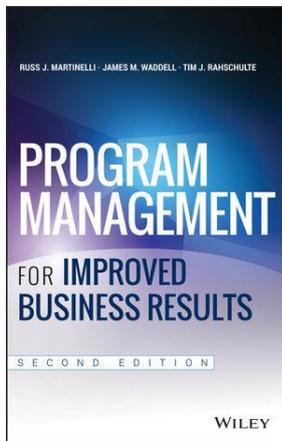

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Program Management for Improved Business Results***

Authors: **Russ J. Martinelli; James M. Waddell; Tim J. Rahschulte**

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Introduction

Program Management for Improved Business Results is centered around getting the most out of programs. This is based on the “how” program management is practiced. The authors draw from their own personal experiences in helping real companies create or strengthen their existing programs.

Overview of Book’s Structure

The book has five parts, with additional case studies in the appendices. All chapters include examples and tables to drive the key points home.

The definition of program management aligning to the business strategy is included in Part 1. Part 2 focused on delivering and managing the program. Program practices, metrics and tools are in Part 3. Part 4 goes into specifics on the job and function of the program manager. Finally, in Part 5, organizational consideration regarding the program management office is discussed.

The book flows sequentially in a logical fashion, but the parts could be read on their own. That could be done to provide information in a quick fashion for a focused topic.

Highlights

The first section of the book elaborates on the definitions and distinctions between projects, programs and portfolio management. Emphasizes the interrelation between projects, not just that “related” projects are key to program management. The main theme begins in the second chapter on realizing business benefits. It is stated this is the primary purpose of program-oriented organizations. Having said

that though, the authors do not advocate that all companies should be program oriented.

The second section goes into detail on delivering the complexity based on systems thinking concentrating on the interactions between the parts. Diagrams and detailed definitions helped show how the interactions happen to manage the whole solution and gain benefit. The actual team member responsibilities are discussed in detail. There is a lot of discussion on the various decision checkpoints from program strategy to program closure as part of the program life cycle.

Part three discusses the program management practices with business results as the primary goal. There are important distinctions made between key performance indicators and business success factors, as not all these measures are used properly. Risk management, risk hierarchy and details on managing the risk process are highlighted in this section. There are very straightforward definitions of base terms on metrics to help companies avoid confusion around their use and gain consistency in measurement. The list of metrics in this section is very comprehensive and goes into how to use them. The section ends with program management tools, including descriptors and tables for the key tools, PWBS (Primary Work Breakdown Structure), program architecture and benefits maps.

The program manager roles, responsibilities and competencies that are touched on in section 2 are detailed out in part 4. Critical skills should include the areas of: Customer & Market; Process and Project Management; Leadership; Business and Financial.

The final section wraps up talking about the point of transition from project to program orientation at a company in order to achieve strategic, market and financial goals. The question from part 1 on which company attributes indicate project vs. program orientation is best, is answered here. The book ends with three comprehensive case studies that bring together many of the book's key points in real world examples.

Highlights: What I liked!

There were numerous tables that highlight differences and points the authors were making. It helps drive the learning in an easy to understand fashion. Also, the many examples and case studies made the points really stick! The tables of metrics, with definitions and how to use them are very useful. There is a very handy and simple stakeholder analysis tool that is very useful, if kept confidential.

A key point I have experienced is that risk management can be over burdened with measurement. Not every risk needs to be quantified, rely on experience as well to know the potential impact.

It was a surprise to read that a business case is not necessary prior to the first program management cycle. Isn't that a necessary foundation for a program to start with the business case?

Who might benefit from the Book

The book is certainly geared toward anyone who is in program management. It is also a good read for project managers to see how they fit in the overall program and to prepare them for the next level in their career if they aspire to the program level. Executives could definitely benefit from learning how to get the most out of the program office with their structure and support. For those Program Management Professional candidates, this could be a useful study accompaniment to the PMBOK.

Conclusion

Program Management for Improved Business Results is a useful guide in the creation of the program structure, strengthening a current program management orientation or gaining knowledge in learning more about program management. It's easy to read, clearly written, with many examples to enhance the materials discussed.

For more about this book, go to: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-111862792X.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@peworldjournal.net.

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Kathy McCrain is a senior financial manager for British Telecom North America, supporting telecom outsource new business bids. She has extensive management reporting, financial systems implementation and commercial finance experience. Her career has been in IT outsourcing at Electronic Data Systems/Hewlett Packard, Sabre, and British Telecom. She has an MBA in Finance from the University of North Texas and holds a Project Management Professional and Certified Management Accountant certification. Kathy is active in the Dallas Chapter of the Project Management Institute and the Institute of Management Accountants. She lives in Frisco, Texas, USA.