March 2026

Project Success

High-level research findings

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Project Management Institute

Our research in 2024 showed that

A project is successful when

Value > **Effort** + **Expense**

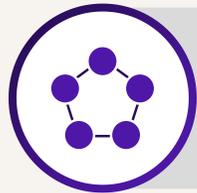**Execution Excellence & Perceived Outcomes**

The 2025 survey offers a more complete view of successful project leadership
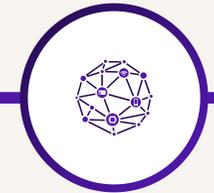
5,800+ global respondents

Increased **survey dimensions around sustainability and AI**

Expanded participant scope to include **functional leads and individual contributors**
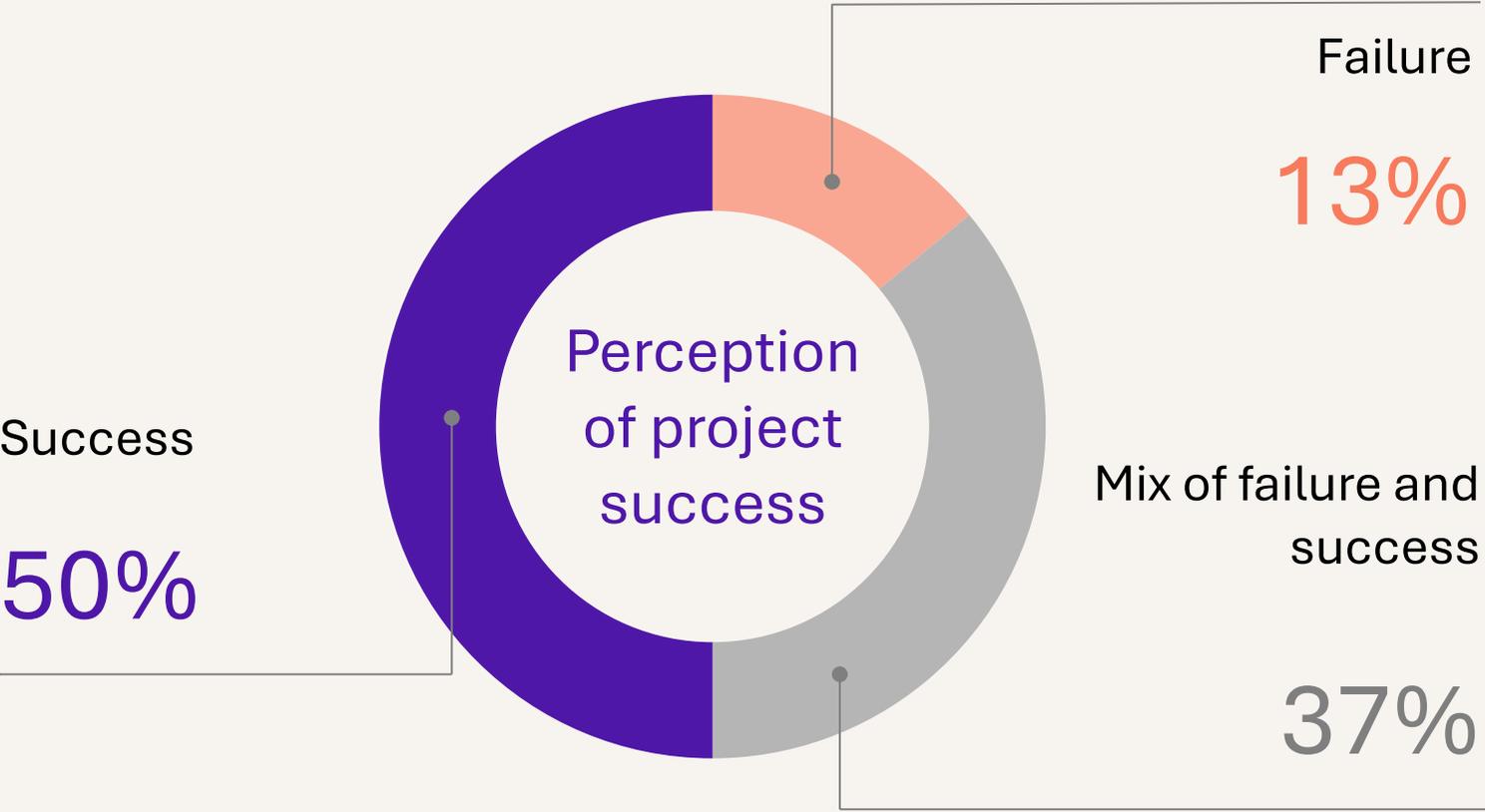
Included perspectives from the community, such as **stakeholder interviews and roundtables**

The findings **capture the full project ecosystem** (leaders, contributors, and enablers) **offering data-driven practices for lasting impact**

Global project success is holding steady

Perception of project success
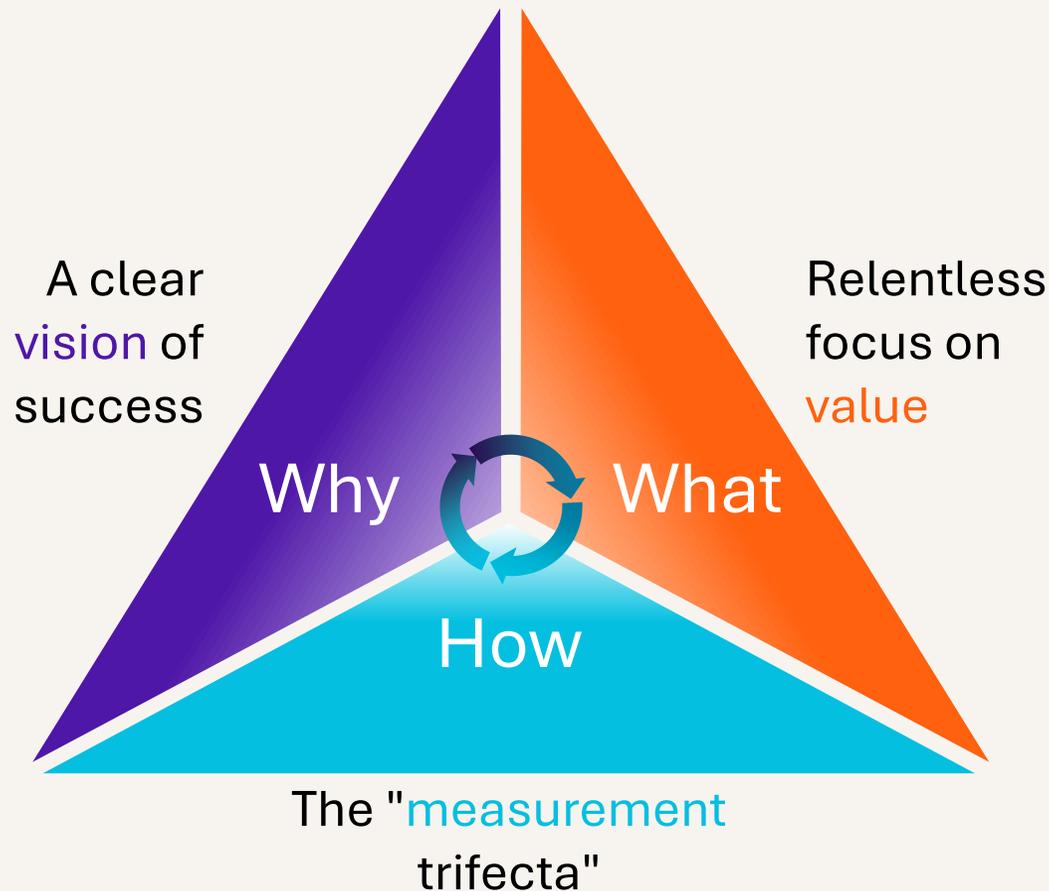
Failure
13%

Success
50%

Mix of failure and success
37%

Global
Net Project
Success Score
37

50% Rating Successful –
13% Rating Failure

Last year:
NPSS 36
48% Rating Successful –
12% Rating Failure

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Why, what, how and M.O.R.E. maximize success

A clear **vision** of success

Why

Relentless focus on **value**

What

How

The "**measurement** trifecta"

+

M	Manage perceptions
O	Own project success
R	Relentlessly reassess
E	Expand perspective

Clear vision is critical for project success

NPSS by clear vision of success

41

No clear vision

+59

Clear vision of success

-18
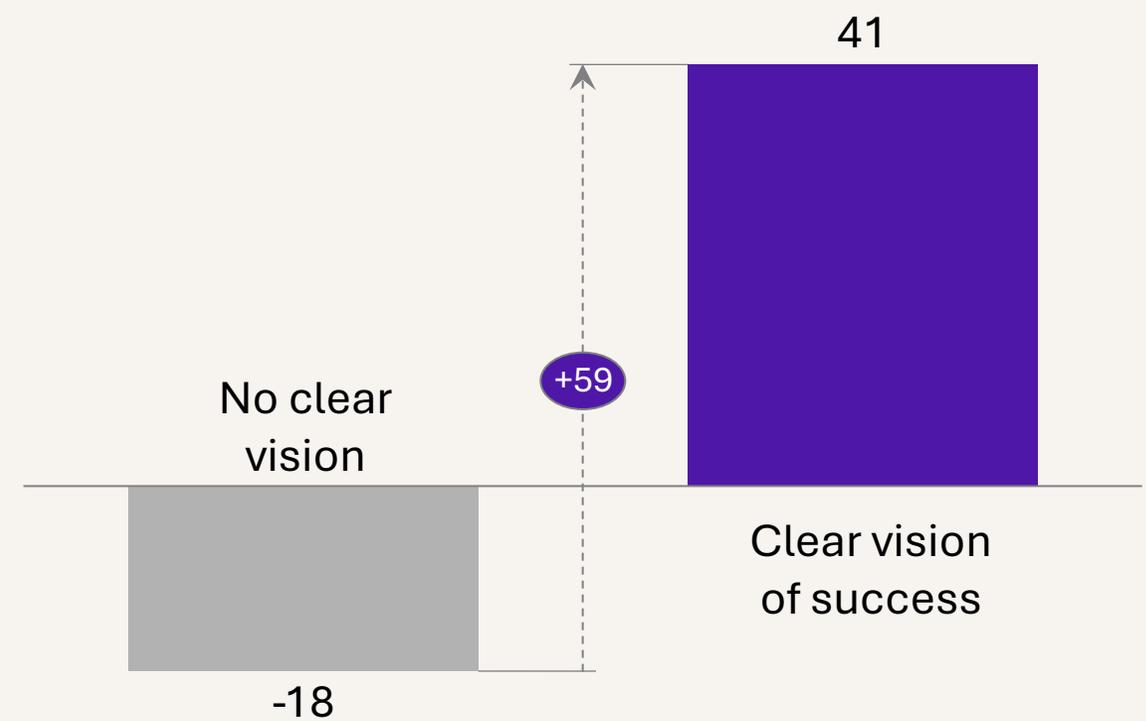
Survey Question: Thinking about the intended outcome or value creation of the project, did you have a clear vision of what success should look like?
Base Sizes: Projects with clear vision of success n = 1,936; Projects with no clear vision n = 138.
NPSS: Net project success score (% rating successful - % rating failure)
Source: PMI 2025 Project Success Survey

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Sustainability is the stronger predictor of Project Success

According to the 2024 PMI Project Success Report, **Sustainability is the strongest predictor of project success.** 2025 Research Insights went further defining the three themes/dimensions of sustainability:

- **Environmental**
- **Social**
- **Economic / Business**

When sustainability (all three themes) is embedded into the **project vision** success scores increase by **+90 NPSS.**

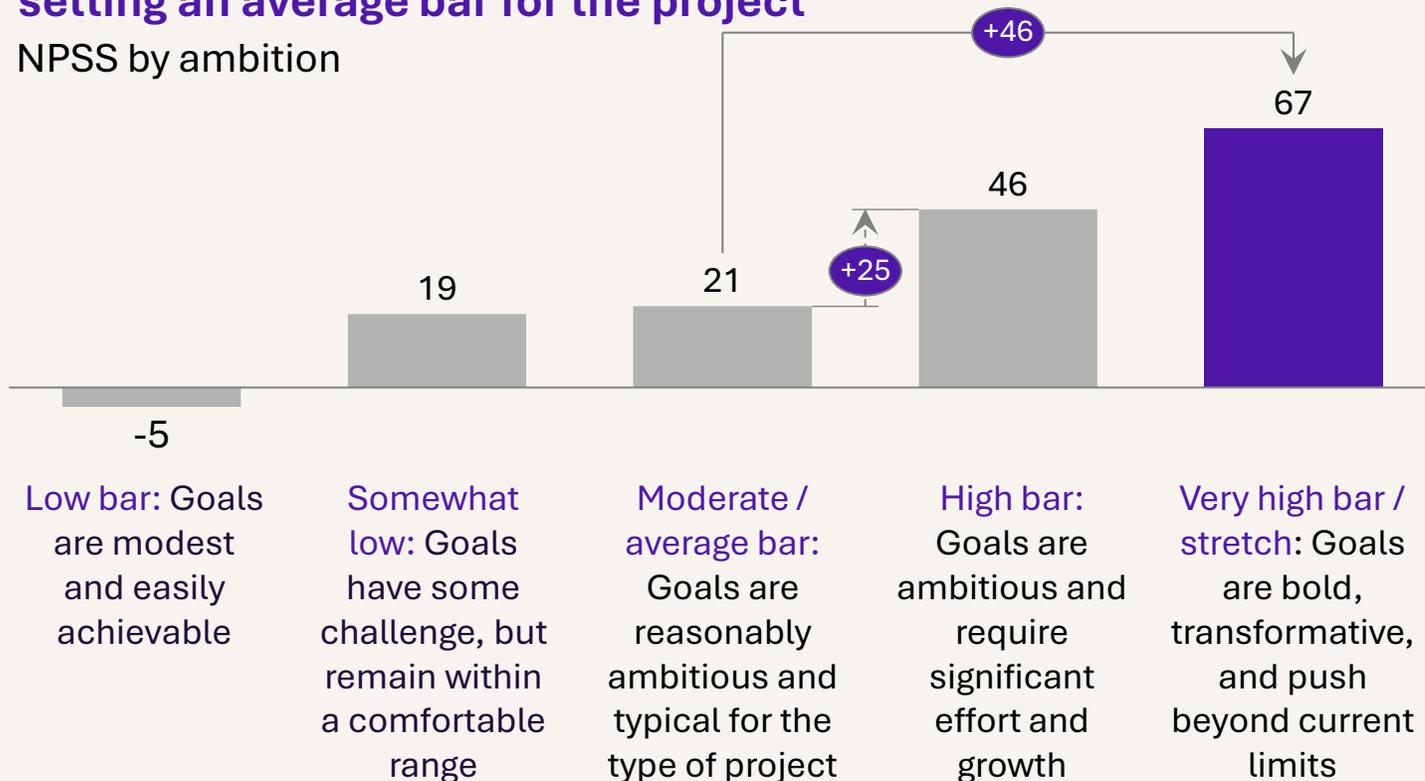**The Gap:** Only **4.3% of projects** integrate **all three sustainability dimensions**

Call to Action: Sustainability is not optional. It is a **strategic performance driver.**

PMI Project Success Report, 2025

Projects with ambitious goals are seen as more successful

Setting a high or very high bar increases success 2-3x over setting an average bar for the project

NPSS by ambition

Chart values:
- Low bar: Goals are modest and easily achievable: -5
- Somewhat low: Goals have some challenge, but remain within a comfortable range: 19
- Moderate / average bar: Goals are reasonably ambitious and typical for the type of project: 21
- High bar: Goals are ambitious and require significant effort and growth: 46
- Very high bar / stretch: Goals are bold, transformative, and push beyond current limits: 67

+46

+25

Execs, then project managers, are seen as having most influence over ambition

Who most influences setting a high bar for the project:
(% selecting)

- Org exec: 44%
- Project manager: 35%
- Project sponsor: 28%
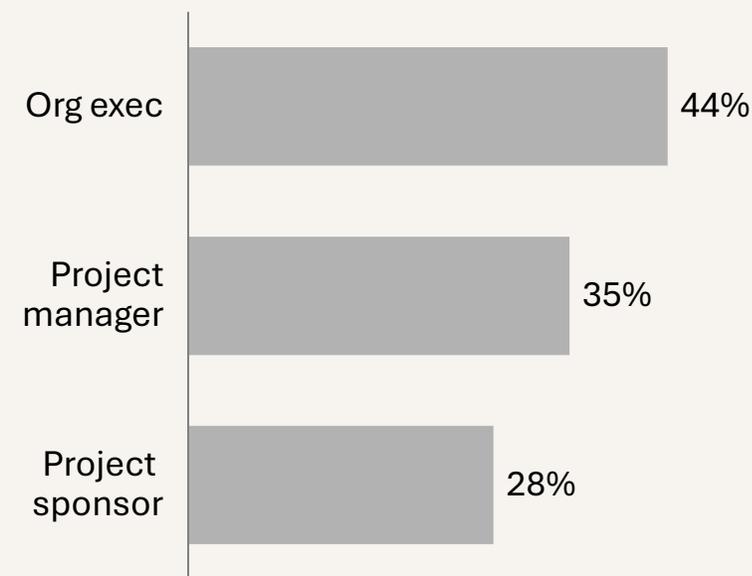
Survey Questions: How would you describe the level of effort you anticipated it would take to complete the project's goal? Who had the most influence over the decision to set a high bar for the project? Please select up to three.
Base Sizes: Ambition Level n = 3,012; Ambition Influencer n = 1,702.
NPSS: Net project success score (% rating successful - % rating failure)
Source: PMI 2025 Project Success Survey

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Teams willing to flex time, cost, scope in pursuit of greater value outperform those rigidly focused on delivery

NPSS by willingness to flex the triple constraint in favor of value creation
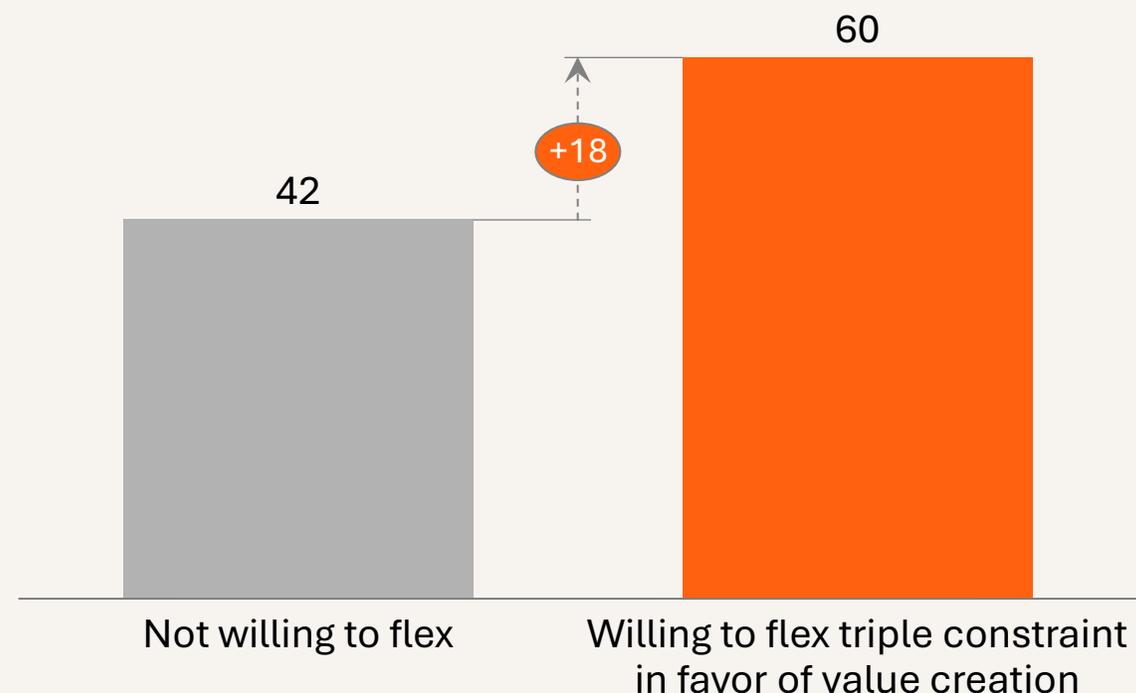
42 — Not willing to flex

+18

60 — Willing to flex triple constraint in favor of value creation

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Not all leaders are as willing to flex as project professionals; tradeoff analysis required to convince execs & sponsors

Willingness to flex the triple constraint for value creation across audiences
(% selecting)

Audience	Extremely willing	Very Willing	Moderately willing	Total
Project Managers	30%	29%	24%	83%
Program Managers	23%	31%	34%	88%
PMO Leaders	13%	29%	32%	74%
Org Execs	11%	29%	38%	78%
Project Sponsors	10%	17%	45%	72%

> Org execs and sponsors are willing to flex, but more moderately; Project professionals need to build the strong tradeoff analysis to gain their support

Legend: ■ Extremely willing ■ Very Willing ■ Moderately willing

Survey Question: How willing were you to compromise delivering on-time, on budget or within scope for the purpose of value creation?
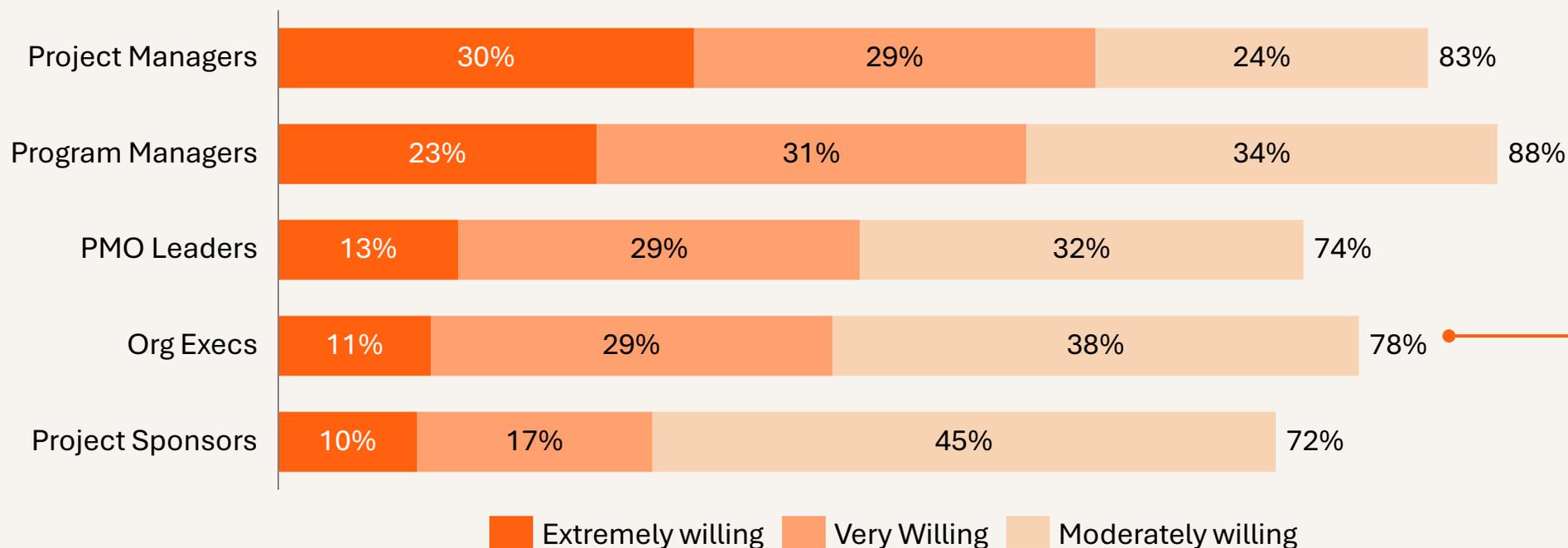*Base Sizes: Project Managers n = 434; Program Managers n = 158; PMO Leaders n = 266; Project Sponsors n = 236; Org Execs n = 297*
NPSS: Net project success score (% rating successful - % rating failure);
Source: PMI 2025 Project Success Survey

The "measurement trifecta" continues to be a fundamental driver of success

NPSS by measurement components

54

+23

31

Without 1 or more of these components

The "measurement trifecta"
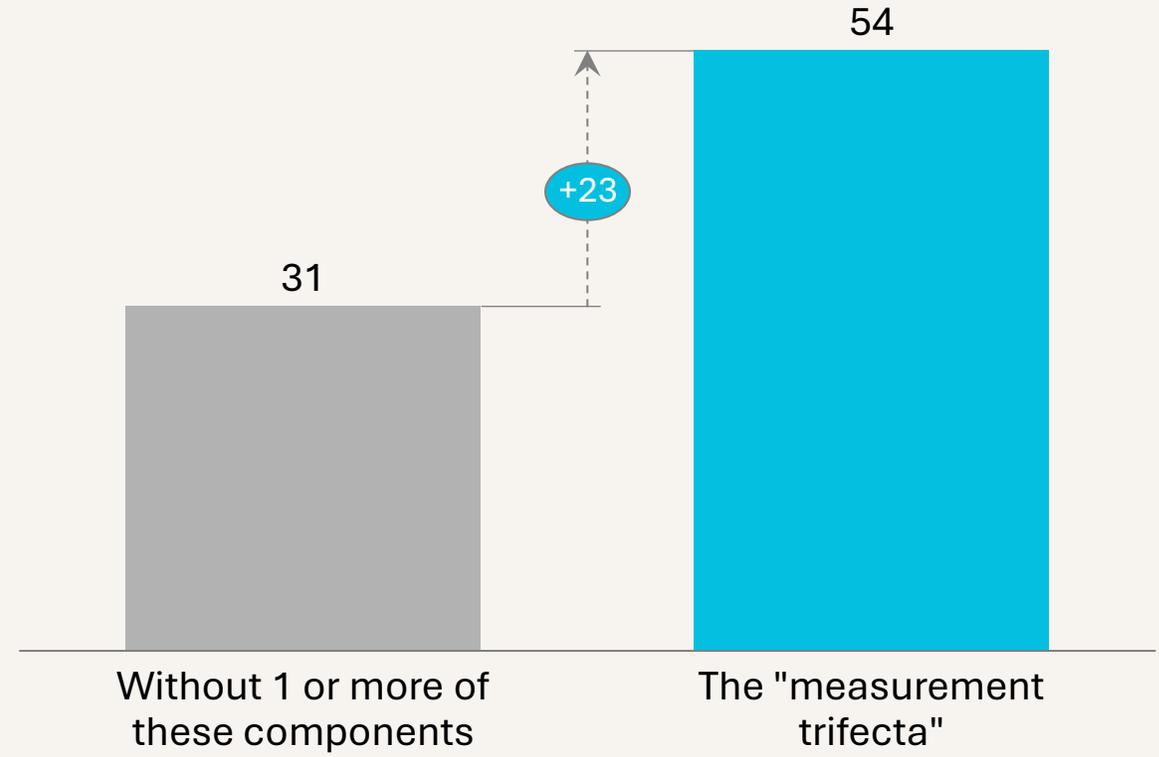
Survey Questions: Were the success criteria for the project defined upfront?; Which of these capabilities were present in the project: Well-established performance measurement system to align and guide decisions?; At what point(s) in time (phase of the project) was the project evaluated on whether it met its intended outcome?
Base Sizes: Projects with success defined upfront, measurement system in place, and measured along with way n = 1,389; Projects without those characteristics n = 2,216.
NPSS: Net project success score (% rating successful - % rating failure)
Source: PMI 2025 Project Success Survey

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Despite clear impact, only 37% of projects utilize all 3 elements of the "measurement trifecta"

37%

of projects use the

"measurement trifecta"

The "measurement trifecta"
(% of projects with measurement component in place)

Define success criteria upfront[1] — 86%

Have a well-established Measurement system in place[2] — 76%

Measure performance toward intended outcomes throughout[3] — 50%
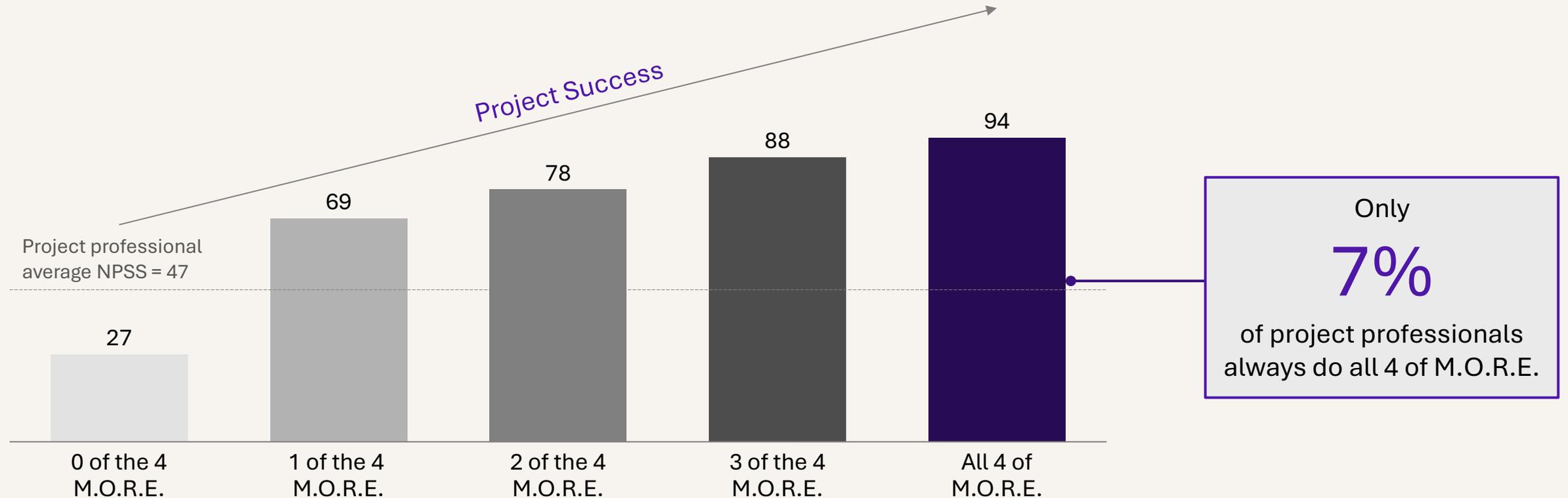
Survey Questions: 1. Were the success criteria for the project defined upfront? 2. Which of these capabilities were present in the project: Well-established performance measurement system to align and guide decisions? 3. At what point(s) in time (phase of the project) was the project evaluated on whether it met its intended outcome?
Base Sizes: Projects with success defined upfront, measurement system in place, and measured along with way n = 1,389; Projects without those characteristics n = 2,216.
NPSS: Net project success score (% rating successful - % rating failure)
Source: PMI 2025 Project Success Survey

M.O.R.E. is the vision PMI set for the project profession

M — **Manage perceptions** by shaping stakeholder understanding and building trust

O — **Own project success** beyond project management success to deliver true value

R — **Relentlessly reassess** to anticipate change and adjust to ensure value delivery

E — **Expand perspective** to connect projects to organizational, societal and sustainability outcomes

The data is clear: M.O.R.E. drives project success

NPSS by M.O.R.E. adoption

Project Success

Project professional
average NPSS = 47

27	69	78	88	94
0 of the 4 M.O.R.E.	1 of the 4 M.O.R.E.	2 of the 4 M.O.R.E.	3 of the 4 M.O.R.E.	All 4 of M.O.R.E.

Only

7%

of project professionals
always do all 4 of M.O.R.E.

*Survey Question: In the context of... Managing how key stakeholders...Taking ownership...Continually reassessing ...Expanding perspective...How often have you used the following practices / how often/have you observed the following practices being used by project or program managers? Base Sizes: Data is reflective of the Project and Program Manager ONLY. PMs 1/4 MORE n=658; PMs 2/4 MORE n=387; PMs 3/4 MORE n=191; PMs 4/4 MORE n=78.*
NPSS: Net project success score (% rating successful - % rating failure); NPSS reflects when M.O.R.E. practices are 'always' adopted
Source: PMI 2025 Project Success Survey

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Stakeholders look to project and program managers to own M.O.R.E.

% of each audience who feel the project/program manager is primarily responsible for M.O.R.E.

69%	72%	74%	75%
All stakeholders[1]	Project sponsors	Org execs	Project and program managers
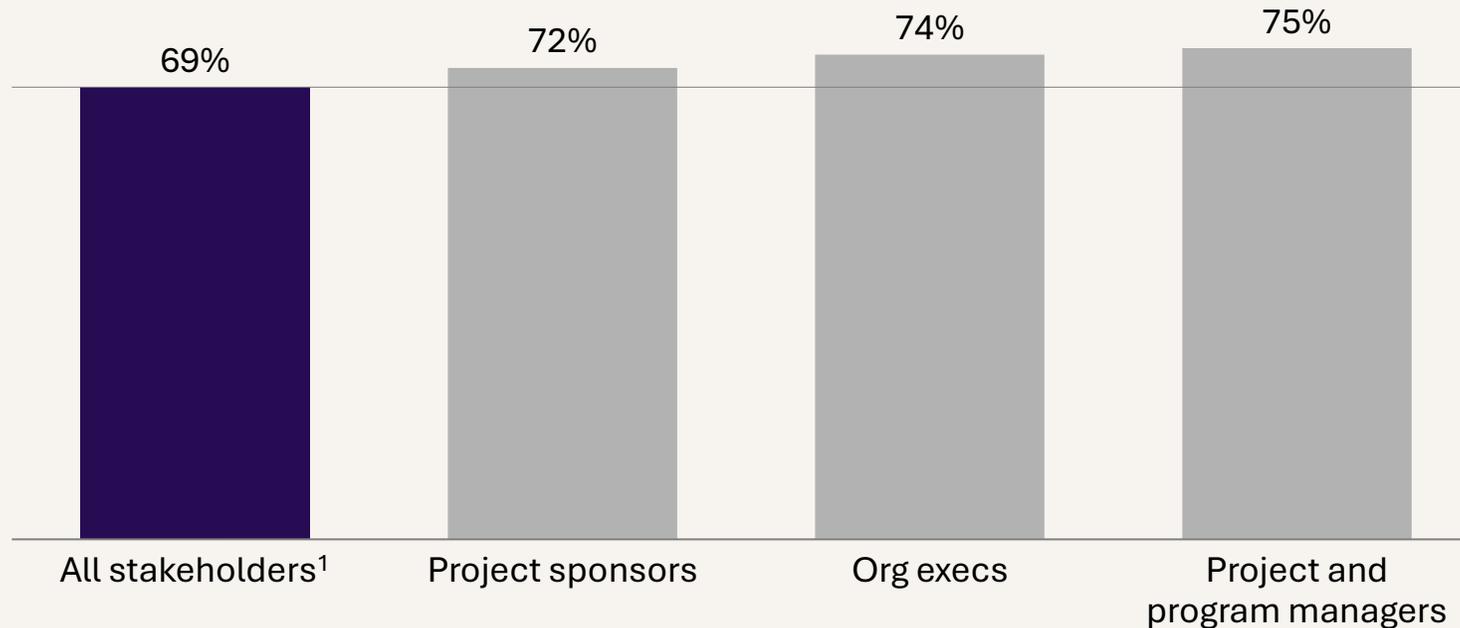
Project and program managers can feel empowered to own M.O.R.E. knowing that stakeholders and leadership look to them

AI is a tool to amplify success, confidence using M.O.R.E.

Project professionals that use AI see a correlation to higher success

NPSS by use of AI

53

+17

36

AI was not used | Use of AI

% of project professionals

30% | 70%
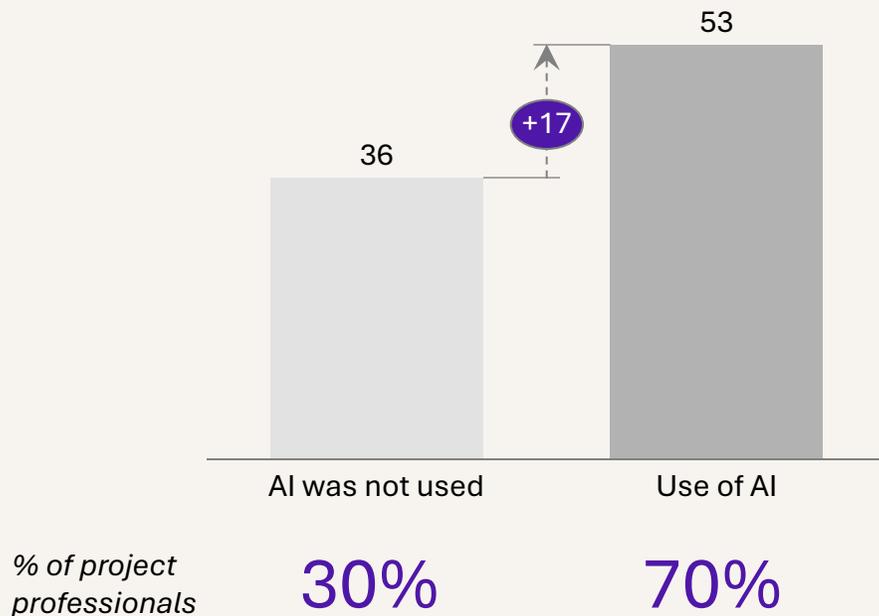
Top 4 applications of AI in M.O.R.E. practices among project professionals can inspire evolving use of AI

% of project professionals

1. *Relentlessly reassess:*
   Identify opportunities to better utilize technology to streamline effort or improve value creation — **36%**

2. *Manage perceptions:*
   Creating an effective reporting approach (e.g. for real-time, shared dashboards or reports) — **35%**

3. *Expand perspectives:*
   Identify emerging risks or new opportunities for the project based on changes in the broader environment — **32%**

4. *Manage perceptions:*
   Clearly map how each stakeholder's needs and wants will be addressed in a successful project outcome — **31%**

Survey Questions: Did you use any AI capabilities during this project? Which of the following applications of AI are most helpful or would be most helpful to enable you to do the following...
Base Sizes: AI project usage n = 1,765; AI usefulness n = 968; AI Applications to enable M.O.R.E. n = 2,090.
NPSS: Net project success score (% rating successful - % rating failure)
Source: PMI 2025 Project Success Survey

M.O.R.E. also drives professional success
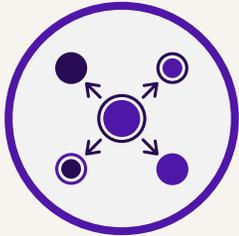
Elevate your impact

Deliver sustained value at scale across your organization and drive transformation efforts

94

average net project success score[1]
vs. 47 PM average

Elevate your influence

Enhance your reputation as a strategic partner to executives and project sponsors, while empowering other project professionals

67%

have sufficient access to key stakeholders[2]

Elevate your career

Accelerate your career growth by becoming a sought-after leader for project success and value creation

75%
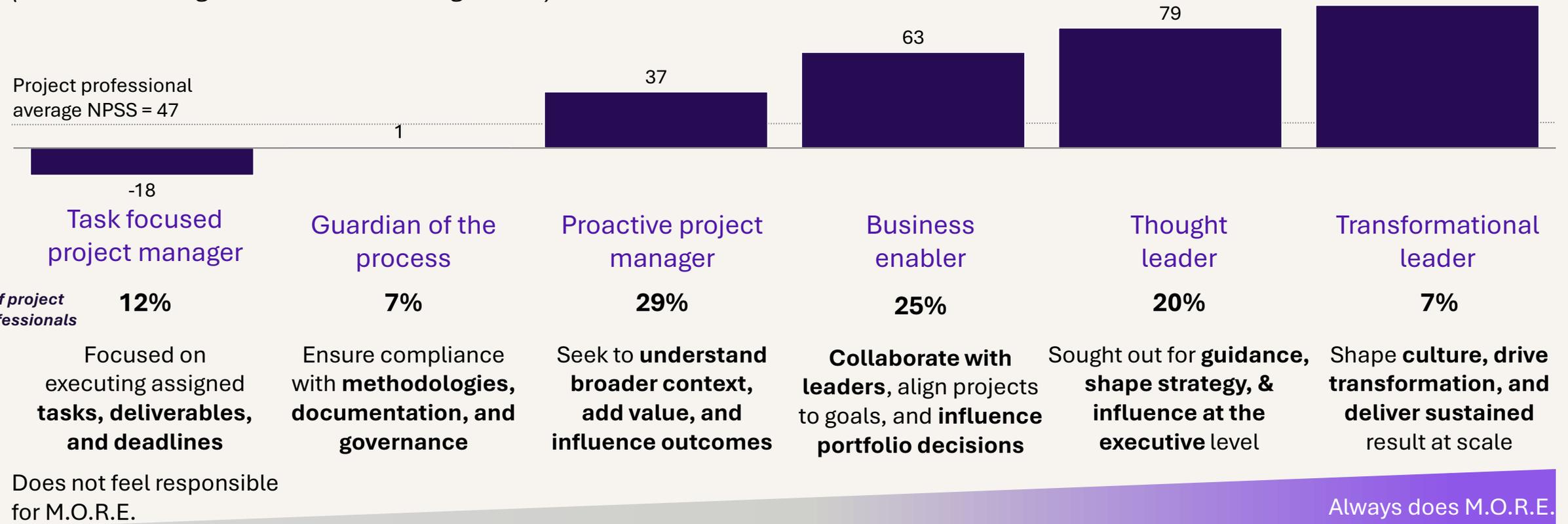
are managing complex projects[3] that have never been done

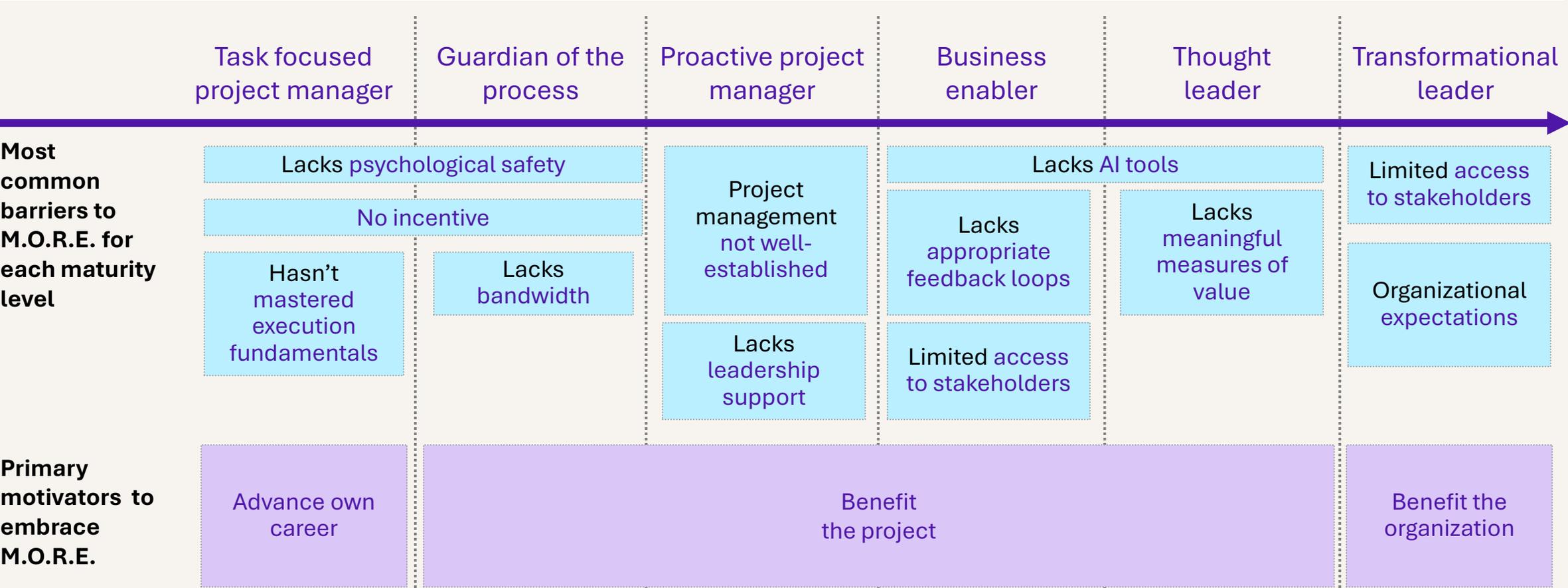*of project professionals who always do all 4 of M.O.R.E.*

As project professionals step up, you drive M.O.R.E. value

Net Project Success Score (NPSS) by levels of project management maturity
(NPSS = % rating successful - % rating failure)

Project professional average NPSS = 47

| | -18 | 1 | 37 | 63 | 79 | 94 |

Task focused project manager	**Guardian of the process**	**Proactive project manager**	**Business enabler**	**Thought leader**	**Transformational leader**
% of project professionals					
12%	**7%**	**29%**	**25%**	**20%**	**7%**
Focused on executing assigned **tasks, deliverables, and deadlines**	Ensure compliance with **methodologies, documentation, and governance**	Seek to **understand broader context, add value, and influence outcomes**	**Collaborate with leaders**, align projects to goals, and **influence portfolio decisions**	Sought out for **guidance, shape strategy, & influence at the executive** level	Shape **culture, drive transformation, and deliver sustained** result at scale

Does not feel responsible for M.O.R.E.

Always does M.O.R.E.

Must address barriers to move up the maturity curve

	Task focused project manager	Guardian of the process	Proactive project manager	Business enabler	Thought leader	Transformational leader
Most common barriers to M.O.R.E. for each maturity level	Lacks psychological safety	Lacks psychological safety				Limited access to stakeholders
	No incentive	No incentive	Project management not well-established	Lacks AI tools	Lacks AI tools	
	Hasn't mastered execution fundamentals	Lacks bandwidth		Lacks appropriate feedback loops	Lacks meaningful measures of value	Organizational expectations
			Lacks leadership support	Limited access to stakeholders		
Primary motivators to embrace M.O.R.E.	Advance own career	Benefit the project	Benefit the project	Benefit the project	Benefit the project	Benefit the organization

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Each M.O.R.E. practice measurably lifts project success

Average increase in NPSS of select M.O.R.E. practices when implemented

M Manage perceptions		**O** Own project success		**R** Relentlessly reassess		**E** Expand perspective	
Clearly **map how each stakeholder's needs will be addressed**	+11	**Collaborate with stakeholders** to achieve overall purpose	+9	Monitor **changes in environment to identify emerging risks** or opportunities	+10	Champion and **repurpose learning across projects**	+10
Maintain a **register to track project benefits**	+11	Adopt **ownership mindset that motivates visible, concrete actions**	+9	Continually **look to better utilize technology**	+9	Explore **implications for the achievement of org-wide goals**	+9
Keep **project participants focused on maximizing value created**	+10	Ensure **project outcomes are aligned to broader organizational goals**	+8	Evaluate whether **project success remains visible**	+7	Explore **implications to broader society**	+9

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M.O.R.E. Essentials Course

Launched November 2025

Helping project professionals understand why M.O.R.E. matters

Description: A short, research-based learning experience designed to introduce project professionals to PMI's latest project success research and the M.O.R.E. call to action. Learners explore the evidence behind what drives project success beyond technical execution, reflect on their current approach to project leadership, and assess their strengths and growth opportunities across the four M.O.R.E. dimensions. The course is designed to spark motivation, build shared language, and help learners identify where to focus their development efforts to deliver greater impact.

Portfolio Category: **Continuous Learning**

Product Format: **Digital Course**
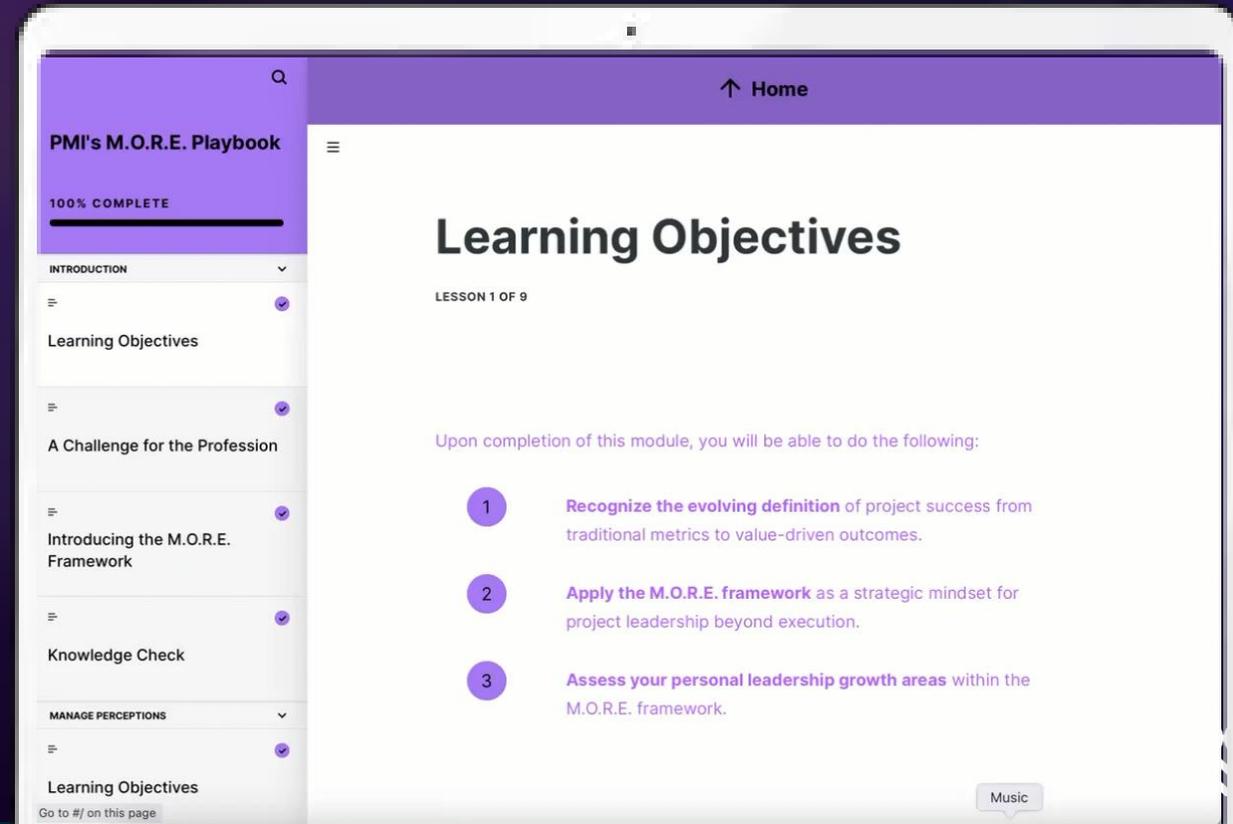
Title: **M.O.R.E. Essentials** (published name is longer)

Confirmed Duration: **5 hours | 5 PDUs**

Confirmed Pricing: **$0 members | $0 non-members**

Product Ready: **01 November 2025**

Launch Languages: **English**

View live course ↘

The path forward for project professionals

How project professionals can approach their work
to elevate themselves, their projects, their organizations, and the world:

1

Employ the fundamentals of vision, measurement, and focus on value

2

Own your responsibility to do M.O.R.E. as a project professional

3

Embed M.O.R.E. practices as daily discipline to drive value creation

•Thank you