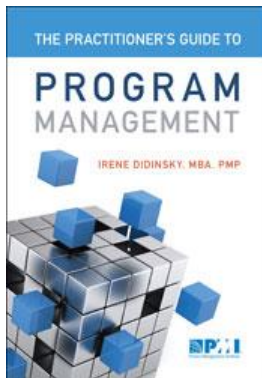


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The Practitioner's Guide to Program Management***

Author: **Irene Didinsky, MBA, PMP**

Publisher: PMI

List Price: \$39.95 Format: Softcover, 235 Pages

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Reviewer: **David Kressin PMP** Review Date: June 2018

Introduction

I can say from experience that most people do not really understand what Program Management is, nor what Program Managers do. I took a survey at my place of work the other day and was surprised at how little people understood what Program management was about. If nothing else, you need to read this book to solidify what Program Management is and how it helps a company. But, that is only chapter 1.

Every program Manager, Potential Program Manager or just Mid-Level Manager will take away much more than the time it takes to read this book. Didinsky eliminates years of trial and error give us a path to success. I have already applied several of the formulas and tools provided in this book to my current project.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book very much structured like a text book, with the concepts and definitions at the start, the Program Management life-cycle, processes, tools and formulas in the middle and future planning and summarization at the end. Any teacher could pick this book up and use it as a basis for a Program Management class. The book is that well-structured and that complete.

Most books you read, each chapter is similar in size and provides one key message. Didinsky does stay with strong messages with each chapter but spends the time where it is needed. Chapter 7 is only a few pages where chapter 8 is 4 times the size of chapter 7. Actually, I really like this. Give me the information and detail where it makes sense and is needed.

Because there is so much work behind project management (Training Classes, Books, Our own Experiences, etc.) every manager project or not understands and can anchor to these concepts. Didinsky use this base in Project Management to

drive home the major points behind Program Management. She does this by providing relevant comparisons throughout the book.

I have said this about other books like this. But, the book does start out slow with comparisons between portfolio, program and project management. Good things to know but a bit dry. The real meat of this book in my opinion starts with chapter 7. So, please keep reading. You won't be disappointed.

Highlights

In a very few pages chapter 7 lays out a comprehensive view of the full life cycle of Program Management. Just when you're thinking, wow the lights came on and I am really starting to understand Program Management, chapter 8 comes in takes it to another level. Finally, chapter 9 comes in with the "Mechanisms to successful Deliver a Program". Chapter 9 walks through each step a Program Manager takes and provides the needed tools and formulas needed to plan, monitor and manage that step. I can see these pages will be torn and tattered over the years as Program Managers return back to the book for reminders on this formula, or that concept or that tool. Some of these concepts and tools have taken me years to discover and Didinsky has them here for everyone. I believe that this is the reason to read this book. Thank you, Irene Didinsky!

Many books I have read in the past on this and other subjects like this provide a list of all the tools and process available and forces you to decide which one is best. Several years and Programs later I have the answer. Didinsky is willing to let us tap into her experiences (wins and losses) and knowledge and narrow down the list to only those processes and tools needed for success. This allows us to bypass the years of trial and error and jump right into program management with proven tools and processes. What I would have given for this book years ago when I started managing my first Program.

By the way, "Mechanisms" is Didinsky's term. But, I really like it and will continue to use it going forward. Mechanisms.

Highlights: What I liked!

First and foremost, I finally have a definition and chart (not created by me) that explains the difference between Project, Program and Portfolio Management. I have so many places where this will come in handy.

Second and more importantly, I have a proven step by step process, templates, formulas and reports - mechanisms to ensure future Program successes. I have added the Work Burndown report for displaying progress against potential work to my daily presentations to better display true progress. And the book has brought back so many of the formulas that I used as a project manager such as budget and forecast variance that seemed too simple to be used on a Program. The book as brought them back and showed me how they apply in Program Management

process. No matter how experienced we are we will come away with something here.

Understand, this book only establishes a path toward success, it still takes a committed Program Manager to properly apply the concepts, processes and mechanisms to get to that success.

Who might benefit from the Book?

With so few books out there on Program Management I think this book should be read by all Program Managers, Potential Program Managers and Mid-Level managers. And I specifically believe that this book should be a required reading for mid-level project managers and mid-level managers that are trying to understand where and who they will be in the future. Program Management is the logical next step for any experienced Project Manager. It makes sense for them to understand the differences and similarities before stepping into the job. These managers are in the best position to glean, understand and apply the concepts, processes and mechanisms provided in this book.

Conclusion

As I stated in the introduction, to say that this book sheds light in an area that has long been murky at best is an understatement. This book provides so much more for Program Management. It provides a comprehensive step by step set of processes and Mechanisms to ensure a Program Manager gets and stays on the road to successful Program Management.

As it states in the name this is not a book about Program Management. This is a Practitioner's guide to Program Management. This is a tool that Program Managers will reference over and over again as they work their way through the Program Management life cycle.

For more about this book, go to:

<https://marketplace.pmi.org/Pages/ProductDetail.aspx?GMProduct=00101599401>

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. 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@peworldjournal.net.

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David Kressin, PMP is a senior program manager in the retail and wholesale logistics industry specializing in improving warehouse strategic and tactical operations, labor and systems efficiencies. He has worked for over 35 years managing resource efficiency improvements and logistics, transportation, warehouse management software implementations in the retail and wholesale warehousing environments. David's concentration is in the high volume grocery, food and drug industries. He has successfully planned, implemented, and managed several strategic projects to improve warehouse and logistics efficiencies around the world. For the past 20 years he has been working as an independent consultant. David Kressin can be contacted at Dave_kressin@hotmail.com