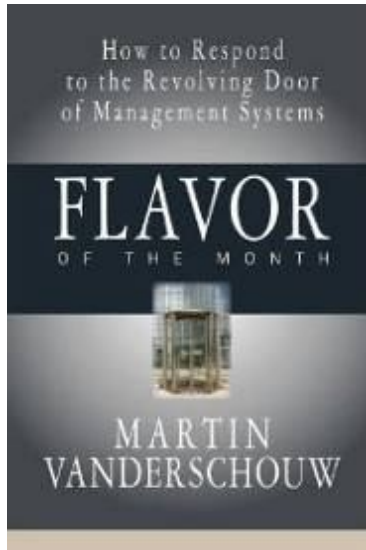


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Flavor of the Month: A Leadership Fable***  
*about management mantras, methodologies, processes, & practices*

Author: **Martin VanDerSchouw**

Publisher: LGd Press

List Price: US\$24.95

Format: Hard cover, 98 pages

Publication Date: 2010

ISBN: 9780982185629

Reviewer: **Joyce Jones**

Review Date: August 2012

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### Introduction to the Book

Though presented as a short fable, this book, as with so many fables, mirrors reality. Its setting could be any large or small business as it struggles through growing pains and potential failure. The situations are realistic.

Highly successful leader Jim Calvin has been brought in as President and CEO of struggling JenMar to lead the organization during a challenging time. Upon arriving he is confronted with significant challenges and he quickly introduces a multitude of improvement tools. How he deals with the people and processes unfolds in this telling story.

### Overview of Book's Structure

A fast read which can be completed in a few hours, the book is organized into succinct chapters focusing on specific topics of change management, task management, performance metrics, time management and strategy.

The style of the book includes continuous dialogue during formal and information meetings of the management leadership team with new CEO Jim Calvin. They have

also hired consultant Ken Collier for his unbiased expertise to provide insights into the things that are working and those which need special attention.

Common 'flavor of the month' management tools for providing structure, process improvement, performance measurement and controls are introduced throughout the book. These include Six Sigma, Agile, Lean Thinking, and structured project management through Project Management Office (PMO). Throughout the fable, the author reveals concepts necessary to excel and succeed.

### **Highlights: What's New in this Book**

There aren't any particularly new ideas or concepts presented in the book. The primary intent of the fable is to highlight typical issues experienced by businesses and the leadership team managing those businesses. By reviewing the processes and tools that are in place and understanding how to implement them, it is critical to get employees on board for successful change.

Some of the key points in the book, with which most people who have worked in management and leadership roles are familiar, include:

- Buy-in is lip service, while ownership is investment and results in more success.
- Change must be managed well
- Manage deliverables, not tasks
- Manage start times, not finishes to avoid last minute surprises and to improve on-time delivery
- Use appropriate performance reporting and metrics.
- All in the organization should understand their role through strategic alignment.

### **Highlights: What I liked!**

With limited time for reading, the short and to the point book was an easy read. Its fable style made it relatable and real. There were many highlighted working checklists that could be applied for use in managing business.

CEO Jim Calvin's email rules were particularly apropos as we all struggle with sorting through hundreds of emails on any work day.

### **Shortfalls: What was Missing!**

There didn't seem to be much missing in terms of topic. Very noticeable were quite a few grammatical and typographic errors throughout the book that made some of the reading confusing or required a second read to understand the sentences.

## Who might benefit from the Book

Anyone who has a leadership role or has worked in management will recognize many of the issues and problems faced by Jim and his leadership team and can benefit from the analysis and proposed solutions. The author provides the difficult questions that need to be asked and answered to help identify where problems exist for resolution.

## Conclusion

Processes and tools can help achieve success, but motivated, competent people are the keys to using them successfully. Strong leadership is also critical to support the organization and the writer recommends 'servant leadership' as a means to that support.

One quote stands out that seems to summarize the basic point of the fable, "When people fail to understand how their work aligns to the organizational strategy they do not commit to it and the initiative eventually loses steam as just with another flavor of the month."

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Flavor of the Month: a leadership fable about management mantras, methodologies, processes, & practices, by Martin VanDerSchouw, published by LGd Press; 2010, ISBN-13: 978-0-9821856-2-9, ISBN-10: 0-9821856-2-6; \$24.95 USD; 98 pages, hard cover. <http://www.ebay.com/ctg/Flavor-Month-LEADERSHIP-FABLE-management-mantras-methodologies-processes-and-practices-Learn-works-/116057372>

*Editor's note: This book review was the result of cooperation between the publisher, PM World and the Dallas Chapter of the Project Management Institute ([www.pmidallas.org](http://www.pmidallas.org)). Publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members are all mid-career professionals, the audience for most project management books. If you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact [editor@peworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@peworldjournal.net).*

## About the Reviewer



***Joyce E. Jones***



**Joyce Jones** has been managing technical development and implementation projects in the financial industry for over twenty-five years. She has spent over forty years working in the information technology field in various roles: developer, system analyst, business analyst, consultant, customer support and as project lead and project manager for implementation and support projects for core banking solutions at many large U.S. banks. She currently manages a team of developers, testers and implementation specialists. Joyce is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP), member of Project Management Institute (PMI) and member of Dallas PMI Chapter, several PM Communities of Practice and serves as secretary of Dallas PMI Toastmasters. She can be contacted at [joyce\\_jones53@verizon.net](mailto:joyce_jones53@verizon.net).