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Fast Forward MBA in Project Management, 5ᵗʰ Ed
Author: Eric Verzuh
Book Review   Reviewer: Jorge Galvan
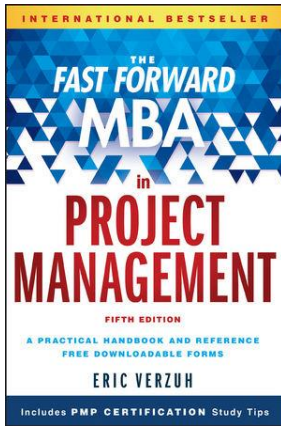
PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: ***The FAST FORWARD MBA in PROJECT MANAGEMENT, fifth EDITION.***

Author: Eric Verzuh

Publisher: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

List Price: $30.00 USA   Format: Soft Cover, 510 pages

Publication Date: Nov 2015   ISBN: 978-1-119-14822-7

Reviewer: **Jorge Galvan, PMP**

Review Date: October 2016

Introduction

The book though extensive is pretty easy to read and enjoyable. The approach seems to be a combination of PMI and some personal approach from the author Eric Verzuh.

It describes project management in a way that emphasizes the role of the project manager even as more important than the methodology itself.

He exposes the product development process in a way that differentiates it very clearly from project management, and the five project success factors he points out to accomplish successful projects are really handy.

The mention and use of the IDEO factors that are used to evaluate potential solutions for a project are gracefully linked to project management.

I like the very useful inclusion and brief explanations about three different approaches to project management based on "Lean Startup", "Agile" and "Stage Gate".

The book then moves into the project life cycle stages and touches different areas of project management that are very much in line with PMI.

The stellar performers and Microsoft project guideline are a really good mix as well as the downloadable forms.

Overview of Book's Structure

The structure of the book in general seems fine and well done from the author's perspective, although with some slight differences from the PMI approach.

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After a good introduction, it brings project initiation and does pretty well with explanations but there is not much mention of the project Charter which I considered an essential part of an initiation process; it is mentioned later in the book though.

He provides a good view on how a project is initiated, by means of an idea or a problem and the analysis that is done to choose which project(s) to carry on. He pushes us to focus on the "why" we are delivering a product, service or result rather than focusing only on delivering it.

The author then goes over the stakeholder analysis, identifying four major roles (Project Manager, Project Team, Management and the Customer) and adding the extended types of stakeholders that may affect the project such as government bodies and organizations of people.

The "write the rules" chapter contains to my perspective the fundamentals of a Project Charter even though he doesn't explicitly mention it. I see somehow confusing how he handles the Project Charter and SOW and the mention he does regarding what PMI favors.

From what I know PMI differentiates SOW (that is used in the Project Chapter) from Project Scope Statement that is done during the Scope Baseline (BS), but the author uses SOW and Project Scope Statement indifferently from my view.

WBS is well explained and the examples are very handy, though it gets a little confusing with the use of "summary tasks" and the definition of a "work package". This of course is based on my knowledge that is primarily from PMI.

The chapters on Risk, Scheduling and Estimating are explained very well and very clear with the again confusing part of differentiating a "work package" from a "summary task".

He continues with the topics of controlling the project, some areas of human resources management, communication and measuring progress, and he ends with a nice chapter for solving common problems.

Last chapters of the book that talk about enterprise project management and requirements engineering are basically to leverage our knowledge of how important project management is for an organization or enterprise. The book finalizes with a brief explanation and tips for the ones interested in pursuing the PMP exam as well as very good guideline to Microsoft Project.

Highlights

The stellar performers are a very creative way of showing in real life what he explains for the chapter, thus giving us a better understanding of what is being read and how it is applicable to real life events. The stellar performers are brief but knowledgeable introduction to some additional methodologies such as Lean Start Up, Agile and Stage Gate.

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For those in the process of taking the PMP exam there are some related questions at the end of most chapters which come in handy for the reader to refresh what has been read.

For sure the guideline for Microsoft Project is a very good addition to the book that personally I see as very useful for me.

All the references and downloadable forms are a plus that we can use to create our own exercises for training purposes or to handle a real project.

Highlights: What I liked!

I very much liked the easy-to-read approach the author took on project management and how he structured it. Even though the book is extensive he made it easy for the reader to get engaged and follow smoothly.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Anybody who wants to embark on a project management profession and even those with the only purpose being to broaden their knowledge about this area.

The book is useful for a project team member that have no knowledge of project management but work in that environment and do tasks and process that are part of the methodology without knowing it. Thus, I would see it as a good lecture for project managers to encourage their teams to read, that should help to build an even more cohesive and committed team.

Conclusion

Pretty good book that emphasizes a more practical approach for real projects.

It takes the reader to the fields of managing a project with every paragraph and adds the stellar petformers to enhance the lecture and the concepts.

A good reasource for project managers to keep handy when dealing with different aspects of ther projects, and especially when the project is coming out of track.

For more about this book, go to: http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1119086574.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; 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 and claim PDUs for PMP recertification. 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 your book reviewed through this program, please contact editor@pmworldjournal.net.

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About the Reviewer

Jorge Galvan, PMP

Texas, USA

Jorge Galvan has extensive experience in the telecom industry working as a software, hardware and infrastructure Engineer for both Core and Radio systems. He has a bachelor's degree in Telecommunications and Electronics Engineering with a minor in Control. He has over 10 years of experience working with projects in different parts of the world and performing different roles such as project team member or technical engineer, as well as project coordinator and SME.

Extensive experience includes different phases of software development projects from feasibility to testing and deployment. Jorge is a member of the Project Management Institute, Dallas Chapter and obtained his PMP certification from PMI in July 2016. He can be contacted at IamJorgeGalvan@gmail.com.