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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

On the Subject of the Book Review of Project Workflow Management – A Business Process Approach in the March 2014 PM World Journal

Dear Mr. Pells,

The March 2014 edition of the PM World Journal features a review of my book, *Project Workflow Management - A Business Process Approach*, written with Rich Maltzman. The review, which was made by Roger L Martin, is interesting and generally fair, but it is obvious that the author of the review skipped the most important elements of the book. As the result, the review readers miss very important information.

Mr. Martin wrote that our book reorganized the PMBOK methodology to improve on it. The fact is, we had no intention of reorganizing PMBOK, because PMBOK, as claimed by PMI, is not a methodology, but rather a collection of methods, mostly theory, while our book presents a very practical step-by-step guiding approach, a methodology, called PM Workflow. It does not only say, what to do, as PMBOK does, but also shows how to do it and when to do it. You cannot manage a project using PMBOK, while PM Workflow is developed for doing exactly that from receiving a new project request to delivering the completed and tested product to clients. It provides details to the elementary level description of every physical PM process execution, directing a project flow only to the required process at the exact time when a process has to be executed. I made a presentation at the International Project Management Day Webinar, where I demonstrated the exact method to achieve that. The presentation may be viewed on Youtube at: <http://youtu.be/ubzelC1InvI>

PM Workflow has the following important attributes, not mentioned in the review:

1. Provides detailed step-by-step guidance of every process implementation with logical decision making and detailed instructions for their execution, along with tools, control point tests, templates, checklists, tips and many examples.
2. Prompts and instructs project managers in every step of the project lifecycle.
3. Extends the level of project control beyond what is offered by existing project management tools, such as MS Project and others.
4. Provides multiple checklists to ensure that ALL processes are followed, such as requirement gathering and analysis, risk management, estimating, quality management, change control and everything else, along with the detailed methods for process implementation.

5. Indicates expected outcome of process execution. When the outcome is not as expected, redirect the project flow to correct the issue.
6. Provides the continuous project health monitoring, redirecting the project flow when issues are encountered.

It appears that the number of processes mentioned in the book review is inaccurate. The author of the review counted only processes shown in the high level process diagrams, but none of the detailed process diagrams was taken into account. The following are the correct numbers of processes in each frame, which include low level processes:

- Requirements (24 processes)
- Planning/High-Level-Design (80 processes)
- Construction/Tracking (9 processes)
- Closing/Training (42 processes)

While the Construction/Tracking frame lists only 9 top level processes, those are processes, described earlier in details in the Planning frame; each high level process is decomposed into many elementary processes. For example, the project planning describes quality management (14 detailed processes), risk management (10 processes) and others. Those processes are used in both planning frame and in the construction/tracking frame, but different parts of each process are used in different frames. For clarity, it was necessary to describe process only once in its entirety in the planning frame, and not breaking it into two parts, one for planning and one for implementation. The book provides more reasons why it was done that way.

The author of the review is correct, that most of page count in the book belongs to requirements and planning. However, most of processes related to construction/tracking have been described in the planning frame and the reference in the book is made to the planning frame.

It was not our intention to describe inadequacies of PMBOK approach and shortfalls of the waterfall method. We provided a different PM Workflow approach, which, when studied, may be indirectly compared to PMBOK. PMI is very powerful organization and providing the correct approach is more effective then criticizing them.

The book describes all needed processes to manage the project and methods of their implementation, even though in the “no-nonsense” compact form, without milling water. I really do not understand why the volume II is needed, as the author of the review has suggested. The book may be used by PMOs to establish the enterprise wide PM processes, but it may be a good hands-on reference for all project managers, from novices to very experienced ones.

It is inaccurate to claim that the book methodology is applicable to large project only. The book clearly identifies roles and responsibilities of all project staff during execution of each frame. While in large projects each role may be played by one project staff member, in the case of small projects, one person may play several roles. However, all roles are required for every project. Furthermore, a table in the book shows which

processes in the continuous project flow will be skipped for small projects. This is described in several chapters of the book.

PM Workflow directs the project flow by selecting processes in the project execution path based on the system of requests, decision checkpoints, decision tables and project health evaluation results. This forces execution of all required processes at the correct time and guides both a seasoned and a less experienced project managers to manage the entire project lifecycle from A to Z, arming them with practical techniques, examples, tools, templates, checklists and step-by-step guidance for confidently managing a project.

The well taken point by the author of the review is that software tools are required to efficiently utilize PM Workflow. Definitely, at the high pressure time, project manager may skip some important processes or introduce human errors in the process flow. However, the software tool based on PM Workflow will eliminate those incidents, forcing project managers to execute all processes. The book specifically says that PM Workflow constitutes a visible path for a comprehensive software application based on PM Workflow. The tool will automate project execution and lead project from the initial request submission to the project closure, while constantly performing qualitative assessments of outcomes and fetching the next process for further execution, based on those results. When issues encountered, it will automatically redirect process flow to the alternative path for resolution. Such an application will eliminate human factor creating a virtually error free project management process. It may seamlessly incorporate existing project management tools, such as MS Project, Clarity, Primavera, etc. This new tool may gather metrics, as described in the book, manage project documentation, produce unbiased reports of project execution for the enterprise management, making each project transparent with no surprises. Such a tool may truly revolutionize project management.

For detailed description of the book, for free downloadable tools and optional project management teaching aid, check out the authors' website www.pm-workflow.com I also would like to point out to the book page on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1492041111), which has very interesting readers' reviews.

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