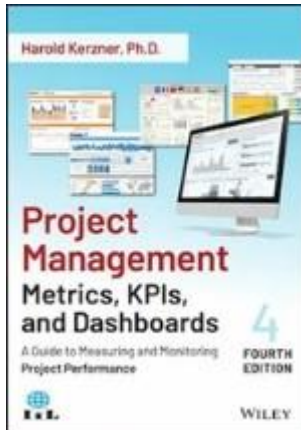# PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW [1]

Book Title: **Project Management Metrics, KPIs and Dashboards**

Author: **Harold Kerzner, PhD**

Publisher: John Wiley & Sons, Inc

List Price: $82.00   Format: Hardcover, 448 pages

Publication Date: 2017   ISBN: 9781119427285

Reviewer: **Nidhi Mahajan**

Review Date: August 2025

Introduction

I picked up Project Management Metrics, KPIs, and Dashboards because I've spent a good part of my career thinking about how to make data more meaningful. I've worked across several complex PMOs and led enterprise programs where performance reporting was more of a checkbox than a tool. I wanted to revisit the basics—not to relearn what a KPI is, but to explore how the best minds in the field think about what actually deserves to be measured.

Harold Kerzner's name has come up often in my journey. He's one of those rare authors whose books aren't just referenced—they're trusted. This one delivered more than I expected. It gave structure to things I had experienced intuitively and pushed me to rethink how metrics should evolve to match strategy, not just track execution.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is laid out in a way that makes sense—even if you don't read it cover to cover. It starts with the core concepts: what metrics and KPIs really are, how they differ, and why misusing them can lead to misleading decisions. It's the kind of foundation I wish more teams had when setting up their dashboards.

As the chapters progress, the content gets deeper. Kerzner talks about different types of metrics—input, output, outcome, leading, lagging—and how to make sense of them based on who you're reporting to. There's a strong emphasis on value-driven metrics,

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which I really appreciated. Too often, we focus on what's easiest to measure, not what matters most to the business.

The sections on dashboards were especially practical. Kerzner breaks down what kinds of dashboards work best for operational teams, versus what an executive might need. He also shares tips on how to design them well—simple layouts, consistent color usage, and avoiding unnecessary animations or clutter. Chapter 12 is where it all comes together, offering a hands-on guide to designing dashboards that people will actually use.

There are also plenty of charts, tables, and case-based examples sprinkled throughout. They give you a real sense of how organizations—from NASA to startups—approach performance measurement at different levels of maturity.

Highlights

One of the biggest takeaways for me was how Kerzner talks about metrics as decision tools. That may sound obvious, but in practice, it's often forgotten. Dashboards should exist to help people act, not just to fill a status report. He also talks about the danger of vanity metrics—things that look good on paper but don't really help anyone make a better decision.

Another highlight is how he emphasizes tailoring your approach based on the audience. What a PMO lead needs from a dashboard is very different from what a CFO needs—and the book offers tangible ways to adjust structure, content, and language to make those differences meaningful.

Also, Kerzner is honest. He acknowledges that implementing these systems is rarely smooth. There's politics, misalignment, resource constraints. But he still provides a roadmap you can work with—even if your organization isn't fully mature yet.

Highlights: What I liked!

I liked that the book didn't try to be overly academic or overly prescriptive. Kerzner writes like someone who's seen how real teams work. He doesn't assume you have perfect tools or buy-in from the top. He offers examples that felt grounded, and I found myself thinking, "We've been through that too."

The section on dashboard design hit home for me. I've spent hours trying to clean up reports that no one reads. His approach—focusing on clarity, tailoring to the audience, and using dashboards as communication tools—really helped me reframe my own approach to reporting.

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Who might benefit from the Book?

If you're in a role where you're responsible for tracking performance, building reports, or translating project delivery into business impact—this book is for you. PMO leads, program managers, strategy teams, and operations folks will find a lot of value in it.

It's also great for senior leaders who want to better understand what dashboards should be telling them. And for anyone in a transformation or regulatory space, where measurement has consequences, this book provides a thoughtful way to approach reporting that moves beyond the basics.

Conclusion

This book reminded me why I care about performance metrics in the first place. It's easy to get lost in spreadsheets and status meetings. But Kerzner brings it back to what matters: helping teams and leaders make better decisions with the right information at the right time.

It's not a flashy book. It's not trying to sell a new framework or trend. It's practical, thoughtful, and written by someone who genuinely wants to help project leaders succeed.

If you're building a PMO, refining your dashboards, or just tired of reports that no one reads, give this book a shot. It won't just help you do reporting better—it'll help you think differently about how your work creates impact.

For more about this book, go to the Wiley webpage for the book here.

About the Reviewer

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Nidhi Mahajan is an experienced program and operations leader with a Master of Business Administration in Finance and a Bachelor of Engineering in Electronics & Communications. With over 17 years of experience across financial services and

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technology, she has held senior roles in program management, PMO governance, and strategic operations—most recently as Director of Business Strategy and Program Operations at Visa Inc. Her work focuses on enterprise transformation, Agile delivery, go-to-market strategy, and applied technology in program environments, including automation, AI integration, and compliance-driven modernization.

Nidhi has contributed to cross-functional initiatives spanning cloud migration, risk frameworks, and digital product launches. She has authored thought leadership pieces on augmented intelligence and human–AI collaboration in program management, drawing from her hands-on experience with tools like JIRA, ServiceNow, Clarity PPM, and Smartsheet. A certified PMP, CSM, and SAFe Agilist, she also mentors early-career professionals and champions data-informed decision-making frameworks.

Nidhi actively participates in global project management communities and speaks at industry forums on PMO innovation and transformation leadership. She can be reached at linkedin.com/in/nmahajan012

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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 the books to the PM World Journal's managing editor; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published.

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