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PMI-PBA Exam Practice Test and Study

Author: Brian Williamson
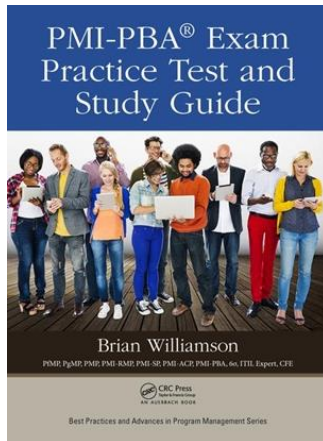Book Review   Reviewer: Richard Gower

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: **PMI-PBA Exam Practice Test and Study Guide**

Author: **Brian Williamson**

Publisher: CRC Press

List Price: $72.95

Format: Hard Cover, 402 pages

Publication Date: 2018   ISBN: 978-1-138-05447-9

Reviewer: **Richard Gower**

Review Date: December/2019

Introduction

The PMI Professional Business Analyst certification is earned through meeting the experience and education requirements and passing a 200-question, multiple-choice test, the PMI-PBA exam. This book helps candidates prepare for the exam by:

This is a large, hard cover book with over 400 pages. It is sturdy and well bound.

The author, Brian Williamson, has considerable experience at the PMI exams, having achieved certification in PMP, RMP, SP, ACP, PBA, PgMP, PfMP as well as Six Sigma, ITIL and CFE. He is an Executive Director of PMO, serves on the Post University graduate business school project management degree program advisory board, is a PMI subcommittee member for the Standard for Risk Management in Portfolios, Programs, and Projects, and is the lead trainer for PMO Advisory. Obviously, he is no stranger to preparing and taking the PMI exams

Overview of Book's Structure

One of the introductory sections discusses the layout of the book and provides a comprehensive approach to preparing for the exam:

1. Read other material (PMI-PBA Handbook and other documents)
2. Read one of the domain chapters in this book and reread the supporting material
3. Practice the exercises and do the 20-question domain quiz
4. Repeat for each domain

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5. Take the final practice exam and review and understand the answers
6. Take the provided online 4-hour sample test and review the answers

The first chapter introduces business analysis and requirements management and discusses the roles the project manager and business analyst play in a project and dives into the business analyst's tasks.

The following five chapters cover the five domains in which the exam questions are allocated:

1. Needs Assessment
2. Planning
3. Analysis
4. Traceability and Monitoring
5. Evaluation

Each chapter provides study hints, a list of the tools and techniques and output broken down by major topic covered by the domain, exercises and games to help memorize key features, 20 practice multiple choice questions, a blank answer sheet for filling out, and the answers describing both the correct answer and why, a reason why the other answers are incorrect and a reference to the topic allowing further reading.

Chapter 7 is a discussion on the PMI and the PMI-PBA credential, how to apply for the exam, a discussion of the fees and how to maintain the credential. The author has done an excellent job of pulling information from the Examination Content Outline and the PMI-PBA Handbook and putting it together in a helpful, understandable manner.

Chapter 8 provides a plan for preparing for the exam, discussing the different tools to learn and study (references, flash cards, memory games, etc.), a repeat of how to use this book, recommended reading, and a detailed 65-day study plan.

Chapter 9 describes how to prepare for the exam day and how to approach the taking of the exam.

The remainder of the book is made up of a 200-question practice exam, blank answer sheets, and the answers describing both the correct answer and why, and a reason why the other answers are incorrect. The book ends with a section of acronyms, a bibliography and the index.

Highlights

The book provides a simple 65-day study plan to approach the PMI-PBA exam, identifying other resources to read prior to working through the sample exam questions. I found it this very beneficial to read the Introduction (Chapter 1), the background to PMI and the PMI-PBA credential (Chapter 7) and Preparing for the Exam prior to working on the questions, and then following the plan to aid my study

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and retention of the material before starting the multiple choice questions. However, if you have already done the study work or participated in any of the face-to-face or online training, the book would work well purely to identify how much of the material you have already retained.

The chapters on the domains include exercises and fun memory games to help with the memorization of key knowledge and sequences. By going back and reviewing the exercises and repeating the memory games, the material becomes second nature.

The book provides information on what knowledge is needed and pointers where to find this information in referenced documents. The book is a study guide highlighting the key knowledge needed to successfully understand each of the domains to pass the PMI-PBA exam.

Following each domain chapter is a list of 20 practice questions in the same format as the questions on the exam. Each question is typically several sentences long describing a scenario followed by 4 possible answers. After the 20 questions is the answer key, where the question is repeated, the correct answer identified and the rationale for that answer. The incorrect answers are marked with a reason why they are incorrect and then there are links to documentation or reference materials regarding the question topic allowing further review and study. The questions are challenging as at least two answers are typically very similar and the correct answer is often the most applicable answer.

The way the answers keys are written make this section a useful tool in reviewing the questions and answers with a good explanation for the correct answer.

The format of the domain questions and answers is followed in the 200-question practice exam at the end of the book. The author recommends that you time the exam to 4 hours to simulate the real exam conditions.

The author also provides an online practice exam that simulates the actual PMI-PBA exam. The test exam is timed and provides you an opportunity to properly prepare for the exam.

I am working my way through the recommended study plan and have not yet reached that stage of my study to try all the exams in the book nor to take the PMI-PBA exam to compare the question types. I am enjoying working through the program using the book as a study guide.

Who might benefit from the Book?

This book is aimed at anyone hoping to take and pass the PMI-PBA Exam. This audience will primarily be those fulfilling the role of business analysis within a company, people working with projects and business operations. The skills are also fundamental to many project managers who also must act as business analysts,

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especially within smaller companies where employees wear many hats. Anyone who wants the tools to, and understand the processes to, ensure that the customer's problems are understood, the requirements are clearly documented, and the delivered solution is successfully received by the customer will benefit from studying for the PMI-PBA exam. This book will help you navigate the tools, techniques, processes and terminology to better understand the material.

Conclusion

The PMI-PBA Exam Practice Test and Study Guide by Brian Williamson is a useful tool in preparing for the PMI-PBA exam. It provides a 65-day study plan that can be used to plan for the exam, identifying the topics of study and the sources of information. The key topics of the 5 domains (Needs Assessment, Planning, Analysis, Traceability and Monitoring, and Evaluation) are identified and sample practice questions are provided for each domain as well as a simulation 200-question exam. The correct answers to the questions are provided, together with a description of why the answer is correct.

The book can be used as part of a study program or can be used to practice answering PMI-PBI exam-style questions. A lot of the information in the book can be found searching around online. However the author has done an excellent job of pulling together the information for you allowing you to focus on the task at hand – earning the PMI-PBA certification.

For more about this book, go to: https://www.crcpress.com/PMI-PBA-Exam-Practice-Test-and-Study-Guide/Williamson/p/book/9781138054479

Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the PMI Alamo Chapter. Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Alamo 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 Alamo 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.com.

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About the Reviewer

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Richard Gower has worked in the software industry for over 30 years, specializing in software development, business intelligence and data analytics. His experience includes software development, business analysis, project management, and product development. He is a Project Management Professional and has a M.S in Data Analytics from UTSA. He is currently the VP of Information for E.J. Ward.

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