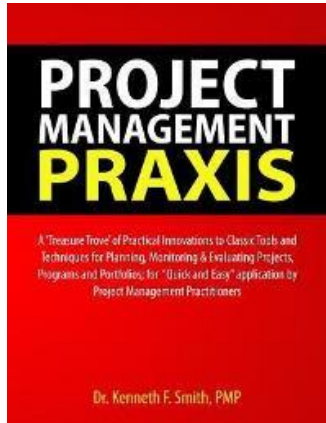


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Project Management PRAXIS***

Author: **Dr. Kenneth F. Smith, PMP**

Publisher: Central Books Supply, INC.

List Price: \$ 65.00

Format: Paperback, 358 pages

Publication Date: 2018

ISBN: 9781722460082

Reviewer: **Swati Shah**

Review Date: February 2020

### Introduction

This book is a compilation of “Best Practices” for planning, monitoring, managing and evaluation of projects and programs (to some extent portfolios as well). It provides an in-depth overview of the Classical Project Management tools and techniques available during the early 20<sup>th</sup> as well as the current era of Project Management.

The author, Dr. Smith, has diverse experience as an analyst & system specialist with the US Department of Defense, Senior Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and through his involvement as an itinerant project consultant with the international development donor community – including the World Bank, African Development Bank, the United Nations, and the Asian Development Bank. Every chapter of the book reflects the plethora of knowledge Dr. Smith has gained throughout his career as a long-time member of the Project Management Institute (PMI); a practitioner, researcher-evaluator, manager, advisor, consultant, and instructor/facilitator in project management. He has developed the Project Management ‘Tool Kit’ as an aid to make project management decisions and to evaluate project performance. This toolkit available to purchase separately.

### Overview of Book’s Structure:

The book consists of 10 chapters with 358 pages. The book is a recapitulation of the author’s “Treasure Trove” – his perspectives and his created and/or adapted Project Management Tools and Techniques.

### Chapter-by-Chapter Review

Chapter 1 primarily covers historical journey of the Critical Path Method and the several related tools and techniques for planning, scheduling, monitoring, and evaluation. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, these tools and practices were used first by

(or for) the U.S. Military, then subsequently honed for broader use. The top three are: Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), Gantt/Bar with Milestones Charts, and Critical Path Method. It is intriguing to see the growth from manual data computation, Plan-a-log kit in a suitcase, typewriters, Spirit and Ink copiers, IBM 7090, Fortran 4, Primavera, to MS Project. This chapter gives you an appreciation for the fact that Project Management has been around for a while and has progressed over time!

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the EVM (Earned Value Management) with detailed discussion of Primary “Driver” indicators, “Derivative Indices”, “Derivative Values” and “Derivative Percentages” indicators. The author highlights some unique limitations of the monitoring and measuring project performance.

Chapter 3 focuses on projects containing repetitive or iterative processes. The Line of Balance (consists of Production flow plan, an objective chart, and a Progress Status Chart) can plan and monitor such projects more efficiently, economically, and effectively.

Chapter 4 outlines the Logical Framework (Logframe) – a systematic tool consisting of a matrix which provides an overview of a project’s Goal/Objective, the purpose, the expected outputs, and the activities. It also captures the Glossary of terms that relate a Program’s and/or Project’s Deliverables with its Organizational Sponsor’s Strategic Vision & Mission.

Chapter 5 talks about the authors’ developed/designed diagnostic tool and technique – “Smith Grid”. There is no magic formula to guarantee harmony in teamwork. However, to build effective Project Teams it is important to understand that all people are different and carry different personality types with their unique working styles.

Chapter 6 concentrates on the Risk analysis and management, a vital part of project planning to drive a project to success. Dr. Smith provides abundant details on risk assessment metrics, activity time estimating, decision-tree analysis, benefit: cost analysis, cost: effectiveness analysis, and the Financial-Social-Political-Environment (FSPE) Index.

Chapter 7 sheds light on the classic matrices, techniques and formulas for establishing targets for project indicators.

Chapter 8 focuses on the Vulnerability assessment (VA) – the evaluation of an organizational and program or project’s financial management structures, work processes and vulnerability to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. Periodic VA testing is one of the several steps in risk analysis. The author also details VULNAS, i.e. interactive template checklist and judgmental rating system based on auditing guidelines.

Chapter 9 describes a detailed and systematic evaluation system for Quality-at-Entry assessment (QAE) of a Project Proposal. The QAE process involves a review of all the key elements which may influence the project objectives, including its design,

appropriateness of project content, realism of project management measures, risk management measures, etc.

Chapter 10 has an in-depth overview of the Evaluation Process Group with systematic tools and techniques for assessing project performance. It is very crucial to understand various evaluation approaches and models to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of projects.

## **Highlights**

Data analysis is an integral part of project planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation. Lack of awareness and/or use of appropriate data, tools, and techniques correctly can become a barrier for any project success. To prevent and/or overcome these barrier, Dr. Smith has designed and modified several tools and techniques on project management. As such, this book can be instrumental for project managers and organizations who are looking for effective portfolio/program/project execution, management and/or remediation.

## **Highlights: What I liked!**

As I read the book, a few things stood out to me. The book is well-structured, easy to follow/understand, and matter-of-factly.

The structure of the book is simple. It allows to reader to follow-along a logical thought-pattern, or alternatively jump to specific topics of interest. The ease of understanding comes from the author's effective use of relevant examples and even ballads to lighten up the reading. The matter-of-fact style is evident from the author's discussion of limitations of various tools and techniques. The good news – the author provides possible alternatives and ideas to overcome these limitations.

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

Individuals preparing to take their project management certifications can gain deeper understanding of PMBOK principles as each chapter has detailed discussion on various concepts with step-by-step guidelines, matrices or tables.

This book can also be very beneficial to any organization and project managers who are looking for effective portfolio/program/project execution, management and/or remediation. It outlines multiple concepts, tools and techniques for managing projects. As well, it provides a glimpse of Dr. Smith's Project Management "Tool Kit" of over 100 "Quick and Easy" Excel templates for on-the job project planning, management, and evaluation.

## Conclusion

Overall the book is very informative. It is written in a simple language and is easy to understand. This book provides detailed step-by-step examples of many tools and techniques which can be beneficial to project managers.

---

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.amazon.com/Project-Management-PRAXIS-Innovations-Practitioners/dp/1722460083>

*Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the PM World Journal and the [PMI Dallas Chapter](#). Authors and publishers provide the books to the PM World Journal's managing editor; 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@peworldjournal.com](mailto:Editor@peworldjournal.com).*

---

## About the Reviewer



### Swati Shah

Irving, Texas, USA



**Swati Shah** currently works as a Project Coordinator at a manufacturing company based in Irving, Texas, USA. She was previously an Elementary School Teacher. Swati secured her CAPM and CSM certificates and has applied her teaching skills as well as ongoing project management experience to successfully transition to, and be successful in, the field of Project Management. She aspires to secure her PMP certification in the near future.