

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

THESIS PROPOSAL

Project Management methodologies as an aid for Training Purposes

By

Fountalidis Emmanuil

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This Master Thesis was elaborated in the frame of the collaboration of the City University of Seattle and the Graduate Technological Education Institute (T.E.I.) of Piraeus to fully implement at TEI of Piraeus Campus the CU's MS in Project Management Program approved by the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religion Affairs as by decision E5/58291 published in the Hellenic Government Gazette (FEK) B/924/5- July-2005.



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BIOGRAPHY

Emmanuel Fountalidis was born on March 15th, 1975 in Athens, Greece. After graduating with his high school diploma in 1992 from High School of Rafina, he attended Lancaster University, in UK for his undergraduate degree. He graduated with BSc in Mathematics in 1997. After that he attended University of Brunel, in UK for his postgraduate degree. He graduated with MA in Education, (Information Technology in Education) in 1999. From 1999 till 2001 Emmanuel Fountalidis completed his military obligation in Greek Air Force.

Manolis continued his professional career on June 2001 in Software Training Companies and specialized in software packages (Microsoft Office). From 2001 till today Manolis is working as a free lancer instructor on software packages and has been hired from companies like HP, Hempel, OTE telecommunications, Ant1, Eurobank, Agrotiki Bank, Bank of Greece, and other. On October 2008, he joined City University of Seattle, T.E.I. of Piraeus campus, for his MSc in Project Management. His research focused on Project Methodologies as an Aid for Training Purposes. He was advised by Dr. Kontesis M.

Abstract

This dissertation refers to the prospect of application of project management methodologies as an aid for training purposes. This area of research is closely related to my profession, as long as I work with several companies as an instructor in seminars and training activities. More specifically I studied the literature review on the specific research area, and then conducted a quantitative analysis on evaluation data that were provided by participants in a series of seminars regarding Microsoft Excel Expert program. The evaluation data included evaluation of my performance, my characteristics, as well as organizational issues in respect with the seminar (program, content, material, premises). The analysis provided some interesting results, which in turn guided me in concluding some project management methodologies that –as proved by my research- can significantly aid training activities.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Employment Position

I have been working as a free lance instructor for the last seven years in several private and public organizations. I conduct seminars of specific duration. My training field includes Microsoft Office software (MCAS certification), management seminars and other systems like LMS. Companies hire me to train their employees so that they may use the software more efficiently and effectively. My training experience is about 9000 thousands hours of training till today.

1.2. Nature of the Study

The nature of the situation that I intend to research regards my profession. The appropriate allocation of time and the proper communication among the associated companies which hire me to train their employees are matters needing careful attention. The efficient use of time is needed because of the following reasons:

- Study purpose for the preparation of every seminar: Each training session targets a specific audience, with specific and individual requirements. Thus the preparation for each seminar is of vital importance in order to adapt to the specific customer's needs.
- Meetings during the week with different companies: Time planning is obviously vital for the instructor as long as several trainings might occur in the same period of time, as well as ongoing planning for forthcoming training seminars. Thus one should consider the several meetings required.

- Phone calls as well as electronic communication such as e-mail, fax and web conferences: Electronic form of communication with companies and individuals play also key role and supplement the communication achieved with meetings.

1.3. Needs Assessment

The stakeholders include the Human Resource Managers and the Educational Managers that I have to meet and schedule the seminars. This part of communication is vital for my work. After scheduling I have to complete the training in a fixed duration. In addition, all the trainees are the stakeholders that complete an evaluation form at the end of the seminar. This means that my profession is completely dependent from the evaluation forms of the trainees. If the trainees provide very good comments for the delivery of the seminar, then this can be considered as a successful seminar.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study will be to use project management tools, methodologies and techniques. These methodologies will mostly include aspects and features from project time management, quality and communication management.

1.5. Significance to Your Workplace

It is very important for me and for the business environment to become a better instructor and also to communicate in an effective and efficient time manner

with the various companies I work with. By using specific project management tools and techniques I believe that will act as an aid for my profession as instructor and for me. The companies I work with as a freelance instructor are willing to help me by giving me evaluation forms for various seminars I conduct.

1.6. Definition of Terms

LMS	Learning Management Systems
MCAS	Microsoft Certified Application Specialist
CDPM	Customer-Driven Project Management
OTE	Organization of Hellenic Telecommunication
TSQ	Time Structure Questionnaire
TMB	Time Management Behavior Scale
WDQ	Worry Domains Questionnaire
MIS	Management Information Systems

2. Problem Statement

There is always a need for improvement of my profession in order to work more efficiently and effectively in the business environment.

2.1. Rationale

Project management includes knowledge areas which could be applied to my profession and improve various aspects of administrative and teaching work. So, such project management techniques could be used, as Time management, Scheduling, Planning, Communication and Quality. My goal is firstly, to improve myself as an individual and secondly to improve my relationships with the companies I work with.

In addition, professional skills will be improved.

2.2. Hypothesis (Objectives)

In the thesis I am going to explore the application of some project management methodologies in my profession. These areas will most likely be Time, Communication, Quality Management and Planning.

2.3.Expectations

The expectations of this thesis would be to improve myself and my work. Firstly, to improve my work as an instructor and secondly by the use of proper communication and time to improve the administration work with the companies I cooperate with.

3. Literature Review

The topics that needs to be analyzed and clarified concerns Project Time management (including Stress management but with less attention), Project Quality Management and Project Communication Management.

3.1. Project Time Management

Before entering into detail about what *Time Management* in a specific project implies, one should consider two aspects of the subject: is the assumption that someone addresses one task at a time (monochronic time) valid, or the resources work in a “polychronic” time manner (Kaufman et al. 1991, Hall 1983)? Researchers state that working on a monochronic-time span means undertaking one task at a time, versus polychronic working time which implies multitasking, or, in other words, dealing with more than one task simultaneously.

Different cultures certainly affect the manner that people deal with tasks. As Nonis et al. 2005 state “Japanese, Middle-Easterners, Latin Americans and people from South Asia (i.e., India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, etc.) view time as a system where the same events occur in natural cycles.” in contrast to “monochronic time typifies most North Americans, Swiss, German, and Scandinavians who save time, waste time, bid time, spend time, and lose time.”. Another aspect that identifies whether monochronic or polychronic approach is adopted is the characteristics of the individuals considered as resources and taking part in a specific project.

In general, and as most researchers tend to conclude, the monochronic time manner is proven to be more effective than polychronic, although on a first approach effectiveness is thought to increase by imposing multitasking to the available resources.

Regarding time management, and how it affects productivity, many research efforts have been undertaken. More specifically Bond and Feather (1988) proposed a tool for defining time structure and purpose (*Time Structure Questionnaire - TSQ*). This questionnaire was used to conclude how and how much the participants organized their time (time well structured), and whether they gave meaning to this time. On the other hand Macan et al. (1990) proposed *Time Management Behavior Scale – TMB* with which they targeted to define and study behaviors that are “critical to the construct of time management” (page 761). Similarly Tallis, Eysenck and Mathews (1991) developed Worry Domains Questionnaire (WDQ) in order to quantify and study the worry imposed to individuals when dealing with time aspects of undertaken tasks. More specifically worry generally comes into play under two specific circumstances: when there is a delay in certain tasks due to any reason (project management, individual fault, external factors) and boredom of the individual (Stober and Joormann 2001, Kelly 2002).

Another psychological factor affecting time management is procrastination and perfectionism (Jackson 2009). When individuals fail to meet task-specific requirements (time or specification/quality related) often present increased levels of anxiety, which in turn further postpones the tasks by reducing the individual's creativity. Symptoms of perfectionism in each and every task usually end up with delay, or even fail to complete. Researchers and managers often wonder “If 80% of the

effort produces 95% of the product, does it really make sense to reach for that final 5%? Will anyone notice? Will it affect the outcome?" (Jackson 2009, page 434).

Another aspect of time management is its being a planning stage, or in other words a stage during which tasks and resources are organized in a manner that the project's objectives will be achieved in the noted timeline and with the required quality and specifications. In the early stages of research regarding project management Guildford (1950) indicated that productivity or creativity is "the abilities characteristic of creative people, which include such activities as inventing, designing, contriving, composing, and planning. People who exhibit these types of behaviour to a marked degree are recognized as being creative" (page 444). Later researches state that creativity of the resources participating in a project team is directly associated with the planning stage (Osburn & Mumford, 2006). In addition creativity is reversely proportional to the time pressure imposed to the individuals participating in a specific project. As Amabile et al. (1996) suggest project teams that work under high levels of time pressure tend to be less creative than respective teams that work with less time pressure.

Time planning is also affected by the creativity characteristics of the individuals. As Runco (2007) and Simonton (2000) state it is shown that people with advanced creativity characteristics, thus being inventive, taking initiatives, having leading capabilities, being motivated and persisting. Those individuals have the tendency to use their time more effectively, by using a second level of "self-organization" among several and possibly tedious tasks (Macan, 1994, Bandura, 1991 and 1997).

Regarding my profession, time management is one of the basic target areas that needs careful consideration and use. There are some basic key steps for

successful time management that could be applied. That is, to set realistic goals, secondly to be organized and lastly to delegate. Delegation is important as I work alone because in some instances, another human resource can be hired from me and work for the specific project.

One important rule is to split important project into smaller projects or tasks. Several distractions that occur in the everyday working environment can be handled by various ways. One might be the isolation to a separate office or meeting room were the phone calls, the e-mails or similar cases will pause for a while. However, there are disadvantages and advantages for every aspect I look at, and so on (Jackson ,2009).

The value and the meaning of time management is in the following list of keywords:

- Positive thinking
- Programming and organizing tasks
- Evaluation and analysis of time management
- Delay and Prioritization
- Auditing (Dedoulis, 2005, p.3)

According to PMBOK “Project time management includes the processes required to accomplish timely completion of the project”. More specifically, these “. . . processes include Activity: definition, sequencing, resource estimating, duration estimating, development and control” (2004, p.123). According to Kerzner, “disciplined time management is one of the keys to effective project management” (2006, p.279).

There are best some best methodologies that everyone could follow especially applied in my profession as an instructor. In order to apply a project Time

management plan, there must be an interval of observation of the everyday tasks. Every ineffective use of time should be recorded in a notebook or notepad. It is very important to cope with insufficient use of time and find effective solutions.

As mentioned above, successful time management depends by effective organization of it.

“Organization is the cornerstone of time management. A big time waster, according to many teachers, is ‘hunting and gathering.’ That is: looking for that missing lesson plan, collecting tools and equipment from students after completion of a project” (Wagner, 2004).

Time planning can be accomplished by Scheduling. Effective scheduling brings forward many advantages. Some of these advantages are the reduction of stress and the accession of individuals’ effectiveness. Time planning is considered to be one of the project management skills as well as general management skills.

There are tools than can be used as methods for an effective time management. These can be a diary, calendar, notebook, laptop, PDA etc. In addition, the use of software like MS Project, Primavera, MS Outlook, and Outlook Express are tools which could help everyone for an effective scheduling (O'Brien, 2004).

Scheduling can be categorized as a five-step process:

- Identify the time you have available
- Block in the essential tasks you must carry out to succeed in your job
- Schedule in high priority urgent tasks and vital "house-keeping" activities
- Block in appropriate contingency time to handle unpredictable interruptions

- In the time that remains, schedule the activities that address your priorities and personal goals (O'Brien 2004, p.709-772)

But if time management is not successfully applied, then unpredictable results can occur in the individuals working environment and in his/her life. And that is stress.

According to Meredith (2006, p.143) there are four major causes of stress linked with the management of projects. Some project manager's never develop a reasonable set of procedures and techniques with which to manage their work

- Many simply have "too much on their plates"
- Some have a high need to achieve that is consistently frustrated
- The parent organization is in the throes of major change

Summarizing, the key concepts for effective time management in the scope of an overall project management process can be summarized in the following:

- 1) Goal setting: goals have to be realistic,
- 2) Proper organization and planning,
- 3) Task delegation,
- 4) Emotional handling: feeling calm, confident and not "guilty" for any tasks that might go off target is of great importance.

3.1.1. Time Management in Education

It is widely adopted that the use of world-wide-web technologies can aid the process of an instructor, in order to manage the tasks involved with his job, as well as the time spent on the aforementioned tasks.

More specifically, there are several web applications that handle the organization of courses (either normal or online courses), student assignments, time

management, course evaluation, and in general aid all aspects of an instructor's "project management".

The extensive research and development of such tools (e.g. TeleTOP, Collis and Gervedink 2000) suggest that my profession can benefit from the detailed project management, and more specifically management of time aspects of an instructor.

3.2. Project Quality Management

A project's "quality management" refers to the process undertaken to supplement all project phases to ensure that these phases are completed in a manner that is cost-effective, meets the requirements and objectives of the project, as well as does not exceed performance limitations. The aforementioned phases include the following:

- Definition of requirements and objectives. At this stage the project is actually defined.
- Design – organizational phase. The stage that the project is organized and split into simpler subtasks.
- Implementation phase. Tasks defined and organized on the design-organizational phase are undertaken and completed.
- Evaluation – testing phase. At this stage the projects results are tested in order to ensure that they meet all aspects of the defined requirements and objectives, as they later were defined in the first phase.

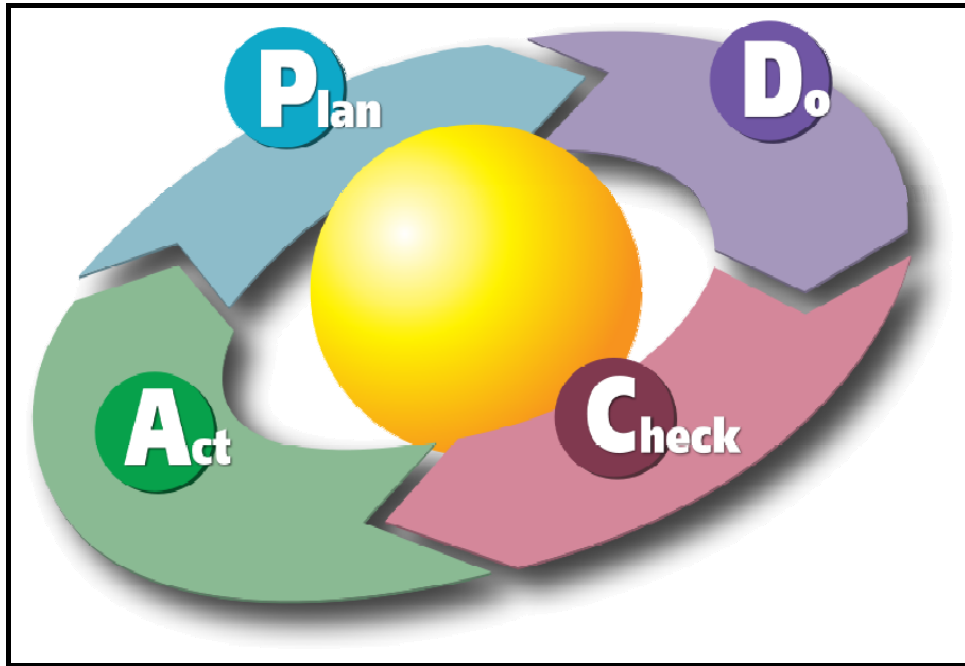


Figure 1. Deming's PDCA Cycle

According to Somasundaram (1992), and as can be derived from its definition and the respective project's phases, quality management is not a one-off process taking place at a specific milestone of the project, but on the contrary it is a constantly ongoing process, taking place coherently during all the aforementioned phases of the project. As Figure 1 depicts Edward Deming's cycle regarding the procedure of constant project and quality management evolution. More specifically the aforementioned cycle states four stages, namely *Plan*, *Do*, *Check* and *Act*, which ensures continuous improvement of all stages leading to customer satisfaction.

Referring to quality someone refers to "the totality of characteristics of an entity that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs." (International Organization for Standardization, 1994).

Quality is one of the major aspects of my profession. Customer involvement is taking place before and after the completion of every seminar. For this reason I will use CDPM as the pathway for quality improvement.

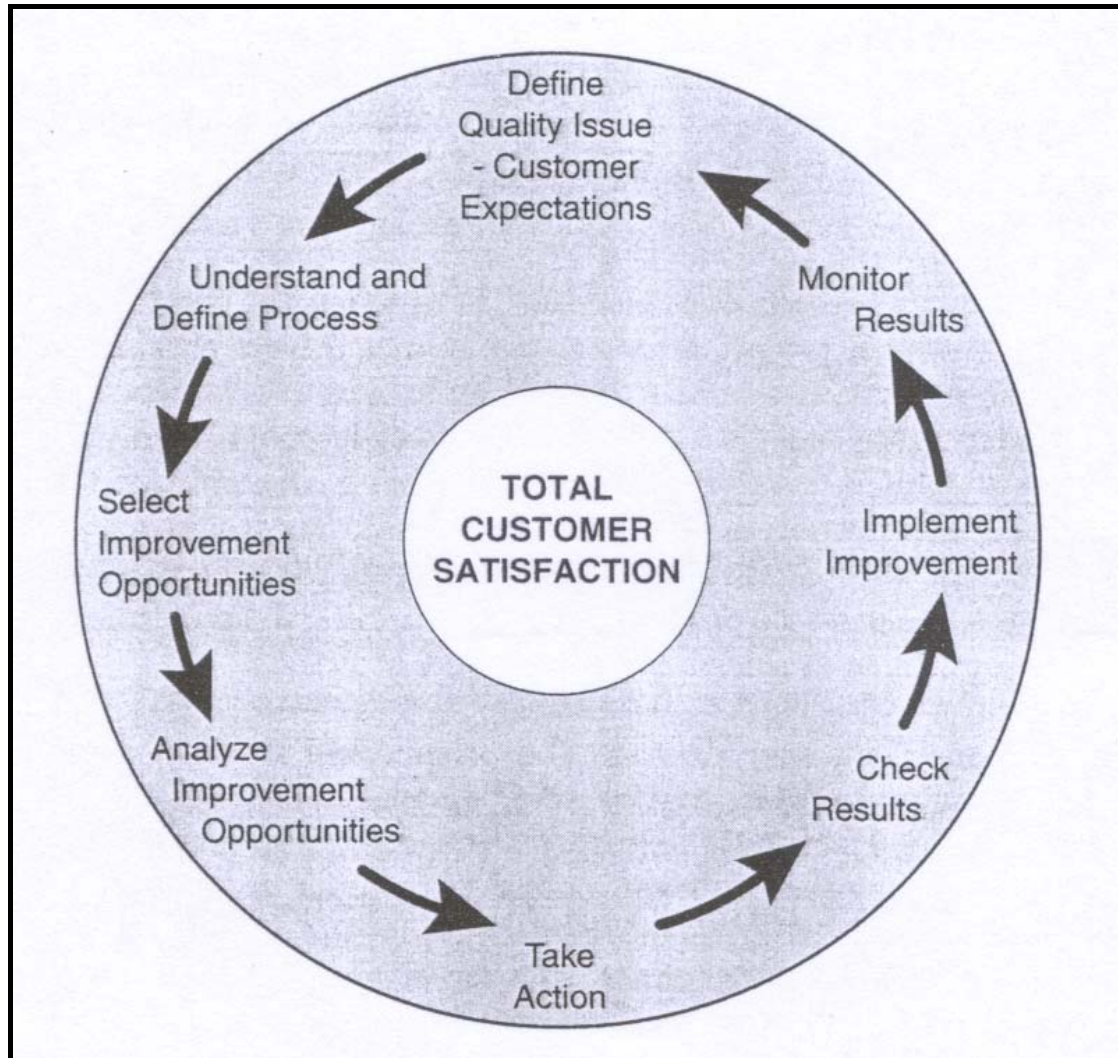


Figure 2. The ongoing process of quality management in CDPM

CDPM – Customer Driven Project Management is a management philosophy, a set of guiding principles, a methodology and a set of tools and techniques that stress customer-driven deliverables, including products and services. It focuses on the performance and improvement of a project and the design and delivery of a product or

service. In addition, the essence of CDPM is that quality is defined by the customer's total satisfaction (Barkley, 2001, p.64-65).

Figure 2 depicts the eight stages of the improvement cycle proposed by Customer Driven Project Management – CDPM. Starting from the top of the cycle and moving anti-clockwise the overall procedure starts from the definition of quality requirements and all related issues (stage 1). Next the project team shall thoroughly analyze and understand the process that will follow (stage 2), so that –going one step further- possible improvements can be spotted and included in the overall procedure (stage 3, 4). After all this “planning” stages it is time for “action”, thus implementation of all scheduled tasks (stage 5), followed –as expected- by the results' evaluation (stage 6) and all possible improvements' implementation (stage 7). Finally after an overall evaluation of the ongoing processes, re-assess the “further improvement” factor (stage 8).

One of the basic assumptions that customer driven project management does is that both customer and supplier are considered to be part of the project team. This is obviously necessary as long as the customer plays a key-role in that approach of quality management: feedback from the customer indicates whether the goal of “total customer satisfaction” is going to be met. In addition, as long as it is an approach to quality management, CDPM is as well a continuous effort to make processes better. This continuous effort focuses on the project team evolution, the use of discrete methods to plan, control and finally evaluate the project. All the aforementioned target in successful deliverables and thus satisfied customers.

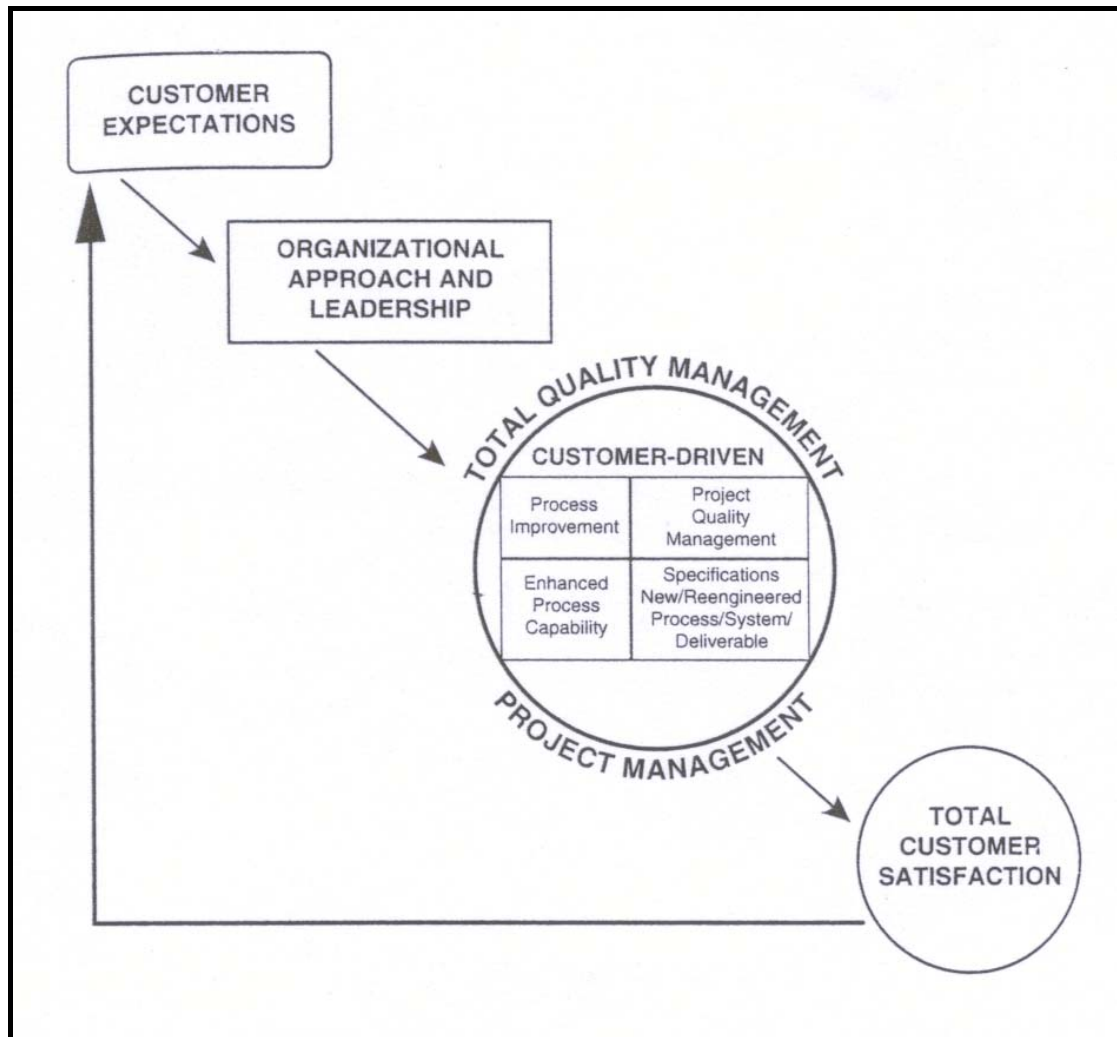


Figure 3. Linking Quality with Project Management

As shown in Figure 3, in customer driven project management quality is directly related to the overall project management. More specifically as shown in Figure 2 all parts of project management (specification definition and moderation, project improvement, quality management, processes' improvement, deliverables) are customer driven targeting and finally leading to complete, total customer satisfaction.

Figure 4 depicts the aforementioned three aspects of customer driven project management: customer driven team structure (i.e. customer being considered part of

the project team), project management system and processes and quality management.

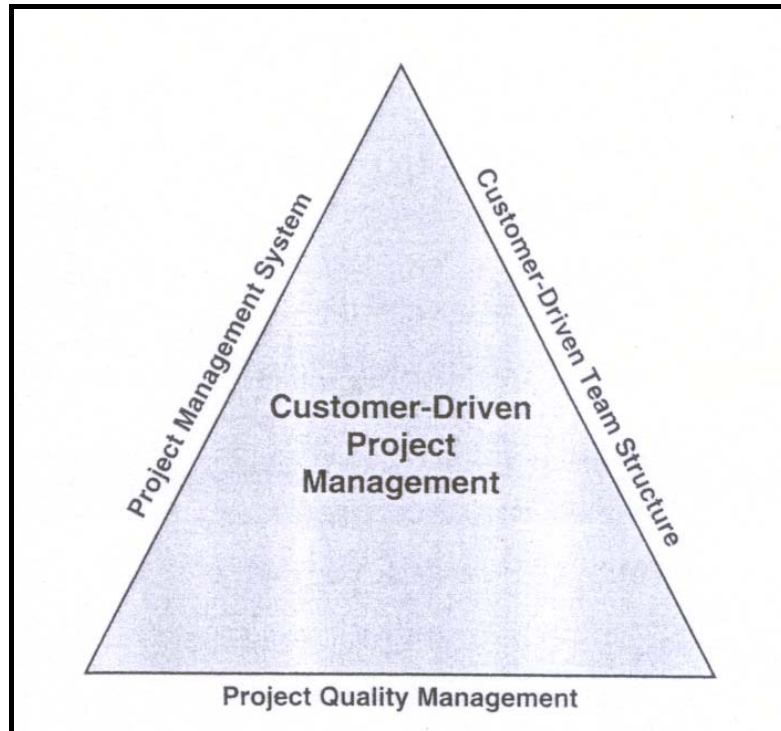


Figure 4. CDPM Aspects

In order to obtain customers' satisfaction various exercises and scenarios have been especially created in order to broaden trainee's field related to the needs of their organization. This has been accomplished, either individually or in group work. However, group work did not have all the time the expected results as the groups found it difficult to process these scenarios. Another factor is that the time limits have not been set properly (Parpala, 2007).

In addition, a lot of times have been observed lack of appropriate information concerning the trainees' needs.

Training aspects, such as delivery that is not engaging, high complexity content, lack of management support for the efforts, and low employee involvement

in the training effort, can prevent the success of the training effort. Such aspects may have been partly responsible for the low level of information retention observed in companies; however this could not be confirmed. The company management was not directly involved in the training design and delivery and did not retain any of the materials used by the consultants hired to provide the training (Geneviève, 2006, p.555).

A learning approach concerning the individual, organizational and functional needs, are aspects that should be taken into account. The seminars must be beneficial for every individual working in the organization. Thus, there are five keys elements that should reflect on and apply in order to have a successful seminar. According to (“Training Methodology”, 2009) these are the following:

- Training Needs Analysis,
- Design of Program,
- Delivery of the Program,
- Assessment of Individual Learning and Evaluation of Program.

It is very critical and vital for the profession of an instructor to become certified in their field. That means that instructors or teachers will concentrate on the content area in which they are teaching and get certified by specific exams. Thus, expertise on the specific subject will become the primary determinant of instructor quality (Brownell, 2008).

3.2.1. Quality Management in Education

Quality in education is considered a vital aspect in order to deliver high-level education and thus create skilled professionals, or in general people with increased knowledge and, as a direct consequence, increased creativity. On the contrary leaving

individuals without education leads to low productivity and eventually potential poverty. Targeting in quality in education one should have in mind not only to the classic educational procedure, but aspects having to do with administrative tasks, the educational institution, the faculty or even the program of a semester or a standalone event. All the aforementioned aspects define quality levels either with evaluation of specifically set goals or in comparison with standards and results as achieved in the past.

As long as the indisputable need for quality in education arises, in the same manner quality management is necessary in modern educational systems. In order to achieve efficient management of quality education several management schemes should be adopted. More specifically one should specify structures and procedures that are capable to monitor and apply effective quality management to the available project resources.

In order to fulfill the aforementioned needs and directives the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has issued the ISO 9001:2008 certification to ensure that the organization accredited with this certification meets at least the following standards: quality management system, records keeping, management commitment to quality, resource management, production, and measurement, analysis and improvement.

3.3. Project Communication Management

Barnard (1938) in his book stated that any executive should show high communicational skills, as long as contact with employees is vital, either regarding direct project issues (immediate problems seeking solutions) or the general project or company resources and organization (new ideas, thoughts and possible concerns or even suggestions). As stated in the book “In the exhaustive theory of organization, communication would occupy a central place, because the structure, extensiveness, and scope of organizations are almost entirely determined by communication techniques.” (Barnard, 1938, p. 8).

In accordance to PMBOK, 2004 “the communication planning process determines the information and communications needs of the stakeholders; for example, who needs what information, when they will need it, how it will be given to them, and by whom. While all projects share the need to communicate project information, the informational needs and methods of distribution vary widely. Identifying the informational needs of the stakeholders and determining a suitable means of meeting those needs is an important factor for project success (PMBOK, 2004, p225).

“The important point is that all communication should be effective, accurate, and considerate of project requirements. The project communication processes provide a methodology for successfully implementing your project communications strategy. In addition to assuring stakeholders are informed and involved in the project” (Elyse, 2006, p.1).

After confirming the importance of communication in all kinds of organizations dealing with projects, researchers have invested great research efforts

on the definition of what is accepted as “high communicational skills”. It is widely accepted that many behavioral aspects comprise competent communication. Such aspects include goals achievement, flexibility and general skills. O’ Hair et al. (1997) and Wiemann (1977) conclude that “high communicational skills” actually mean being flexible in potential use of different types of communication in order to achieve one or more project tasks that depend on more than one individuals. As can be derived from the aforementioned communicational skills are necessary not only to executives, but in all levels of a project team.

Van Duyn (1986) proposed a set of communication management techniques in order to achieve effective communications in management information systems (MIS), which can be widely adopted, as long as they are quite generic. These techniques are the following:

- Two way communication line: when two individuals participating in a project with possibly different roles communicate information, ideas and suggestions should be interchanged.
- Everyone, from users to top-level executives should be aware of what can be implemented and what can not using the specified project resources.
- Individuals should be willing to accept to constructional criticism, targeting in improvement of the individuals and / or the process he/she is involved into.
- Executives should keep aware the project team for both the team’s performance (per person and as a team), as well as the “big picture” of the company, such as what is requested, by whom, why etc.
- Everyone should *listen* to others

- Constructing team bonds that lead as well to good relations between team members is also crucial.

Morreale, Spitzberg and Barge (2001) suggest that successful communication takes place when the team members can effectively express their knowledge and experience, apply their skills and adapt in a highly variable environment in which many forms of communication are established. Other researchers state that communication relies more on personal characteristics like openness, trust and self-disclosure (Argyris 1965).

Pinto and Pinto (1991) showed that all aspects of a specific project performance can be dramatically improved when middle and higher-level managers effectively communicate with all team members. That can be crucial, as long as the aforementioned “project performance” comprises of aspects like project budget, time plan and deadlines, client usage and deliverables’ quality. Outcomes from Ammeter and Dukerich (2002) research efforts were aligned with Pinto and Pinto (1991) findings: good communicational skills from the project manager can directly affect a specific task or even the whole project’s performance. Thus when the project manager is effective in his role to keep the team members aware of set goals and objectives, as well as to estimate as accurate as possible the required resources and consecutively the required budget, the overall team’s performance can be significantly boosted.

4. Project Management Methodologies

4.1. Summary

A professional free lance instructor should be able to organize his (or her) time efficiently and effectively. Effective communication skills are important for all the administrative work that needs to be accomplished. Trainees are dependent upon the communication skills of the trainer (instructor). Finally, quality features will make the difference to the companies that hire me and to the trainees that attend the seminar.

Hence, all the above topics will be discussed and analyzed as the result of my literature review regarding my thesis.

4.2. Research Methodology

There are project management techniques and methodologies that could be used on instructor's profession. These methodologies will include best practices of Time, Communication and Quality Management.

Project Time management will be used because all the seminars conducted have a specific duration. Furthermore, the administrative part of the profession is based on the proper allocation of time. As mentioned earlier, several meetings occur during the week and the everyday preparation of seminars is vital and necessary. Furthermore, communication is handled by the frequent use of phone calls and e-mails. In addition, conflicts arise by the suggested meetings between the various companies.

Quality is an important objective related to my profession. In order to train employees in various levels (upper management, lower management) the trainer should have qualitative skills which will be recognized by the trainees.

In order to measure quality I am going to use quantitative analysis.

So, there will be evaluation forms from different seminars. A distinct type of evaluation form is in Appendix A. This evaluation form is used and delivered by OTEacademy (subsidiary company of OTE) to all the employees of OTE, for evaluating instructor skills and the content of the seminar.

I have arranged with OTE and one other company I cooperate with, to pass me a large amount of completed evaluation forms and then to conduct an analysis with the aid of Microsoft Excel 2007. By the use of Microsoft Excel a large amount of time will be reduced in order to obtain the analysis. Many graphs (columns and pies) will be created in order to investigate the data and conduct a statistical analysis. This analysis will definitely show the differences between the evaluation forms and also features that need improvement or special attention. The characteristics that need improvement will be handled carefully. In addition, in order to obtain credibility, various evaluation forms will be examined concerning the same subject. For example, I intend to select randomly, fifty (50) evaluations forms on the topic of Microsoft Excel Expert that I teach regularly in various seminars.

Therefore, once the statistical analysis of the evaluations forms has been completed, by the aid of literature review I will develop a methodology that will be act as a tool for instructors to have a continuous improvement in their profession and distinguish among others.

4.3. Research Results

Upon successful completion of each of five seminars conducted for OTE staff, and focused on the topic “Microsoft Excel Expert” , OTEacademy (a subsidiary company of OTE) gave specific evaluation forms to the seminar participants.

The completed forms were provided by OTEacademy as a feedback in order to conclude my research on the effectiveness of my instruction sessions, as well as evaluate possible weaknesses on the overall procedure: time, quality and / or communication management aspects of the overall seminars’ project management.

As mentioned in the research methodology description without loss of generality fifty (50) evaluation forms were selected randomly from all the evaluation submitted as part of the aforementioned seminars’ evaluation. These forms, as presented in Appendix A, contained the following main evaluation sections:

- **Instructor characteristics.** The specific section contained multiple choice questions (evaluating the instructor from 1 to 10) regarding the following five characteristics:
 - Effectiveness
 - Constructive
 - Open, reachable
 - Polite, kind
 - Confident, decisive
 - Communicative
- **Instructor performance.** This section followed the previous section’s structure: seven questions regarding the performance of the instructor were given to the participants in order to score the instructor in the 1-10 scale.

Questions included –among others- whether the instructor was well informed and trained, whether he could effectively respond to participants' questions and other.

- **Seminar effectiveness.** In the specific section scoring questions in the 1-10 scale were included, regarding how effective the specific seminar proved to be. More specifically provided evaluation referred to subjects like whether the seminar program completed successfully following the planned schedule, if the duration was adequate or whether the goals set were achieved.
- **Seminar organization.** The final section of the evaluation procedure concerned the overall organization of the seminars. Participants answered on subjects like seminar material quality and efficiency, whether seminar premises were appropriate and well equipped, whether existing equipment covered the specific seminar's needs, and others. Seminar organization section is split into two sub-sections, namely:
 - Support material evaluation and
 - Premises, equipment, labs and general services evaluation.

4.3.1. Quantitative Analysis

Starting with a general description of the quantitative analysis that took place as part of my dissertation I should mention the following. Five seminars regarding Microsoft Excel Expert were conducted on different dates and different audience. Each seminar has provided as feedback a set of detailed evaluations regarding the aforementioned evaluation sections. From the five seminars' evaluations fifty

evaluations were selected and processed in order to produce meaningful, human readable results, that can aid in coming to a conclusion regarding possible shortcomings of the existing process, as well as regarding the instructor organization and / or characteristics.

In the following sections the seminar results are presented, entailing all data in seminar 1, describing how graphs are produced, whereas for the rest of the seminars I present the overall picture produced from the evaluations without getting into detailed evaluation reports, as long as the methodology to produce overall graphs is identical for all seminars.

4.3.1.1. Seminar 1

In the first seminar I start from the overall picture provided by the evaluations, and following I will present the way I have come up with those results.

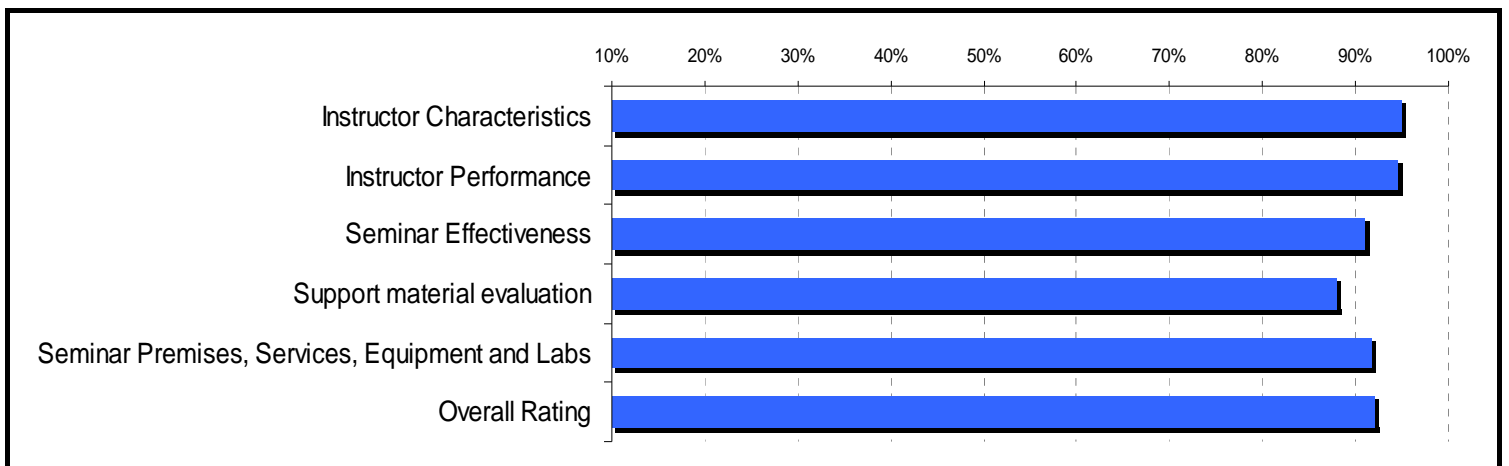


Figure 5. Seminar 1 overall quantitative analysis evaluation

Critical evaluation

Figure 5 presents the overall performance of all evaluation sections. The horizontal axis is the score of the specific section expressed as a percentage. As

mentioned evaluation questions are answered in a way of score in the 1-10 scale. Thus at the end all seminar's participants have provided a range of scores regarding each question of each evaluation section (instructor characteristics, instructor performance etc.). The results presented in Figure 5 are a mean value of all scores from the randomly selected participants' evaluations in the specific section. The last bar of the graph represents the mean of overall scores of all evaluation sections, assuming that the instructor is responsible for both his / her performance, as well as the seminar organization, support material, content and generally all aspects from the meetings to arrange a seminar to the very last detail of e.g. the presentation equipment in the seminar premises. In detail some areas were quite successful according to the evaluation (instructor characteristics gave a mean value of 95%), while on the contrary regarding the section regarding the support material the evaluation showed some room for improvement averaging a lower 88%. Overall an average 92% indicated that the participants were in general satisfied with the provided training services.

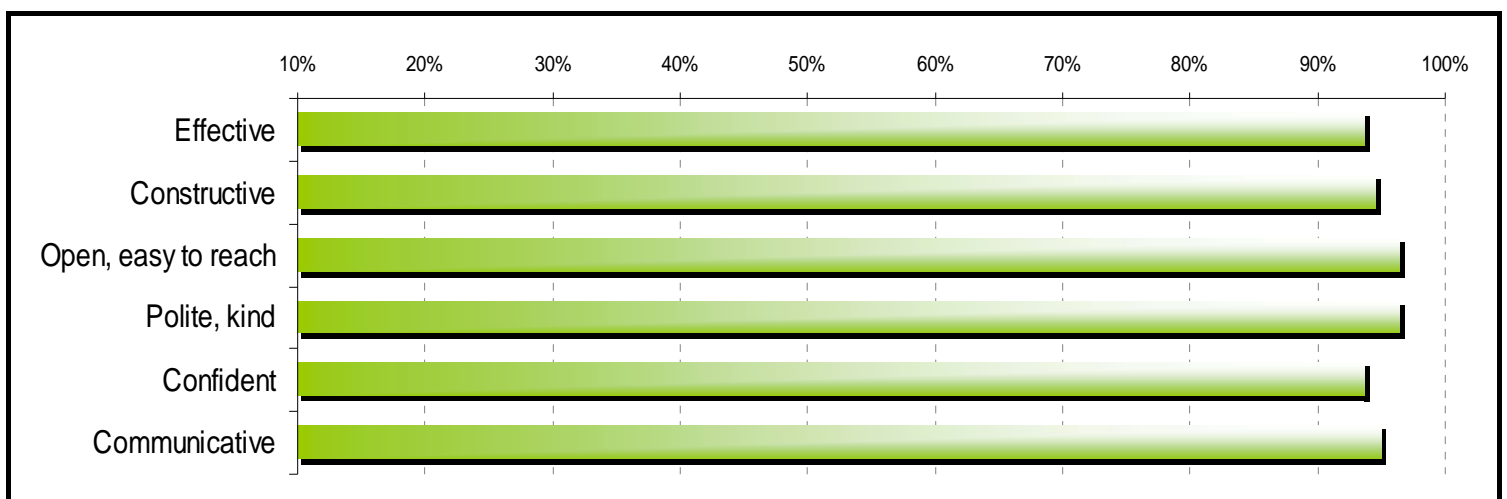


Figure 6. Instructor characteristics evaluation (seminar 1)

Critical evaluation

Figure 6 presents the score results regarding the instructor characteristics section of seminar 1, and more specifically the six different characteristics included in this evaluation section (whether the instructor is effective, constructive etc.). All evaluations in this section were high (effective 94%, constructive 95%, open and polite 96%) concluding to the high mean value of 95%.

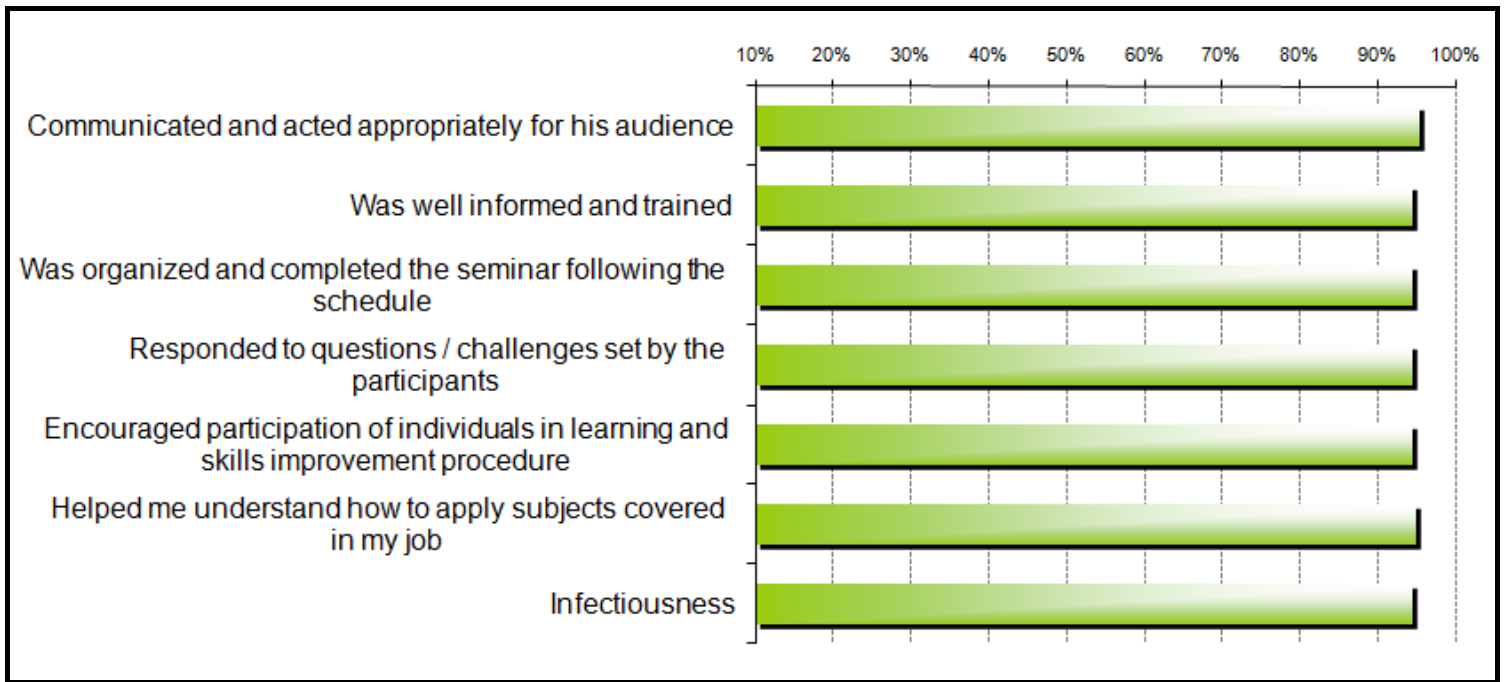


Figure 7. Instructor performance evaluation (seminar 1)

Critical evaluation

Figure 7 presents the score results regarding the instructor performance section of seminar 1, and more specifically the different performance metrics included in this evaluation section (whether the instructor shows communicational skills, infectiousness etc.). This section provided really good evaluations as well. The instructor for example was found to “communicate appropriately with the audience” (96%) and showed high levels of infectiousness (95%) leading to an average 95%.

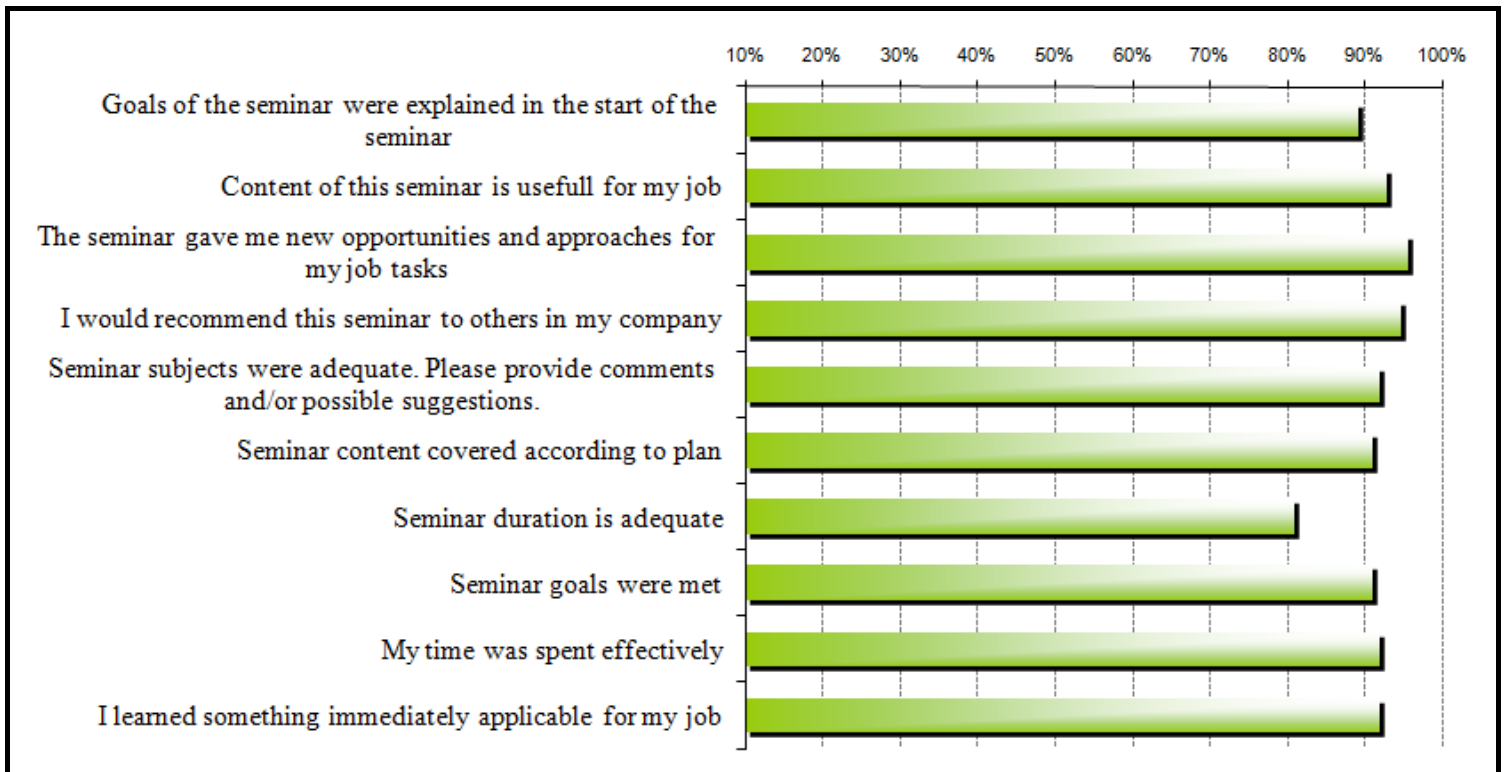


Figure 8. Seminar effectiveness evaluation (seminar 1)

Critical evaluation

Figure 8 presents the score results regarding the seminar effectiveness section of seminar 1, and more specifically the different questions included in this evaluation section (whether the seminar achieved its goals, participants time was effectively spent etc.). This section of evaluations showed some strong and some weak points regarding seminar effectiveness: the seminar duration's adequacy scored only 81% in comparison with 95% of whether the seminar provided new opportunities to the participants' job tasks. An overall 91% regarding summarized the aforementioned differences.

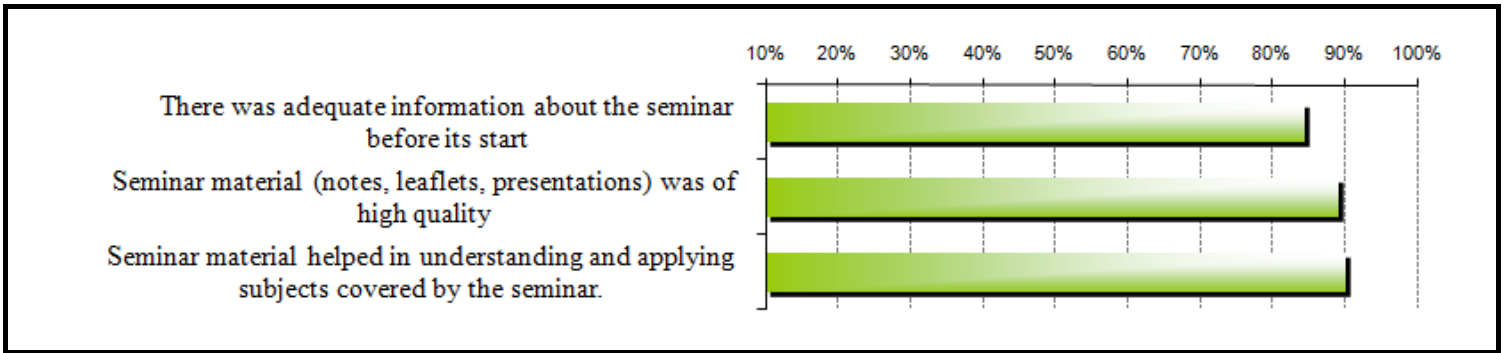


Figure 9. Seminar organization: support material evaluation (seminar 1)

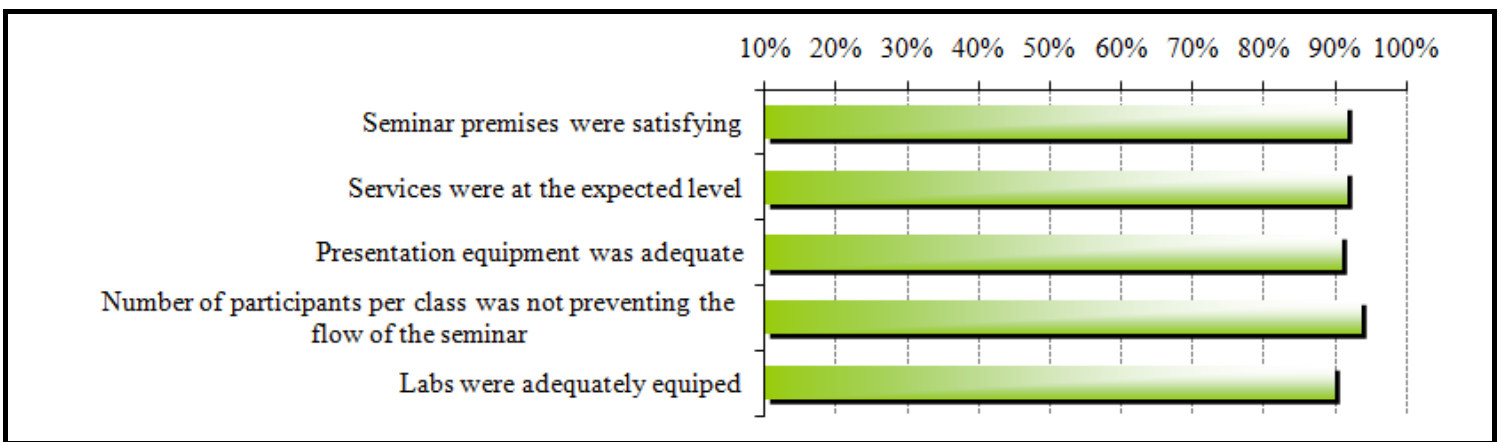


Figure 10. Seminar organization: premises, services, equipment and labs evaluation (seminar 1)

Critical evaluation

The last section of evaluations was about the organizational issues of the seminars, and was split in two sub-sections.

Figure 9 presents the score results regarding the support material evaluation section of seminar 1, and more specifically the different questions included in this like whether there was enough information about the seminar before its start, quality as well as effectiveness of the material etc.

Figure 10 presents the score results regarding the seminars, generic services, labs and equipment of seminar 1, and more specifically the different questions

included in this like whether premises where the seminars were held were satisfying, equipment and labs quality and adequacy etc.

The lowest scores came from pre-seminar information provided (Figure 9, 85%) and labs equipment adequacy (Figure 10, 90%), whereas the highest scores were given for the number of participants per class (Figure 10, 94%) and overall services level (Figure 10, 92%).

4.3.1.2. Seminar 2

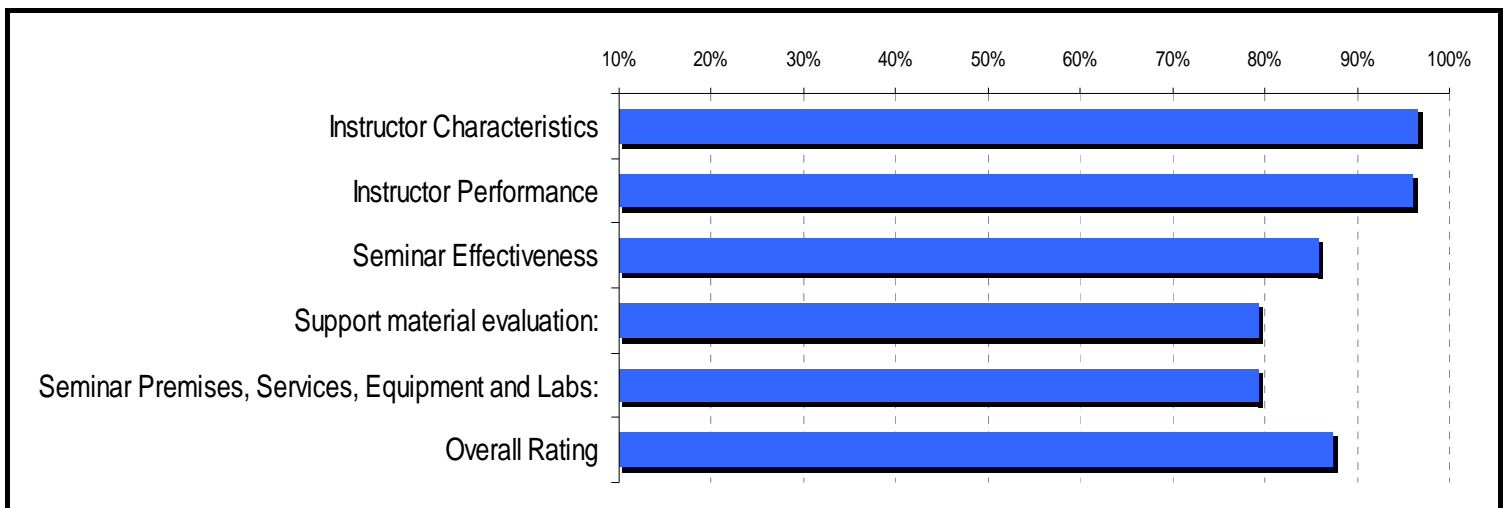


Figure 11. Seminar 2 overall quantitative analysis evaluation

Critical evaluation

Figure 11 presents the overall performance of all evaluation sections in seminar 2. As I see the horizontal axis is the score of the specific section expressed as a percentage. As mentioned evaluation questions are answered in a way of score in the 1-10 scale. Thus at the end all seminar's participants have provided a range of scores regarding each question of each evaluation section (instructor characteristics, instructor performance, seminar effectiveness and seminar organization). In this

seminar evaluation of the instructor (characteristics and performance) were really high (97% and 96% respectively), the seminar effectiveness was evaluated at 86% whereas the two sub sections regarding organization of the seminar scored relatively low (both at 79%).

4.3.1.3. Seminar 3

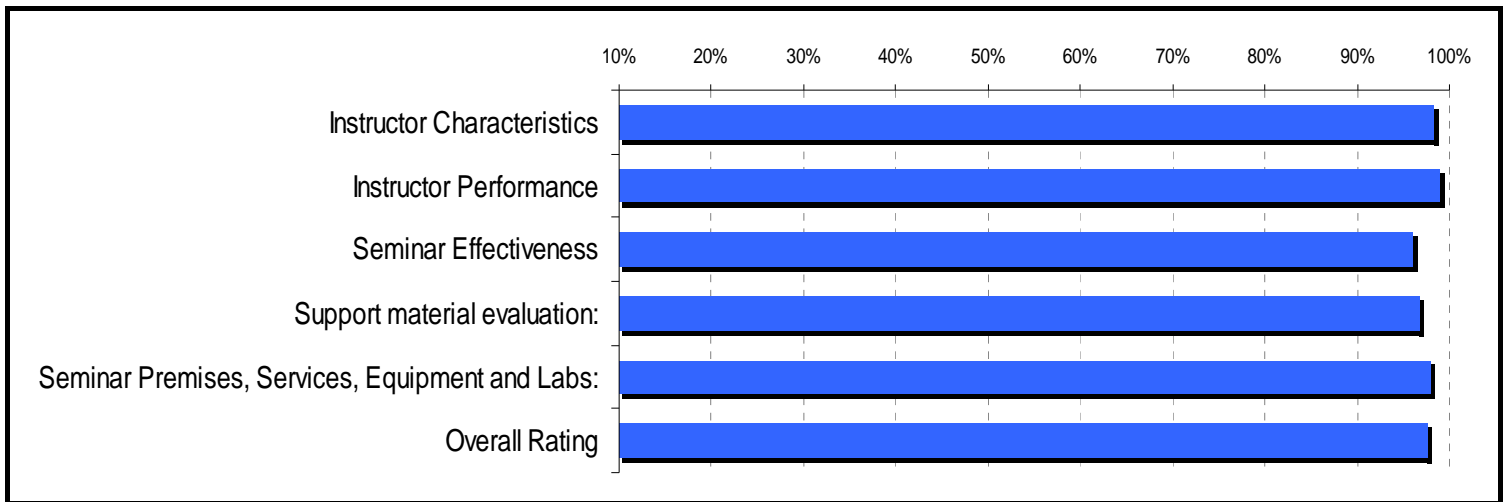


Figure 12. Seminar 3 overall quantitative analysis evaluation

Critical evaluation

Figure 12 presents the overall performance of all evaluation sections in seminar 3. The horizontal axis is the score of the specific section expressed as a percentage. As mentioned evaluation questions are answered in a way of score in the 1-10 scale. Thus at the end all seminar's participants have provided a range of scores regarding each question of each evaluation section (instructor characteristics, instructor performance, seminar effectiveness and seminar organization). In this seminar all evaluations were quite high. The instructor related sections, characteristics and performance, scored 98% and 99% respectively, the seminar effectiveness was

evaluated at 96% whereas the two sub sections regarding organization of the seminar scored 97% and 98%. The average of 98% is considered really satisfying.

4.3.1.4. Seminar 4

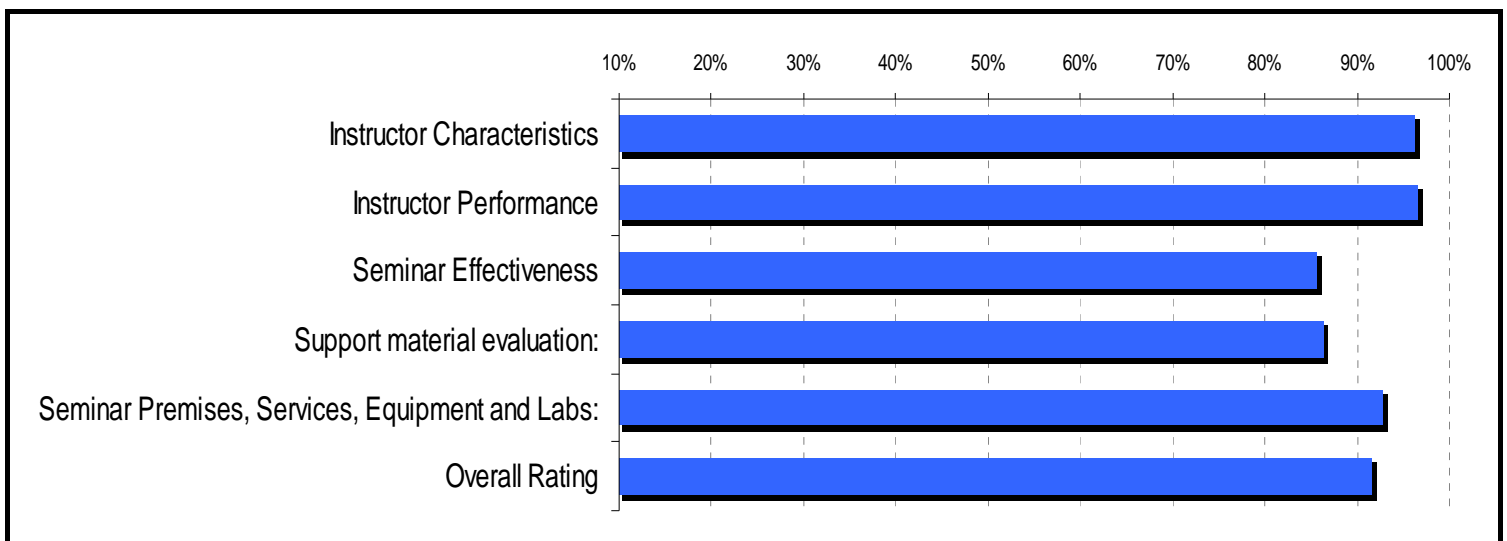


Figure 13. Seminar 4 overall quantitative analysis evaluation

Critical evaluation

Figure 13 presents the overall performance of all evaluation sections in seminar 4. The horizontal axis is the score of the specific section expressed as a percentage. As mentioned evaluation questions are answered in a way of score in the 1-10 scale. Thus at the end all seminar's participants have provided a range of scores regarding each question of each evaluation section (instructor characteristics, instructor performance, seminar effectiveness and seminar organization). In this seminar most evaluations were quite high. The instructor related sections, characteristics and performance, scored 96% and 97% respectively, the seminar effectiveness was lower at 86% whereas the two sub sections regarding organization

of the seminar scored 86% and 93%. The average of 92% is considered good, pointing out needs for further improvement in specific areas (support material and seminar overall effectiveness).

4.3.1.5. Seminar 5

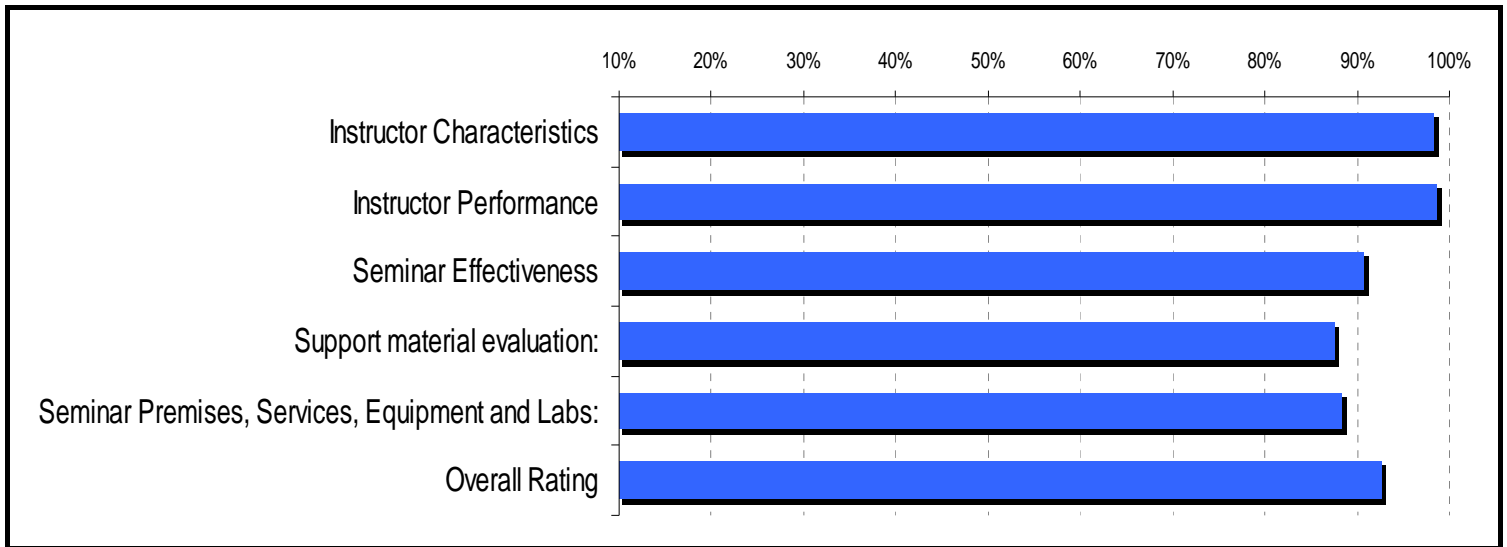


Figure 14. Seminar 5 overall quantitative analysis evaluation

Critical evaluation

Figure 14 presents the overall performance of all evaluation sections in seminar 5. The horizontal axis is the score of the specific section expressed as a percentage. As mentioned evaluation questions are answered in a way of score in the 1-10 scale. Thus at the end all seminar's participants have provided a range of scores regarding each question of each evaluation section (instructor characteristics, instructor performance, seminar effectiveness and seminar organization). In this seminar most evaluations were quite high. The instructor related sections, characteristics and performance, scored 98% and 99% respectively, the seminar effectiveness was lower at 91% whereas the two sub sections regarding organization

of the seminar scored both 88%. The average of 93% is considered good, pointing out needs for further improvement in specific areas (support material and seminar premises and equipment).

4.3.2. Evaluation of the Results

As can be seen from the graphs presenting results of the quantitative analysis, the different seminars provide similar results. Indeed there is very small variation between mean values of per section evaluations, for example the five different values for the overall seminar rating are 92%, 87%, 98%, 92%, 93%, which as one can see is really close and thus quite reliable.

Of course, and as long as feedback – especially according to the CDPM directives- should be used in order to continuously improve skills, procedures and as a result deliverables, one should seek for weaknesses, even for evaluations that at first sight seem almost perfect.

In addition as we see the lowest area of the evaluation in all seminars seems to be located in the seminar effectiveness and seminar organization (support material evaluation and premises, equipment, services and labs evaluation).

On the contrary, evaluation of the instructor (characteristics and performance) in most seminars is almost perfect. Of course there always is room for improvement, but that “almost perfect” evaluation might lead us to slightly modify, or make more detailed evaluation questions: after all evaluation should be used as a feedback tool to spot weaknesses, as well as show good performance achieved after effort for continuous evolution.

The next section makes use of all the results' evaluation to propose possible directions towards the use of project management methodologies for training purposes.

4.4. Proposed Methodology for Instructors

As stated in previous sections for the purpose of my dissertation the CDPM (Customer Driven Project Management) model will be used. As a consequence all project management methodologies proposed should focus and target in the final, total customer satisfaction.

Starting from the findings of our research through the evaluation of seminars and the respective research / quantitative analysis, the following general CDPM methodologies that can aid an instructor – as seen from my experience in my profession- can be concluded:

Strict time management: Both instructor and participants of a training program usually have tight schedules. Thus good planning taking into account initial meetings necessary to arrange the seminar / training session, actual seminar duration, addition of “flexibility periods” to cover for possible delays imposed by inner or outer factors and even manipulation of the final evaluation stage, as long as it will be really critical as I will explain later. Specifically for training purposes time management should also bear in mind that time plan should be detailed enough to include a specific training program, covering the needs for a specific content presentation.

High communicational skills: in this specific business area, communicational skills play the most prominent role among all: apart from contacting people for organizational duties, the instructor ought to continuously communicate and transfer knowledge, experience and last but not least ideas with all the participants of a training program. That way a constant “communication channel” with the *customer*

– training program participant is established, giving valuable feedback regarding possible ways to achieve total customer satisfaction, either realtime (at the current project – training session) or through the constant evolution of the project’s procedures (CDPM - wise).

Quality Management: As long as the CDPM model is followed managing the quality of the “project’s deliverable”, which is no other than the participants’ additional knowledge and experience, is vital for an instructor. Thus continuous improvement of means used during seminars (notes, presentations, equipment etc) is mandatory. This is always confirmed by the findings of our research, as long as the lowest ratings of the seminars I gave as an instructor concerned exactly these: support material, premises and equipment. Of course improvement of these fields requires good organizational skills, which is the next project management methodology to be proposed.

Organizational skills: The use of project management tools (such as Microsoft Project software) to aid training purposes can improve organizational duties, and thus enable the instructor to provide better services, which ought to be personalized. Once again our research showed weaknesses in this field, as long as rating of the services, support material and in general organization of the seminars conducted scored good, but left quite big space for improvement.

Evaluation – feedback: This could be the most crucial “project management related” methodology coming into play for an instructor. Using the CDPM model, in combination with the Deming Cycle (continuous evolution – Plan, Do, Check, Act) can provide the instructor the means to keep on improving his / her job. One key-aspect of the use of evaluation is the ability to continuously adapt evaluation forms, questions and overall structure to the context of the training activity and the

expected participants. Parameters that might affect the structure and target of the evaluation procedure could be the goals set for the specific training activity, the expertise and the job of the participants, the available time for the activity / seminar etc.

4.5. Timeline

Figure 15 represents the timeline of the project consisting of the completion of my dissertation.

ID		Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
1		Chapter 1 - Introduction	5 days?	Mon 14/12/09	Sun 20/12/09
2		Chapter 2 - Problem Statement	15 days?	Mon 21/12/09	Sun 10/1/10
3		Chapter 3 - Literature Review	45 days?	Mon 11/1/10	Sun 14/3/10
4		Chapter 4 - Methodology	15 days?	Mon 15/3/10	Sat 3/4/10
5		Chapter 5 - Results / Findings	20 days?	Mon 5/4/10	Sat 1/5/10
6		Chapter 6 - Discussion of Results	13,88 days?	Mon 3/5/10	Thu 20/5/10



Figure 15. Timeline of dissertation project

5. Conclusion

In the current dissertation research efforts were focused on the prospect of using project management methodologies for training purposes. Starting from the description of my profession, I continued making a needs' assessment and the respective purpose of the current research, as well as why this is important for my work. After formulating the problem and presenting existing approaches, the core part of my research is presented.

Using the feedback from five seminars I organized as an instructor, I proceeded to quantitative analysis of the findings. The results stressed the existing shortcomings of the overall training procedure and thus this research effort proposes some project management methodologies that can effectively be applied for training purposes.

In general I could say that an instructor should combine –among others- a really skilled project manager in order to produce a good result. Thus it is considered really critical to follow and use methodologies and directives from the project management field as an aid for his job.

6. Further Research

As can be easily derived from the project management's nature which relies in constant evolution, there is much space for further research. As stressed in previous sections feedback through evaluation is critical, especially for training purposes. Consequently a possible field of further research might be an effort to create a standardized procedure to provide highly adaptive evaluations and thus *feedback with*

meaning. Of course standardization efforts can help improve quality levels for training purposes in general, thus this could be a second research direction.

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Appendix: Course Evaluation Forms



COURSE

EVALUATION

Name (Optional):

Instructor	Course Name	Course Date
Manolis Fountalidis		

On a scale from Strongly Disagree (1), to Strongly Agree (5), please rate your overall agreement level with the statements below:

Instructor Evaluation:	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Instructor was prepared and organized	1	2	3	4	5
2. Instructor was responsive to questions	1	2	3	4	5
3. Instructor simplified difficult topics	1	2	3	4	5
4. Instructor displayed knowledge of subject matter	1	2	3	4	5
5. Instructor encouraged class participation	1	2	3	4	5
6. Instructor showed ways of applying the material to the daily business issues	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					

Course Evaluation:	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Course objectives were clearly presented	1	2	3	4	5
2. The exercises helped me learn new concepts	1	2	3	4	5

3. Knowledge acquired can be applied to my work	1	2	3	4	5
4. Course taught me new ways of thought and better ways to deal with situations concerning my work	1	2	3	4	5
5. The course intended learning objectives were met	1	2	3	4	5
6. Course duration was adequate	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					



Course Evaluation

Course Material:	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Course material was clearly written and easy to follow	1	2	3	4	5
2. Course material will be useful for future reference	1	2	3	4	5
3. Course material is useful for my work	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					

Environment:	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Equipment worked well (Overhead, Computers, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Room/Class was comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
3. Room/Class was free of distractions	1	2	3	4	5
4. Services were satisfactory	1	2	3	4	5
5. Number of attendants in the class was adequate	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					

Overall:	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. I was satisfied with this training experience	1	2	3	4	5
2. I will suggest this Course to my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:



Course Evaluation

Comments:	
<p>1. Please give us two ways by which you are planning to apply what you have learned to your daily business issues:</p>	a.
	b.
<p>2. What did you find more important during the Course?</p>	
<p>3. Is there something you would like to be different or added to the Course?</p>	
<p>4. In the future, what would you do differently as a result of this course?</p>	
<p>5. How would you describe in general your</p>	

overall experience of this course?	
Comments:	

Thank you very much for your time.