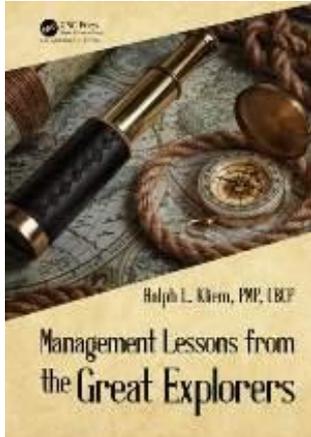


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW¹



Book Title: ***Management Lessons from the Great Explorers***

Author: **Ralph Kliem**

Publisher: CRC Press

List Price: \$49.95 Format: soft cover, 152 pages

Publication Date: 2022 ISBN: 978-0-367-46433-2

Reviewer: **Danny Boswell**

Review Date: August 2022

Introduction

The world is a tapestry of information that intermingles across disciplines as well as from the past, through the present, and to the future. Connecting patterns can enrich our lives and provide insight to topics that initially appeared unrelated.

This book looks at the work of thirteen explorers and connects their lessons to project management. The subjects span across all parts of the globe, starting in the 13th century and continuing into the 20th. The positive and negative actions of this group are applied to the project management world to ascertain how a PM can leverage the positive and minimize the negative to enhance results.

Overview of Book's Structure

The outline is the most positive aspect of the book. The first thirteen chapters address each of the thirteen explorers individually. A given chapter provides background of the person, the situation or context to place him within the culture, a description of the analyzed expedition, lessons, and final thoughts from the author. The Lessons section provides a bulleted list as well as a paragraph to provide more detail for each bullet. This construction enables the reader to quickly glance at the bullets as a reminder for each chapter and reference more detail as needed.

The final chapter provides an overview of some project lessons learned through the centuries. Thirteen lessons are presented in a bulleted list, and again, a paragraph of

¹ How to cite this review: Boswell, D. (2022). Management Lessons from the Great Explorers, book review, *PM World Journal*, Vol. XI, Issue IX, September.

each item provides more detail and calls back to the explorer(s) that addressed that lesson.

A glossary provides background of exploration terms that may be unfamiliar to project managers, from Admiral to Zamorin, terms that highlight the expansiveness of the subject and the lead provided by the author. The bibliography provides referenced works that can then provide tendrils for further exploration by the reader if a particular explorer claimed their interest.

Highlights

The book starts off sounding like a history book describing explorer characteristics, challenges, and their voyages. The subjects chosen are major figures that helped inform the world about the planet on which they lived, so it isn't a simple book on names, places, and dates – it provides a story to pull everyone in to the adventure. Much like a project, if a PM is lucky enough to be engaged at project inception, these exploratory attributes provide a sketch of what may come. The expedition sections are full of forethought and missteps that any experienced PM will come to recognize and join in the author's theme that the two disciplines have similarities that can be leveraged.

Highlights: What I liked!

The most fascinating aspect of the book is how it invites the reader to join in the journey of taking interests in one's life and applying those lessons to another part of life. A PM is more than the sum of their projects. The author integrated his clear love of learning about the world's explorers with his knowledge of project management. This lesson leads readers to integrate their experiences and thereby deliver improved projects.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Project managers are the target audience, but anyone interested in using a different lens to understand other topics could benefit by reading this book. Within the humanities discipline, texts are interpreted through a specific approach – literary theory, theory, or cultural theory – which keeps a reader focused on cues relevant to a specific path. The author provides a good example for any interested in learning about explorers or project management.

Conclusion

Through the lens of the world's great explorers, lessons can be drawn for managing projects. Number one on the author's lesson list in the final chapter is "learn from experience." There are other lessons from choosing your team, to adapting to changes, to understanding stakeholders, and others; but that first lesson not only identified and detailed the topic, it also provided an implemented example.

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.routledge.com/Management-Lessons-from-the-Great-Explorers/Kliem/p/book/9780367464332>

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Danny Boswell has spent 30 years creating solutions within all aspects of IT project delivery – defining the project, securing the funding, designing the solution, coding, testing, deploying, and analyzing the result. He is currently a senior business analyst in a Treasury Solutions group. Danny is a member of the Dallas PMI and Dallas IIBA (International Institute of Business Analysis). He has a business degree in Finance and an MA in History of Ideas.