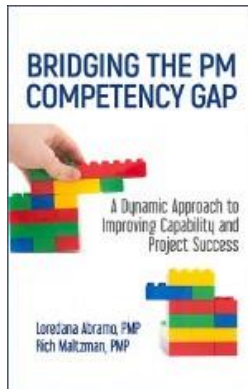


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Bridging the PM Competency Gap: A Dynamic Approach to Improving Capability and Project Success***

Author: **Loredana Abramo, PMP and Rich Maltzman, PMP**

Publisher: J. Ross Publishing

List Price: \$37.95 Format: Hardcover, 294 pages

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Reviewer: **B. K. Gamble, PMP**

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### Introduction

*Bridging the PM Competency Gap* provides a structured approach and practical steps on how to close the competency gap within organizations regardless of their size. Abramo and Maltzman provide several strategic approaches on how to build a sustainable, continuous learning environment.

The two authors have a wealth of experience between them. Their approach to bridging the PM competency gap is thorough, detailed, and very organized. Each chapter provides many helpful tools to illustrate their main points. The strategic approaches that are provided in the book are thoughtful and insightful as each recommendation considers the scalability options for small to large organizations.

### Overview of Book's Structure

This book covers its content in nine chapters. The first chapter provides a definition of what comprises the PM competency and introduces the "The Gap" problem statement. What is it that keeps Project Managers from achieving excellence? A competency gap! The authors define PM Competency as "the ability to successfully and efficiently manage projects with a combination of technical, leadership, strategic, and business management expertise." In discussing the PM competency gap, Abramo and Maltzman reviewed the key areas of the PMI Talent Triangle: Technical, Leadership, and Strategic and Business Management. Leadership was noted as being the most important skill for long-term success. As projects become more complex, strong project leadership skills are even more important to ensure strategic value is delivered to the organization.

In the remaining chapters, Abramo and Maltzman share several strategic approaches and tools that can be used to establish a continuous learning environment for different organization sizes. The book's final chapter provides

feedback from 36 experts regarding the PM competency gap and their recommendations on how address it. Four appendices are also provided for additional reference.

## Highlights

It is important to spend adequate time upfront developing the overall strategic approach. Senior leadership's support is needed to endorse the importance of project management as a discipline. It was noted that while you also need strong support from the middle management level to make competence building an ongoing, active contributor to project success, project managers also need to be aware of their own needs and take responsibility for their own development.

Before you go too far down the path in understanding the PM competency gap in your organization, you must first observe and evaluate your project management staff. There are generational differences in the workplace – age matters! Project Managers tend to reflect the populations from which they are drawn. Different generations do not learn in the same way and are not motivated by the same things. Understanding the mix of Project Managers in your organization's community is important as you strategize on how to build a continuous learning organization.

When addressing which tools are needed for the competency gap there are many options regarding training. However, one size does not fit all situations. Some of the options highlighted include: Formal Training, Knowledge Transfer, and Mentoring Programs.

Once you're ready to execute your strategic approach, the authors stress making sure you know if your bridge is built and working. It's important to know what success looks like so you'll know when you've achieved it. There should be a feedback loop built into your process in order to improve the bridge. The Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle is a great tool for ensuring continuous communication and improvements to the internal competency development process.

## Highlights: What I liked!

I liked the authors' structured approach for bridging the PM competency gap. The content of the chapters were easy to read and follow. Although the techniques are intended for reducing the competency gap within organizations, I found the information useful as an individual practitioner and contributor. The authors drew me in with their first chapter. It was fascinating to learn that project management as a discipline did not start in this millennium! Three projects of extraordinary scope and complexity were reviewed which illustrated the point that project management was a discipline as early as 246 B.C.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Chapter 9, Leveraging Expert Judgement. The authors posed the following questions to 36 experts to gain their wisdom and insights:

1. What are the warning signs that a gap in PM competency exists?

2. Which one or two PM competencies have become more critical to project success over the past ten years, and which will gain importance over the next decade?
3. What solutions do you envision for the development of these PM competencies?

Reading the responses from the experts was enlightening. Anyone reading this book should take the time to review this chapter as these forward-thinking thought leaders provide invaluable insights and ideas for bridging the PM competency gap.

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

Senior and middle project managers who are interested in identifying and closing the PM competency gap within their organization would benefit most from reading this book. Project Managers can also benefit from this book as the authors provide many models and tools that can be used to self-identify and highlight competency gaps and areas of improvement.

### **Conclusion**

*Bridging the PM Competency Gap* provides several strategic approaches for establishing a continuous learning environment to close the gap on project manager competencies. The book provides guidelines for planning, implementing, and assessing the competency development within your organization.

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For more about this book, go to: <http://www.jrosspub.com/bridging-the-pm-competency-gap.html>

*Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the [PMI Alamo Chapter](#). Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Alamo 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 Alamo 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](mailto:editor@pmworldjournal.net).*

## About the Reviewer



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**B. K. Gamble** is currently the HR Training and Development Manager for a non-profit operating foundation in the Texas Hill Country and is a member of the Project Management Institute (PMI Alamo Chapter). B.K's career was focused in the Information Technology arena for over 35 years but she jumped on the Project Management bandwagon 15 years ago.

B. K. has a B.S. in Computer Science, a M.B.A. in Information Systems, and has held the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification since 2001. She has varied interests but considers herself to be a "life-long" learner and seeks opportunities to improve herself by learning new skills and serving others.

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