

Transferable Skills and Career Opportunities

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Within Defence Large Scale Prime Systems Integration the development of recent programmes has created a need for skills that often fall outside of the traditional Defence sector capability. The local provision of these specialist skills is made difficult by a current UK skill shortage which is forcing the Defence Industry to rely on transferable skills drawn from across the full spectrum of international and private industry. Recent Defence initiatives for through-life-management of equipment plus the development of programmes to enable collaborative working require the provision of shared and controlled data across the products full life cycle. Configuration Management provides the techniques which mitigate many of the risks involved in the control of this data. Excellent career opportunities currently exist for the CM practitioner with the relevant knowledge and skills that are transferable from Government to Commercial programmes, across all market sectors and from Software to Hardware or Product development.

Key Words,

Recruitment, Defence, transferable skills, career opportunities,

Electus Recruitment Solutions provides recruitment solutions to most of the UK Defence Prime Systems Integrators and Consultancies. The UK is currently in a candidate driven market which is creating a situation where highly skilled candidates from across all market sectors are in high demand. Electus Recruitment Solutions currently has close to 500 hundred active vacancies for Executive, Management and technical engineering personnel.

Within Defence Large Scale Prime Systems Integration the concurrent development and implementation of recent programmes has created a need for skills, that often fall outside of the traditional Defence sector capability.

Most of these programmes involve large scale systems integration with the value of projects being measured in many millions if not billions of pounds. The amount of work to be undertaken being too great or diverse for any one company may involve a multi-national supply chain with many suppliers under subcontract to the programme. Examples of the scale and complexity of some of the current Defence Programmes are indicated below:

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- FRES which is the UK MoD's largest land programme, with expected procurement cost around £14bn.
- Bowman Digital Battlefield Communication Systems with an anticipated value of £2bn
- The Future Strategic Tanker Programme MOD air-to-air refuelling programme which will cover a 27-year service period and represents the world's largest defence private financing initiative and will create over 5,000 high quality UK jobs.
- The £4bn MoD Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) contract which is the largest single technology contract in the UK public sector. This programme is managed by the Atlas consortium of companies and will develop a consolidated IT infrastructure across all three armed forces, providing a managed service to some 340,000 users in 2,000 locations in 24 countries. This contract is expected to sustain more than 2,000 jobs, maintain 70,000 desktops and rationalise 5,000 applications.

A new report unveiled by the British Chambers of Commerce on skill shortages within the UK has identified the increasing difficulties that British businesses face in finding employees with the right skills. This year more than 55% of employers said that they find it more difficult to recruit skilled employees today than five years ago.

In order to meet the skill requirements for these large systems integration programmes the Defence Industry Prime Systems Integrators and Defence Consultancies are being forced to rely on the provision of transferable skills that are drawn from across the full spectrum of international and private industry. The recognition that these required skills reside within industry sectors like telecoms, Banking, Finance and IT has resulted in a relaxation of previous requirements for specific industry-standards knowledge and a more accommodating approach to the requirement for current Security Clearance.

As new Government Procurement Initiatives have directed a through life systems approach to procurement, project-focused teams have replaced traditional functional boundaries. The resultant need for the provision of timely and consistent data across the products full life cycle has created the need to share and control this data. Configuration Management provides the control of enterprise, programme and project information which is essential for Fixed Price Prime Contracting. CM also provides the controlling techniques which reduce or mitigate many of the risks involved with Large Scale Prime Systems Integration.

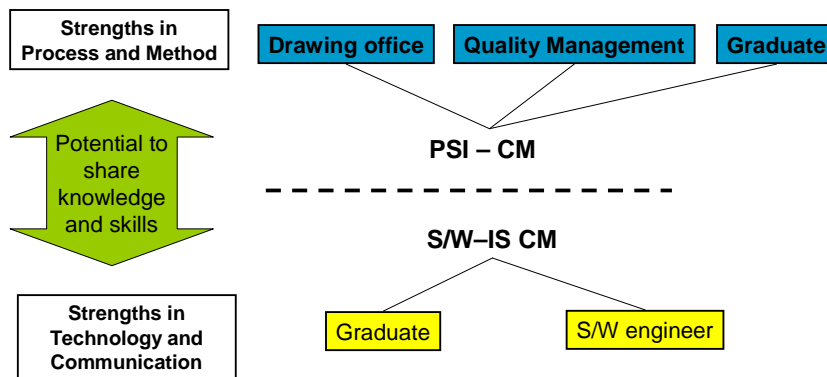
Some of the key characteristics of programmes within a Large Scale Prime Systems Integration Environment are as follows

- Value of projects measured in many millions if not billions of pounds
- Amount of work to be undertaken too great or diverse for any one company
- Many suppliers under subcontract to the programme
- International supply chain
- A large systems integration exercise

Large Scale Prime Systems Integrators require a combination of both Product or H/W and Software CM with Product CM Practitioners usually coming from an engineering environment with strengths in process and method as opposed to a S/W engineering background with strengths in technology and communication.

Large Product or System development programmes across many industry sectors now require similar development methods, tools and methodologies. This has enabled the modern CM practitioner to have skills that are transferable from Government to Commercial programmes, across all market sectors and from Software to Hardware or Product development. The recruitment industry is beginning to see the emergence of the CM Practitioner with a skill base that is applicable to all industries.

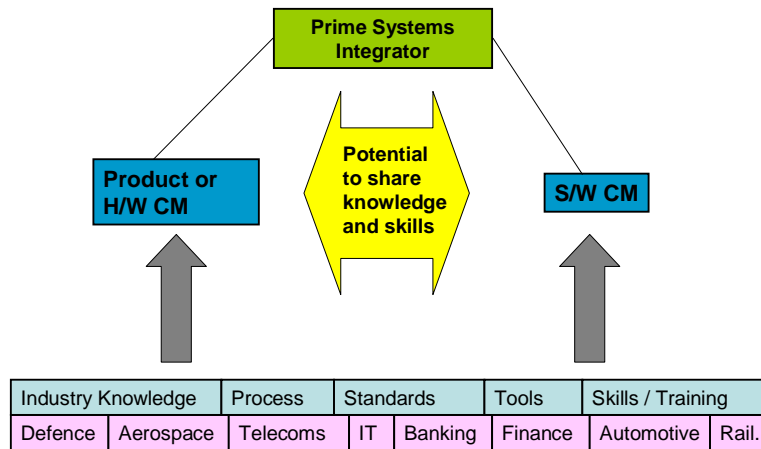
CM Skill requirements



Prime Systems Integrators are able to experience the following benefits by drawing CM skills across the full spectrum of international and private industry:

- The ability to share the knowledge and understanding of CM and its interaction with Data and Information management functions,
- The ability to share tools and technology experiences and ideas.
- The ability to facilitate the emergence of more general and widely accepted best practice techniques and processes,
- The ability to further enable the portability of CM practitioners between industry sectors, thus increasing the availability of skilled CM resource.

CM Skill Industry Base



Opportunities

The size and complexity of these Large Scale Defence Through-Life programmes has impacted the way that CM needs to be addressed and CM practitioners need to ensure that their skills are current and a good match against CM job requirements.

In order that CM Practitioners are able to meet the requirements of Defence programmes, it is important that they have current professional consulting skills, technical skills, product knowledge, project & client management skills and good account management skills.

As the Large Scale Prime Systems Integration field will be more global than ever and cost will continue to be a factor a distributed form of CM will continue to play a major role, it is essential, therefore, to have a knowledge of the newer CM tools that will begin to gain market share. The increase in process improvement initiatives due to a need for improved productivity and consistency have created a need for a CM professional to understand the SCM Key Process Area (KPA) in SW-CMM, the CM Practice in CMMI, the measurement and improvement techniques in Six Sigma, Sarbanes-Oxley, and ISO 9001. It is, also, important to understand any new development methods, which are introduced to improve productivity, such as Agile methods. Knowledge of these models and methodologies form an important part of the CM professional's skills. Finally as cost will continue to drive organizational change it is important that CM professionals be ready to adapt to change that supports the organization.

Large Scale Defence Integration Programmes face the same threats to secure information systems as other industry sectors through terrorism and corruption. Configuration Management has created the ability to manage, control and recover those systems. In our current environment regulatory requirements have created an

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essential need for Configuration Management and the people that perform Configuration Management.

The recruitment industry is aware of the growing number of CM practitioners who are now able to successfully transfer across from one industry sector to the next in order to meet the continually growing requirements of a globally expanding industry base. The CM practitioner with the knowledge of process, standards, tools and skills that are transferable from Government to Commercial programmes, across all market sectors and from Software to Hardware or Product development will continue to be in demand for years to come.