**What Is an IT Project Manager? And How to Become One**

*IT project managers help plan and roll out IT processes across organizations.*

**What is an IT project manager?**

An information technology (IT) project manager is a professional that helps organizations achieve their IT goals by planning and executing projects. IT project managers might lead projects to introduce new software solutions, scale IT processes, or switch cloud providers for an organization. Some IT project managers may be tasked with leading software development.

IT project managers can work with the IT teams of many different types of organizations, including health care facilities, tech companies, and universities, among many others.

**What does an IT project manager do?**

An IT project manager brings new IT processes of an organization to fruition. Here’s what the actual tasks and responsibilities of an IT project manager might include:

* Lead multiple IT projects from initiation to completion
* Develop and manage project budgets
* Communicate with stakeholders, including IT managers, vendors, and executive leaders
* Lead risk management and mitigation efforts
* Gather, analyze, and report IT metrics

**IT project manager salary and job outlook**

IT project managers in the US make an average salary of $108,114 as of March 2022.

Job growth for IT project managers is expected to be strong. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects an **11-percent job growth rate** for computer and information managers from 2020 to 2030. The Project Management Institute (PMI) also sees strong growth for project manager jobs internationally, estimating the sector to grow by 33 percent, or 22 million new jobs by 2027.

Below is a list of average US base salaries for similar positions. Data comes from Glassdoor and is accurate as of February 2022.

* Senior IT project manager: $123,684
* Technical project manager: $117,506
* Project manager: $96,312

**How to become an IT project manager**

IT project management will require project management skills and experience. Though technical skills aren’t always required, they are often requested and can give you a strong edge in your application.

**1. Develop relevant skills.**

A mix of project management skills and technical IT skills can bring you closer to landing a position as an IT project manager. The main skills you’ll need to learn can broadly be broken down into three categories:

* **Project management methodologies:**As a project manager, you should be familiar with various approaches to project management. Since IT can be a volatile field, knowledge of methods and approaches that are designed to accommodate changes are often requested. These might include:
  + Agile
  + Scrum
  + Kanban
  + Lean
* **Project management processes:**Completing a project successfully means taking the project through the four stages of the project lifecycle: initiating, planning, executing, and closing. You’ll need to know how to budget, assess risk, set schedules, assign tasks, run kick-off meetings, and more.
* **Technical IT skills:**Since you’ll be working to implement large-scale projects, a broad understanding of IT processes will be helpful. This can include security, systems, networks, cloud computing, or programming, and scaling various aspects of IT processes. The exact technical skills you’ll want to cultivate can vary depending on the industry and job. For example, a biotechnology firm might ask for some experience in biotechnology.

***What degree do you need to be an IT project manager?***

*Many job descriptions ask for at least a bachelor’s degree in computer science, business, or a related field. A degree can equip you with essential knowledge and expand your job opportunities. Keep in mind that it is still possible to become an IT project manager if you have enough relevant experience.*

**2. Gain experience.**

There are several ways to gain the skills you need to become an IT project manager.

* **Gain experience in the field.**IT project managers can get their start doing hands-on work in IT and working their way up to being project managers. If you’re in an IT position hoping to take this route, sharpen your leadership and management skills. It might help to approach your manager and state your interest in project management as well.
* **Start in a project support role.**If you don’t have a technical background, starting in a project support role for an IT team, like project coordinator or program associate, can help you break into the field.
* **Get a certification.**Build up your knowledge and credentials by getting a certification. The Project Management Professional (PMP) and Scrum Master certifications are often requested in job descriptions. If you’re looking for an IT certification to boost your technical credentials, the CompTIA ITF+ can be useful—it covers all IT foundations and is designed for non-technical professionals.