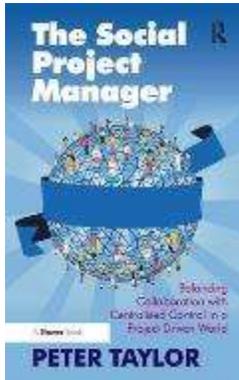


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## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The Social Project Manager***

Author: **Peter Taylor**

Publisher: **Routledge (A Gower Book)**

List Price: US\$47.96      Format: hard cover; 175

Publication Date: 2015 (Gower); 2016 (Routledge)

ISBN: 978-1472452221

Reviewer: **Susan Riewe**

Review Date: January 2017

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### Introduction to the Book

“*The Social Project Manager*” explores the next generation of project management – the marriage of traditional practice with collaboration via social platform tools that mirror the way people are communicating outside of the office. The book’s subtitle, *Balancing Collaboration with Centralised Control in a Project Driven World*, sums up the need to find a balance between formal project management standards and informal real-time collaboration.

The author invited leading providers of social technology products to contribute their thoughts on project management in today’s world, communication and how to integrate tradition with technology. The author inserts comments within these essays, as well as, sharing his own knowledge and social stories as examples.

### Overview of Book’s Structure

This book is organized into six chapters, starting with the evolution of project management, moving on to practicing social project management and becoming a socially mature organization and ending with a list of eleven tips for success.

Each chapter is infused with a mix of essays by providers of social project tools, author knowledge and comments, as well as real world examples. Here is a summary of each chapter:

Chapter one – The Past, the Present and the Possible Social Future – compares traditional project management with Project Management 2.0 (the addition of distributed collaboration). The author then explains in detail how the social aspect is the next evolution of PM and the need to achieve the right balance of social collaboration.

Chapter two – The Challenge of Being a Social Project Manager – defines Social Project Managers as using ‘modern software tools to decentralize specific project processes, but retain the collaborative essentials’. Communications and decisions are visible and real-time, reducing the need for meetings and increasing collaboration, commitment and performance.

Chapter three – The Practical Social Project Manager – delves into the benefits of becoming a social project manager, the increased success of projects, how social fits into the project lifecycle, how it affects the team and how to balance collaboration with centralized control.

Chapter four – The Social Project Manager as a Commercial Force – is a view of the project-based organization selling knowledge and expertise rather than products. The project managers are the firm’s assets, so the communication skills of these managers is key to keeping their clients satisfied and insuring the continuance of the relationship.

Chapter five – The Socially Mature Organization – explains the stages an organization goes through to become socially mature. The end result creates brand advocates, streamlines business processes and improves both product quality and success.

Chapter six – Social Project Management Tips – lists eleven tips for becoming a better social project manager. The team can help with the project socially and will be more invested in the outcome, projects need collaboration, optimizing communication is key, informal conversation is valuable and bringing all your work together into one system creates the visibility needed to enhance collaboration and communication.

### **Highlights: What’s New in this Book?**

This book brings to light the need for project management education and training to offer best practices on managing projects using social tools. For the experienced project manager, learning to manage projects socially is essential to remaining viable in the new ‘social world’.

The author says ‘not rushing to take on board what is ‘hot’ and what those around you might personally recommend is the right approach’. The tools in the marketplace need to be compared to find the best fit for each organization. Find the tool that can be implemented easily, taught simply and will be adopted by the team as effortlessly as possible. Get everyone working in one space with one tool.

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

A few gems that I highlighted as I read (just a sample!):

A social approach to project communication can reduce the amount of time workers spend searching for content by 35%! – McKinsey & Company report

The social project manager is a sharing and team involvement encouraging creature creating a communication flow with appropriate delegated decision making in order to allow the project to progress smoothly and quickly.

Social project management changes the focus from centrally planned management of tasks to the collaborative completion of tasks, directed by a shared project plan.

The social project manager, instead of processing all communications for the team, processes the communications of the team.

When people are ready and willing to share, they communicate more freely, and mistakes and misfires are more quickly identified.

Social means fewer boundaries.

We do more when we understand how our task is contributing towards the greater good rather than just ticking it off in isolation.

Offer your team a reliable way to see all the work that is required, the priorities of all work (both planned and unplanned) and true visibility into who is working on what.

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

PMO Leaders and Project Managers are the targeted audience for this book because the adoption of social project management in any company will stem from the PM organization. As more organizations become socially mature, project managers that understand how to manage socially will have more opportunities than those who do not adopt this method of collaboration and co-creation.

### **Conclusion**

This is a well-written book that packs a lot of information into relatively few pages. I like that the author kept it short and got right to the point – not a lot of extra details to make your mind wander off the intended path.

The subject of the book – the social project manager – is so relevant to our changing modes of communication and the more collaborative, bottom-up approach to managing projects today. This topic needs to be studied by both future and practicing project managers and this book is a good starting point.

*The Social Project Manager*, by Peter Taylor, published by Gower Publishing (England) and Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group (USA); 2012, ISBN 9781472452221; 175 pages, hard cover. More at <https://www.routledge.com/The-Social-Project-Manager-Balancing-Collaboration-with-Centralised-Control/Taylor/p/book/9781472452221>

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

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## About the Reviewer



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**Susan Riewe** has been in the project management field for the past 18 years, and earned certification in February of 2008. Most of her experience has been with IT related projects for a major retailer. She is currently working as an analyst for a pharmacy management company in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Susan may be contacted at: [sriewe@gmail.com](mailto:sriewe@gmail.com)