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Thinking On Purpose for Project Managers
Author: Bill Richardson
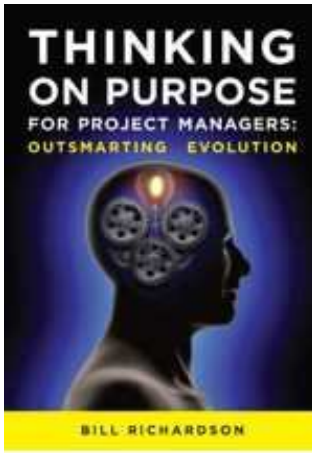Book Review
Reviewer: Kasandra Bell

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: ***Thinking On Purpose for Project Managers: Outsmarting Evolution, Second Edition***

Author: **Bill Richardson**

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

List Price: US$39.95

Format: Soft Cover; 340 pages

Publication Date: 2009

ISBN: 9781554890255

Reviewer: ***Kasandra Bell, PMP, ITIL***

Review Date: November 2012

Introduction to the Book

The premise of this book is that evolution gave humans powerful but automatic thinking processes that are not appropriate for most current living environments. Bill Richardson teaches his understanding of why humans think the way they do and then how to overcome this thinking to be more effective.

I believe all humans evolve; starting as babies, learning and growing throughout life. Not everyone believes that human ancestors were apes and fish; readers who believe in Intelligent Design may have trouble forcing themselves to read past the first chapters.

Mr. Richardson does go on to provide insight into why humans think on autopilot and how to change those thought processes. 40 tools and techniques for changing thought processes and managing projects effectively are included in the book.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book's structure is well thought out and easy to navigate. The first section explains why humans are where they are in the evolutionary cycle and why this is a problem. Mr. Richardson also introduces three case studies used in the second section to illustrate how using his techniques resolved each of the issues in the case studies.

The second section is the explanation of Mr. Richardson's Thinking On Purpose techniques, the case study solutions, and the Thinking On Purpose Toolkit. There are a

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Table of Contents and Index to assist with locating the section or tool that the reader may want to use.

There are over 300 pages in this book; however, there are only about 125 pages of text covering the subject. The rest of the book is the case studies with charts and diagrams, the Toolkit, Appendices, and the Index, so it is a fairly easy read.

Highlights: What's New in this Book

This book has a compilation of charts and tools from many sources (all with appropriate credit), emotional intelligence topics, biases that may affect project managers, and a fairly easy to understand explanation of how the human brain works.

Highlights: What I liked!

There is a lot to like about this book. I like the summary areas for Common Biases and Common Fallacies, the TOP Ten Nuggets, and the Thinking On Purpose Toolkit. It is very useful to have these in one location.

There is a matrix listing all 40 TOP Tools and the most appropriate "purpose frame" for each tool; Situational Assessment, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Action Planning, and Risk Assessment. Following the matrix is a section on Getting the Most Out of Your Tools and then full instruction for each tool. The instructions include the original source(s) for each tool.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

This book needed a final edit before publishing to correct such things as (hyphens and spaces in the middle of words, inconsistent formatting, odd hard returns in the middle of paragraphs, and missing or wrong words like "Off" instead of "Of". Appendix 3 is an evaluation chart but it is useless as is because the questions and explanations are cut off.

Access to soft copies of the tools, or links to online locations, would be very helpful.

Who might benefit from the Book

All project managers might benefit from this book; especially beginning to intermediate project managers. There is beneficial information compiled in one location. Readers who have not learned a lot about thought processes and how to change them may find the information very useful.

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Conclusion

This book contains a lot of great information for those who are not used to thinking about how to think and it is helpful to have so many tools in one location. However, many careless mistakes and the lack of easy access to usable tools and templates are disappointing.

Thinking On Purpose for Project Managers: Outsmarting Evolution, *Second Edition, by Bill Richardson, published by Multi-Media Publications Inc.; 2009, ISBN: 978-1-55489-025-5; US$39.95, soft cover; 329 pages. More at www.mmpubs.com or at www.thinking-on-purpose.com*

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 in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members are generally 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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About the Reviewer

Kasandra Bell, PMP, ITIL

Kasandra Bell currently provides senior project management leadership to IT Shared Services projects at a major university in the North Texas area with multiple campuses in different cities. She ran her own consulting company prior to that providing program management consulting and project management expertise and training to small and medium businesses, with international clients, in a variety of industries. Kasandra earned her PMP in 2005 and is an active member of the PMI Dallas chapter, including managing their Professional Development Day project.

Kasandra mentors junior project managers and teaches project management basics to college students. She is an award winning newsletter editor receiving recognition from Toastmasters and the Texas Association for Gifted and Talented.

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