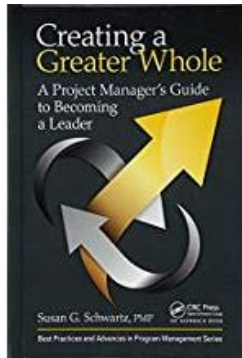


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Creating a Greater Whole – A Project Manager's Guide to Becoming a Leader***

Author: **Susan G. Schwartz, PMP**

Publisher: CRC Press (An Auerbach Book)

List Price: \$53.80      Format: Hardcover, 199 pages

Publication Date: 2018      ISBN: 978-1-138-06405-8

Reviewer: **John Poulos, PMP**      Review Date: September 2018

### Introduction

The author – Susan G. Schwartz, a consultant, trainer and practitioner in project management, leadership and organizational change – presents a comprehensive guide to help project managers on their leadership development journey. The book summarizes a broad and diverse collection of tools – strategies, frameworks, models and guidelines – assembled through extensive research by the author, to help project managers navigate this journey.

A foundational theme of this book is that a leader's strength and effectiveness rest on his/her ability to motivate and integrate the efforts of collaborative teams to achieve a shared vision and objectives. An allied core theme is the need for continuous learning – experienced project managers don't always have the answers, but they learn from their mistakes and always seek to learn and improve their skills and capabilities.

### Overview of Book's Structure

Chapter 1 (What is Leadership?) focuses on the main attributes of leadership – humility, integrity, confidence, empathy and, at its core, trust – organized as the Diamond Leadership Model.

Chapters 2-8 explore a range of topics central to leadership development, along with supporting frameworks and models that managers can apply to address frequently encountered situations and challenges.

Chapter 9 (Leaders are Human Too) concludes with a discussion of the human aspects of leadership, including a closing statement on the importance of seeking life balance as a key ingredient to strong and effective leadership.

While following a general thread, the chapters are largely self-contained and the reader can explore sections in any order.

## Highlights

A valuable contribution to interested readers is the remarkably diverse and comprehensive collection of frameworks and models outlined throughout the book. The author provides succinct summaries of these tools and frameworks, and effectively links them to the concepts presented in each section, leaving the reader to select those of greatest interest and relevance, relying on the Bibliography to explore them in greater depth.

To help the reader understand and internalize each concept and framework, the author includes “Consider and Deliberate” sections throughout the book. These reflective exercises are lists of questions the reader can use to connect to their particular experience, and to think through how the concepts might be applied in future situations for greater leadership effectiveness.

Given the diversity of supporting frameworks, it is not realistic – nor does the author attempt – to consolidate these various tools into a single unified framework. Nevertheless, she does establish linkages between various models, where synergies are meaningful and useful.

## Highlights: What I liked!

I appreciated the comprehensiveness and clarity of presentation of the leadership development guidance and tools. Examples and illustrative situations are drawn from the author’s experience, interviews and numerous public sources. They can be thought provoking and insightful as you project them against your personal experience and context.

The “Consider and Deliberate” exercises provide an effective technique for the reader to reflect on key concepts and derive lessons to strengthen one’s leadership skills and capabilities. Coming back to and updating your notes periodically can serve to observe progress on the leadership development journey.

## Who might benefit from the Book?

Any project manager (and even managers in general) can benefit from the guidance and insights in this book. The lengthier an individual’s experience, the more they can relate to the concepts by means of the reflective exercises, but even the most junior practitioner will derive valuable insights and benefit from this catalog of leadership development frameworks, selecting and adopting those most relevant to their situation

and journey. The book encourages continuous learning and provides a plethora of sources to explore concepts and techniques in greater depth.

## **Conclusion**

Effective leadership is a prized yet intangible quality in project managers. As you navigate along your own leadership journey through practical experience, this book can serve as an ongoing source of guidance and continuous learning, one to draw from periodically to reinforce guidance and assess your progress.

The wide range of references – including the Lego Movie, “Driving off to Abilene”, Shakespeare, Al Capone and the Laotian monk Xieng Mieng – make for an interesting and entertaining read.

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For more about this book, go to <https://www.crcpress.com/Creating-a-Greater-Whole-A-Project-Managers-Guide-to-Becoming-a-Leader/Schwartz/p/book/9781138064058>

*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. 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



### **John Poulos, PMP**

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**John Poulos** has over thirty-five years of experience providing guidance on the effective use of information technology while delivering business-driven, technology-based solutions to a wide range of private and public sector organizations. As Senior Director of Infrastructure, Cloud and Security at NTT DATA Services, he managed strategic projects for NTT DATA/ICS leadership. In addition, he delivered infrastructure and IT strategy consulting services to corporate and government clients.

In his last assignment, John led a global project to migrate 30,000 employees of a company recently acquired by NTT DATA from their original end-user computing environment to the standard NTT DATA PC image and SW configuration. In prior positions, John provided IT consulting services across various industries and geographical regions. He managed complex projects for clients in private enterprise, higher education and government. John holds E.E. and Engineering Management degrees from Southern Methodist University, MIT, and The George Washington University.

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