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A Project Sponsor's Warp-Speed Guide
Authors: Yogi Schulz + Jocelyn Lapointe
Book Review   Reviewer: Bill Sundermann

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: **A Project Sponsor's Warp-Speed Guide: Improving Project Performance** [1]

Author: **Yogi Schulz and Jocelyn Schulz Lapointe**

Publisher: Business Expert Press

List Price: $ 31.99 Format: Paperback, 196 pages

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Reviewer: **Bill Sundermann, PMP**

Review Date: 01/24/2024

Introduction

A strong working relationship between project sponsor and project manager is critical for success. Of the many books and articles directed at improving project performance, very few cover the role of the project sponsor and the interaction needed with the project team and stakeholders. *A Project Sponsor's Warp-Speed Guide* provides project sponsors with a structured approach to evaluating project health and establishing direction for a solid collaboration with the project manager.

Overview of Book's Structure

The Preface provides insight into the motivation behind the book and the reader can feel the challenges the author has encountered with project sponsors that do not devote sufficient time to the role or who may need help understanding their responsibilities. The main attribute of the book centers around an assessment that the author has constructed for project sponsors. Following the chapter containing the assessment, other chapters are devoted to supporting detail aligned with the project phases of feasibility, planning, design, build, test, deploy, and close. These chapters follow the same structure – each assessment topic is paired with accompanying low-risk and high-risk observations. The topics reflect common areas of focus for any project in any industry. For example, topics in the chapter devoted to the Planning phase include the project management plan, team organization, and project schedule among others. In most cases, the low-risk observation would be the equivalent of a 'Yes' if the topic deliverable is observable and the high-risk observation a 'No' if not observable or absent from the project archive. The authors provide additional comments under these observations along with references to corresponding sections

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of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). Supplementary material is in the form of appendices that guide the reader to the author's website.

Highlights

A successful project starts with a project sponsor who is able to translate the vision and strategy of the enterprise into a project charter. In the Feasibility chapter, the author accurately and pointedly states that the project sponsor is "responsible for management oversight of the project" and is "the link between the project to senior management and business stakeholders that keeps everyone informed and aligned". This role can be challenging when project progress is behind schedule or criticism comes from senior levels. The project team and stakeholders depend on the project sponsor to be actively involved and serve as a strong advocate for the project.

Combined with a set of standard project management guidelines, such as the PMBOK, *A Project Sponsor's Warp-Speed Guide* can provide guidance to success in this role and provide additional direction on establishing working relationships (and guardrails) between the project sponsor and project manager.

Throughout the book, there are many references to standard project artifacts such as a risk management plan, decision records, product design document, change management plan, etc... These references help the Project Sponsor to confirm that this documentation is not only evident, but are comprehensive and reasonable.

Highlights: What I liked!

The assessment included in the book (and also available for free download) provides a solid evaluation for a project sponsor's determination of risk level. Not only is there commentary on the observations, but actions to address high-risk observations are also included. This is where the author's coaching experience is added to help the reader resolve an issue that could impact project success. Also, in the body of the book, each topic contains a reference to the applicable section of the PMBOK promulgated by the Project Management Institute (PMI).

Additionally, the author provides links to her website that includes the specifics of the project sponsor role (such as ensuring resource commitments are kept, resolving issues outside the purview of the project manager) as well as activities and functions that should be left with the project team.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Project sponsors needing guidance on their role in the project lifecycle will benefit from the book's straightforward and concise assessment tool. Correspondingly, project managers can provide this material to a project sponsor who is disengaged or unsure of their role.

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Conclusion

While there are many resources for how to initiate and execute a project, *A Project Sponsor's Warp-Speed Guide* provides guidance specifically for the project sponsor. The essence of the book highlights the importance of collaboration. With the advancement of feature-rich collaboration tools, it is essential for project teams to agree on how these tools will be used on a daily basis for providing status updates and to document the expectations for their use in the project management plan. The project sponsor should ensure that sufficient resources are available to fund these types of tools and to secure licenses for other needed software.

As the key link between a corporate strategy statement and the project definition that supports that strategy and the business goals, project sponsors have a key role in a successful project that adds measurable value to the business.

For more about this book, go to: https://www.businessexpertpress.com/books/a-project-sponsors-warp-speed-guide-improving-project-performance/

About the Reviewer

Bill Sundermann

Coppell, Texas, USA

Bill Sundermann is a team builder and Agile coach with 27 years' experience in the financial services technology industry. His specialties are on team building, effective messaging, and process consulting across multiple software development teams. He holds an MBA from SMU and is a certified PMP and SAFe Release Train Engineer focusing on helping teams in their Agile journey. He can be contacted at bsundermann@verizon.net

Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the PM World Journal and the PMI Dallas Chapter. Authors and publishers provide books to the PM World Journal Editor; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter where they are offered free to PMI members who agree to provide a review within 45 days; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. Reviewers can normally claim PDU's for PMP recertification upon publication of their book reviews.

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