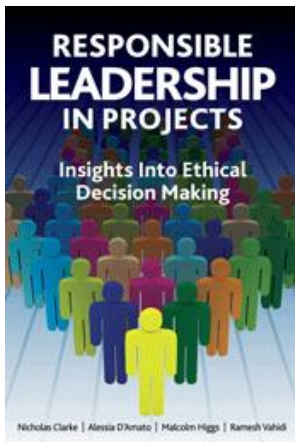


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Responsible Leadership in Projects: Insights Into Ethical Decision Making***

Author: **Nicholas Clarke, Alessia D'Amato, Malcolm Higgs, Ramesh Vahidi**

Publisher: Project Management Institute (PMI ®)

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Introduction

Responsible Leadership in Projects: Insights Into Ethical Decision Making, by Nicholas Clarke, Alessia D'Amato, Malcolm Higgs, and Ramesh Vahidi, investigates how relationships among the project manager, project team members, and “key” stakeholders bring about ethical and/or moral dilemmas during the management of a project. It takes a closer look at how managers’ leadership actions impact the decision-making process in an attempt to resolve ethical and moral dilemmas.

This book brings to the reader’s attention the significant role organizational culture plays in the ethical decision-making process and the importance of extensive stakeholder engagement in contributing to handling ethical issues and dilemmas.

Overview of Book’s Structure

The Chapter 1, “*Executive Summary*”, gives the reader background information about the objectives of the study, how the study was conducted, key findings, and the resulting contributions to theory and practice. This is followed by a short “*Introduction*” (Chapter 2) explaining how a phenomenological approach survey was conducted to map the interrelationships between the various stakeholders in four projects located within the financial industry in the United Kingdom.

Chapter 3 deals with “*Responsible Leadership*” and contains, among other things, a statement regarding a 2009 poll conducted in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain and the United States indicating the percentage of Americans and European adults who believe the behavior of their business leaders is unethical or irresponsible. I think you will be amazed when you see these numbers in the book.

“*Ethics in Project Management*” is addressed in Chapter 4. At this point, the authors give an overview of ethics concepts, contexts, theories, ethical dilemmas, ethical decision making, and behavioral theories they uncovered in their review of project management academic literature. Names and dates of the authors, who produced this literature, are included for the reader who cares to investigate this material further.

After explaining that an ethical decision is a decision “that is both legally and morally acceptable to the larger community”, Chapter 5, *Ethical Decision Making*” addresses individual and situational factors that affect ethical decision making and various ethical decision-making models. Chapter 6 explains the aims of the study and details the methodology used. This is followed by the longest chapter in the book, Chapter 7, describing the findings of the four case studies.

The book wraps up with some general discussion comments and a summary of key findings and conclusions in chapters 8 and 9.

Highlights

This is the first study to investigate how relationships among project managers, team members, and “key” stakeholders bring about ethical or personal conflicts for project managers. In spite of the fact that much has been published about the idea of a code of professional conduct in project management, there is a scarcity of academic studies on ethics in project management.

In project management, relations and shared leadership in the team and larger stakeholder group, is critical to a decision-making process that resolves ethical and moral dilemmas as effectively as possible.

In all four projects, the need for consensus building was the dominant value that appeared to direct decision making and was significantly influenced by the organizational culture. Consensus building involving high levels of stakeholder engagement lead to greater accountability for decision making. Though preferable, as a decision-making strategy, consensus building has its limits.

Significant effort in stakeholder engagement and management plays an important part in resolving ethical dilemmas and making ethical decisions.

Highlights: What I liked!

I particularly liked the fact that a study of this nature was performed. I teach a PMP®/CAPM® certification exam prep course, during which we cover the Project Management Institute’s aspirational and mandatory standards in the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. While our study of the Code explains how we are to conduct ourselves ethically in managing projects, it doesn’t delve into the interpersonal dynamics that take place in ethical and moral dilemma situations and how they impact the decision-making process. This book fills that gap.

Who might benefit from the Book?

I think it's probably obvious to say that all project managers would benefit from reading this book because ethical and moral dilemmas present themselves, to some extent, in most, if not all, projects. Realizing and understanding the many factors that contribute to these dilemmas can help the project manager work through these challenging situations.

Others who would benefit from this book include project sponsors, "key" stakeholders, and members of the project team. Understanding the role relationships and leadership play in making ethical decision would help these individuals produce decisions that instill respect and confidence in their leadership abilities.

Conclusion

The project manager serves a role similar to that of an orchestra conductor. S/he works with all the players involved to produce a project outcome that is deemed a success. It is not unusual for a project manager to encounter a few sour notes, we will call ethical and moral dilemmas, during the performance of the project. Having an insight into ethical decision making, found in *Responsible Leadership in Projects*, will enhance the project manager's ability to get through these challenging times.

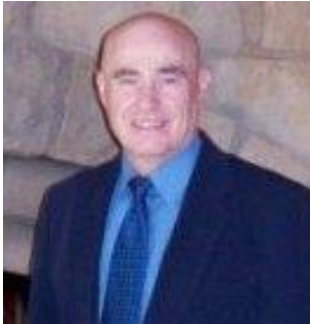
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About the Reviewer



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Les Foley, PMP, MPM, MBA, MA, BS earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and Economics from Culver-Stockton College in 1977, a Master of Arts Degree in Computer Data Management from Webster University in 1985, an MBA Degree in General Business from Amberton University in 1997, and a Master of Project Management Degree from the Keller Graduate School of Management in 2012. While serving at the Air Force Officer Training School (OTS) from '81 to '85, he attended the Academic Instructor School, conducted the OTS train-the-trainer program for three years, and earned his Master Instructor rating. Les completed his military career with the Air Force in 1990 with the rank of captain and moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area.

Over the past 27 years, Les has worked in the eyewear, copier, aerospace, defense, and audio-visual industries in DFW; most recently, as a PMP Prep Class Boot Camp instructor for Rebus Business Solutions and as a Project Manager at Whitlock--an audio-visual integrator in Flower Mound, TX. He earned his Project Management Professional (PMP®) certification in August 2005.

Les began teaching Project Management Professional (PMP®) certification exam prep classes in 2006 while employed at Elbit Systems of America, LLC in Fort Worth, TX and produced over a dozen new PMPs for that company. Les and his wife Denise started D and L Training in 2011. He has been teaching PMP®/CAPM® Cert Exam Prep classes at White's Chapel in Southlake, TX, for the unemployed, since 2013. This class has produced over 175 PMPs to date.

In his spare time, Les likes to read, listen to classical music and exercise. He is passionate about teaching, project management, and helping others to be successful.