

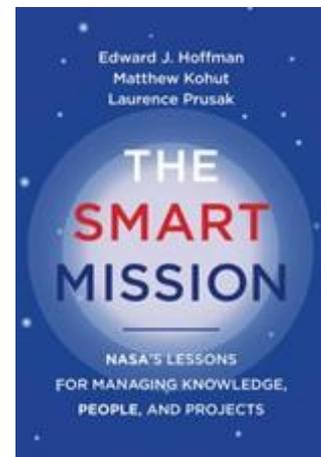
Publishing News

The Smart Mission: NASA's Lessons for Managing Knowledge, People, and Projects

New book from MIT Press by former NASA project leaders emphasizes leadership, teamwork and knowledge for successful project management

7 November 2022 – Boston and New York, USA – MIT Press has published an important book this year authored by Dr. Edward J. Hoffman, Matthew Kohut, and Laurence Prusak. Titled “The Smart Mission: NASA's Lessons for Managing Knowledge, People, and Projects”, the book explains why human skills and expertise, not technical tools, are what make projects succeed. The book is based on the authors’ experiences related to programs, projects and project management at NASA over many years.

According to the book’s introduction, the project is the basic unit of work in many industries. Software applications, antiviral vaccines, launch-ready spacecraft: all were produced by a team and managed as a project. Project management emphasizes control, processes, and tools—but, according to *The Smart Mission*, that is not the right way to run a project. Human skills and expertise, not technical tools, are what make projects successful. Projects run on knowledge. This paradigm-shifting book—by three project management experts, all of whom have decades of experience at NASA and elsewhere—challenges the conventional wisdom on project management, focusing on the human dimension: learning, collaboration, teaming, communication, and culture.



The authors emphasize three themes: projects are fundamentally about how teams work and learn together to get things done; the local level—not an organization's upper levels—is where the action happens; and projects don't operate in a vacuum but exist within organizations that are responsible to stakeholders. Drawing on examples and case studies from NASA and other organizations, the authors identify three project models—micro, macro, and global—and their different knowledge needs. Successful organizations have a knowledge-based culture. Successful project management guides the interplay of knowledge, projects, and people.

Dr. Edward J. Hoffman, currently CEO of Knowledge Strategies, LLC, and Senior Lecturer at Columbia University, was NASA's first Chief Knowledge Officer and founder of the NASA Academy of Program/Project and Engineering Leadership (APPEL). Following the Columbia shuttle failure, he led the team that designed the Strategic Management and Governance Handbook. He is the coauthor of *Shared Voyage: Learning and Unlearning from Remarkable Projects*.

Matthew Kohut, former major communication advisor to NASA, is coauthor of *Compelling People: The Hidden Qualities That Make Us Influential*, named one of Amazon's Best Business Books of 2013. **Laurence Prusak**, former strategy consultant to Hoffman at NASA, is Senior Lecturer in the Information and Knowledge Strategy graduate program at Columbia University and the coauthor of *Working Knowledge*, a widely cited text about how knowledge works in organizations, and other books.

First published in August 2022, the 176-page book is available in hard cover or e-book. For more about the book, [click here](#) or purchase it on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/Smart-Mission-Managing-Knowledge-Projects/dp/0262046881> or Barnes and Noble at <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-smart-mission-edward-j-hoffman/1140482084>