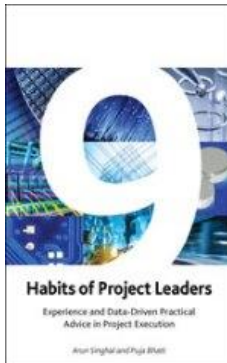


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***9 Habits of Project Leaders: Experience and Data-Driven Practical Advice in Project Execution***

Author: **Arun Singhal PE, PMP and Puja Bhatt, PMP**

Publisher: Project Management Institute

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Reviewer: **Kimberly S. Varner, PMP** Review Date: May 2018

Introduction

Sometimes project managers focus on managing the triple constraints of scope, time, and budget to the extent that they may miss an opportunity to score a real win! While the customer and the project manager may consider the project a success, what about everyone else? Will the project team and the organization/executive management also consider the project a real win? Maybe, maybe not! The *9 Habits of Project Leaders: Experience and Data-Driven Practical Advice in Project Execution*, is a research-based book, which explains how project managers can grow into project leaders who use nine habits to develop much-needed soft skills. Authors Singhal and Bhatt suggest that if a project manager can develop these nine underutilized habits, he or she will be able to engage ALL of their stakeholders, contribute to the project's success, and score a win for everyone!

Overview of Book's Structure

The *9 Habits of Project Leaders: Experience and Data-Driven Practical Advice in Project Execution*, is a 65-page, pocket-sized book that is a simple read. Honestly, you can read the book in less than one hour and gain some practical nuggets of information. I recommend reading it at least two times so that you can begin to think about how best to apply the nine habits to your work and make them...a habit!

The first section of the book is the preface, which is a must-read piece. The preface will set the reader up with pertinent information on the following: the intended audience, the definition of a habit and how the nine habits are tailored to project management, the importance of soft skills as they relate to the habits, the goal and importance of a project manager becoming a true project leader, and the premise of the "Triple Win" (Win-Win-Win) concept. I can't emphasize enough the importance of this section, which offers a solid foundation for one's understanding.

Each habit has its own chapter and includes a title that will give the reader a clear directive or action item. For example, Habit One (Chapter 1) is "Take complete

ownership of the project” and Habit Two (Chapter) 2 is “Enable core team to make decisions.” The chapters are approximately three to five pages long and include the recommended habit, real-life examples (based on Singhal and Bhatt’s research) of why a habit should be followed, and the business strategy that promotes the habit. The business strategy sells the habit and seals the deal on why the habit is critical to the stakeholders’ win.

The first appendix includes a list of the authors’ collective project management experience, which represents 20 diverse projects, worth \$5 million to \$20 billion, in the United States and abroad. The second appendix is the data collection and analysis methodology, which outlines the authors’ 20-year research for this book.

Highlights

In life, some habits are negative and hard to break; however, the nine habits in this book are positive and will more than likely be beneficial for project managers. Seems simple? If done correctly, it appears simple enough. Rooted in research, the nine habits were developed by interviewing experienced management professionals, directors, and core team members. The authors hope project managers will consciously incorporate these habits into their management skills and ultimately become project leaders who think about and work with their customers, their teams, and their organizations to ensure success.

Authors Singhal and Bhatt say that when used together, the nine habits guarantee positive outcomes. The habits include: 1) Take complete ownership of the project, 2) Enable core team to make decisions, 3) Finish every meeting with an action item list, 4) Plan from start to finish, 5) Work the plan from start to finish, 6) Don’t just say it. Document it and share it, 7) Limit surprises, 8) Celebrate project milestones, and 9) Set up a project recognition system. When reading the habits with their respective business drivers (See summary on page 49), Figure 4), one can understand why the authors guarantee success, because the habits build communication and winning relationships across all stakeholders.

A major highlight of the book is that the nine habits align with the 10 core Knowledge Areas of the PMBOK® Guide (5th edition). Specifically, they align with the Project Communications Management and Project Stakeholder Management knowledge areas. This emphasizes the importance of effective and consistent communication between project managers and stakeholders, as well as the necessity to manage stakeholders’ expectations.

Highlights: What I liked!

I really liked this “fun-sized” book, because it is small enough to fit into a small bag, it is a quick read, and more importantly, it offers very practical information that brings the importance of soft skills and a positive character, to light. The authors were able to synthesize two decades of research into useful information that is in alignment with the PMBOK® Guide Knowledge Areas. That is a plus in my book!

While I haven't memorized the nine habits and their business strategies verbatim, they are simple enough to adopt. After reading this two times, I know that my goal is to work toward being a project leader (people leader) who uses these habits to ensure greater success for everyone.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Project managers at all three levels of the Project Manager Maturity Model (See Preface, page vii) will benefit from the book. First, the "Foundational Project Manager," who focuses on scope, time, and budget, will learn that they can grow as project managers and their skills and focus will need to expand so that they become more business savvy. Then, the "Business-Savvy Project Manager," who examines strategic value and financial value, will learn the importance of ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged and contribute to project success. Finally, for anyone who has reached the level of Project Leader, which is the ultimate goal, the book will serve as a reminder of the Triple Win across stakeholders.

Conclusion

The *9 Habits of Project Leaders: Experience and Data-Driven Practical Advice in Project Execution* is an excellent book because it takes the project manager's mind out of the daily, technical grind and reminds them of the soft skills needed to help ensure a project's success. Delivering high-level deliverables within scope, on time, and within budget is important, but "how" a project manager does so is just as important. The nine habits will help project managers zero in on those character-building steps that make them conscious of all stakeholders' needs and lead a winning project that will benefit everyone.

For more about this book, go to:

<http://marketplace.pmi.org/Pages/ProductDetail.aspx?GMProduct=00101598101>

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About the Reviewer



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Kimberly Varner, PMP has more than 23 years of writing, public relations, marketing, event, and project management experience – as well as deep experience designing and conducting outreach to underserved populations. Over the course of her career, she has developed communications plans and content for clients across the health, education, safety, technology, medical, sports, and entertainment industries.

Kim earned her Master of Arts in journalism from the University of Maryland at College Park, and previously earned a Bachelor of Arts in mass media arts from Hampton University. Kim obtained her Project Management Professional (PMP)[®] Certification in March 2018.