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Fundamentals of Program Management
Author: Motoh Shimizu
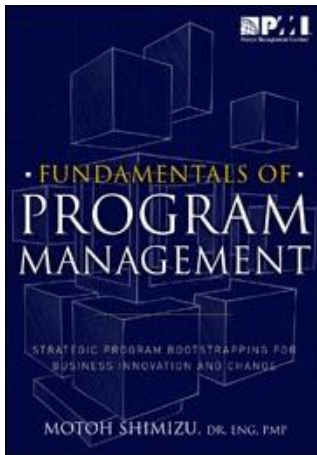Book Review   Reviewer: Ralph J. Mauelshagen

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: ***Fundamentals of Program Management:***

Strategic Program Bootstrapping for Business

Innovation and Change

Author: **Motoh Shimizu, Dr. Eng, PMP**

Publisher: PMI

List Price: US$ 34.95   Format: soft cover, 201 pages

Publication Date: 2012   ISBN: 978-1-935589-63-1

Reviewer: **Ralph J. Mauelshagen**, PMP, CCP

Review Date: 02/2015

Introduction

Many professional books of our day are written in an informal manner, and these books are easy to read or even skim for the salient points. "Fundamentals" is not such a book. It is closer in style to a masters' thesis, and requires attention, concentration and critical thought. With that investment, "Fundamentals" rewards the reader with understanding and keen insight across the breadth of its constituent topics.

Before studying this book, the reader should become familiar with what the P2M® is (Project & Program Management for Enterprise Innovation) from the PMAJ (Project Management Association of Japan), because "Fundamentals" has a shared basis in the P2M® and PMI's PMBOK®. One need not be an expert in the P2M, because whenever it is invoked in this book, the relevant principle is clearly described. However, it is helpful to know the relationships among these and other such standards – the PMAJ itself has a helpful and succinct 36-page online booklet for that reason.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is structured very logically and openly, with outline-style overviews to begin each chapter.

Highlights

Dr. Shimizu describes early in chapter one precisely what he means by the term "strategic program bootstrapping." It describes when a program is initiated by executive(s) only in conceptual form, and then "the program manager and program organization elucidate and detail essential strategic requirements…" So in a sense, it is bottom-up instead of top-down. Doing so allows the program to be more nimble,

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more flexible, and "is a realistic and efficient method that fits small-scale organizations," which could also, he emphasizes, be a segment of a much larger organization.

Because there is considerable overlap in the concepts of program bootstrapping and business startups, it is not surprising to find echoes of Lean Startup (Ries, 2011) in this book, although not explicitly referenced. Two such echoes are the "leap of faith" (here "leap") in unpredictable situations and the author's directive to examine scenario elements from future to present, instead of present to future (both on p.56).

Throughout the book, complexity noticeably dominates the author's view of business activity, programs, risks, personal skills, etc. And in this book, such complexity requires complex, hierarchical plans and organizational structures. At some point, of course, these structures get top-heavy and compound organizational attenuation. Finally, near the end of the book, flattening the organization is suggested as an alternate solution, but not developed further. In the US, many successful flatter and agile organizational experiments have been maturing (cf., "Scrum" by Jeff Sutherland, takes Scrum out of the software context and into the board room, or "Lean Startup" by Ries). One must imagine that Japan is following suit, but this book is silent on such developments.

As one might expect, there are many practical references to Kaizen, the Toyota Production System, Lean, Kanban, and other such breakthroughs from Japan. However, Dr. Shimizu brings in at least as many western authors and concepts, and achieves a workable and seamless composite model of this special type of program management. It is also helpful that this book's translation team went further than simply translating the text – they also translated the context so the western reader is assisted with essential backstory that a Japanese reader would know as familiar.

Highlights: What I liked!

The author expects strategic thinking and action from any program manager who leads a bootstrapping program. This bootstrapping program manager must be business-savvy and fully aware of the external context (environment) of the program. Innovation and risk tolerance are also essential characteristics of this kind of program manager.

Because these qualities are so essential for success of a bootstrapping type program manager, Dr. Shimizu devotes full chapters to 1) implementation and integration management, 2) strategy and risk management, and 3) value assessment, pulling from both resources – the PMBOK® and the P2M®. The result is a unique, blended approach for the program manager to consider and then utilize as appropriate for his or her bootstrapping program.

Who might benefit from the Book?

In the world of business, there is no clear delineation between a bootstrapping program manager and a program manager who plans and executes on a fully-formed strategy given by executive leadership. In real life, one can expect some

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amount of blend of these two approaches, and that can vary greatly in a single organization or for a single program manager over time. For that reason alone, this book should be read and kept as a mid-level resource by any program manager who wishes to be ready and fully competent for these situations.

It is also refreshing to see thoughts from another business culture, from the P2M and also from the author's own concepts. Anyone who thinks they have "arrived" and knows program management can take another meaningful step in competency maturation by reading this book and others like it.

Conclusion

Therefore, once you have grasped the PMBOK and the Standard for Program management; once you're proficient at managing programs, then broaden your awareness, your knowledge, your experience by interacting with books, seminars, and people like this. The very real value is two-fold. You will improve yourself, and also amplify value in every program and project in your charge.

For more about this book, go to:
http://marketplace.pmi.org/Pages/ProductDetail.aspx?GMProduct=00101363101

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.

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About the Reviewer

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Ralph Mauelshagen is a Senior Consultant with Greenlight Project Management, working out of the US office in Plano, Texas. He has led Information Technology and Business projects and programs to successful completion for over three decades. He is a first-generation American with personal roots in the Midwest, the South, and the West. With a Technology degree for the mind and a Biblical Studies degree for the heart, his diversity of education, geography, culture, and business contexts enables him to recognize and create value by blending ideas from diverse domains.