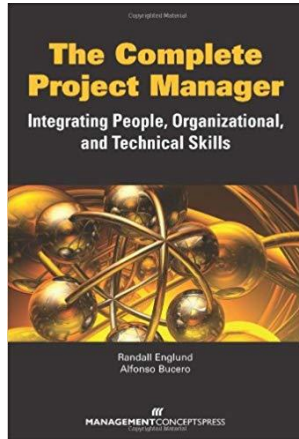


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The Complete Project Manager: Integrating People, Organizational, and Technical Skills***

Authors: **Randall Englund, Alfonso Bucero**

Publisher: Management Concepts, Inc.

List Price: \$58.16

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### Introduction

The Complete Project Manager book outlines the variety of soft project management skills necessary for successful project management and shows the complexity of efficient project management. Project managers' role is more than defining schedules, identifying risks, and engaging stakeholders; it's about leadership, negotiations, fun, change management and so many other soft skills.

The authors, Randall Englund and Alfonso Bucero, two former senior project managers at Hewlett Packard, emphasize areas that make a project manager complete. They share their experiences and use them as examples throughout the book. From that perspective, The Complete Project Manager is a great blend of principles and real life experience. Key project management concepts are covered in simple but thoughtful manners that bring the reader to authors' day to day project management experience.

### Overview of Book's Structure

The book highlights key components of a complete project manager described metaphorically as a "complex molecule". Similarly to how organic compounds are structurally diverse, project management is the application of knowledge, skills and techniques to execute projects effectively and efficiently. The book is a guide of how to build your own combination of "molecules" as your project management skill set.

The Complete Project Manager emphasizes how to integrate key people, organizational and technical skills. The authors outline the multitude of skill areas a complete project manager should leverage to be successful.

In the book are described and exemplified twelve of soft project management skills: 1) *Leadership* – be visionary; 2) *Personal Skills* – consider people interaction; 3) *Humor* – bring FUN on the agenda; 4) *Project Management Skills* – utilize PMI's Project Management Body of Knowledge; 5) *Environment Skills* – create project-friendly environment conditions; 6) *Organizational Skills* – execute projects in “green” organizations rather than “toxic” ones; 7) *Negotiating Skills* – engage in negotiations; 8) *Political Skills* – be politically sensitive; 9) *Conflict Management Skills* – embrace constructive contention; 10) *Sales Skills* – sale the value of services and processes; 11) *Change Management Skills* – understand change management process; 12) *Customer Knowledge* – apply servant leadership skills.

## Highlights

I really enjoyed how the authors of *The Complete Project Manager* portrait project managers' role as being a blend of skills related to people, technical skills and culture. A project manager in order to be successful covers this entire spectrum. The authors allocate a good chunk of their journey to soft personal skills. The importance of relationships, networking, and political awareness is crucial for a complete project manager. It takes a lot farther than simply being technical competent or intelligent; it's how one relates and persuades the relationship with others. As per this Chinese proverb, “The smart man knows everything; the wise man knows everyone”.

As a project manager, one should strive to operate effectively in any type of environment. Other than positional power and personal power the authors highlight the authority of competence is when you are really good at your job and team members reach out to you for suggestions. The idea with authority of competence is to work really hard and maintain your work standards at the highest. That way competency overpasses any type of organizational culture influences.

Another important highlight of the book that caught my attention relates to decision making. As the authors outline, the worst decision is the decision to not make any decision. To be successful, projects need to continuously move forward. Project managers need to ensure that decisions are made effectively and that any decision is clearly documented and sent to the project sponsors and decision makers. Decision making is critical for successful projects and project managers need to ensure of a continuous efficient decision making during any project.

## Highlights: What I liked!

*The Complete Project Manager* covers a variety of concepts any project manager can find useful to absorb. Of the multitude of examples a few outlined below got my attention and I consider them inspiring for a project manager.

I liked how the authors made references to the importance of humor as part of project management success. Obviously people work and perform better when they are smiling. Humor can be used to facilitate interaction or in case of sensitive interactions. Projects flow better and more accomplished when people have fun doing whatever they are doing. Humor at the right time and right place can lead to better relationships

among team members. Humor could also be a two-edged sword, but if used correctly can get more engagement from team members. One should be aware of cultural differences when using humor too. The overall idea is that a good-humored work environment is essential for projects to succeed.

How to achieve results giving up control was another topic I liked in *The Complete Project Manager* book. The goal to every project is to achieve results. Onerous controls inhibit achieving results because they demotivate and limit how people approach creative work. In project-based work, managers may need to give up control to achieve results. The paradox is that managers often need to give up control to get successful projects and achieve business objectives. Then if the results are more important, the cost then is giving up control.

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

The *Complete Project Manager* would be beneficial for any of the below:

Project, program and portfolio managers regardless of their level of seniority might benefit from *The Complete Project Manager* relating to the way the book stands out as a project management toolkit.

Project management consultants could use the book as a guide on the seminars and/or classes they facilitate.

Project sponsors and other executives could find useful tips on project managers' areas of focus.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude the book, I would start with a powerful statement in the book's preface "Successful projects are done by skilled project managers and teams, supported by effective sponsors ". The authors define the profile of a skilled project manager and *The Complete Project Manager* book is a great place to find those soft skills required for running a successful project.

The book provides insights over easy to understand, universal, powerful and immediately applicable project management concepts. *The Complete Project Manager* combines technical, behavioral, and systems thinking approach to project management and flavors it with unique examples that have universal appeal. It's a refreshing, practical, motivational, and useful guide.

It was a pleasure reading through the real life experiences of authors' journeys. The book surfaces as a self-study guide and can be used as a reference to refresh thinking or gain new insights. It's a storytelling approach where concepts are grounded in real-life experiences.

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.oreilly.com/library/view/the-complete-project/9781567263831/>

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## About the Reviewer



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Valentina Rada's professional experience includes twenty years of experience in market research, retail and restaurant industries as research analyst and project manager. She is a Project Management Professional and an Agile Certified Practitioner. She has a Master in Business Administration from the University of the Incarnate Word. She is currently a Senior Project Manager for the City of San Antonio in Texas.

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