



From Technician to Project Manager: BICSI's Education Path

An interview with BICSI Past President Russ Oliver,
RCDD, DCDC, ESS, NTS, RTPM

BICSI has always been a provider of top-notch, innovative products and services that strive to educate professionals in the information and communications technology (ICT) industry. If you're a novice structured cabling installer or a seasoned telecommunications designer, there are training resources to guide you along your career path.

BICSI's Registered Telecommunications Project Manager™ (RTPM™) credential was established in 2012 after it became evident that there was an opportunity to bridge a communications gap between structured cabling technicians and designers. A BICSI RTPM oversees and coordinates the interaction between designers, engineers, installers and technicians when new ICT projects are being developed or are undergoing construction. RTPM credential holders can understand and apply a vast collection of telecommunications project management principles, concepts, tools and technology.

BICSI Past President Russ Oliver, RCDD, DCDC, ESS, NTS, RTPM, played a major role in the creation of the RTPM credential.

"As you grow in the ICT industry, you have the opportunity to do many different things. It's typical for an installer or tech to just install cable early in their career. But, if you want to advance, you have to move on to project management and/or design," Russ said. *"The RTPM program was developed to provide technicians an opportunity to grow from everyday field work, achieve more recognition in the industry and still have the opportunity for hands-on field experiences."*

Russ added that an RTPM credential opens a career path to more diverse job opportunities in the industry, including a pathway to becoming an ICT designer.

"Most often, technicians are already acting as supervisors or foremen, but they don't have the designation to identify their project management experience, which you need if you want to advance your career," he said. *"BICSI's RTPM program identifies that expertise and awards the recognition to those who earn it."*

The RTPM is an effective bridge that can move a technician toward advanced career opportunities. A project manager must perform work to accommodate the customer requirements, which can further lead to design experience necessary for the Registered Communications Distribution Designer® (RCDD®) role.

Why should I choose the BICSI RTPM credential over other project management credentials?

No two industry credentials are created the same, especially in specialty industries such as ICT. BICSI launched an updated RTPM program, which included new courses, a manual and an exam.

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The updated program expands on the project management principles specific to ICT, with emphasis on the types of meetings held and specialty technologies that are used, as well as a vast collection of telecommunications project management principles.

According to Russ, the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification is a good example of project management training that covers a broad, global look at project management principles, but doesn't cover specialty concepts such as ICT. He said an ICT project manager needs to understand what the installers and techs under them are doing and how they're doing it; they need to know what the daily tasks are.

"A BICSI-certified RTPM is more valuable than someone with general project management knowledge because they understand real-world scenarios and practical application," he added. *"The RTPM program expands on and details the strategic needs and focus that an ICT project manager has to know."*

More information on BICSI's RTPM credential and training can be found at bicsi.org/rtpm.

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BICSI Project Management Training

To help those sitting for the **RTPM exam** and anyone wanting to build their knowledge of ICT project management, BICSI offers several training resources:

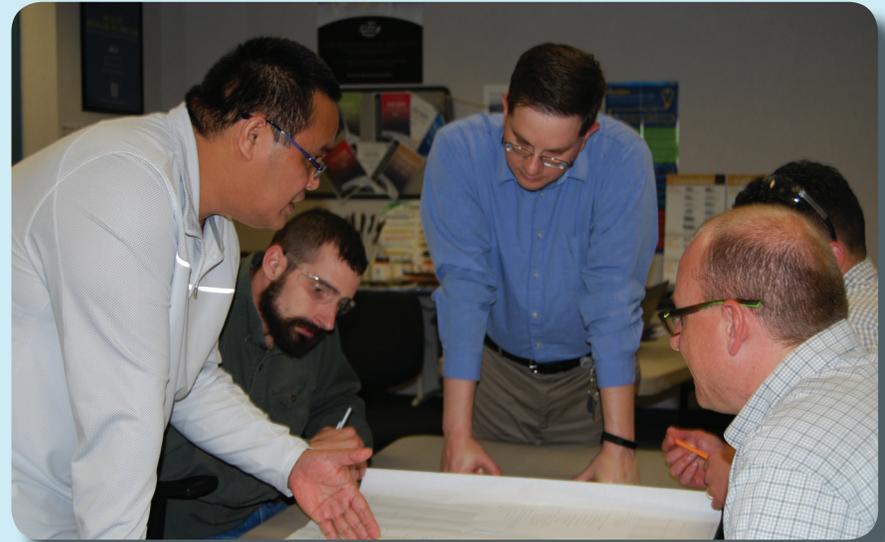
PM101: Introduction to Project Management

Gain a basic overview of the project management process from project selection to closeout, including information about risk management, quality control and procurement planning. Principles and strategies to make your project teams successful are provided.

PM102: Applied Telecommunications Project Management

Learn the tools and templates (e.g., codes, standards, installation methods, telecommunications design) to successfully manage an ICT project throughout the entire project lifecycle. Unlike many project management courses that speak only of theory, BICSI's PM102 course has students put theory into practice during hands-on exercises, demonstrating why or why not to use a particular project management tool or technique.

BICSI Training Provider Services Manager Chris Hobbs, RCDD, DCDC, RTPM, CT, explains that the typical progression for a person in the ICT industry is to start out as an installer. *“As a person’s career grows, they tend to move up and become a technician. Their experience as an installer helps as a leader of other installers. However, the breakdown usually occurs when they make the leap to a project manager. A project manager is a completely new set of skills that must be learned—this is where PM102 excels.”*



PM103: Advanced Tools for ICT Project Management

This course is designed to teach key project management concepts, such as what a project is and what your role as a project manager will be. Delve into techniques and strategies for managing a project's scope, schedule and budget. This course also includes tutorials to teach you how to use Microsoft Project 2016.

Telecommunications Project Management Manual (TPMM)

Winner of the prestigious Award of Merit from the Society for Technical Communication, the *TPMM* provides a unique reference for those who wish to successfully manage complex telecommunications projects. It is the source authority for the applicable RTPM education and testing programs.

Visit bicsi.org/rtpm to learn more about these telecommunications project management training resources.