Book Reviews #6: In Brief

Book 2 – **A Pocket Guide To Stakeholders' ~~Management~~ Engagement**
By George Jucan

Introduction

Today, all of the people associated with a project can be considered as Stakeholders to varying degrees. That is, they may range from:
- Those responsible for the project's conception and implementation,
- To those who will be, or conceive themselves to be, impacted by the outcome of the project,
- To those who are only marginally affected.

And, of course, the larger the project, the larger is the number of stakeholders. Alas, not all stakeholders will view the project in the same positive light but, nevertheless, their collective impression will determine the perceived level of project success.

Author George Jucan makes a bold statement in the title of his Pocket Guide, by crossing out "Management" and substituting "Engagement".[1] George claims that as a project manager you cannot "manage" stakeholders whether above or below you, except perhaps for the direct members of your own project management team. But you can actively "engage them" as George sets out to explain how in this pocket guide.

About the author

George Jucan is an internationally recognized consultant, speaker, trainer and author, with over 25 years of successfully enabling organizational performance through effective project, program and portfolio management.[2]

Book Structure

This book consists of ten segments the core of which are:
- Setting the Stage
- Understanding People
- Know Your Stakeholders
- Plan Stakeholder Engagement
- Engage Stakeholders
- Monitor Engagement
- Top 5 Tips for Effective Engagement

Right off the bat, George challenges the classic project management definition of "success" with a different perspective. It is true that from a management-of-the-project perspective, the measure is the classic "On Time, On Budget", always assuming that the Quality is satisfactory. However, stakeholders are typically more interested in the project's outcome. In other words, "customer satisfaction" is in the final product. But not all stakeholders will view the project results the same way. In George's view:[3]

> "A project is considered as being successful if, after the dust has settled, it is remembered that it delivered <u>perceived</u> value to stakeholders. … Delivered value and associated

project success is extremely subjective – it's all in the eyes of the beholder."

So, George's "new" definition states:[4]

"A project is only as successful
as the stakeholders think it is!"

George goes on to point out:[5]

"However, people's confidence in their perception can be exploited by a savvy project
manager. By highlighting certain details you can focus their attention where you want
them to look, and influence their "own" opinion – it's more efficient to make them see by
themselves what you want them to see, rather that trying to convince them to accept your
version of reality!"

What we liked

Having made his position clear on what project "success" looks like, George goes on through the series
of segments listed above in which he divulges the various tools and techniques that he uses at each stage.

Understanding People[6]
- The Johari Window
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Myer's Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Triarchic Theory of Intelligence
- David Kolb's Learning Styles

Know Your Stakeholders[7]
- Brainstorming method
- Plotting Stakeholders: Top down approach to importance
- Plotting Stakeholders: Inside Out according to the distance from the Project Team
- Stakeholder Registry: Public
- Stakeholder Registry: Confidential
- The Power/Interest grid
- The Power/Influence grid
- The Influence/Impact grid
- The Salience model: Based on Power/Urgency/Legitimacy
- The Stakeholder's Network

Plan Stakeholder Engagement[8]
- The Stakeholder Engagement Assessment Matrix (SEAM)
- Defined Activities Plan
- The Salience Model: 3D plot
- The Salience Model: 2D table
- Stakeholders Engage Plan

Engage Stakeholders[9]
- The Communication Model: Complex, All dimensions
- Effective Involvement

Monitor Engagement[10]
- Documentation: (Seven types)
- Dashboards: Status and Focus tables, Heat maps, and Performance Indices

Top 5 Tips for Effective Engagement[11]
- Changes are good, unmanaged changes are bad!
- Set the Rules before you start the Game!
- Information is Power – Use it!
- People don't hate change, they hate <u>being</u> changed!

You can see that George gives you a lot to chew on!

Conclusion

George ends his book with his mantra for successful projects, which he calls the *Road Map to Project Success*, namely:[12]

1. Project success is measured in stakeholder satisfaction;
2. Stakeholders need to be "part of the team" to truly support the project;
3. Stakeholders' happiness is directly proportional to their ability to exercise change;
4. Change is the only constant throughout the entire project – build processes based on enabling change, not against it;
5. Enabling change allows you to deliver what they really need, not what they thought they wanted when the project started; hence,
6. Meeting the "stakeholders needs" results in a successful project.

To this end and at a minimum, the following areas should be discussed and processes/procedures agreed upon, especially amongst the project team:[13]
- How to work together – roles responsibilities, relationships
- How to exchange information – tools, medium, frequency
- How to identify and resolve issues – collaboration and escalation
- How to track progress – delivery status, forecasts, impacts
- How to resolve conflicts – negotiation and arbitration rules.

Unlike so many professional books, George has made his book, *A Pocket Guide to Stakeholder's Management Engagement*, very easy to read, almost like a memory jogger. Get a copy and keep it handy for your next project.

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[1] The latest PMBOK® Guide has introduced a new discipline titled *Project Stakeholder Management*, using the word "Management" for consistency with all the other disciplines such as Scope, Quality, Time, Cost, etc.
[2] Jucan, George, *A Pocket Guide to Stakeholders' ~~Management~~ Engagement*, Organizational Performance Enablers Network, Ontario, Canada, 2017, back cover page.
[3] Ibid, p10
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid, p11
[6] Ibid, pp13-17
[7] Ibid, pp18-29

[8] Ibid, pp30-43
[9] Ibid, pp44-57
[10] Ibid, pp58-69
[11] Ibid, pp88
[12] Ibid, p70-77
[13] Ibid, p75