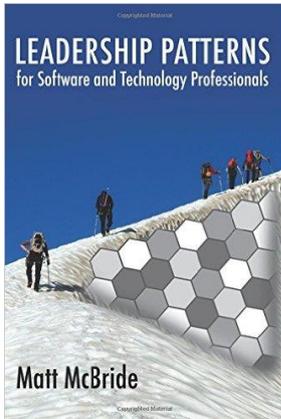


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Leadership Patterns for Software and Technology Professionals***  
Author: Matt McBride  
Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform  
List Price: \$28.99 Format: Paperback  
Publication Date: 2016 ISBN: 1508634408  
Reviewer: Eldon Zorinsky  
Review Date: August, 2016

### Introduction

In his new book, *Leadership Patterns for Software and Technology Professionals*, author Matt McBride addresses what are, in his view, the most challenging aspects associated with developing good software – communication and leadership skills.

In today's business environment, it has become the norm to utilize teams of software and technology professionals to develop complex software systems. It is well understood that the number of stakeholders assigned to typical development teams and the diversity of their respective backgrounds combined with potential organizational barriers makes good communication and alignment on objectives difficult. It is imperative to overcome these obstacles in order to deliver high quality software on time and within budget. However, these issues are not being effectively addressed by many organizations.

The author is convinced that better outcomes can be consistently achieved by software professionals through the application of effective leadership practices. He reviews many of the problems that are typically encountered and then, based upon his real-world experiences, proposes ways to deal with them using a structured approach to leadership that enhances team member and stakeholder engagement and improves interactions among everyone affected by the project in ways that quickly drive insightful and productive solutions.

*Leadership Patterns for Software and Technology Professionals* discusses how overlaying technical and project efforts with certain leadership (behavior) patterns allows problems to be re-framed in ways that can facilitate the formulation of solutions which deliver more effective and desirable results. These patterns provide a useful template that will help the reader leverage their leadership, influence, and relational skills to deliver impressive results.

## Overview of Book's Structure

The book begins with an explanation of the author's reasons for writing this book along with a discussion of his overall objectives. This is followed by a description of the "Leadership Ladder" and its relationship to the reader's personal goals. It is organized in a way that provides a very useful structure that identifies important leadership (behavior) patterns in four distinct *areas* of leadership: Self (S), Team (T), Project (P) and Customer (C). The patterns in each of the aforementioned areas are clearly defined and examined as separate chapters.

*Self* Leadership patterns include the Leader pattern, the Adaptor, the Iterator, the Communicator and finally, the Facilitator pattern. *Team* leadership patterns include Engagement, Coach, Freeze Frame and Tuner. *Project* leadership patterns discussed are the Early Riser, Snap, Vision, Base Camp, Wizard, Oz, and Showboat. Finally, *Customer* leadership patterns include Hat, Resolute, Pace Car, Partner, Translator and Step.

Each "pattern" chapter for a given area begins with a situational scenario followed by: a **problem statement**; the **context** of how the particular pattern is used to address the problem; the **solution** – how use of the described leadership pattern effectively addresses the problem; and a final section that deals with **applications and consequences**.

The last chapter of the book includes several exercises that provide an opportunity for the reader to practice using these patterns.

## Highlights

This book was written to help entry level and mid-career professionals become more effective earlier in their careers by examining the "less-than-successful" experiences of others in order to identify opportunities to accelerate their respective learning curves. In far too many cases and for a variety of reasons, project teams over commit and under perform. Unfortunately, there are no universal process-oriented panaceas or technical methodologies that address these short-comings, nor are there any tools available to drive breakthrough results. As the author points out, better technology may lead to some degree of advancement, but software system development is a fundamentally difficult creative process that requires focused, aligned and productive interactions among a set of people with diverse backgrounds and differing goals and objectives.

The "good news" is that the author believes that there is a better way to approach these team interactions that facilitates correct engagement, drives alignment and improves overall performance. This approach involves the use of a set of practices, referred to as "leadership patterns," that can be combined with traditional project efforts. Embracing these patterns requires changes in both individual behaviors and operational perspective. Since change is typically difficult, the book breaks things down into small, easy-to-comprehend pieces. The author's experiences confirm that

recognizing and adopting even just a few of these “leadership patterns” will greatly impact one’s career trajectory.

As technical professionals, we tend to rely, in large measure, on our technical capabilities to get our jobs done – i.e., we focus on these skills almost to the exclusion of all others. Many, if not all, of the projects in our work environment span different disciplines as well as internal and external organizations and functional areas. Since we are compelled to work with our colleagues and our customers to create cost-effective, timely and complex software and hardware systems that add value to the organization, it is highly likely that the quality and character of interpersonal interactions with those colleagues will be more important with respect to achieving career success than technical competency.

By segmenting leadership into four areas (Self, Team, Project and Customer) and identifying “leadership patterns” within each of these areas, the author creates a great operational template that, when applied during the course of a project, improves stakeholder engagement and alignment of project objectives. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of meeting the requirements contained in the Statement of Work within the constraints of time, budget and quality. There are likely to be other benefits as well – the formation of a high performing team and the creation of a more harmonious, optimistic and productive work environment.

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

The author’s approach to segmenting leadership into four clearly defined areas and his subsequent identification of leadership patterns within each of those segments serves to expand the reader’s perspective beyond a particular project role and its technical aspects. Examining every-day, real-world scenarios and then creating solutions within the context of each leadership pattern makes applying the patterns very straight-forward and keenly illustrates how using the patterns positively impacts project outcomes. This methodology also shows that everyone can learn and demonstrate leadership qualities if they choose to do so.

I was heartened by the fact that, over the course of my own career, I have actually used many of the leadership patterns that were mentioned, but I never consciously placed them into a well-structured framework. It is very useful and important that this framework is “open-ended.” With every new project, one can add their own ideas and patterns to each area to grow their leadership capabilities and, by so doing, add more value to their company and the products and services it provides to its customers.

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

This is a great read for the students who want to train in the software profession, as well as for practicing professionals. The book illustrates the importance of why clear communication and aligned collaboration with our colleagues and customers is a

prerequisite for more effectively achieving the objectives of the organization, insuring career growth and enhancing job satisfaction.

## Conclusion

Matt McBride's ideas and approach to dealing with real-world problems associated with the development of complex software and hardware systems, detailed in his new book entitled *Leadership Patterns for Software and Technology Professionals*, provides an excellent operational framework that can be utilized by any software or technology professional to hone their leadership and communication skills in ways that will lead to improved organizational outcomes and personal performance. It is an "open-ended" template and as such, it can be expanded over time as one's experience level grows. It is the author's stated hope that this book will "launch a dialog and that (his) readers will want to participate in and extend these patterns on a regular basis."

---

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.amazon.com/Leadership-Patterns-Software-Technology-Professionals/dp/1508634408>

*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@peworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@peworldjournal.net).*

## About the Reviewer



**Dr. Eldon J. Zorinsky, PMP**

North Texas, USA



**Eldon Zorinsky** is an award-winning technology executive, program director, certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and registered Professional Engineer in the State of Texas. He specializes in building high performance teams of technical and business professionals and leading them in the definition, development and commercialization of new products and technologies.

He received his Doctor of Engineering degree in Electrical Engineering and Master of Science degree in Engineering Management from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He also earned a Master of Science degree in Physics from the University of Missouri at Columbia, MO and a Bachelor of Science degree from Creighton University in Omaha, NE. He holds numerous patents in the areas of semiconductor devices and device isolation and over the course of his career, has successfully led product and technology development and commercialization efforts that generated combined revenue of nearly \$1B.

Eldon is an active member of the Dallas Chapter of PMI and is currently serving as a Workshops Director with the Chapter's Professional Development Group. He is also a member of IEEE, The Engineering Management Society, AAAS, and The American Vacuum Society. Email: [ejzorinsky@gmail.com](mailto:ejzorinsky@gmail.com)