

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Managing Business Projects: The Essentials***¹

Author: **Frank Einhorn**

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Introduction

Project management fundamentals are widely recognized among engineering, construction, and information technology settings. However, the same principles that lead to a successful deliverable of a new software application can also be used to manage projects in other areas of the business environment.

Managing Business Projects: The Essentials explains these principles and how to apply them specifically to business projects. The book is well suited for new project managers as well as for projects managers experienced in other disciplines. The latter will appreciate the examples contained in the book contrasting business and non-business projects.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is organized as a graduate level textbook and split into 4 distinct parts. Part 1 is an overview of the book itself and project fundamentals. It provides basic definitions, methodologies, and explains the roles of the project manager and sponsor. Part 2 covers core elements of business project management such as scope, estimating, scheduling, stakeholder engagement, risk management, change control, and project governance. Part 3 covers issues that are of special significance to business projects. It spends a good amount of time ensuring the reader grasps the concept of tying all activities to the overall business strategy and the business case. It

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also goes in depth with Organization Change Management (OCM) since most business projects produce some form of policy, application, tool, or process which constitutes a change in the way the organization functions. Ethics, project negotiation, and unique problems associated with business projects are also covered. Part 4 consists of case studies, a study guide, quizzes, and other study materials which are very useful in enhancing student learning.

Highlights

There are distinct differences between business projects and projects of other disciplines. In construction or engineering projects the requirements are well known and understood, whereas in a business project there is usually very little known at the project start. Often times business projects begin with assumptions and those assumptions change as the project evolves. The environment constantly changes, instead of remaining generally constant as with construction projects. To this end, the author discusses the Agile methodology and shows how it can be well suited to a business project.

The book places a strong emphasis on documentation, especially the business case, to keep the project on focus. Documentation serves to provide a source of lessons learned, provide touchpoints with stakeholders, and facilitate communication among team members to ensure activities are directed towards the project goals.

Highlights: What I liked!

Chapter 27 discusses negotiation, and I really appreciate the way it provides negotiation techniques, guidance on preparation for negotiation, recognizing your powerbase, how and when to negotiate, and situations when not to negotiate. Many times, we may feel that our negotiation skills are sufficient as they are, but this chapter reminds the reader of things which may be overlooked and reinforces self-assessment.

Another great point discussed is that many times with business projects, the emphasis is placed on financial factors. Non-financial factors are just as important and the book explains the dangers of only assessing a project based on financial factors.

I particularly enjoyed the example the book provides on the Project Definition Document (PDD). This document is important in business projects where the scope and goals are vague at project onset. Its purpose is to document the reason for the project, identify the business goals and objectives, critical success factors, scope, cost, resources, schedule, and other essential pieces of information related to the project. I have since started using the framework of the PDD contained in this book with projects in my office.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Managing Business Projects: The Essentials is targeted towards graduate students, but will also be beneficial to business professionals not familiar with project management fundamentals. It will provide them with new concepts and insights while guiding their planning processes as they initiate projects within their organizations. Project managers experienced in construction and other traditional project oriented professions will learn the nuances of managing business projects and broaden their horizons.

Conclusion

Managing Business Projects: The Essentials does a wonderful job of highlighting the differences between business projects and projects in other disciplines. Among the various differences are the visibility of progress, likelihood of scope change, and OCM. It will help project managers new to applying their craft in a business environment with stakeholders unfamiliar with project management principles. As stated in the book introduction, it is not intended for undergraduate students, but they could benefit from reading it and applying it's principles as well.

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.routledge.com/Managing-Business-Projects-The-Essentials/Einhorn/p/book/9781032276021>

About the Reviewer



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Kevin Dorsey is a Process Improvement project manager for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. He provides mentorship and coaching to a team of project managers covering a 14-state region. He also has spent the last 18 years managing projects in the U.S. Army Reserve in addition to serving as a design project manager. He holds a BA from the University of Louisville and holds certifications as a PMP and Six Sigma Green Belt.

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