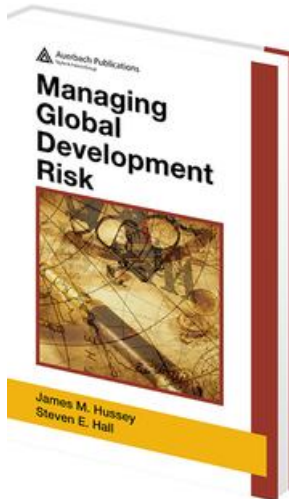

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Managing Global Development Risk***

Authors: **James M. Hussey** and **Steven E. Hall**

Publisher: Auerbach Publishing - CRC Press - Taylor and Francis Groups, LLC

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Reviewer: **Ira S. Barash**

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Introduction to the Book

The main focus of this book is establishing a project management office (PMO) and advancing it through a well-planned maturation process to higher stages. The emphasis is on the achievement of a strategic PMO (Stage 3) in a four-and-one-half year timeframe. This involves the establishment of six key centers:

- Methodology center
- Resource evaluator
- Project Planner
- Project Management Control Center
- Project Review and Analysis Center
- Hiring, Training and developing center for their own personnel

The authors noted that there is a strong correlation between the establishment of a successful PMO and its level of maturity to project success across the corporation.

Overview of the Books Structure

The book is very well structured. The introduction discusses the history of PMOs to the current time. It completely outlines the topics discussed.

Chapter One describes the framework to align the PMO to corporate strategy. This alignment is key to alleviating many of the problems that arise with project management and the acceptance of the PMO.

Chapters 2 through 5 describe how to start a PMO and allow it to mature, the planning, preparation and strategy that is required and the actual establishment including a framework for methodology and PMO governance.

Chapter 6 through 9 describe the evolution that is required to move from a Project Oriented PMO to a Portfolio concept, the people required to run the PMO, the merger of the PMO and IT and the cultural changes required.

Finally, chapter 10 describes the ultimate benefits that are derived from a PMO and how they can be measured. This includes setting up key success factors and measuring them with key performance indicators, effectively capturing lessons learned and using them in future projects, doing benchmarks and tracking performance of projects and individuals.

Highlights - What I liked

The book is a very fast read. It is simple to understand for a person who has managed projects, has been at senior management or C-level positions, or has been involved with large scale projects.

The highlight of the book was to show through percentages how effective a high performing PMO can be in achieving successful projects. In addition, it outlined the importance of having a PMO with governance, good people, and automated tools that are effective and efficient.

The book outlines the steps that are needed to create an effective PMO. The entire organization must be involved because of the need of acceptance of changes in the culture. There must be an effective leader who assumes the title of PMO director. Good people have to be found and cultivated within the PMO organization. Corporate wide training and mentoring programs are a key to success for those who implement projects. In addition, a career path must be established for people who are in the PMO. Finally, a steering committee must be formed with support from the CEO.

The ability of the functional teams within the organization to accept a cultural change and move to a project oriented style within the organization is recommended. There is an assumption in this book that every organization wants to move to a project oriented company. This assumption was interesting because Capital One Financial adopted this culture. The weakness is that many regularly scheduled functions that fall within the prevue of the functional team do not fit neatly into a project management story. With no project charge code, the ability to get work done by the functional team is difficult.

Finally, implementation of companywide project management software as well as Information technology team acceptance to track projects are both key to a successful PMO being formed.

Shortfalls - What was Missing

Some of the statistics of project success need to be updated in a new edition of the book. The latest data was from 2007 and seemed ancient.

One shortfall of the book is there is only a single mention of cultural differences. I had to go to the appendix to find the instance on Page 247. At Capital One, working with people from different cultures and countries is an everyday occurrence. The project manager and PMO must be aware of differences in culture. A policy in one country and culture may not be understood or appreciated in another country and culture.

Another shortfall is that many of the people who work on projects are consultants and contractors. The PMO must have the ability to train project managers who are contractors when they are hired and throughout the project. Because of tight budgets and time constraints training may not happen.

There are governance policies, tools, techniques and company policies must be quickly learned. As a contractor at Capital One, the PMO dictated how projects are to proceed. The learning curve was large. Many surprises occurred during the project because PMO policies were not spelled out. Because of this learning curve, important items were rushed and not done correctly.

Finally, the book did not cover what happens when the PMO fails or does not achieve the goals as outlined in the book. Workarounds were not covered.

In this note, C-level people and senior functional managers are busy people. Meetings are stacked three to five deep in any given hour. Courses are ignored if they do not apply to the current days issue. One assumption that the book made is that everyone in the organization wants to embrace the concept of a PMO and buys into the methodology used. I do not think that this is the case in most large organizations.

Who might benefit from the Book

The book benefits C-level people; portfolio, program and project managers; and IT managers. It states solid and justifiable business reasons for striving to have a PMO at Stage 3 and higher. It gives quantifiable numbers as to the success of projects in percentage terms as PMO's progress within a company from one stage to another.

The book outlines a path of success and gives a timeframe for success to be achieved. A PMO must be started within six months or the rate of failure increases. The PMO should show benefit to the corporation in the first year of its existence. PMO maturity is a key to its ultimate success by progressing from one level to another.

Conclusion

In summary, four areas of knowledge are recovered to have an effective PMO organization. They are:

- ✓ Governance and Portfolio Management
- ✓ Resource Optimization
- ✓ Organizational Change
- ✓ Performance Measurement

The benefits of this well written book far out-weigh the shortfalls. The purpose of the book is to show the benefits of the PMO, how to set one up in an effective manner, the changes required in the culture and how to move the PMO to higher level stages as time progresses. This is covered exceptionally well.

This book could be used in a graduate project management Project Management program because of its value as a guide for launching and growing a successful PMO within an organization.

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Editor's note: This book review is the result of cooperation between publishers, PM World and the Graduate Program in Project Management at the University of Texas at Dallas in the United States (<http://jindal.utdallas.edu/executive-education/executive-degree-programs/project-management/>). Publishers provide books to PM World, books are delivered to UTD where they are given to faculty, graduate students or alumni for review; the reviewer provides a book review in a standard format; the reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. Since reviewers are normally mid-career professionals, they represent the intended audience for most PM 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.

About the Reviewer



Ira Barash



Photo – Ira Barash and his wife Ellie

Ira Barash has worked at Strategic Staffing Solutions and Capital One Financial in Plano TX in the Consumer Mortgage Group as an IT project manager and developer. He is currently searching for a new opportunity. Barash received a certificate (2007) in Project Management from the **Graduate School of Management at the University of Texas Dallas**, a Masters of Business Administration (MBA - 1989) in Finance from Wright State University and a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA - 1976) in Quantitative Analysis from the University of Cincinnati's Carl H. Lindner School of Business. Passions are to be a terrific husband, have challenging work assignments, live a healthy lifestyle including traveling, exercise, writing and supporting of non-profits financially and by volunteering. Member of Project Manager Institute and PMI - Dallas Chapter. Volunteer Commissioner for City of Plano on Community Relations Committee serving second year of two year term. Ira can be contacted at ibarash@comcast.net.