

# Are You Ready for the Next One?

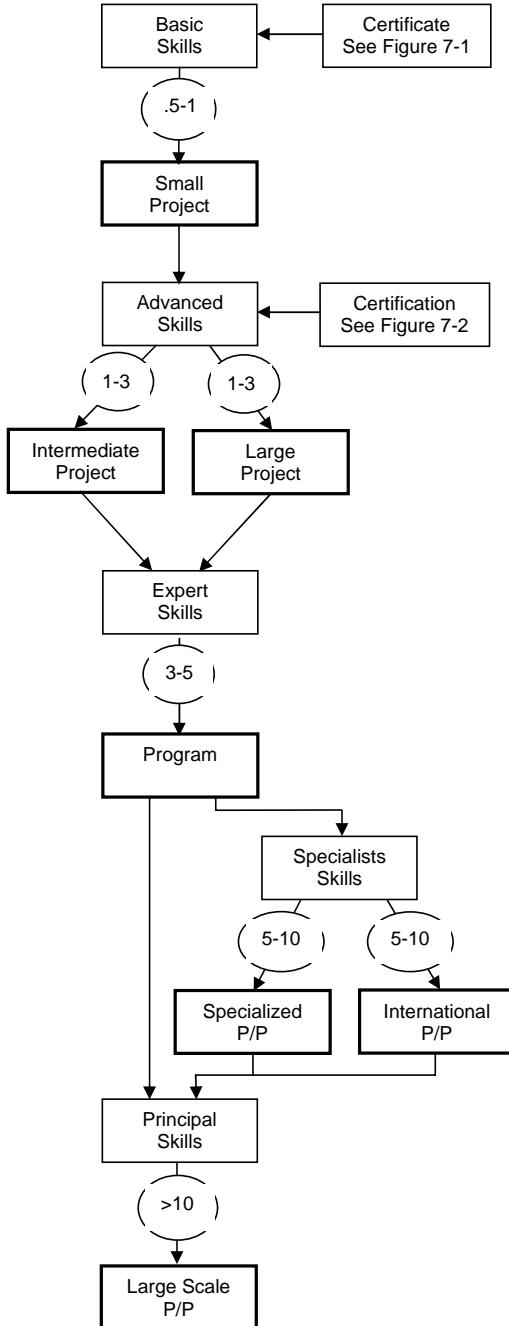
Occasionally, you will be asked or directed to go to the next project or program before finishing the one you are currently working on. Don't lose the opportunity, but first, audit the program you are leaving and have someone of authority agree with the audit. If your replacement does not conduct the program as well as you did, you have a recognized condition of the program as you left it. It can save your reputation or your job. Conversely, if you are assigned to an ongoing project or program, it is a good idea to audit that project or program as soon as you arrive. Here we have the opposite case in terms of performance but the same case in terms of establishing a baseline. In the case of the ongoing project, it will be difficult to conduct the audit, but you should insist that it be performed anyway.

Legally, corporations are perpetual. And so it is with project and program managers. Each must be preparing for the next project or program and looking for the next promotion. In the case of a corporation, it will be preparing itself through proposals. In the case of a project manager, he will be preparing himself through knowledge, experience, and performance. Indeed, these factors will determine what your next project will be.

## What Will the Next One Be?

The next project or program you will lead depends entirely on where you are now. Let's assume you're leading a small project. Look at Figure 10-1. It pulls together the path of progress through the project levels as a graphical representation of what we have talked about throughout the book. The boxes with the heavy lines indicate project or program

Figure 10-1. What is your next move?



levels. The boxes with the normal lines indicate the skill levels. In between the boxes are circles containing numbers. These circles portray the experience, in years, required to move from one project or program level to another.

As you can see, an appropriate certificate can replace the Basic Skill Set requirements so long as the seminar offerings compare, at least, requirement to requirement.

Additionally, an appropriate certification can replace the Advanced Skill Set requirements so long as the certification courses compare, at least, requirement to requirement, and the candidate has the appropriate experience.

## **How Will You Get There?**

Let's say you have entered the world of project management and have collected the skills necessary to lead a small project. In order to move up to an intermediate or large project, you must collect all the advanced skills necessary and have one to three years' experience at that level.

You can continue your progress through the project management ranks by gaining expert skills and three to five years' experience. Of course, a project or program must be available for you to lead when you are available. It is not unusual for a company to use a qualified project manager to lead or participate in a new business proposal whenever there is no immediate project to lead. This, of course, is a matter of chance and company practice. The bottom line is that you will either find project activity in your own company or move to another company.

Follow the same rationale to get you where you want to be. In fact, this scene will play over and over again throughout your project management career.

Depending on your education and training, you may have entered the "stream" somewhere other than at the small project level. In this case, only the entry point will be different. The rationale is the same from that point on.