
PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Project Management in Practice, 6th Edition***

Authors: **Jack R. Meredith, Scott M. Shafer, Samuel J. Mantel (Deceased)**

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Introduction

Project Management in Practice (6th Edition) provides a detailed technical presentation of project management with “real world” examples of projects that are used to highlight and teach the tools and techniques necessary to manage successful projects and the use of projects to achieve the strategic goals of organizations. As the authors state in their preface, “*Communication from some instructors in these institutions told us they would like a textbook that was shorter and focuses more directly on the 'technical' aspects of project management than those currently available.*” The text references an Instructors’ Manual and Learning Objectives which could be utilized in conjunction with a project management education program. The authors include references to the Project Management Institute’s (PMI®) Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®), with references throughout the eight chapters. Review and discussion questions, and case studies are provided at the end of each chapter. An Appendix section is also included providing a review of the probability and statistics concepts used within the book.

Overview of Book’s Structure

The book is divided into 8 chapters as follows:

1. The World of Project Management
2. The Manager, The Organization, and The Team

3. Project Activity and Risk Planning
4. Budgeting the Project
5. Scheduling the Project
6. Allocating Resources to the Project
7. Monitoring and Controlling the Projects
8. Evaluating and Closing the Project.

The book covers the Project Life Cycle and Chapter 1 provides an overview of the Project Life Cycle and differences between Project Management and General Management. In addition, it includes a discussion regarding Project Selection, Project Management Office and Project Portfolio. Chapter 2 discusses the role of the project manager, their responsibilities, selection of project manager, and fitting projects within the organization. Chapter 3 includes risk management tools and techniques, and project planning including the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). Chapter 4 outlines budget methods, cost estimating and management of budget uncertainty and inherent risk with suggestions for dealing with them. Chapter 5 outlines Scheduling (project plan) and determining the Critical Path for the project. Chapter 6 deals with resource allocation and Chapters 7 & 8 review Monitoring and Controlling the project and evaluating and closing out the project, respectively.

All chapters include references to PMBOK, Best Practices and Risks as margin notations and at the end of each chapter Case Studies and Review-Discussion Questions are provided. As noted, the authors include case studies and include one study that follows the planning, building and marketing of an assisted living facility. This is a valuable means of assuring that readers/students are referring to previous chapters as part of the review/learning process.

Highlights

The Project Management in Practice book provides insight into the world of project management with technical and practical solutions. Chapter one includes a discussion on the role that stress and conflict play in project management. Having been involved in a project management role for over 20 years I found it reassuring to read, *“For the moment, it is sufficient to recognize that projects and conflict are often inseparable companions, an environment that is unsuitable and uncomfortable for conflict avoiders.”* In this role, we are often confronted with stressful situations where we have to be a mediator and make tough decisions.

The book addresses the stress that project managers face and the attributes that are necessary for a project manager to deal with that stress in a productive and professional manner. In particular, Section 2.2 discusses *“Negotiation, Conflict Resolution and Persuasion.”* We are always dealing with grey areas in our role as project leaders and the book provides information regarding the skill set required as the project manager to deal with these issues.

Each chapter includes examples and template references and I found the RACI (Responsible-Accountable-Consult-Informed) Matrix referenced in Chapter 3 a great example of the many tools that can be implemented for project management. The case study relating to the planning, building and marketing an assisted living facility provided at the end of each chapter was informative based on its relationship to the chapter and also showing real life progression of influences and solutions. The authors focus on the triple restraint (Iron Triangle) of time, scope and cost and discuss the impacts when any of these are changed during planning and building phases.

Who might benefit from the Book

The book provides a detailed overview of the project manager's role and includes chapters on risk management, basic scheduling and earned value management. The material reinforces the PMBOK approach, and includes many references, templates and other tools that a project manager can utilize in their day to day work. I believe that both students of project management and practicing project managers would benefit greatly from the text.

Project Managers studying for the PMP exam would also find this material beneficial when used as a secondary study source when used in conjunction with the PMBOK Guide. Reading this prior to taking any preparatory study course for the PMP exam would facilitate a better understanding of the material.

Conclusion

I found the sections dealing with stress and the overview of the world of project management the most relevant and apropos. The segment discussing selection of a project manager would be most helpful to those concerned with selection and/or assessment of potential PMs. The review questions, discussion topics, and case studies are most helpful as both a teaching aid and reinforcement of existing skills.

The book is definitely a technical text and examples provided help with understanding the day to day role as a project manager. I would recommend reading it prior to taking the PMBOK courses as it would assist in understanding the process groups and knowledge areas. Personally, it would have been very helpful in my own preparation for the PMP exam.

For more about this book, go to <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-EHEP003673.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 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@pmworldjournal.net.

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