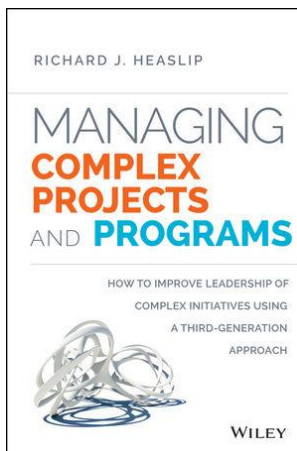


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Managing Complex Projects and Programs: How to Improve Leadership of Complex Initiatives using a Third Generation Approach***

Author: **Richard J Heaslip**

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Reviewer: **Clint Hudson**

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### Introduction

The author, Richard Heaslip, spent much of his career in scientific experimentation as a biochemical pharmacologist. As his career advanced, he found himself serving as Vice President of Program, Project, and Portfolio Management. It is the convergence of these two roles that serves as the catalyst for this book. In his Project Leadership role he became very dissatisfied with the way projects were being managed in his organization. This dissatisfaction led him on a journey to learn about, analyze, and form a new hypothesis regarding how best to handle complex projects and programs. This book, *Managing Complex Projects and Programs*, details that journey and his recommendations.

### Overview of Book's Structure

*Managing Complex Projects and Programs* is broken down into two major sections: The first section focuses on the history, successes and limitations of first and second generation programmatic. The second section provides an explanation of third generation programmatic, its structure and benefits, and why Heaslip believes that third generation programmatic is a superior structure for managing complex projects and programs. The following is a brief explanation of first, second, and third generation programmatic as outlined in these two sections.

In first generation programmatic the structure for a project or program in a corporate environment is highly formal and rigid. The Project Manager is responsible for ensuring that the project is on-time, on-budget, and to specifications. The project managers have extremely limited authority to change the project specifications and answer to oversight committees who authorize changes to the project or program. The oversight committees maintain tight control over project's strategies, plans, timelines, budgets, and specifications. The project manager focuses on project outputs.

In second generation programmatic the project or program manager has greater responsibility for projects whose timelines, budgets, and specifications need to be managed adaptively. The project manager is more responsible for ensuring that outcomes meet the business objectives of the company rather than rigidly conforming to project specifications. The project manager must adapt the project to meet a changing environment and business needs. The project manager is also responsible for managing multiple internal constituencies. In second generation programmatic, companies often add layers of sub-committees that the project or program managers must answer to or manage to ensure that the project meets the needs of all.

Third generation programmatic provides a structure intended to address operational and outcome complexity by advocating a dual leadership role. In third generation programmatic, both an operational leader and an adaptive leader guide projects and programs. The operational leader is responsible for delivering project outputs and outcomes while the adaptive leader is responsible for optimizing the delivery of program-level outcomes. The adaptive leader is responsible for ensuring that the programs remain in synch with the organizations larger strategies and goals.

## Highlights

Richard Heaslip brings up several compelling concepts as the result of his research into projects and programs. He discusses different types of project / program complexity that must be managed successfully: Operational, Outcome, Stakeholder, Organizational, and Environmental. He covers the fact that many organizations create additional committees and sub-committees in an attempt to address all the types of complexity referenced above. His build-up to the introduction of third generation programmatic pivots on the concept of a *program centaur*. A program centaur is an individual who has the skillset to manage all types of program / project complexity with equal effectiveness. This type of individual is as rare as a centaur. If your organization is not fortunate enough to have found a centaur then a new approach is required.

## Highlights: What I liked!

I gravitated to this book for several reasons. I found the methodical approach that Richard Heaslip took in evaluating all types of program and project structures extremely effective in building his case for third generation programmatic. He exposes the reader to a variety of structures, programs and solutions. He discusses, in a fact-based manner, the advantages and disadvantages of each structure type. He backs up these illustrations with real-world examples taken from his research. I also liked the concept of the exasperados that the author introduces early in the book. The exasperado is a talented program or project manager who finds the limits of the current program and project management models stifling and a hindrance to remaining in the program management profession.

## Who might benefit from the Book?

All project and program managers would benefit from a study of these concepts, but Project Managers, Program Managers and leaders of PMOs in consulting or larger

organizations would benefit the most from reading this book. This group would most readily identify with each model and approach to program and project management. Consulting and larger organizations will also have access to the resources required to successfully implement a third generation approach.

## Conclusion

In summary, I found *Managing Complex Projects and Programs* to be a well-researched and well-written study of project and program management structures and concepts. Richard Heaslip did a very good job of guiding the reader through his research into project and program management and building up to his introduction and explanation of the third generation programmatic approach. I recommend this book most strongly to program and project managers in larger organizations and consulting organizations. Individuals in these environments will be in the best position to implement the third generation approach. However, project management practitioners in smaller organizations will also find the concepts and study fascinating.

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For more about this book, go to: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-111838301X.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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**Clint Hudson** currently serves as the Director of Account Management for EnTouch Controls, a provider of energy management services, solutions and products. Clint holds the PMI PMP credential and has successfully completed projects involving the deployment hardware, software, and services to companies ranging from Fortune 100 companies to single site proprietors. He has also led the formation of account management, project management, accounts receivable and customer service organizations in small and medium sized companies. He currently resides in Frisco, Texas, USA with his wife Elisa and three children; Kara, Clayton, and Katie.