PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: The Project Management Coaching Workbook
Author: Susanne Madsen
Publisher: Management Concepts Press
List Price: $49.00 USD
Format: Soft cover; 236 pages
Publication Date: 2012
ISBN: 9781587263572
Reviewer: Michael O’Connor
Review Date: May 2012

Introduction to the Book

This is a great book for either new or experienced project and program managers who are working in project management field. There are many tools in this book that you can apply to your project that will help you better understand yourself and your team. The way it is written and explained makes it so that everyone can understand the information being presented.

The book is divided into six different steps that the author has broken down and formatted. The author explains how to use the book and what the six step journey is all about. There are many useful instructions, tips and counsels on project management. All of the chapters are broken into easy-to-follow steps.

Overview of Book’s Structure

This book has 6 chapters that follow a six step process. In each chapter there are worksheets, instructions on how to fill them out, and information on how to score them. There is a key that helps to indicate what those scores may mean for you or your team.

Many templates, in PDF format, are available on the author’s webpage. They can help a person or team work through the information. This book is basically a workbook, something you can write in to make notes and observations. This book is a tool for the project/program manager and the team. It may be a good idea to buy a copy for each team member so that he or she can work through some of the exercises.
Highlights: What I liked!

I enjoyed working through the different activities and assessments in the book. This is a really good way to better understand yourself, your team or both. You can pick and choose which areas you would like to focus on or choose to complete all of the worksheets and assessments. I also liked the easy-to-use format and the six step methodology.

The book is put together in a way that you could potentially only use one part or go ahead and use all of it. For areas where you are strong, you could defer, but in areas that you are weak you could take the assessment to better understand where you or your team can improve. The author has a great deal of knowledge and background in the area of project management. Her website has good links to other useful sites and it also has some good templates in PDF format for review.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

One thing that I found difficult was reading through the sections that have a gray background. They were hard to read. Perhaps this could be lightened up in another version of the book. I would have also liked to have seen all of the assessments together at the end of the book or maybe even available on the webpage, so you could print more copies for your team or yourself.

Since it is a workbook, perhaps at the end of the book it could have a table to review all or some of your scores. In many of the sections there is good basic information. It may be beneficial to recommend another author or source of information for further study in regards to each particular subject.

Who might benefit from the Book

All project/program managers and team members would benefit from reading it as well as using the tools throughout the book. You do not have to be an expert in project management to use the information that is presented. I am personally using some of the items in this book to improve my current project as well as my communication skills. I found some of the assessments eye opening, and they brought my attention to some things I need to work on.

Conclusion

I really enjoyed this book. From the time I began reading it up until the time I finished it, only a few weeks had passed. I made time for myself to work through the workbook, making notes and highlighting different sections. You need to use this book as a workbook in order to really take advantage of the wealth of information it offers. I suggest walking around with it for a week or two, making notes and suggestions while
taking the assessments and then trying to learn how you can apply those things into your own projects or with your own team. I am positive that every project manager and team member will find something in this book that will help them become more successful.


Editor’s note: This book review was the result of cooperation between the publisher, PM World Inc and the Project Management Center For Excellence in the School of Engineering at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland, USA (www.pm.umd.edu). 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

Michael O’Connor

Michael O’Connor is a Senior Engineering Program Manager in Research and Development at Medtronic with over (20) years of experience in the medical device field. He has developed many medical products from conception to commercialization. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Project Management Program, A. James Clark School of Engineering, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA.