PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW
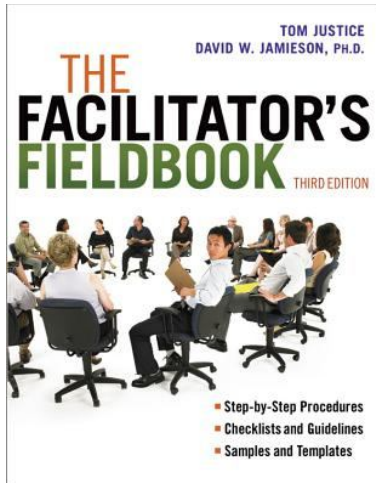
Book Title: ***The Facilitator's Fieldbook Third Edition***

Authors: **Thomas Justice, David W. Jamieson**

Publisher: **AMACOM** Books

List Price: US $45.00

Format: soft cover; 470 pages

Publication Date: 2012

ISBN: 978-0-8144-2008-9

Reviewer: **Madison Berndt**, PMP and **Susan Kennedy**, PMP

Review Date: January 2013

Introduction to the Book

As a Project Manager, Business Analyst or Consultant, effective facilitation can be the most visible and challenging aspect of a large scale project. This book provides useful taxonomies for understanding and discussing facilitated group meetings along with guidelines and templates for planning and implementing the meetings.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book begins with an introductory primer. We found the Primer and Resources useful because it clarifies the tools and techniques needed to facilitate meetings. Most of this is not new to an experienced facilitator so the overview is good for reminders and orientation. The overview and Primers are 10% of the book.

The next three sections deal with the main phases of facilitation: Preparation, Working with the Group and Implementation (follow-up and action items). Experienced project professionals will recognize these as aligned with the PMI process categories of Initiation/Planning, Executing/Monitoring, and Closing.

Most of the content is dedicated to detailed guidelines, checklists, and examples for large group meetings. The information is easily accessible and relevant to anyone working on enterprise level projects that require cross-functional engagement.

We particularly like the way that tasks for each phase are handled. A task list is provided that clearly defines what is needed and then each task is covered in more

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detail. Worksheets and templates are provided throughout. Almost 70% of the book is dedicated to the three phases of facilitation.

Four scenarios are covered in more detail by sections 4 and 5. These include:

- uncooperative large groups of selected stakeholders (sound familiar?),
- working with large groups of self-identified stakeholders,
- working with multiple groups within large-group meetings, and
- facilitating in a virtual environment.

The virtual facilitation section is particularly helpful for recommending standards of conduct to be expected from team members. The condensed coverage and detailed process steps provide a useful resource for integrating the latest technology into meetings. The detailed coverage of specific scenarios is general enough to be applied in divergent situations.

The final section provides a guide for using this book as a training tool. These last four sections comprise 20% of the book.

Highlights: What's New in this Book

This 3rd version includes an updated intro and overview, some new guides in areas recommended by users, and new material in the Graphic Facilitation and Facilitator Training Designs. Also, the section on Facilitating in a Virtual World was updated based on more recent experience and research.

Highlights: What I liked!

What we liked most about the book is that it provides quick and easy access to the frameworks, task breakdowns, and deliverables for defining what needs to be done. This is a tremendous time and frustration saver for anyone facilitating meetings. The window of opportunity for taking control of a complex problem is small. This book helps insure that the most important considerations for a successful facilitation are in place. It will help a reader take advantage of the limited time available to move forward in a productive way.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

For the intended purpose of the book it is complete. Stakeholder assessment and detailed coverage of certain techniques assume that the reader has at least had exposure to professional facilitation methods. For most readers this shouldn't be a problem and for others, there are many other resources that provide that detail.

Who might benefit from the Book

Anyone tasked with organizing or planning meetings will find the guide invaluable as a resource for quickly communicating action items and directing activity. Project Managers and Business Analysts who need to plan and facilitate effective meetings will benefit from this book. Consultants who facilitate client meetings will appreciate the jump start with timesaving tools and templates ready to go.

Conclusion

The framework, checklist, and templates provided by the author of The Facilitators Fieldbook make this a useful resource to keep on hand. The book allocates the appropriate amount of coverage to provide easily accessible guidance. It's sitting on our quick grab shelf as a handy reference for all things facilitation!

The Facilitator's Fieldbook Third Edition; by Thomas Justice, David W. Jamieson; published by AMACOM Books; 2012; soft cover; 470 pages; ISBN: 978-0-8144-2008-9; List Price: US $45.00; more at http://www.amacombooks.org/book.cfm?isbn=9780814420089.

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 Reviewers

Madison Berndt, PMP

Madison Berndt is a Project Manager located in the Dallas, Texas area focused primarily on Business reporting and Business Intelligence related projects. His experience with end-user development projects includes startups, mid-sized/high growth, and established Fortune 500 companies. He is a graduate of UT Arlington having earned his Bachelor Science in Economics in 1989 and Masters of Business Administration in 2007. In 2010 he earned the PMP certification and is an active volunteer with PMI Dallas. Madison can be contacted at webinars@pmidallas.org

Susan Kennedy, PMP

Susan Kennedy, PMP is an award winning project manager with 30 years' experience. She has managed over 25 information technology implementation projects across the US, Canada, Mexico, Europe and Asia. She has taught facilitation classes, and has managed executive meetings around the world. Susan is known for effectively facilitating contentious issues, and seems to enjoy it. She is experienced in strategic and operational planning, and is the recipient of several project management and business awards. Susan Kennedy can be contacted at profdev@pmidallas.org