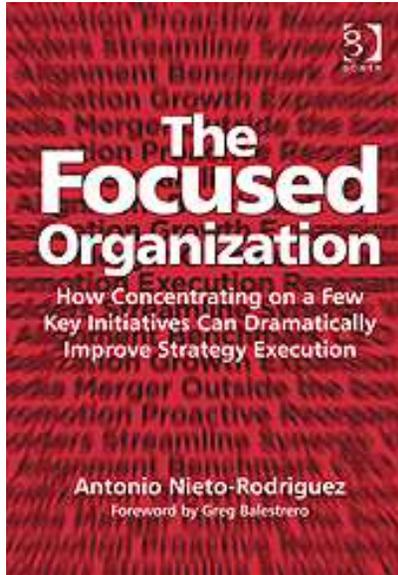


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## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: **The Focused Organization, How Concentrating on a Few Key Initiatives Can Dramatically Improve Strategy Execution, 1st Edition**

Author: **Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez**

Publisher: **Gower Publishing Company**

List Price: US\$106.43

Format: hard cover and electronic; 223 pages

Publication Date: 2012

ISBN: 978-1-4094-2566-3

Reviewer: **Rodger L. Martin, JD, MBA, BSEE, PMP**

Review Date: May 2013

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### Introduction to the Book

Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez describes how concentrating on a few key initiatives can dramatically improve strategy execution and ultimate success for the organization. The book contains four main themes:

- A balanced organization must properly distribute resources and assets in two dimensions.
  - Business Areas – Support/Costs and Core/Growth
  - Business Dimensions – Run-the-Business and Change-the-Business.
- Management Gurus in the past have ignored the importance of Project Management. Most top MBA programs do not give project management a proper focus.
- The Focused Organization addresses seven characteristics (which not unexpectedly comprise the title of the book) to achieve growth, consistency, out-performance of competition, elevated market status and fulfilled staff.
  - F – Fewer Projects
  - O – Organized Staff
  - C – Competitive Mindset
  - U – Urgency

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- S – Strategic Alignment
  - E – Excellence
  - D – Discipline
- How to Become a Focused Organization requires six critical pillars supporting the framework:
    - Leadership and Culture
    - People and Skills
    - Organization and Governance
    - Process and Methods
    - Systems and Tools
    - Performance Management

### **Overview of Book's Structure**

First, the book addresses the shortcomings of several management gurus and top MBA programs in not recognizing the value of Project Management at all, no mention as it relates to strategic execution.

It then presents a two-by-two matrix business model of Business Area (Support/Cost and Core/Growth versus Business Dimension (Run-the-Business and Change-the-Business). Here he makes the case that the Project Management Model is a better methodology for Changing-The-Business than traditional management approaches.

He then asserts that the benefits of a FOCUSED Organization are significant:

1. Achieve Strategic Goals
2. Attain Financial Results
3. Become a High-Performing Organization
4. Develop a Winning Culture of Getting Things Done
5. Build a Happy, Committed and Engaged Workforce

To become a focused organization requires six critical pillars supporting the framework:

1. Leadership and Culture
2. People and Skills
3. Organization and Governance
4. Process and Methods
5. Systems and Tools
6. Performance Management

## **Highlights: What's New in this Book?**

The Strategy to become a Focused Organization requires a radical change in every key element that composes the company. Using a fast track approach provides top management with quantifiable results in less than 12 months. His main guidelines include:

1. Ensure that the CEO and Top Management fully support the Initiative.
2. Make the Project a Priority and Allocate the Best Resources
3. Build the Business Case
  - a. Benefits – Describe how the company will benefit from implementation
  - b. Costs –Quantify how much the transformation will cost, including implementation, roll-out and sustaining costs
  - c. Risks – Identify the major risks to become a focused organization
  - d. Assumptions – Identify the current situation and which variable should be considered
  - e. Financials – Identify the concrete benefits expected from the investment
4. Perform a Maturity Assessment
5. Fully Develop and Implement the Six Pillars of the Focused Organization
6. Begin Executing the Strategy and Delivering the First Benefits

## **Highlights: What I liked!**

Good development of a current business model. The approach builds a strong case for how Project Management supports the proper dimension of business activity, especially strategic initiatives.

It also describes what must be in place to support a successful Project Management Strategic Initiative. He essentially provides the reader the Overall Project Management Office Charter.

Lastly, he gives the components of the initial project plan for implementing Project Management in an organization.

## **Shortfalls: What was missing?**

I would have liked to have read a chapter on “Risk Analysis and Risk Response” describing the challenges, strategies and responses in moving an organization to a higher maturity level. He clearly states that to be successful requires a culture change.

Getting total enterprise buy-in (from upper management to the working managers) to change the culture and the way a business operates requires more than just benefits statements.

The author does discuss the need for tools, but just as management gurus short changed Project Management, I think he short-changed the need for document and knowledge management. The prevalent approach of using Outlook/Word/Excel and Shared Drives to manage knowledge should never be underestimated as to its usually negative impact on any Project Management Office initiative.

### **Who might benefit from the Book?**

Those who plan to set up or support Project/Program Management Office initiatives should definitely have this information. Senior Management needs to have this approach in their vision of their organization for the future.

### **Conclusion**

Great stuff! Sound principles! Good basis for a sequel in implementation challenges of a Project Management Office Initiative.

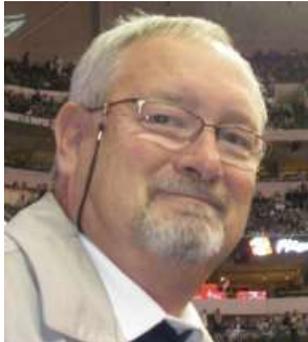
I highly recommend the book if you are interested in strategic project management development.

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*The Focused Organization, How Concentrating on a Few Key Initiatives Can Dramatically Improve Strategy Execution, 1st Edition; by Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez; published by Gower; 2012; List Price: US\$106.43; hard cover and electronic; 223 pages; ISBN: 978-1-4094-2566-3 (hbk) – 978-1-4094-2567-0 (ebk); information at <http://www.gowerpublishing.com/isbn/9781409425663>*

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## About the Reviewer



### ***Rodger Martin, JD, MBA, BSEE, PMP***

Rodger Martin has a broad background in business, law, engineering and Project Management. He is a retired US Air Force officer with expertise in rockets and National Ranges. His work experiences include government, military, public corporations, small business consulting and high-tech non-profit organizations. For the last 12 years, he has worked on Document Management, Knowledge Management and Process Management/Modeling projects commercial companies. He acquired his PMP certification in 2007.

#### Author profile:

Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez is an expert in strategy execution and project management especially in the banking industry. He was a PriceWaterhouseCoopers consultant for more than ten years, where he was the lead global practitioner for Project and Portfolio management.

He has an MBA from the London Business School with an undergraduate degree in Economics. He is a Professor of Project Management at three universities.

He launched and manages the largest think tank on Strategy Execution in LinkedIn – StrateXecution (group id 2548095) with more than 3,500 experts worldwide.