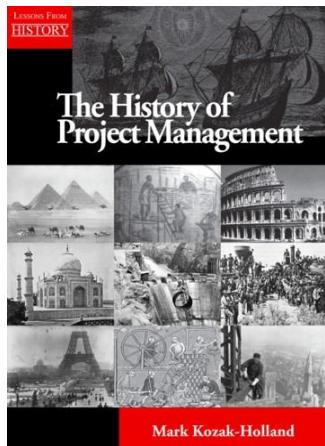

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The History of Project Management***

Authors: **Mark Kozak-Holland**

Publisher: Multi-Media Publications, Inc.

List Price: US\$59.95

Format: Hardcover, 640 pages

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Reviewer: **Johnny Gan, PMP**

Introduction to the Book

I was attracted by this book is because of the author, Mark Kozak-Holland, who is the principal author of the **lessons from History** series. In this book, ***The History of Project Management***, Mark provides detailed historical material, proves once again that project management is as old as the beginning of civilization, and that project management has been a continuous evolution. As Mark said, “This book aims to be the first in linking the project management of the past with the present.”

Actually, project management itself is obtaining experience constantly from the history of the practice. Spanning the last 4500 years, the evolution of project management has been very much driven by external factors like war and economic forces where, for example, there have been business pressures to organize resources and meet end goals. Many projects were so complex and required sophisticated management techniques. How do you approach the daunting end goal? Mark is leading us to find out the answers from history stories within this book.

Overview of Book’s Structure

For most people, the starting point of reference in the history of Project Management is the Great Pyramid at Giza. This is a monumental structure for its time, 2550 BC. In examining historical projects, it is essential to view the project from the lens of that period. Undoubtedly the projects were executed with very different mind sets, by different cultures, and with different belief systems.

Given the rather academic tone of the introductory of historical projects, most readers will probably find the book surprisingly easy to follow by comparison. This book divides all projects broadly into 3 mainly types:

1. Structural construction projects – edifices, structures and buildings, like Giza, Colosseum, Gothic Cathedrals, Taj Mahal, Crystal Palace, Hoover Dam, and Empire State Building.
2. Transportation related projects – of people, vehicles, water and this includes the building of roads, bridges, aqueducts, canals ships and railroads. Like Hadrian's Wall, Iron Bridge, Transcontinental Railroad, Panama Canal, Golden Gate Bridge, and London's sewer projects.
3. Project expeditions – voyages, journeys, or explorations, for example Columbus, Magellan.

The chapters of this book are organized for a given historical period along a time-line that runs through eras and centuries with some overlap:

- From Village to City (2550 – 510 BCE).
- Roman Republic (510 – 100 BCE).
- The Roman Empire (100BCE – 456).
- The Middle Ages (350 – 1450)
- The 15th Century and Renaissance and age of discovery
- The 16th Century and the Modern Age of Engineering
- The 17th Century and the First Scientific Revolution
- The 18th Century and the Industrial Revolutions (Phase 1)
- The 19th Century, the Industrial Revolutions (Phase 2) and Second Scientific Revolution
- The 20th Century. Second Industrial Revolution

Highlights: What I liked!

It's not a project management textbook, but does teach you the course of project management by historical lessons. And it's not a simple history book either, because you learned the principles of successful project management from significant and notable projects.

Project management is not a new 20th Century discipline but has existed and been practiced since the beginning of civilization, and has continually evolved, adopted and absorbed developments in new materials, technologies, ideas, and practices. Base on this point, Mark also describes the historical environment of the project, like major event, impact of changes of society, new tools and techniques applied in a certain

historical period. In each chapter wrap-up, it also gives the key lessons and tips for educators.

Most people misunderstood that successful of historical projects was because they had bunch of workforce, unlimited budges and extended time lines. But from this book, you will correct your idea that earlier projects also started with a clear project vision and an effective project governance structure, motivated sponsors and leaders, the simplicity of communication, and well organized craftsmen and workers. All these success factors are still the elements of today's projects.

Who might benefit from the Book

Readers will find much benefit in this book; it provides good content, historical materials. However, it does describe the nature of the complexity of issues, so it's a step forward for those who would study the matter further, but not a book for beginners. It's a good reference book for people who want to learn the stories and lessons from historical projects.

Conclusion

The most important thing to gain from this book is that project management has progressively evolved through time and across history.

Where does this lead us to today? It is an error in judgment to dissociate these historical projects from modern project management. Across history, the methods and practices of project management are little different from what is done today. Much can be learned from these historical projects that could be used as a baseline for measuring today's projects and putting them into perspective.

Today, project management is everywhere, in every industry and every field, and it is still continually growing into the foreseeable future. Yet, this should not be unexpected as for thousands of years humans have run projects. Projects have been at the heart of human civilization and its progress.

The book ends at 1940, and the author has planned to have its succession book. Let's see what significant developments occurred from 1940 onward up to present day.

The History of Project Management; by Mark Kozak-Holland; published by Multi-Media Publications; 2011, hard cover, ISBN 978-1-55489-096-5; List price US\$59.95; more about the book at <http://www.mmpubs.com/catalog/the-history-of-project-management-book-p-394.html>.

Editor's note: This book review was the result of cooperation between the publisher, PM World Inc and the Dallas Chapter of the Project Management Institute (www.pmidallas.org). Publishers provide books to PM World, books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter where they are given to chapter members who commit to providing a book review in a standard format; the reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. Since PMI Dallas Chapter members are generally 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



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Johnny Gan has many years of software R&D experience at [HRsmart.com](http://www.hrsmart.com) (<http://www.hrsmart.com>). Mr. Gan received his MS degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, USA, and is also certified by the Project Management Institute (PMI®) as a Project management Professional (PMP®). Johnny can be contacted at qianggan@gmail.com .