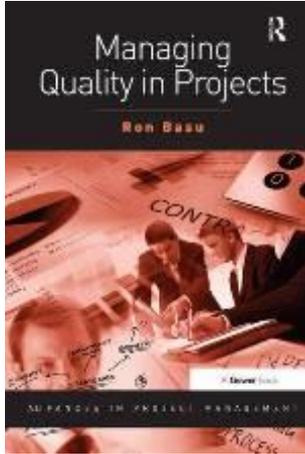


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW¹



Book Title: ***Managing Quality in Projects: Advances in Project Management***

Author: **Ron Basu, UK**

Publisher: Gower/Routledge

List Price: \$59.96 Format: Paperback, 272 Pages

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Reviewer: **Sarah Delgado Visser, PMP**

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Introduction

Working in the medical field, the importance of quality is clear to me: A lack of project quality would be detrimental to both our patients and our customers. Working instead in the field of national infrastructure, Basu convinced me early in *Managing Quality in Projects* of the lack of a project management-specific definition of quality and lack of clarity on ensuring quality in projects. He argues that there is a need within project management to manage and track quality, especially as it is part of the iron triangle.

Overview of Book's Structure

The introduction includes a short literature review to establish that there is a gap of knowledge in project management about how to meet the requirements of quality. Basu discusses how quality is related to project excellence and that he wants to provide practical ways to establish quality as an important part of any project.

Chapter 1 discusses quality management and project management, and how quality management has traditionally been a focus more in operations management, especially as it relates to supply chains. He defines what project management and its processes are. He discusses stakeholder management and change control as critical supports to quality.

Chapter 2 seeks to define what project quality is after reviewing the partial definitions established in the project management body of knowledge. Basu then has a more extensive literature review, proving again the need for his book as he details what are the dimensions and definitions of project quality. He arrives at the definition, "*Project*

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quality is the philosophy of the adherence of standards to fulfill acceptable delivery objectives throughout the life cycle of a project” and he chooses to focus on “*three . . . dimensions[:] . . . design quality, process quality and organisation quality*” (47). He continues to return to these three dimensions throughout the book.

Chapter 3 looks at the unclear guidelines relating to quality in three main project management bodies of knowledge: the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), Projects in Controlled Environments (PRINCE2), and International Standards Organization (ISO). Basu looks at eight causes of project failure and connects all of them to organizational, process and product quality. Basu concludes the chapter with recommendations for “developing and applying a quality management strategy” to make his analysis more practical.

Chapter 4 looks at project success and how it is based upon project quality and project excellence. Looking at the opposite, project failure, Basu pulls out which dimensions of project quality are related to failure. The literature on success criteria is summarized and the lack of robust application is discussed. Chapter 5 looks at five project excellence and maturity models in the project management field, with one from operations management (European Foundation of Quality Management or EFQM). Basu states that the models are good tools for organizations but do not have a “structured approach to move toward project excellence” (84). Chapter 6 explores applying operational excellence to projects by first taking a historical view. Then the chapter explores supply chain and production best practices with Six Sigma and how it can be applied to project management. Basu also proposes a definition for project excellence.

Chapter 7 describes Basu’s empirical study into “how project quality and project excellence are practised,” (100), including interviews with practitioners and a questionnaire survey on project quality. Basu is especially interested in how practitioners define quality, how their organizational structures relate to quality, and defining success in projects. Chapters 8 and 9 are case studies on large, well-known infrastructure projects. The case studies include summaries of their quality management systems, procedures, audits, as well as performance management and project effectiveness. Chapter 9 compares the two projects and rates them both using his Assessment of Project Excellence (APEX), as well as noting the main strengths and main gaps of each project’s quality.

Chapter 10 is when Basu becomes even more practical. He reiterates all the recommendations he made throughout the book and proposes an “implementation plan of managing quality in major project[s]” (175). This chapter is connected to Appendix 2, “Guidelines for APEX (Assessing Project Excellence),” which I will discuss more below. The book also concludes with two additional appendices, which showcase his online questionnaire discussed in chapter 7 and an example Quality Management Plan.

Highlights

The “Guidelines for APEX” in Appendix 2 are a series of excellent rating guidelines to judge how well an organization has set up project management to ensure quality. For example, “Criteria 4 Organisational Effectiveness” has five different points, and each one has grading examples for *Poor* through *Excellent*. The first point is, “Organisation structure includes a steering team . . . project teams and support team with a dedicated quality manager and budget for quality,” and the best grade for this item includes having a “formal organizational structure” and committing over 0.5% of a project budget to quality. I would recommend that companies who have not focused before on quality in projects take the time to grade themselves using this rubric and then make the appropriate improvements.

Highlights: What I liked!

Basu provides multiple case examples throughout, which bring theory into the real world. His experience is in infrastructure in the United Kingdom and so I found the examples different from my industry and interesting. I appreciate his real-world investigation via the surveys as well.

Who might benefit from the Book?

New or experienced projects managers, especially those who like Basu have found it frustrating that quality is hard to define when managing projects. I think every project manager and project management organization should be dedicated to quality and this book is a valuable resource.

Conclusion

Quality and project excellence are critical and rarely researched components of managing projects. Basu proved in this book that quality was a knowledge gap in the project management field and then brings the field a large step forward but there is still more research to be done. The additional study suggested by him in chapter 10 would be interesting to see, including “the validation of findings and conclusions across other types of major projects” and also gathering of additional data from “different cultural environments” other than the UK (186). I hope to see more research on project management quality in the future.

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.routledge.com/Managing-Quality-in-Projects/Basu/p/book/9781409440925>

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About the Reviewer



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Sarah Delgado Visser works as an Associate Project Manager in the medical industry. Her background in technical writing has taught her to care about the details and the customer's needs. She enjoys hiking throughout Texas and the United States with her dog Taquito.

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