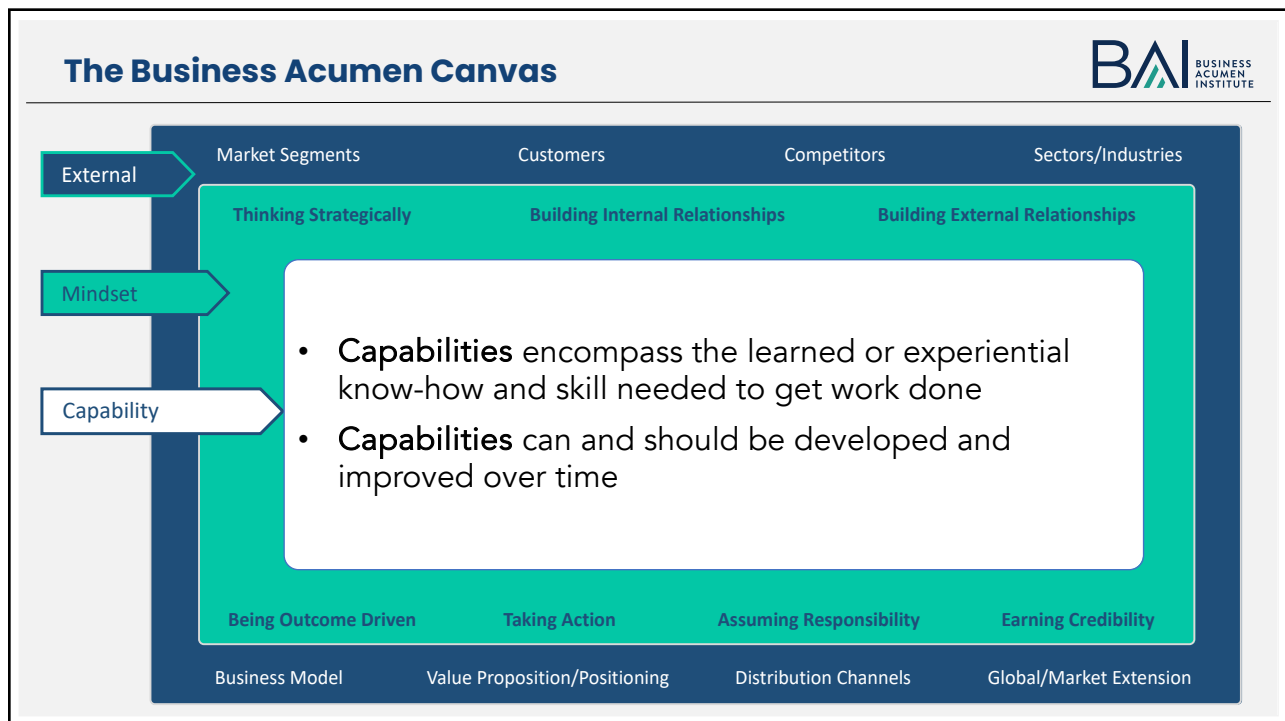
The Business Acumen Canvas



The Business Acumen Canvas



The Business Acumen Canvas



The Business Acumen Canvas



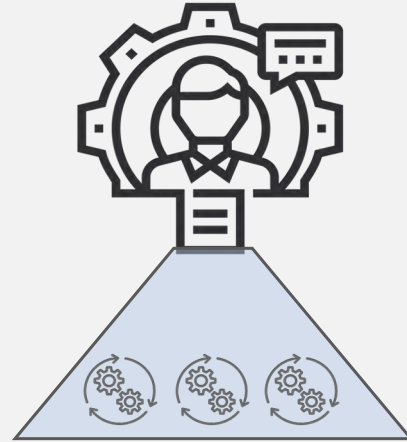
The Business Acumen Canvas



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Zooming In – Zooming Out – Connecting the Dots

- Looking at situations or data at a granular level
- Pulling back to see how it all fits together
- Zooming back in on another situation
- Building more connections to reduce reactions and to better anticipate



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What's Next?

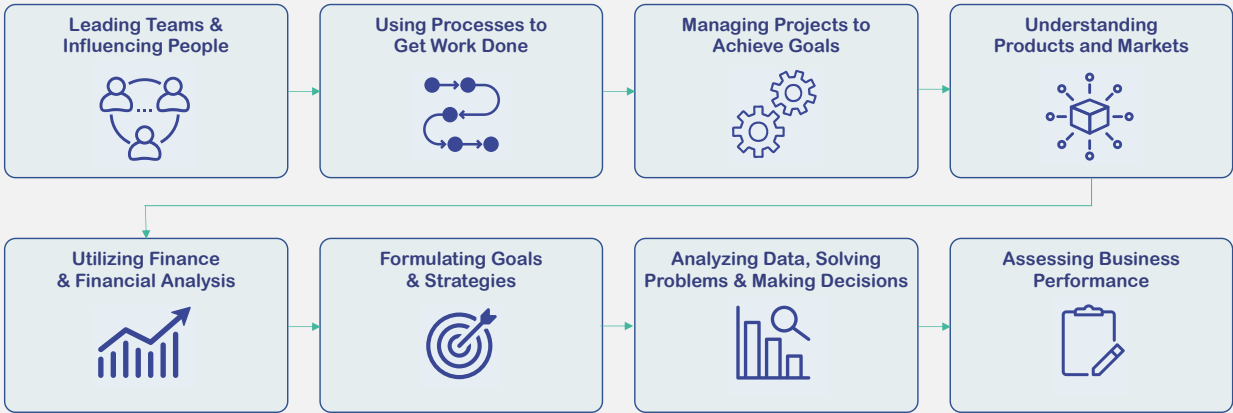
We have a definition of business acumen, let's talk about capabilities

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Capabilities

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Core Capabilities - 25,000 Ft.



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Next Steps

I'll provide a high-level explanation of each capability

I'll cover a number of points – there are 40 sub-categories across the 8 capabilities



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1

Leading Teams and Influencing People

1. Establishing organizational connections and developing networks
2. Clarifying roles and responsibilities
3. Building credibility and earning trust
4. Influencing others
5. Creating political capital



*Project management skills help **people** get things done, inside and outside of work.*

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2

Using Processes to Get Work Done



1. Learning how processes are used
2. Understanding functional and cross-functional workflows
3. Linking roles & responsibilities to workflows and the WBS
4. Assessing variances (plans vs. actuals) in a workflow
5. Identifying ways to improve processes



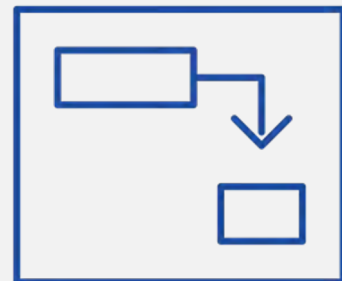
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3

Managing Projects to Achieve Goals



1. Linking projects to *processes* and people and ultimately, to desired business results
2. Understanding workflows and dependencies
3. Keeping projects on track
4. Managing risk
5. Communicating effectively



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4

Understanding Products and Markets



1. Garnering insights about market segments and customer needs
2. Assessing industry & competitive trends
3. Understanding the company's products, the value proposition, and positioning
4. Linking the company's business model with the products developed and sold
5. Reinforcing the connection between the company's strategy and its products



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5

Utilizing Finance and Financial Analysis



1. Understanding accounting, finance, and financial management
2. Assessing business profitability (P&L)
3. Analyzing variances
4. Realizing the importance of cash flow, working capital, and discounted cash flow
5. Evaluating the connections between items on financial statements



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6

Formulating Goals and Strategies

1. Understanding the strategy formulation process
2. Synthesizing data to surface future options or opportunities
3. Linking opportunities to goals and strategies
4. Iterating to determine optimal pathways
5. Assessing resources required and linkages to the business case



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7

Analyzing Data, Solving Problems, and Making Decisions

1. Identifying problem conditions
2. Understanding the sources & uses of data
3. Leveraging data analysis to get to the root cause of a problem
4. Solving problems using facts and data and deciding on courses of action
5. Using a decision matrix to optimize decision-making



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8

Assessing Business Performance



1. Forming perspectives on data, metrics, and business performance
2. Utilizing explicit tools (scorecards, etc.) to assess business performance
3. Visualizing data to assess trends and reveal issues, challenges, etc.
4. Using metrics and KPIs to calibrate strategic goals
5. Informing stakeholders and maintaining momentum

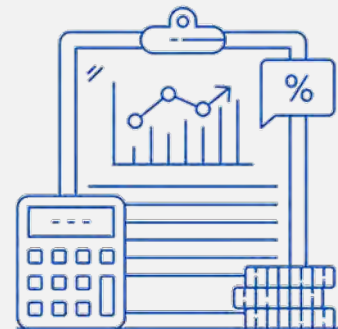


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Value Proposition for Building Business Acumen



1. Learning to see the “interconnectedness” of parts of the business – and – to see the bigger picture
2. Leveraging facts and data to create narratives and stories; a key to strategic leadership
3. Cultivating outside-in strategic thinking
4. Enabling people to adopt a growth mindset
5. Encouraging collaboration and communication
6. Developing the ability to surface and solve problems
7. Building connections between projects, customers, strategy, and finance, and business performance



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Continue Your Business Acumen Education



PMI member benefit

Register for the online self-paced course **Business Acumen for Project Managers** for \$149* (versus the normal fee \$595)

Earn 5 PDUs for this online course and earn a certificate from Business Acumen Institute

Register Here



<https://bit.ly/pmi-149>

If we can help your company with corporate training, send email to sjhaines@business-acumen.com

* Limited time

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Our Curriculum Portfolio



Course Title	Onsite Instructor-Led	Virtual Live Instructor-Led	Online Self-Paced
Business Acumen for Project Managers	✓	✓	✓
Business Acumen Essentials (non-project)	✓	✓	✓
Product Management Essentials	✓	✓	✓
Business Case Applied Learning Program	✓		
Strategic Planning Applied Learning Program	✓		

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Thank you!

Questions?

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