

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Project Management Leadership: Building Creative Teams***

Authors: **Rory Burke & Steve Barron**

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Introduction

With advancement in technologies and know-how, project requirements and team competencies for conducting and managing projects are more demanding than ever, and that is particularly true for mega projects in a globalized marketplace. Therefore, in addition to technical competencies and from project leadership perspective, additional sets of skills are required for the successful implementation of projects.

In a global and competitive economy, how we ensure that projects are conducted successfully largely depends on the project leader's expertise (hard-skills), relevant experience of conducting and managing projects and teams, and most importantly in my view, their core values, character (determines how we respond to situations and circumstances during the project lifecycle) and superior emotional intelligence (soft-skills). The lack of such sets of skills would result in compromised project outcomes with costly ramifications for the project team and sponsor.

The book offers the readers fundamental concepts of project leadership in the context of project management. The authors emphasize project managers' challenge to strike a balance between the leadership skills & styles and project management systems, as both skills are essential for the implementation of a successful project.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book consisting of 24 chapters represents three major sections. The first 11 chapters in *Section I – PM Leadership*, include leadership skills, styles, behaviors, ethics, influence, emotional intelligence and stakeholders, and build a basis for the understanding of various subject matters and their relevance within the project lifecycle phases. The 6 chapters in *Section II – Building Teams*, include project team roles, development phases, team building techniques, and mentoring & coaching. The 7 chapters in *Section III – Project Leader's Competence*, incorporate key themes including negotiation, motivation, communication, delegation and problem solving.

With the learning objectives in mind, each chapter begins with *Learning Outcomes* and ends with *Exercises* encouraging questions and discussions. Some chapters, 9 in total (between chapters 5-24), also include Key Points and References. The book is enriched with a useful Glossary and an Index for easy retrieval of subject matters.

Highlights

In order to equip the reader with more complex subject matter in succeeding chapters, the book devotes more than 40% of the contents to fundamental concepts of project management (enabling & facilitating processes) and leadership (traits & processes) and how both should work interchangeably for successful project implementation.

The authors covered many aspects of project management and project leadership, and have made the case that both skills are needed for project success. They have touched many aspects of leadership in conjunction with project management and emphasized that in addition to technical capability, project managers must demonstrate additional skills within the Emotional Intelligence (EI) domains, among other competencies, to excel and succeed in project implementation.

The authors pointed out the impact of soft-skills in managing projects. Command and control leadership style is no longer effective, in fact proven counter-productive. Control freaks erode the team performance and project as a whole, resulting in inferior and often detrimental outcomes. It is indeed substantiated and particularly true in case of global high visibility projects working in multidisciplinary and multicultural environment.

Highlights: What I liked!

The authors successfully explained the fundamental concepts of leadership in project management with ample graphs and figures throughout the book. In some sections the subject matters are explained by linking them in the project lifecycle phases (e.g., in chapter 3, 7, 11 & 12) facilitating their understanding at various stages in project processes.

Throughout the book, the authors describe the interrelationship of project management and project leadership, and provide explanation of terms used in both fields with reference to PMBok and APM BoK. I liked the beginning of each chapter with expected learning outcomes and exercises, and key points at the end of chapters. The questions and examples asked in exercises are intriguing, facilitating additional learning by linking and/or referring to readers own project experience.

Who might benefit from the Book?

This book is a valuable guide for practicing project management professionals (project managers/directors) including projects sponsors to better understand the intertwined nature of leadership skills in optimum project delivery. Academia endeavoring grants/projects and professional project managers aspiring for

supervisory roles in project management are recommended to benefit from this book.

Conclusions

The competitive global marketplace demands technical competencies, skills and tools that are crucial for project success. This book is an excellent resource and offers a fast-track learning of fundamental concepts of leadership skills required to manage projects successfully. It addresses the significance of technical competencies (hard-skills) in managing projects that must be utilized in conjunction with leadership skills (soft-skills) to meet the challenges of complex and varied projects. The authors made the effort to tie many of the soft skills to project situations, however, several subject matters presented in the book are of an academic nature and require practical examples.

Although briefly touched upon, the role and significance of Emotional Intelligence (EI), using early work by Goleman et al., the authors did not make the business case for the subject matter. Some fortune 500 companies in the U.S. are making a practical use of EI skills for upper management positions, while some advocate EI and leadership at all levels of managing project and people throughout the organization's hierarchy. With the advances in understanding and its applications in the industry today, readers are encouraged to delve deeper into the subject and develop such competencies to excel and succeed in project implementation particularly applicable in multidisciplinary and multicultural environment.

For more about this book, go to: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118674014.html>

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. Reviewers can keep the books and claim PDUs for PMP recertification. 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.

About the Reviewer



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Javed Azam has more than 25 years of technical/engineering and management experience in conducting and leading projects in more than 15 countries (U.S., W-Europe and SE-Asia). He served in progressively responsible positions as Regional Director, Program/Project Director and Chief Operating Officer of consulting engineering firms, and demonstrated his management, operations and leadership skills in the acquisition and implementation of complex and multidisciplinary projects (capacity enhancement, geotechnical, inspection/testing, environmental, infrastructure & water resources development) projects in often culturally challenging environments.

In addition to his technical certifications, Javed is a Licensed Professional Geoscientist (P.G., Geologist), Certified Professional Geologist (CPG), and a Certified Project Management Expert (PME). He is member of several professional organizations including the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG) and the Project Management Institute (PMI). He is an alumnus of University of Texas, University of California-Berkeley, and Delft University of Technology/ITC.

Javed is driven by passion, integrity, high performance teamwork, and servant leadership to deliver successful project/program outcomes, and provides expertise to his clients and quantifiable value to his organization. He serves as a Principal Consultant with Development Group International in Dallas, TX and can be reached at JavedA@DevelopmentGroupIntl.com.