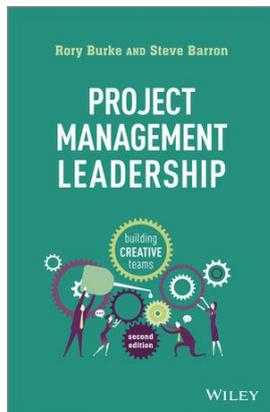


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Project Management Leadership: Building Creative Teams, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition***

Authors: **Rory Burke, Steve Barron**

Publisher: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

List Price: \$44.00 (paperback); \$28.99 (e-book)

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Reviewer: **Sheila Jackson, PMP** Review Date: April 2015

### Introduction

In the forward to *Project Management Leadership*, Dr. Steve Kempster sets the tone for readers by explaining that project management and project leadership are two sides of the same coin, cautioning that many project managers “pay too much attention to managing and spend little time leading. As with everything in life, finding the right balance is key.” Keeping this balance in mind, the authors, Burke and Barron, lay out an organized framework of project management leadership principles and theories, and their application in the project environment.

Why do we need yet another book on this topic? Perhaps it is our awareness of the lack of good leadership or our own experience with admirable project leaders. I think most would agree that the workplace is shifting towards a new, higher baseline requirement in what we’ve called “soft skills”. In the Authors’ Notes, Burke and Barron point out that project managers increasingly work within matrix-type project organization structures where they might not have full line authority over the resources carrying out the work. Additionally, Burke explains, “the workforce is better educated, more experienced, and more competent...[and are] better prepared to question their project management leader’s instructions.” In this contemporary context those mastering key aspects of leadership will be more successful, with direct benefit to the projects and teams they lead.

### Overview of Book’s Structure

Project Management Leadership, Burke explains, was written to support courses and modules in project management and project leadership. Filled with diagrams, definitions, figures and exercises, Project Management Leadership is a textbook-style overview covering major topical categories and their sub-divisions. There is plenty here to whet the reader’s appetite for deeper understanding, however, it is not meant to be exhaustive or terminal. References for further reading at the end of each chapter enable deeper, more detailed study.

The writing style is straightforward, factual, and informative. While there are no anecdotal stories or narrative plot lines, the authors succeed in their aim of providing principles and methodologies consistent with the PMBoK and APM BoK.

As part of its educational mission, each chapter includes stated learning outcomes, exercises for introspection and/or application; the book includes a detailed glossary and comprehensive index. Organized in three parts, then topically for easy reference and understanding, the reader can easily refresh specific areas of interest.

The first part covers leadership skills and styles such as project governance and ethics, power to influence, emotional intelligence, and working with stakeholders, among others. The second part focuses on project team formation through overviews of team roles, team-building techniques, team development phases, coaching and mentoring. The third part covers competency areas such as decision making, conflict resolution, delegation, and communication, among others.

## **Highlights**

Because of its textbook format *Project Management Leadership* doesn't have a single highlight or culmination. There is no single cumulative "ah-ha" moment teased out linearly throughout the chapters. Instead, based upon one's needs and/or level of experience topical sections may be more or less inspiring at various times. The categorization of topics helps the reader quickly access points of interest. However, the authors do define specific Learning Objectives in introducing each chapter.

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

This book is chock full of easily digestible facts, tools, and techniques. Its content is a solid refresher of business school basics. This book is an accessible, factual helper. I can imagine using its guidance in preparing business proposals, performance reviews, and professional development training documents.

In the swirl of priorities many of us can slip into managing at the expense of leading. Yes, even as mature business professionals we need to go back to basics in light of the shifts in workforce. Something as simple as reminding ourselves that team formation occurs in phases or that leadership power can display itself in varying forms can decompress a stressful situation.

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

*Project Management Leadership* appeals to a broad audience of project management students and seasoned practitioners. Burke and Barron have compiled a solid, resource manual that can be interesting theoretically and/or readily applied on the job. Students, managers with direct reports, leaders of project teams (large or small), mentors, coaches, human resource professionals, and trainers alike will find this book indispensable due to its succinct and concise format.

## Conclusion

Today's workforce requires more from project leaders. Command and control management is so, well, "yesterday." The modern concept surrounding the persuasive dynamic of authentic leadership is what the authors unpack in *Project Management Leadership*.

A recent personal experience illustrated positive leadership in our midst. Company P announced several promotions in a company-wide email, including MC's promotion to Director. Soon thereafter MC returned to his department, having been in a meeting when the announcement email was distributed. Upon seeing MC, applauding team members rose in their seats and colleagues emerged from offices to congratulate him. While this was a managerial title promotion, the immediate, warm spirit of conviviality made it clear that MC was already an influential, well-liked leader. Sure, MC is the proverbial hard worker but he knows a little bit about authentic leadership. It would seem that MC is living out much of what the authors lay out here. Again, the influence of that winning balance of manager and leader.

Building creative teams requires intentionality. Burke and Barron provide established, proven tools and techniques for doing so. Anyone wanting to improve in specific leadership areas will find something here that is actionable.

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For more about this book, go to: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118674014,subjectCd-BA14.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](http://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@peworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@peworldjournal.net).*

## About the Reviewer



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**Sheila Jackson**, PMP, MBA has more than fourteen years of project management experience, working mostly in marketing, live events, and ecommerce. For twelve years she worked for a global marketing/advertising agency; her most recent work has been within omni-channel ecommerce. Sheila has a BA in Psychology from Baylor University and an MBA from University of North Texas, USA.