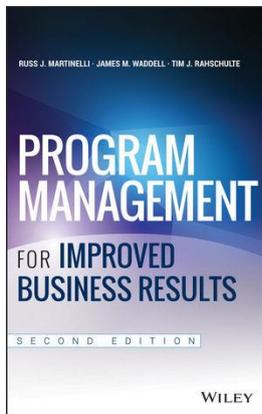


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Program Management for Improved Business Results, 2nd Edition***

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

Publisher: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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Reviewer: **Wyatt Dunn, PMP** Review Date: May 2015

Introduction

As almost any Project Manager including PMP certified Project Managers know, there is a great wealth of books and reference guides on Program Management. Many of these focus mainly on the mechanics of a program management process. Strikingly by contrast, Martinelli, Waddell, and Rahschulte's book, Program Management For Improved Business Results, brings forward the key concept about being focused on the business results outcome as a guiding principle vs the more pure mechanics of a program management process.

The authors take great pains to lay out this principle in the Chapter 1, It's About the Business. The fundamental elements of their concepts are explained and further supported by the coalescing of PMI (US) and Office of Government Standards (UK) definitions of program management identifying a group of related projects managed in a coordinated manner (PMI) that delivers outcomes and benefits related to the organizations strategic objectives (OGS). It is the intertwining of these correlated concepts that lay the groundwork for remaining chapters in the book.

Overview of Book's Structure

The overall structure of the Program Management For Improved Business Results contains five (5) key sections:

- Part I: It's About the Business
- Part II: Delivering the Whole Solution
- Part III: Program Practices, Metrics, and Tools
- Part IV: The Program Manager
- Part V: Organizational Considerations.

In Part I, the foundation of the author's views on Program Management are defined and related to the principle focus of yielding business benefits. The further alignment

of a program with a coherent set of business strategies is explored to ensure the greatest degree of success.

In Part II, the Whole Solution concept is explored where many large projects are reviewed with the consideration of being transformed into a Program because they are complicated. This concept is often also applied to several projects around a central theme. In considering the Whole Solution, it is the complexity of a single or multiple projects that is the driving factor where their interconnectedness and cross-linked deliverables require their execution be organized into a program. It is in response to this complexity that now requires how project teams now need to be viewed as an integrated program team. The process of organizing and managing the program team and overall program is then explored.

In Part III, the Program Practices, Metrics, and Tools are explored. In a key derivation from the traditional view of practices, metrics, and tools, the key focus is on Benefits and not lower level tasks and measurements solely. It is by identifying the key benefits, devising appropriate metrics to track the benefits achievement, and using unique tools such as Benefit Maps to best chart the success of the program. Included in these benefits based concepts is the inclusion of the recognition of the Stakeholders and their role in the program's success as is risk management concepts.

In Part IV, the focus shifts to the Program Manager's role and responsibilities. In this part, the concept of the program manager's role is now elevated to include all key components of the program's focus including:

- Team management
- Project management
- Business and Benefits management
- Stakeholder management
- Overall integration of the program into the top level organization's strategic objectives.

This takes special program manager competencies to be successful in all aspects of the program. No one program manager is perfect in all areas. It is key they understand their areas needing further development and to aggressively strive to continually update their knowledge and skills in these areas. The author's define the competency model by four (4) key areas:

- Leadership
- Skills
- Personal Qualities
- Experience.

It is from these key areas where the fundamental basis for developing excellent program managers is derived. This provides the basis for their continuing evaluation.

In Part IV, the Organizational Considerations are reviewed in light of transitioning from a project centric viewpoint to a program centric viewpoint. It is in this process where the point of transition from the project to a program centric view and outlook are defined. This results in a primary shift in focus of management to these investment programs and the business as a whole. This transition can come at a rapid pace or be more evolutionary. In any event, the ability to understand and manage change is essential.

Finally, the concept of transitioning to and managing a Program Management Office (PMO) is described. As a part of establishing a PMO function, a number of important factors need to be identified and managed. They include:

- Timeline – how long to establish the PMO function
- Centralization – concept of how centralized the organization is comfortable with
- Reporting – the reporting structure and related discipline/governance concepts
- Leadership – the ability of the PMO and program managers to be true leaders in the transition process
- Continuous Improvement – concept of continually raising the bar and achieving higher maturity levels to provide best practices and support to the programs.

Highlights

The key highlights of this book include:

- Fundamental definition and basis for US and UK based schools of thought on the true benefit of project and program management.
- The introduction of a main focus on identifying and tracking progress on attaining the key benefits expected from this investment of labor and hard dollars vs desperate projects' successes.
- Use of Risk based measurement and decision making in rationing scarce investment dollars for the programs to achieve the broader benefits to support the strategic objectives.
- Establishment of formal PMO practices and organization to provide support, governance, and leadership to aid the successful completion of the programs.
- Identification of the key competencies of quality Program Managers and approaches to aid if the continual improvement of their competencies.

Highlights: What I liked!

The key highlights I liked included the broader scope (revelation to me) of the two basic pillars of a program process and that it is to result in benefiting the organization by design, not by chance. That the Program created should be the result of a bigger understanding of the organizations strategic needs of defining programs to achieve key portions of the overall strategic vision.

I also especially liked the specifics provided in creating, executing, measuring, and evaluating the success of a program through rational program practices, realistic metrics and measurement approaches, and several elemental tools. This allows a program/PMO process to get off the ground and grow with the organization based on their maturity in evolving to a program based organizational outlook.

Who might benefit from the Book?

As to who would benefit from reading this book, I would say anyone who has been tasked with defining and guiding a process or project and was interested in understanding the contribution of their efforts to the bigger picture.

After having read this book, the reader who comprehends and agrees with the base premises of this book will be further benefited by following the recipe of the book. The recipe of defining and organizing projects as integral elements of a bigger program focused on achieving specific strategic objectives - strategic objectives that have been defined with the interconnectedness of the projects in a program in mind and guided by Program Managers who have been educated and nurtured in the fundamentals of sound program management.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the concepts revealed in this book are an eye opener to the casual and experienced project manager alike. For seasoned Program Managers there are numerous takeaways to incorporate in their next Program setup and support for a PMO function that is aligned with the strategic objectives of the organization.

If their organization doesn't have a formal PMO process, the contents of this book provide a detailed blueprint for the purpose, construction, and operation of a PMO process that will support and guide Programs to a successful conclusion. I highly recommend this book as a primer for the PMI chapters as a practical application of key PMI principles in a larger context.

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 a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the [PMI Dallas Chapter](#). Authors and 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. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published. 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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Wyatt Dunn has more than 30 years of IT and operational project management experience in the power, telecom, ERP, and IT consulting businesses. Certified Salesforce.com Admin, PMP, and Registered Professional Engineer-Inactive. Wyatt volunteers in job placement groups assisting others with job search and referral support. A car guy, he is an active member of the PMI Dallas Chapter.