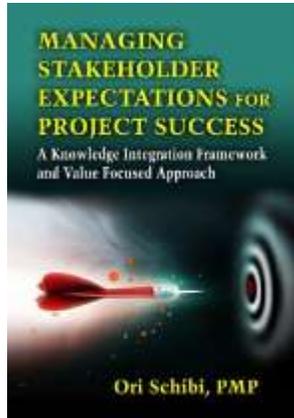


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Managing Stakeholder Expectations For Project Success***

Author: **Ori Schibi, PMP**

Publisher: J. Ross

Format: Hard cover; 332 pages List Price: \$59.95

Publication Date: 2014 ISBN: 978-1-60427-086-0

Reviewer: ***Nazanin Mehrooz, PMP***

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Introduction to the Book

There are many project management books which offer templates, toolkits, concepts and mechanics of project management. The focus of this book is to share the best practices and concepts which PMs face on a day-to-day basis. It serves as a good reference book to help a PM tackle situations based on the author's experiences after 20 years of project management consulting, teaching and professional development.

This book supports the concepts from PMI's Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) but focuses more on how to leverage those concepts in context of organizational challenges and project realities.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book contains 13 chapters:

1. The (Sad) Reality of Project Management
2. Project Complexity and Readiness Assessment
3. Culture and Politics: The Organization's Pillars and Speed Bumps
4. Understanding Stakeholders and What They Want
5. Connecting Success and Constraints
6. Assumptions: The Project Manager's Best Friends
7. Managing Those Things That Make a Difference
8. Managing Risk Effectively: What's Missing from Current Risk Management Methodologies
9. Learn What Quality Means

10. Managing Project Change
11. Designing and Managing Project Communications
12. Organizational Influences
13. Integration: Putting It All Together

Highlights: What's New in this Book?

- The book focuses on recognizing simple human behavioral characteristics and applying them against the reality of your projects
- Relevant, applicable, realistic and addressing specific needs on projects based on today's reality of organizational challenges
- Each chapter addresses real life situations encountered in organizations and provides excellent guidance on how to handle it based on best industry practices. It serves as a great reference book of lessons learned which is applicable to most industries.
- Downloadable checklist and other useful information is referenced throughout the book to support your project needs

Highlights: What I liked!

I really appreciated the experience which the author, Ori Schibi, brought to light in this book. After 20 years in the industry, he hit the nail on the head in terms of challenges seen in the workplace in various organizations. His lessons addressed real life challenges I have seen very recently in my several work places and found his guidance to be very practical in approach to address these issues.

I had to laugh out loud when I read his description of some organizational PM cultures referenced as "culture of alligators". Having team members who are allies, trust worthy and working with you instead of against you is indeed the best way to have a successful organization. The reality is that often there is a feeding frenzy similar to when alligators feed with respect to resource needs.

What I also liked was how the author raised how ineffective approaches like finger pointing, delaying challenges to a later date, making exceptions to processes and adding more resources to get the job done faster can be. The traits of trying to help others, giving appreciation of effort, asking questions like what can I do to help us work better together, effective communication and confirming project resources have what they need to do their job are all excellent behaviors which improve the chances of project success.

Finally, in the chapter associated with connecting success and constraints, I really liked the example of a balloon to articulate the trade-offs among the constraints on a project. PM need to balance demands on a project around cost, scope, time, risk, resources and quality. This is a very good visual tool on how squeezing one side of the balloon (for example resources) can impact the overall quality of the project with the pressure building up on other sides of the balloon (for example cost, time and risks). This is also a good tool to try to contain the scope when customers want more with limited time and cost on projects. By squeezing the balloon from all sides, there is a chance of popping it or having an unsuccessful project.

Shortfalls: What was Missing?

If you are looking for a book to provide more insight on the concepts and methodology, this book may not be the best source. It's intended to be used by PMs who need guidance addressing key organizational and behavior challenges on their current or upcoming projects.

Chapter 2 addresses managing stakeholder expectation for project success covers the importance of readiness assessments to improve success criteria on your projects. The process of building a propriety readiness is covered and the importance of identifying relevant questions for your context and environment is highlighted. I found myself looking for a potential list of generic questions which were applicable for various industries and didn't find any included. Similarly with the project complexity assessment guide covered in this chapter, providing some examples of what makes a complex weight scope of 5 versus 1 would have been helpful. The author does a good job of talking about how to score weights from 0-5 but not examples of these complexities which would make this a very useful reference guide.

Who might benefit from the Book

Any Project Manager who needs guidance on how to handle organizational challenges and wants to influence human behavioral characteristics to work in the best interest of your project would benefit from this book.

For those who struggle with how to build the right political power in organizations, I found the activities listed in chapter 3 on culture and politics useful. Some of the tips shared include building and understanding your power based specific to your organization, building trust and knowing your team. Factors that build trust versus destroying it are listed which are helpful for PM, resource managers and any leader in an organization.

Chapter 4 which is centered on understanding stakeholders and what they want is very complete. It helps identify examples of internal vs. external stakeholders by role name

and provides very good examples supporting the PMBOK suggested tools like interest and influence grids, stakeholder analysis charts and responsibility assignment matrix.

Conclusion

This book is a very good guide to improve soft skills and offers useful guidance on stakeholder needs and managing their expectations. It also provides very useful information on how to address political situation in the work place. The methods shared for reducing requirements and scope, metrics to evaluate your project's health and prioritizing risks are very beneficial for any project manager. Additionally the sections covering topics like project readiness and complexity are helpful when planning a project to improve chances of more successful projects.

If you are looking for a good reference book which offers useful information to address real organizational challenge, the author shares his knowledge based on 20 years of experience and offers plenty of downloadable checklists and other useful materials covered throughout the book.

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Nazanin Mehrooz started her career as a software engineer and is a certified project manager with over 5 years of PM experience in telecom, manufacturing and transportation industries. As a program manager, she successfully managed a suite of related software projects during the full SDLC utilizing waterfall and agile methodologies. Nazanin's technical background as a software engineer and global IT functional manager provides a solid foundation for effectively leading project development, delivery and operational phases. She enjoys networking and applying her soft skills to build and manage productive happy teams. Nazanin is an active volunteer for the PMI Dallas Chapter marketing team and has served as the PMI Fort Worth Chapter email operations manager since 2012. Email:

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