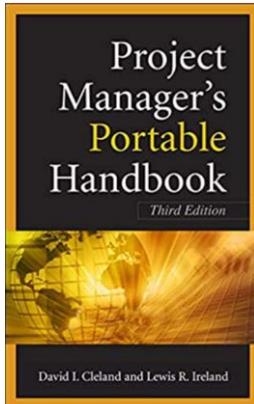


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Project Manager's Portable Handbook***

Authors: **David I. Cleland, Lewis R. Ireland**

Publisher: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

List Price: \$52.00                      Format: Soft cover, 442 pages

Publication Date: 2010                      ISBN: 978-0-07-174105-7

Reviewer: **Valentina Rada, MBA, PMP, PMI-ACP**

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### Introduction

Project Manager's Portable Handbook is a useful guide for any project manager who wants to stay on track with related project management standards being a tremendous source of project management theories and practices.

The authors of the book are two prestigious Project Management Institute (PMI) fellows, the late Dr. David I. Cleland who has been described as the "Father of Project Management" and the late Lewis R. Ireland who was a former PMI president with 40 years of experience in project management. They both brought and outlined project management concepts in a structured but insightful manner. Their book outlines ways of how to successfully manage projects and have those concepts handy and easy to find in their handbook.

### Overview of Book's Structure

The book is structured into ten key areas that help project managers or other professionals enhance their knowledge related to various project management areas: 1) *The Discipline of Project Management*: a framework for understanding project management; 2) *Project Organizational Design*: discusses standards of how appropriate organizational design entails to managing projects; 3) *Alternative Project Applications*: provides examples of alternative project applications; 4) *The Strategic Context of Projects*: outlines possible design and execution of organizational strategies; 5) *Project Leadership*: an overall description of team leadership characteristics; 6) *Project Initiation and Execution*: discusses key considerations when selecting a project; 7) *Project Planning and Control*: outlines ways of how to plan and monitor a project; 8) *The Project Culture*: provides insights on how culture can impact a project atmosphere; 9) *Project Communications*: discusses various communications

patterns in a project; 10) *Improving Project Management*: provides alternatives of how to better improve projects' processes.

## Highlights

Although the *Project Manager's Portable Handbook* presents numerous techniques and insights of how to manage projects, a couple of them caught my attention that I believe are valuable for any project manager. First, it is about the five project management functions and/ or stages essential for a project manager to acknowledge. Those are planning, organizing, motivating, directing and controlling; these are slightly different than traditional project management process groups. I believe that this perspective could strengthen the entire project management process and see how organizing and motivating would add value to how projects are managed.

Many times, executives and/ or project managers struggle to articulate the benefits of project management, but in their book, Cleland and Ireland identified them in a manner that resonates with what project management stands for, such as: positive communication of needs to project team, early identification of problems, issues or risks, an integral performance measurement capability to compare planned to actual progress. "Organizations need the discipline of project management while receiving the benefits of flexible, tailored workforce to complete work" (Cleland & Ireland, 2010, p. 125).

The other areas well-articulated in the *Project Manager's Portable Handbook* include the importance of constructive criticism for a successful project, how to best approach changes in a project by providing reasons for "a different approach of doing business" (Cleland & Ireland, 2010, p. 111), how to manage open or hidden conflicts in a project environment, how to align key motivational factors related to either opportunities for self-development or "getting along well with others on the job," (Cleland & Ireland, 2010, p. 213) and how to establish project priorities based on the work critical to the business.

## Highlights: What I liked!

By far the most valuable takeaway relates to how Cleland and Ireland defined the five project management functions. It makes so much sense to plan development of the project objectives, but also consider organizing the resources needed for achieving project goals. Motivation being critical indeed as it relates to bringing out the best in people. I believe that this perspective could be much more efficient and drive success for any type of project.

I also liked how establishing project priorities is being considered as part of the planning and controlling function. This is critical if we think of today's fast-growing business environment and plan for those priority tasks first "that have most urgency of need" (Cleland & Ireland, 2010, p. 287). Being able to outline priorities helps the entire

team better allocate time and resource and allows business stakeholders have visibility on the work first prioritize.

A valuable insight pertains to how the book is organized. Although every concept is briefly described, it allows the reader to use this book as a project management guide.

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

Cleland & Ireland's handbook is highly recommended to any project manager regardless of their level of seniority. Their book is a guide that any project manager, and not only, should keep on their desk for reference to any function of project management.

Further, program and portfolio managers could benefit reading or having access to the book as it makes strategic reference related to program or portfolio management.

Consultants or senior executives could use this guide as a reference as well to how project management benefits the overall organizational business strategy.

### **Conclusion**

Given the multitude of project management literature in today's environment, the Project Manager's Portable Handbook is an essential guide of fundamental project management knowledge required to successfully manage projects. The book brings relevant information in a pragmatic way that helps project managers to easy find and understand key fundamentals of project management.

The way Cleland and Ireland presented key project management fundamentals is cleverly structured, easy to read, allowing the reader to use this handbook as a reference on most of the project management concepts. Their handbook is an everyday project management guide for managers or project managers.

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For more about this book, go to: <https://www.mhprofessional.com/>  
[Or find it on Amazon here.](#)

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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's in Business Administration from the University of the Incarnate Word. She is currently pursuing her education as a PhD student in Organizational Leadership at the University of the Incarnate Word.

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