



LiFT Level 2 Project Management Program

Program Overview

The MCAKC LiFT Level 2 Project Management Program helps experienced project managers build on existing knowledge and develop skills that are difficult to gain through day-to-day project experience alone.

Taught by industry experts, participants learn how to build and lead project teams, manage contracts and risk, negotiate effectively, navigate change orders, avoid claims, improve financial performance, leverage technology, and successfully deliver projects from planning through closeout.

Through ten weekly seminars, participants gain practical tools and techniques they can immediately apply to improve project performance, profitability, leadership effectiveness, and long-term career success.

Program Benefits

- Connect with project management professionals from mechanical contracting firms throughout Kansas City.
- Gain practical tools and resources that can be applied immediately on the job.
- Strengthen your ability to lead teams, manage risk, improve project outcomes, and increase profitability.
- Develop practical skills that support greater responsibility, accountability, and leadership for your projects.
- Gain confidence in managing contracts, financials, change orders, scheduling, and client relationships.

Who Should Attend?

Project Managers with 3–7 years of experience who have established project management fundamentals and are ready to develop more advanced leadership, financial, and project management competencies.

Program Details

Program Format: Ten weekly seminars

Schedule: Thursdays, September 24 – December 3, 2026

CEUs: 4.5

Tuition

No charge for employees of MCAKC Member Contractors signatory to Local 8 or Local 533.

\$1,000 for non-member contractors signatory to Local 8 or Local 533

\$1,500 for Associate Members

Location:

MCAKC Knowledge Center
10955 Lowell Avenue, 10th Floor
Overland Park, KS 66210

Questions?

learn@mcakc.org

913-948-9200

Setting Up Your Team for Success – The Team

Successful projects begin with strong teams. In this seminar, participants will learn how to establish effective project teams by defining roles and responsibilities, improving team dynamics, and creating a culture of accountability and collaboration. Participants will explore the characteristics of high-performing teams and develop strategies for aligning team performance with organizational goals and project objectives.

Because communication plays a critical role in team success, participants will also examine communication and listening styles, identify barriers to effective communication, and learn techniques for improving interactions with team members, customers, and stakeholders.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Identify five root causes of dysfunctional teams.
- Define project team roles and responsibilities and develop a team code of culture.
- Implement strategies for improving team dynamics.
- Align individual and team performance goals with organizational goals and strategic initiatives.
- Identify various listening, questioning, and communication styles.
- Identify their personal communication style and recognize the styles of others.
- Describe barriers to effective communication and improve overall communication effectiveness.

Instructor

Gary Polain is the Principal of OzMosis Leadership. A native-born Western Australian, he began his professional career as a mechanical engineer specializing in power station design, dust pollution control, and mine ventilation systems. Over the past three decades, Gary has built an accomplished career in leadership development, executive coaching, team development, and organizational effectiveness.



A highly regarded speaker, facilitator, and coach, Gary has trained and coached thousands of professionals throughout Australia, Canada, the United States, and England. He works with organizations to strengthen leadership, improve team performance, and create measurable behavioral change that drives organizational success.

Setting Up Your Project for Success - The Project Plan

Successful projects begin long before work starts in the field. In this seminar, participants will learn how effective planning during the pre-construction phase drives project performance, productivity, profitability, and overall project success. From developing a project execution strategy to establishing performance goals and productivity benchmarks, participants will gain practical tools for building a strong foundation for project delivery.

Drawing on lessons learned from complex commercial and industrial projects, participants will explore the critical planning activities that occur before construction begins and learn how proactive decision-making can reduce risk, improve team alignment, and create measurable project outcomes.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Explain how pre-planning components are critical to project performance and success.
- Build a productivity plan from the project estimate.
- Establish project performance goals and milestone measurement criteria.
- Describe strategies to enhance project profitability during the pre-construction phase.

Instructor

Chris Champagne, PE, LEED AP, is an Operations Manager and Team Leader with P1 Group, where he has spent more than 30 years building a career in mechanical construction. During his tenure, he has advanced from estimator to project manager and now leads project management teams and major construction operations.

A graduate of Kansas State University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, Chris is a licensed Professional Engineer in Kansas and a LEED Accredited Professional. He is currently helping lead P1's work on the Panasonic Battery Plant in De Soto, Kansas, one of the largest construction projects in Kansas history.



Drawing on decades of experience in estimating, project management, operations, and field execution, Chris provides practical, real-world insight into the planning, leadership, and decision-making required to deliver successful projects.

Risk Management for Construction Professionals

Construction contracts do more than define scope, schedule, and price—they establish how project risks are allocated and managed throughout the life of a project. In this seminar, participants will learn how to identify and evaluate contract language that can significantly impact project profitability, productivity, and risk exposure.

Using real-world examples from the mechanical contracting industry, participants will explore common contract provisions related to scope, schedule, notice requirements, delays, changes, and risk transfer. Participants will also learn practical strategies for reviewing contracts, identifying potential issues before work begins, and improving communication between project teams, management, and legal counsel.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Explain critical contract clauses and the associated implications to the successful outcome of a project.
- Identify high-risk language related to scope, schedule, notice requirements, and risk transfer.
- Use the Contract Review Checklist to minimize exposure at all stages of the project.
- Summarize the importance of aligning contracts, bid documents, and proposals.
- Recognize common contract risks that can lead to disputes, delays, and financial loss.

Instructor

Guy Gast is a Senior Consultant with The Waldinger Corporation and former President of Waldinger's Iowa Division. During a career spanning more than 40 years, he held leadership roles in project management, operations, labor relations, and risk management while helping grow Waldinger into one of the Midwest's leading mechanical contracting organizations.

Guy served as National President of SMACNA from 2015–2016 and was recognized as SMACNA's 2020 Contractor of the Year for his contributions to the sheet metal and mechanical contracting industry. Drawing on decades of experience managing complex projects, contracts, and business operations, Guy provides practical insight into contract management, risk allocation, and strategies that help contractors reduce risk and improve project outcomes.



Business Negotiation Skills

Project managers negotiate every day with owners, general contractors, suppliers, subcontractors, team members, and other stakeholders. Success often depends on the ability to communicate effectively, build trust, navigate conflict, and reach agreements that support both project goals and long-term business relationships.

In this highly interactive seminar, participants will learn practical negotiation and communication strategies that improve outcomes, strengthen working relationships, and increase influence. Through facilitated discussions, hands-on exercises, and small-group activities, participants will develop skills in negotiation, collaborative problem solving, conflict resolution, and relationship management that can be applied immediately on the job.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Prepare effectively for negotiations by identifying interests, priorities, and desired outcomes.
- Apply negotiation strategies that create value and strengthen long-term business relationships.
- Improve communication through active listening, questioning techniques, and adapting communication styles.
- Navigate conflict and difficult conversations professionally and productively.
- Use collaborative problem-solving techniques to identify shared interests and develop effective solutions.
- Build trust, credibility, and influence with project stakeholders, team members, clients, and business partners.
- Negotiate with greater confidence in project, business, and interpersonal situations.

Instructors

Stephanie Haynes is a Partner with TransformationWrx and has more than 20 years of experience in collective bargaining, negotiations, and conflict resolution across the public and private sectors. Based in Kansas City, Missouri, she specializes in transformational mediation, helping organizations build stronger relationships and achieve collaborative, long-term solutions. Stephanie provides expertise in negotiations, communication, conflict resolution, and leadership development and has developed training programs on a wide range of workplace and labor-management topics.



Myla Hite is a Partner with TransformationWrx and a labor relations professional with more than 40 years of experience as a negotiator, mediator, consultant, and trainer. She has led complex bargaining efforts and resolved workplace disputes across the private, public, and federal sectors. Known for her practical, real-world approach, Myla provides training in negotiations, communication, conflict resolution, and leadership development and is a sought-after speaker and facilitator.



Claims Avoidance

Construction projects involve significant contractual, financial, and operational risk. While claims can be costly and time-consuming, many disputes can be avoided through proactive project management, effective communication, and proper documentation.

In this seminar, participants will explore the common causes of construction claims and learn practical strategies for minimizing risk throughout the project lifecycle. Drawing on real-world examples from the mechanical contracting industry, participants will examine how project decisions, contract administration, documentation practices, and communication impact the likelihood of claims and disputes.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Identify the most common causes of construction claims and disputes.
- Recognize project management practices that help reduce claim exposure.
- Apply effective documentation and communication strategies to support successful project outcomes.
- Explain the importance of contract administration in claims avoidance.
- Implement proactive risk management techniques throughout the project lifecycle.

Instructor

Dr. Tim Wentz is Professor Emeritus of Construction Management at the University of Nebraska and a nationally recognized educator, speaker, and consultant in the mechanical contracting industry. Prior to entering academia, Tim worked in his family's mechanical contracting business, where he developed expertise in design-build contracting, estimating, and project management on a wide range of commercial construction projects.



A licensed Professional Engineer, Master Heating Contractor, and Master Plumbing Contractor, Tim is also a LEED Accredited Professional and ASHRAE High-Performance Building Design Professional. Throughout his career, he has taught and consulted for mechanical contractor associations across North America and has received numerous industry honors, including multiple MCAA Educator of the Year awards and MCAA's Distinguished Service Award, the association's highest recognition.

Cash Flow, Billing & Work-In-Progress (WIP)

Effective project managers understand that profitability depends on both cash flow and accurate project forecasting. This full-day seminar explores the financial tools and processes that help contractors maintain healthy cash flow, improve billing and collections, and accurately measure project performance throughout the project lifecycle.

Participants will learn practical strategies for managing cash flow, improving billing practices, forecasting costs, and understanding Work-in-Progress (WIP) reporting. Through real-world examples and industry best practices, participants will gain a clearer understanding of how financial management, project controls, and performance measurement work together to improve project profitability and support better business decisions.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Describe the importance of cash management practices and their impact on company performance.
- Apply tools and techniques that improve cash flow and accelerate collections.
- Increase profitability through effective billing, forecasting, and project controls.

- Identify how to manage Work-in-Progress (WIP) for improved project profitability.
- Explain the relationship between budgeting, forecasting, change management, job status reporting, and WIP.
- Apply earned value reporting techniques to improve project forecasting and cost projections.
- Create greater accountability and financial transparency through measurement and reporting.

Instructor

Stephane McShane is a Director with Maxim Consulting Group and one of the construction industry's leading consultants, trainers, and facilitators. With more than 30 years of experience in construction operations, project management, leadership development, and organizational performance, she works with contractors throughout North America to improve profitability, productivity, and business performance.



Beginning her career as an apprentice in the electrical construction industry and advancing into executive leadership roles, Stephane brings practical field and management experience to every engagement. She is a nationally recognized speaker, coach, author, and industry educator who specializes in project execution, financial performance, leadership development, business processes, and workforce development. Her practical, results-focused approach helps contractors implement strategies that drive measurable and sustainable improvement.

Change Orders

Change orders are an inevitable part of construction projects, but how they are managed can significantly impact project profitability, customer relationships, and overall project success. In this seminar, participants will learn practical strategies for identifying, pricing, documenting, negotiating, and managing change orders throughout the project lifecycle.

Drawing on real-world project experience, participants will explore best practices for developing effective change order processes, securing timely approvals, maintaining accurate documentation, and minimizing disputes. Participants will gain a better understanding of how proactive change management supports project performance, protects profit margins, and improves communication with owners, contractors, and project stakeholders.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Explain how change orders impact project performance and profitability.
- Price and negotiate change orders to achieve a profitable outcome.
- Outline strategies for obtaining timely change order approvals.
- Compare the differences in impact and management strategies between additive and deductive change orders.
- Explain the importance of tracking, documenting, and communicating change orders throughout the project lifecycle.

Instructor

Chris Champagne, PE, LEED AP, is an Operations Manager and Team Leader with P1 Group and has more than 30 years of experience in mechanical construction. Throughout his career, he has held leadership roles in estimating, project management, and operations, helping deliver complex commercial and industrial projects.

A licensed Professional Engineer and LEED Accredited Professional, Chris brings practical, real-world insight into project planning, change management, team leadership, and project execution.



Delivering Project Success: Turnover, Commissioning & Closeout

The final phase of a project is where planning, execution, and customer satisfaction come together. Successful project managers understand that turnover, commissioning, and closeout are not simply end-of-project activities—they are critical processes that impact profitability, customer relationships, future opportunities, and overall project success.

In this seminar, participants will explore the project manager's role in driving successful project completion. From quality control and documentation management to commissioning support, owner training, warranties, and final project acceptance, participants will learn strategies that improve project outcomes and strengthen relationships with owners, contractors, and project stakeholders.

Drawing on industry best practices and real-world leadership experience, this seminar will provide practical tools for managing expectations, coordinating project teams, reducing risk, and delivering a successful project completion experience for all parties involved.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Explain the project manager's role in turnover, commissioning, and closeout activities.
- Identify documentation requirements necessary for successful project completion.
- Develop strategies for managing quality control, startup, and commissioning activities.
- Coordinate stakeholders and project teams to support successful turnover and owner acceptance.
- Manage owner training, warranties, punch lists, and final closeout requirements.
- Apply best practices that improve customer satisfaction, reduce risk, and support timely project completion.

Instructor

Angie Simon, P.E., is a nationally recognized mechanical engineer, former CEO of Western Allied Mechanical, and former President of the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA). Throughout her career, she has been a champion for leadership development, workforce engagement, operational excellence, and advancing opportunities within the construction industry.



Angie is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Heavy Metal Summer Experience (HMSE), a national workforce development initiative that introduces high school students to rewarding careers in the skilled trades. She also serves as a peer group facilitator with Maxim Consulting Group and is a member of the Dean's Advisory Council for the College of Engineering at California Polytechnic State University. A sought-after speaker, mentor, and industry leader, Angie is known for helping organizations build stronger teams, develop future leaders, and create lasting impact through strategic leadership and operational excellence.

BIM, VDC & Project Coordination

Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Virtual Design & Construction (VDC) have transformed how mechanical contractors plan, coordinate, fabricate, and deliver projects. While project managers may not create models themselves, they play a critical role in managing the people, processes, and decisions that drive successful project outcomes.

This seminar provides a practical understanding of BIM and VDC from a project management perspective. Participants will explore BIM execution plans, coordination workflows, fabrication planning, scheduling considerations, model deliverables, and the relationship between BIM, prefabrication, and field productivity.

Through real-world examples and discussion, attendees will learn how to identify BIM-related risks, distinguish between design and coordination responsibilities, and effectively collaborate with project stakeholders to improve project performance.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Explain the fundamentals of Building Information Modeling (BIM), Virtual Design & Construction (VDC), and commonly used industry terminology and acronyms.
- Explain the role of BIM and VDC throughout the project lifecycle.
- Distinguish between design responsibilities and coordination responsibilities.
- Describe how BIM supports fabrication planning, material management, and field productivity.
- Define the project manager's role in the BIM/VDC process and identify key decisions that contribute to successful outcomes.
- Communicate BIM and VDC requirements effectively with project teams, owners, general contractors, and trade partners.

Instructors

Jason Steele is Sr. VDC Manager for Cerris Systems and a recognized leader in BIM, VDC, and construction technology. With nearly 20 years of experience in virtual design, construction technology, coordination, and prefabrication, he helps project teams leverage BIM processes to improve project outcomes, reduce risk, and increase productivity.



A member of Pipefitters Local 533 for more than 25 years, Jason brings a unique perspective that bridges field installation and construction technology. He previously served as an instructor for Local 533 and the United Association Instructor Training Program (UAITP), helping develop the next generation of industry professionals. His extensive experience in healthcare, mission-critical, and commercial construction provides participants with practical insight into how BIM and VDC support successful project delivery.

Stacy Zerr, P.E., is Executive Director of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Kansas City (MCAKC) and brings nearly 30 years of experience serving the mechanical contracting industry. Prior to joining MCAKC, she held leadership roles within the industry, including positions at The Waldinger Corporation and leading construction technology initiatives that supported BIM, VDC, prefabrication, and project execution.



A recognized advocate for innovation and technology adoption, Stacy previously served as Chair of MCAA's Innovative Technologies Committee and has been a frequent presenter at the MEP Innovation Conference. She also served as an instructor for MCAA's Institute for Project Management (IPM),

helping project managers better understand technology, collaboration, and project delivery processes within the mechanical contracting industry.

Drawing on her experience in contractor operations, construction technology, workforce development, and industry leadership, Stacy helps project managers understand how BIM and VDC processes support successful project planning, coordination, fabrication, and execution.

Project Performance, Productivity & Post-Project Reviews

Successful project managers understand that profitability depends on more than delivering quality work. It requires effective labor management, accurate performance measurement, and a commitment to continuous improvement. In this seminar, participants will learn how to evaluate project performance, identify productivity trends, and use project data to make better decisions throughout the project lifecycle.

Participants will explore practical methods for tracking labor performance, analyzing job costs, improving productivity, and measuring project outcomes. The seminar will also focus on the value of post-project reviews and how lessons learned can be used to improve future estimates, planning processes, project execution strategies, and overall business performance.

Drawing on real-world construction examples and industry best practices, participants will gain practical tools for improving project profitability, increasing accountability, and creating a culture of continuous improvement.

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Explain the importance of job cost reporting and project performance measurement.
- Analyze labor productivity and identify opportunities for operational improvement.
- Apply strategies for measuring, managing, and improving field productivity.
- Evaluate the impact labor performance has on project profitability.
- Identify factors that influence labor productivity and project outcomes.
- Conduct effective post-project reviews that generate actionable lessons learned.
- Leverage project performance data to improve future estimates, planning, and project execution.
- Create greater accountability through performance measurement and continuous improvement practices.

Instructor

Stephane McShane is a Director with Maxim Consulting Group and one of the construction industry's leading consultants, trainers, and facilitators. With more than 30 years of experience in construction operations, project management, leadership development, and organizational performance, she works with contractors throughout North America to improve profitability, productivity, and business performance.



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