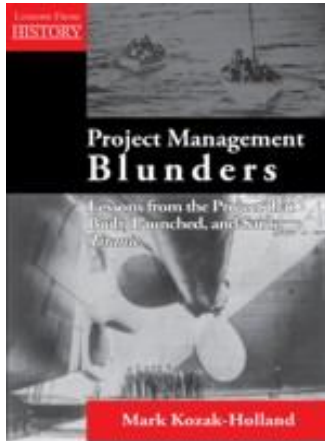

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Project Management Blunders: Lessons from the Project that Built, Launched and Sank Titanic***

Author: **Mark Kozak-Holland**

Publisher: **Multi-Media Publications Inc.**

List Price: US\$ 39.95

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Reviewer: ***Kathryn M. Moore, PMP***

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Introduction to the Book

Project Management Blunders: Lessons from the Project that Built Launched and Sank Titanic analyzes the project management phases and key decisions in the project to deliver three Olympic sized ships to replace an aging fleet of six much smaller ships. J.P. Morgan had taken over White Star in 1902 and put it under a conglomerate of shipping companies called International Mercantile Marine (IMM). Shares in IMM were offered to fund the development of a new fleet of liners.

Harland and Wolff was a premier shipbuilder in Ireland. White Star had a longstanding relationship with Harland and Wolff. White Star hired Harland and Wolff to deliver three identical Olympic size luxury ships. Harland and Wolff delivered *Olympia* first. *Titanic* was to be built on a seven month lag behind *Olympia*. The *Britannica* was the third ship to be built.

The author walks us through key decisions made throughout the project that contributed to the sinking of the *Titanic*.

Overview of Book's Structure

Readers are provided with a background on Shipping Liner competition and White Star's business model. The project initiation examines the project charter and business case regarding the plans to build three Olympic sized ships to replace the current fleet of six ships.

Within each chapter, project management processes are examined and linked to the Project Management Body of Knowledge. Each chapter ends with a set of Conclusions, Key Lessons and a section for educators.

Highlights: What's New in this Book

Key decisions that impacted the safety of the passengers and the ship were made throughout each project phase. Scope emphasized luxury over speed. However during *Titanic's* maiden voyage, the chairman of White Star pushed to set a world record on speed. The chairman received Marconi grams warning of icebergs in the area that were ignored. When the iceberg was hit, without waiting for a complete assessment of damage, the chairman ordered the ship forward which doomed a crippled ship.

Work on the *Titanic* had to stop several times to repair major structural damagers to the *Olympia*. Yet, the delivery date for the *Titanic* didn't change, so shortcuts were made to the amount of time dedicated to Sea Trials. Sea Trials lasted one day. The new crew did not have a chance to familiarize themselves with handling the ship before the ship launched its maiden voyage. The ship's crew didn't practice lowering the lifeboats.

Measuring sea temperature is a key indicator for icebergs. The rope to test water temperatures was not long enough to reach the water. If measuring sea water temperature had been tested during Sea Trials, this problem would have been identified.

Operators for the Marconi grams were onboard to allow customers to send and receive communications, but were not onboard for safety purposes to communicate between ships regarding dangerous conditions.

Several key personnel familiar with the *Olympia* were placed on the *Titanic* and this was deemed acceptable that day to day operational activity would run smoothly.

Decisions to reduce the number of lifeboats occurred during the design phase. In a later phase, the number of lifeboats was reduced even further in the name of luxury for first class passengers.

Highlights: What I liked!

Review of White Star's project management from conception to the delivery of the liner showed how much structure and regulations were in place to deliver the liners.

Putting the *Titanic* into operation without sufficient sea trials or crew operational procedures in place resulted in numerous missteps that led to the sinking of the *Titanic*.

The ship's crew didn't have sufficient sea trials to become familiar with maneuvering the ship prior to the first voyage. Testing the temperature of the sea water prior to the voyage would have identified that the rope was not long enough to reach the water. The lookouts did not have a set of binoculars once they took their shift. The Marconi gram operator was for commercial use and communications warning of icebergs in the vicinity of the *Titanic* were not handled properly. The White Star Chairman ignored the warnings.

How White Star's Chairman escaped criminal charges in the US and Britain is another set of missteps by the investigating committees.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

Why did Admiral Smith agree with the White Star Chairman Ismay's demand to start the engines forward after hitting the iceberg when a complete damage assessment had not been completed? Where were Admiral Smith's code of ethics to protect the passengers and ship?

Who might benefit from the Book

Individuals interested in history and project management would benefit from reading this book.

Conclusion

The book overlays historical project management used by White Star against today's Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBok®).

Project Management Blunders: Lessons From the Project That Built, Launched, and Sank Titanic; by Mark Kozak-Hollan, PMP, published by Multi-Media Publications Inc.; 2012, ISBN-13: 9781554891221; \$39.95 USD; 384 pages, soft cover. More at <http://www.mmpubs.com/catalog/project-management-blunders-book-p-466.html>

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 (PMI Dallas Chapter – 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 by PM World 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@pmworldjournal.net.

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Kathryn M. Moore is a Senior Project Manager in the Banking Industry. The past three years she has been managing global projects in the development of Fraud and Compliance software for banks around the globe. Since obtaining a PMP in 2002, Kathryn has been active in the PMI Dallas Chapter including a role as a registered company coordinator. Kathryn has a BBA in Information Systems from the University of North Texas. She can be contacted at kathrynm Moore@tx.rr.com.