

## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Leading in Uncertain and Complex Projects: Supporting Structures for Self Management***

Author: **Lars Marmgren & Mats Ragnarsson**

Publisher: Studentlitteratur AB, Lund (Sweden)

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Reviewer: **Charlie Green, PMP**

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### Introduction

This book “Leading in Uncertain and Complex Projects” looks at the problem of how companies often lead large and complex projects and their need for increased efficiency and control in the management of those projects, And the problems it raises where their methods and tactics often result in less control and efficiency.

The authors then present a different way of leading and managing projects. This new strategy is to allow projects to self-organize using a strategy called “game plan” that emphasizes cooperation and overlapping responsibilities for the work required to complete the project through a common dialog and common understanding of the project and its needs to create a common ground for the project.

### Overview of Book’s Structure

The book is divided into 9 chapters. The book starts out with an overview of the problem with traditional project management and the ways projects are managed by many organizations and the problem where managing around risks and minimizing their uncertainty will result in a successful project. Where actually the end result creates an organization that is dehumanizing and destroys the sense of belonging and that profit is its only objective.

The book then in subsequent chapters goes into looking at a different concepts of organizing and leading projects in different ways that will help project managers to lead their teams in self-organizing and allow their team members to take part in creating the goals and objectives and the course of action for organizing their own work while working with others to achieve the desired end results of the project.

## Highlights

The game plan strategy presented in the book is not just theory, but the authors look at two major projects that used the strategy in accomplishing the successful results of those projects. One of the projects was a large construction project, and the other was for the development and testing of a pharmaceutical drug. The two project managers for those projects throughout the book provide examples of how they used the different strategies in their projects and their thoughts of those strategies.

The book talks about leadership and how the project manager needs to look at and organize to promote a self-organizing project team. It also talks about uncertainty and how to deal with it. It addresses the concept of a self-organizing team and what that means and the rules or instructions around what self-organization to ensure the results are achieved. It addresses the game plan and how to design one to guide the team so that it achieves the desired results. The book then talks about thinking together and how the team can create common objectives and create a plan. Then finally everything is brought together to achieve a well-functioning team that is thinking and acting together to complete the project successfully.

## Highlights: What I liked!

I really liked the chapter on uncertainty and how to deal with it. It all comes down to how complex the project is. In any project there are going to be uncertainties. Those uncertainties create risks to the project. Individuals will never know or remember everything there is about planning and organizing a project and when the project team collaborates and shares knowledge and information with each other as a whole instead of as individuals the group learns from each other and problems can be resolved. Ideas are manifested and as Aristotle once said “the whole is more than the sum of its parts”.

## Who might benefit from the Book

Any project manager or project team can learn and benefit from this book, whether a seasoned project manager or someone that is fairly new. The concepts are not new. The authors are re-emphasizing concepts that have been around that work for centuries

## Conclusion

Throughout this book, the authors encourage us to use strategies and techniques that are not new, but project teams tend to get caught up in the task at hand and don't take the time to listen and learn from others. In this book we are reminded of these techniques and are encouraged to use them. I recommend this book. I enjoyed reading it.

For more about this book, go to:

<https://www.studentlitteratur.se/#9789144110349%2FLeading%2Bin%2BUncertain%2Band%2BComplex%2BProjects>

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## About the Reviewer



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**Charlie Green, PMP** has worked as a project manager since 1985. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Texas at Dallas. He holds a Project Management Professional certification. And he currently manages software implementation projects in the Financial Services industry. Previously he has managed new product, business process improvement, business intelligence and system development projects in the financial, telecommunications, information technology industries and military. Charlie is retired from the U.S. Air Force Reserve following a 26 year Air Force career. Charlie is a member of the Dallas, Texas, USA PMI Chapter.

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