



Acquisition Research Program:
Creating Synergy for Informed Change

INDUSTRY PERCEPTIONS OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PROGRAM MANAGER COMPETENCIES

Dr. Roy L. Wood

Dean, Defense Systems Management College

Defense Acquisition University

Research Questions

1. Which project management competencies are perceived by industry managers as most important in government program managers?
2. How well are government program managers perceived by their industry partners to be meeting those competencies?



Competencies

TECHNICAL SKILLS (C 1 – C20)

Determining goals	Determining deliverables	PM technical ability	Documenting constraints	Documenting assumptions
Defining strategy	Quality assurance	Identifying resource requirements	Developing a budget	Creating a work breakdown structure
Developing a schedule	Developing a resource management plan	Establishing controls	Developing a plan	Communicating strategy
Measuring performance	Implementing corrective actions	Implementing change control	Responding to risk	Conducting administrative closure

SOFT SKILLS (CS 1 – CS15)

Project leadership	Flexibility	Sound business judgment	Trustworthiness	Communication style
Listening skills	Setting and managing expectations	Negotiations	Issues and conflict resolutions	Organization skills
Coaching	Facilitation	Decision making	Problem solving	Team building



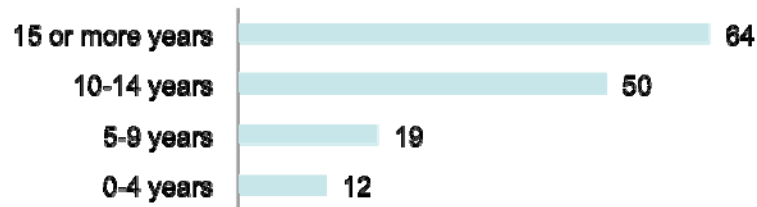
Data Collection

- Opinion data collected online from industry partners
 - 146 anonymous industry respondents from multiple contractor organizations
 - Likert scale responses to competency importance:
 - Importance: Very Important (5), Important (4), Neutral (3), Unimportant (2), Very Unimportant (1)
 - Performance: Expert (5), Good (4), Avg (3), Fair (2), Poor (1)
- Designed to provide a more objective assessment than surveys administered to the program managers themselves
 - Potential to avoid “blind spots” in the competency data contained in most of the current literature

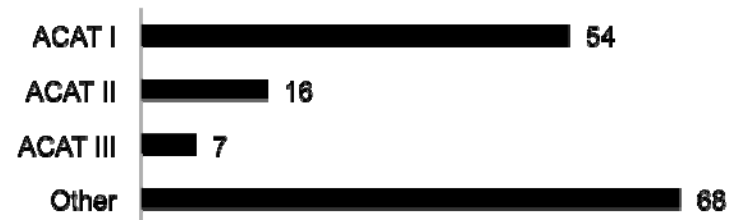


Participant Profiles

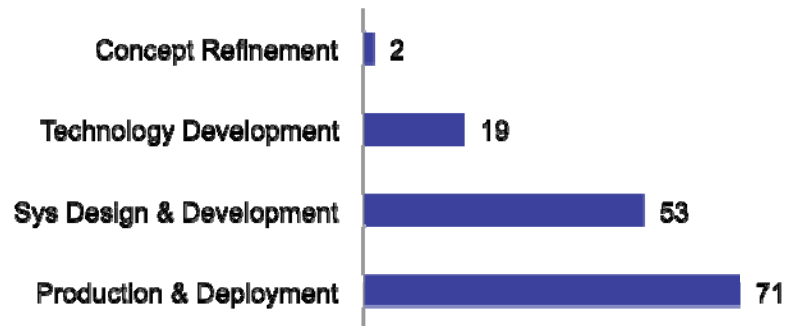
Project Management Experience



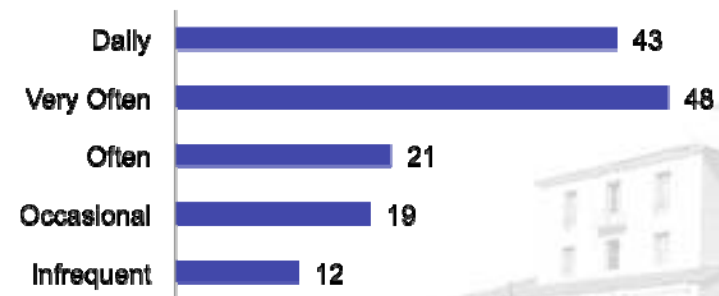
Acquisition Category of Programs Managed



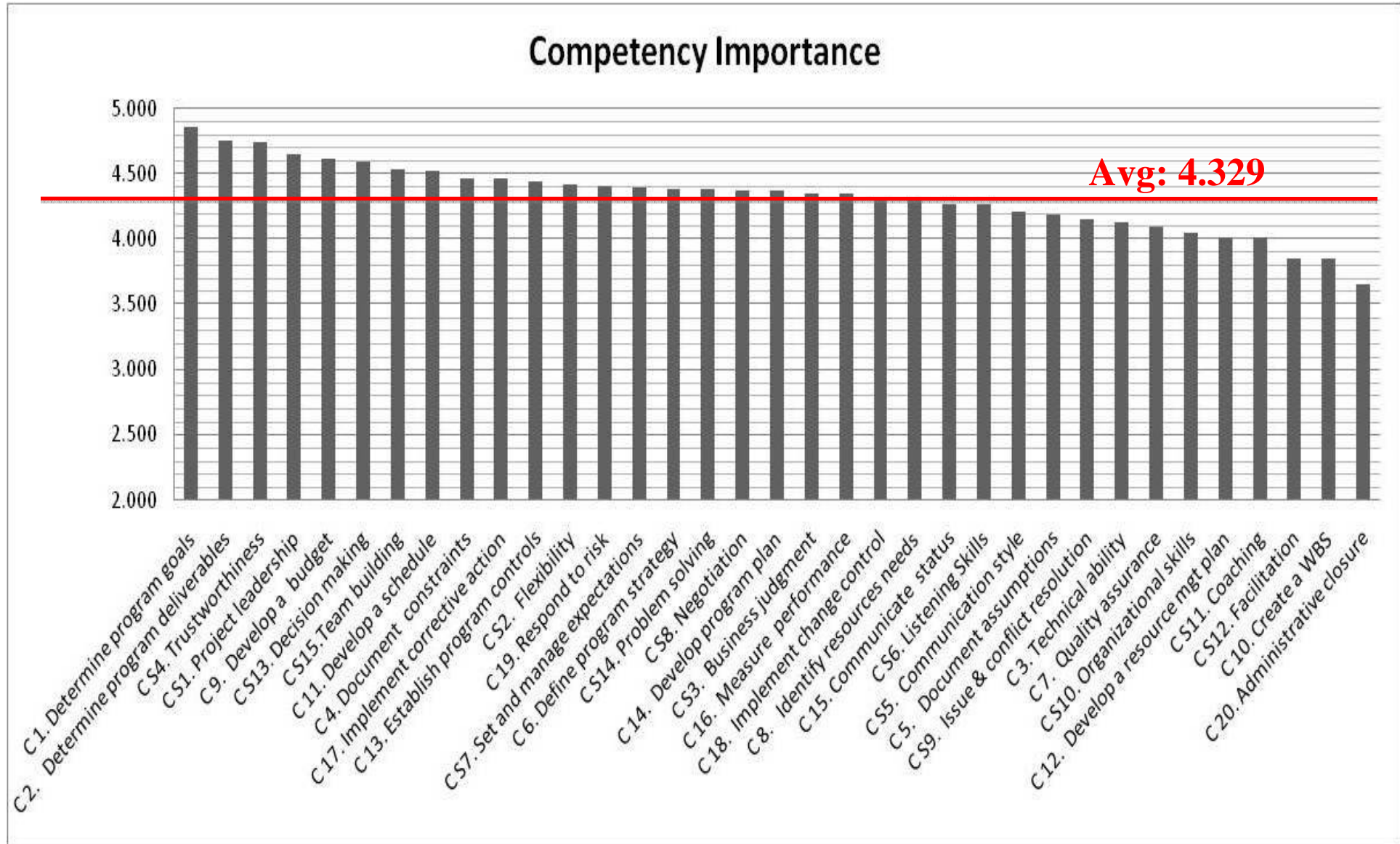
Program Phase



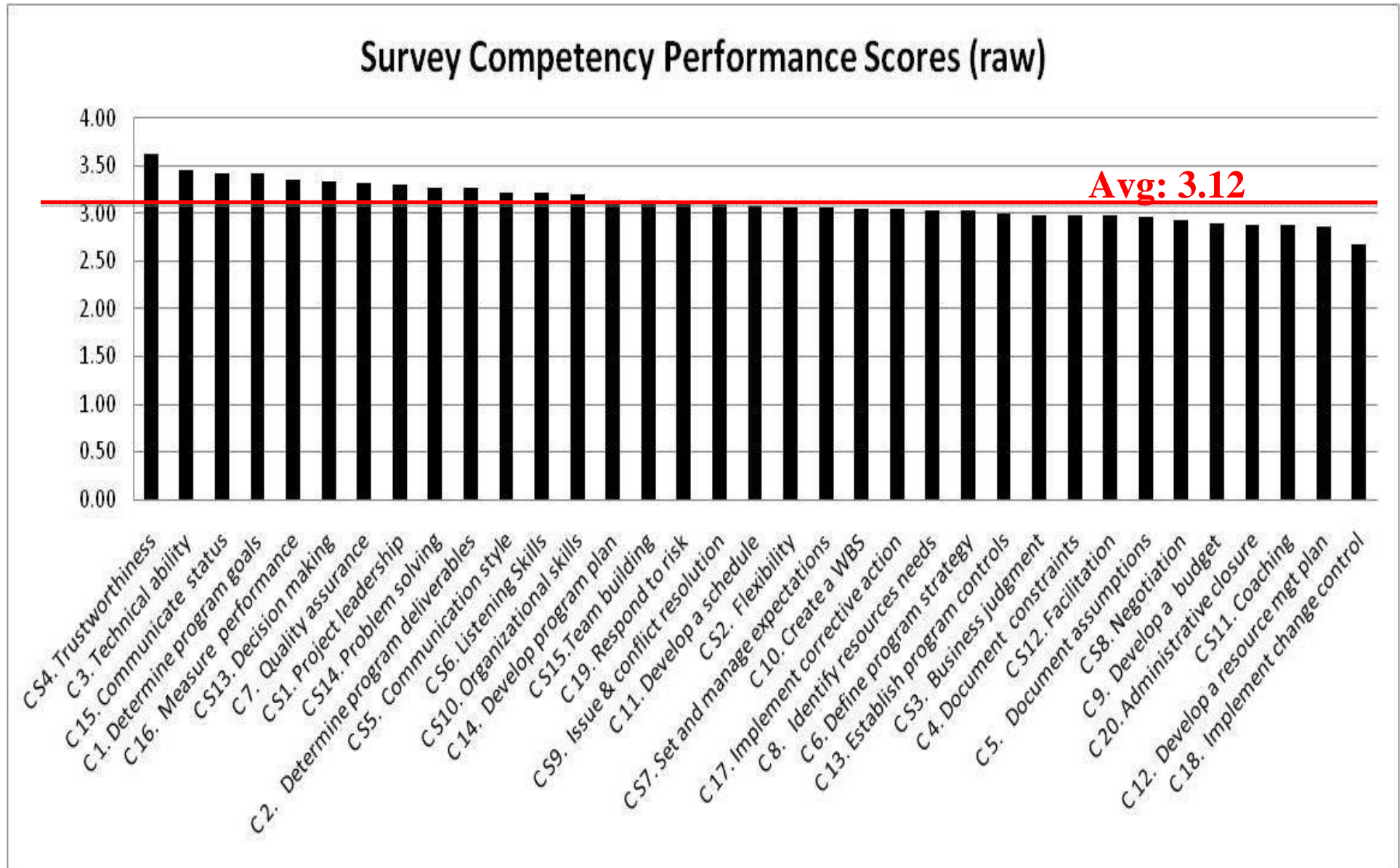
Communication with Government Counterpart



Competency Importance Ranking



Competency Performance Ranking



Top Ten Competencies

(difference between Importance & Performance)

	Competency	Importance	Performance	Difference
C 9	Develop a budget	4.616	2.902	1.714
C 18	Implement change control	4.308	2.676	1.632
C 4	Document program constraints	4.466	2.978	1.487
C 2	Determine program deliverables	4.753	3.268	1.485
C S8	Negotiations	4.377	2.927	1.450
C 1	Determine program goals	4.863	3.420	1.443
C 11	Develop a schedule	4.527	3.088	1.440
C 13	Establish program controls	4.438	3.000	1.438
C 17	Implement corrective action	4.466	3.051	1.414
C S15	Team building	4.538	3.132	1.406



Competency Shortfall (Borich Model)

	Competency	Importance (I)	Performance (P)	Difference $I \times (I-P)$
C 9	Develop a budget	4.616	2.902	7.913
C 2	Determine program deliverables	4.753	3.268	7.060
C 18	Implement change control	4.308	2.676	7.030
C 1	Determine program goals	4.863	3.420	7.016
C 4	Document program constraints	4.466	2.978	6.643
C 11	Develop a schedule	4.527	3.088	6.519
C 13	Establish program controls	4.438	3.000	6.384
C S15	Team building	4.538	3.132	6.378
C S8	Negotiations	4.377	2.927	6.345
C 17	Implement corrective action	4.466	3.051	6.316



Summary of Observations

- Competency importance fairly evenly split between hard skills and soft skills
- Assessment of performance generally disappointing (just above “average”)
- Skill “gap” assessment indicates hard skills need the most attention
 - This conclusion was at odds with much of the research literature



Conclusions

- Study indicates need to improve PM hard skills, especially:
 - Developing a program plan, including realistic budget and schedule, and well-defined deliverables
- Soft skills improvements are needed in:
 - Team building and negotiation skills

