PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW[1]

Book Title: **Move Fast & Fix Things: The Trusted Leader's Guide to Solving Hard Problems**

Authors: **Frances Frei & Anne Morriss**

Publisher: Harvard Business Review Press

List Price: $30.00　　　　Format: Hardcover, 240 pages

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Reviewer: **Chris Knox, PMP, WMCP**

Review Date: November 2023

Introduction

"Move Fast and Fix Things" presents a detailed manual for implementing successful change management strategies applicable to organizations of every scale. Central to the book's approach is the vital aspect of fostering trust as a catalyst for driving meaningful change. The guide provides actionable, day-to-day tasks designed to fulfill this objective. These tasks not only delineate the daily objectives but also provide essential considerations for navigating them, accompanied by checkpoints to gauge progress and measure success in task completion.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book employs a weekly framework, using days of the week as primary divisions to address key concepts. Each day (chapter) centers around a core concept, featuring a comprehensive agenda outlining tasks to be accomplished within the conceptual framework. It also includes essential materials or considerations necessary for executing the daily agenda. The book incorporates "Gut Checks" strategically placed throughout the chapters, serving as both pause points during the work and checkpoints to acknowledge progress. In recognizing the inherent variability in the pace of problem-solving, the book suggests that the timeframe for resolution may not strictly adhere to a fixed five-day process. Instead, it advocates for an organic determination of pace based on the specific need or complexity of the issue at hand,

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while emphasizing that the overall workflow of the process remains constant. The primary concepts explored in the book include:

- Monday: Identifying Your Real Problem

- Tuesday: Solving for Trust

- Wednesday: Making New Friends

- Thursday: Telling a Good Story

- Friday: Going as Fast as You Can

- Conclusion: Taking the Weekend Off

The overview for Monday is below as an example of how the remainder of the book is mapped out.

Monday - Identify Your Real Problem
- Agenda:
    - Choose Curiosity
        - Gut Check: Proceed when you're deeply curious about what you might discover today
    - Build a team of problems solvers
        - Gut Check: Proceed when you've built a team of problem solvers and given yourselves a name worthy of your mission.
    - Explore what's holding you back.
        - Gut Check: Proceed when you have a short list of the organization's most significant problems.
    - Pick a candidate problem to solve.
        - Gut Check: Proceed when you've picked a candidate problem to solve and can describe the problem in simple, jargon-free language.
    - Collect the organization's problem data.
        - Watch for signs your organization is stalling.
        - Gut Check: Proceed when you've gathered the data that's relevant to your problem and shared it with your fellow problem hunters.
    - Build a case with the data you have.
        - Gut Check: Proceed when you've learned from the data you already have.
    - Learn more about your problem
        - Gut Check: Proceed when you've gained new perspectives on your problem from the stakeholders most impacted by it.
    - Decide what you're going to fix this week.

· Gut Check: Proceed when you have identified the right problem to solve.

- Materials Needed:
  ◦ Curiosity
  ◦ Comfort with discomfort
  ◦ Clear, transmissible understanding of your organization's strategy
  ◦ Easy access to organizational data
  ◦ Five to twelve colleagues with distinct roles and perspectives
  ◦ One data analyst
  ◦ High-quality snacks

Highlights

The authors introduce the concept of a "FIX" map, which serves as a compelling four-quadrant visual for readers to identify where their organization is within their change lifecycle. Fix, an acronym for the requirements for *fast, iterative excellence,* has four outcomes when taking trust and speed into consideration:

- Accelerating Excellence (High Trust / High Speed)

- Responsible Stewardship (High Trust / Low Speed)

- Reckless Disruption (Low Trust / High Speed)

- Inevitable Decline (Low Trust / Low Speed)

This simple but powerful assessment tool is revisited multiple times throughout the book. It requires you to ask the introspective questions "Are you moving fast or slow", and "Are you building or losing trust with your most important stakeholders". Most organizations initially find themselves in the Responsible Stewardship or Reckless Disruption phase, as they tend to possess either high speed or high trust but not both. Honestly identifying where you are at in the change lifecycle sets you up for success (High Trust and Speed). This acknowledgment enables the prioritization of pertinent issues, often necessitating an initial slowdown to make adjustments that pave the way for significantly faster and more efficient progress in the future.

Highlights: What I liked!

A key takeaway that resonated with me is found on "Wednesday", as it addresses the impact of diversity in organizations. As a minority, I strongly relate to the significance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), emphasizing the importance of enabling everyone to express their authentic selves, ensuring they have a voice and the opportunity to make a meaningful impact. This portion advocates for creating both

physical and emotional safety for embracing differences and underscores the psychological safety necessary for fostering diversity."

Referencing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the profound implications of safety for all individuals and its potential impact on an organization's bottom line are emphasized. The exponential benefits of diverse thought processes become apparent, uncovering problems and solutions that might go unnoticed in an echo chamber of perspectives. The sharing of diverse viewpoints which leads to creative problem solving is contingent on a welcoming organizational culture. This understanding highlights that creative license is a luxury that is paid for with relational equity. Relational equity is accumulated with safety and trust within the organizational framework.

Who might benefit from the Book

The book's standout feature lies in its comprehensive approach to change management. Its principles prove to be versatile, suitable for navigating various forms of change, whether they pertain to products, services, personnel, diversity, equity, and inclusion, or cultural shifts. This adaptability renders "Move Fast & Fix Things" a valuable asset for professionals across organizations of any size and at every hierarchical level, providing them with the essential tools to exert a meaningful influence within their respective spheres of influence. Moreover, the concepts outlined in the book extend beyond the professional realm and can be applied to interpersonal relationships, including those with friends and family, where trust plays a pivotal role in facilitating positive change.

Conclusion

This book is a must-have resource for anyone with a desire to lead impactful change with urgency and efficiency. "Slow is Smooth, and Smooth is Fast" is a popular quote referenced in "Move Fast and Fix Things." The quote is a great picture of the overarching concept that moving as fast as possible, requires slowing down enough on the front side to first identify your real problem (Monday). Once the real problem is established, you can begin to solve the real problem and build trust (Tuesday).

As you are building trust, you should be making new friends and really digging into the impact of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) while building a culture that is safe - physically, psychologically, and emotionally. (Wednesday). From there you will begin to tell a good story which involves crafting a compelling narrative that pays homage to the past while clearly articulating the envisioned future, fostering buy-in, and igniting infectious enthusiasm (Thursday). All of this ultimately leads to Friday and beyond where you will actually be able to move fast and fix things.

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For more about this book, go to: https://store.hbr.org/product/move-fast-and-fix-things-the-trusted-leader-s-guide-to-solving-hard-problems/10546

About the Reviewer

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Chris Knox is a husband, father, and friend who also happens to love business, investing, and music. Chris is a passionate and proven strategist and leader, with professional experiences in project management, strategic planning, operations, product management, business development, people development, and client experience across multiple industries. With his remarkable blend of business acumen and unwavering integrity, Chris is perpetually on the lookout for opportunities to contribute to the growth and success of organizations as an invaluable asset and a catalyst for progress. He can be contacted at Chris@chrisknoxonline.com

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