Book Reviews #3: In brief
By R. Max Wideman, FPMI

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Introduction

When the Project Management Institute ("PMI") was launched in 1969, there were few books if any dedicated to the subject of project management. Of course, there were many writings describing how some of the great structures of the past were built. Examples include such monuments as the great Giza Pyramid in Egypt (2580-2560 BCE) or Stonehenge in the UK (built in several stages from 2800 - 1800 BCE), the Great Wall of China (around 221-206 BCE). Since then there have been many great engineering undertakings like canals, railways, bridges, tunnels and dams around the world.[1] But great undertakings have not necessarily been confined to infrastructure.

In the *Six Secret Teachings*, T'ai Kung describes the political advice he gave to two kings Wen and Wu of the Chou dynasty in the eleventh century BC, over 3000 years ago. These rulers used his work to defeat the Shang dynasty that had ruled for 600 years. He is the first famous general and beginner of strategic studies in China. His works were written to support revolutionary activity wherein limited resources were employed to overcome a vastly superior army.[2]

Sound like project management? Of course, but in fact all these accounts describe the management of their respective technologies in specific undertakings. Today, there are multitudes of books on the market that describe the art and science of project management as applied in various environments whether structural, organizational, information technology, research and development and so on. So why do so many people continue to write books on the subject? We think that's because the subject of project management is large, complex and fascinating. Authors think that they have discovered something new or can express what is known more clearly. Every now and again they actually do.

The following reviews briefly describe our general impressions and recommendations on recent books that we have examined.

Books discussed in this Review

1. Enterprise Project Governance: A guide to the Successful Management of Projects Across the Organization, by Paul C. Dinsmore & Luiz Rocha, 2012
2. Improving Your Project Management Skills: Second Edition, by Larry Richman, 2012
3. Project Sustainability: A comprehensive Guide to Sustaining Projects, Systems and Organizations in a Competitive Marketplace, by John N. Morfaw, MBA, 2011

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Enterprise Project Governance:
A guide to the Successful Management of Projects Across the Organization
By Paul C. Dinsmore & Luiz Rocha, 2012

Introduction

What is ***Enterprise Project Governance*** you may well ask? For that matter, what is ***governance***?[3] According to J. Rodney Turner, author of the *Gower Handbook of Project Management*, it is "The planning, influencing and conducting of the policy and affairs of an organization."[4] So, according to authors Paul Dinsmore and Luiz Rocha, Enterprise Project Governance (EPG) is:

> "Project governance initiated under the umbrella of corporate governance. It is about ensuring that:
> - Projects succeed by establishing a well-defined approach that all parties understand and agree on;
> - The approach is followed throughout the life cycle of portfolios, programs, and projects;
> - Progress is measured and actions are proactively taken to confirm that everything stays on track; and
> - Agreed-on benefits, products, or service are delivered."

If that sounds too good to be true for the average project reader, it probably is. But listen up, because this book provides a thorough exposition on an emerging corporate management responsibility that will have a profound influence on how projects are prioritized and conducted in the future. Even though poorly recognized at this time by project teachers and consultants alike, it means that it will affect you! Better yet, this book likely represents the scope and content that you will have to master if you are ambitious enough to aim for the top rung of the corporate ladder.

As the authors observe:[5]

> "Faced with the challenge of developing products and services 'faster, cheaper, and better' in order to survive in a relentlessly competitive world economy, the effective implementation of projects and programs will ultimately determine the success or failure of your organization. It's no longer enough to simply bring single projects in on time and under budget. You now have to ensure that every project or program under you roof gets completed successfully, and that they align with the priorities, resources, and strategies of the organization as a whole – and ultimately create value."

This is not project management for sure, but rather that project management provides the solid foundation on which this wide-ranging management responsibility must rest. The authors' objectives are not only to inform the project management community, but also to engage corporate management at large. As they go on to say:[6]

> "Whether your view is from the boardroom, the executive suite, the project management office, or the project trenches, Enterprise Project Governance gives you the tools and guidance you need to achieve harmonious project results across your entire organization. Containing enlightening examples and case studies, the book reveals practical methods for incorporating EPG into your company's culture, synchronizing it with corporate governance, and maximizing efficiency and results across all departments."

Indeed, this book aims to show that "governance" issues affect the classic components of project management, including portfolios of projects, their necessary support structures and their stakeholders. And "The book's scope includes all project-related factors in an organization and shows how top-down

governance structure is fundamental to ensure beneficial and healthy projects."[7]

We have read this book with some degree of excitement because we see it as opening up a stirring vision of the future and future opportunity. We agree that the book is a valuable read at all levels of experience. We believe that it is also relevant to a wide range of organizations that depend on projects for their very existence, not just commercial but governments, NGOs, and non-profits as well. The train may not yet have arrived at the station but it is certainly coming down the tracks.

About the authors

Paul Dinsmore, PMP, is a renowned specialist in project management and organizational change and is President of Dinsmore Associates with offices in Dallas and Rio de Janeiro. Paul has received the Distinguished Contribution Award from the Project Management Institute ("PMI") and is a Fellow of PMI. He has conducted seminars internationally on project management, change management, team building, and leadership.

Luiz Rocha is Director of Projects with Dinsmore Associates and has 35 years experience in project management and business consulting. Luiz has worked with Andersen Consulting and Delloite in the United States and Europe when he had the opportunity to manage multicultural and geographically dispersed projects in Latin America, North America, and Europe. Luiz is an engineer by back ground, holding an MSc in industrial engineering.

Table of Contents

The contents of this book are set out in thirteen chapters and several appendices as follows:
1. Introduction to Enterprise Project Governance
2. The Essence of Enterprise Project Governance
3. Linking Strategy to Portfolio
4. Risk Management: Dealing with Uncertainty
5. Project Portfolio Management: The right Combination of the Right Projects
6. Turning Strategy into Reality
7. Organizing for Enterprise Project Governance
8. Stakeholder Management and the Pivotal Role of the Sponsor
9. EPG Performance Beyond Time, Cost and Quality
10. EPG in Mega Projects, Joint Ventures and Alliances
11. EPG for Different types of Projects
12. The EPG Plan: A Roadmap to Transformation and Success
13. Challenges and Roadblocks
    Appendix: Sarbanes-Oxley Compliant Projects
    Notes and Sources
    Glossary
    Abbreviations and Acronyms

The book has a total of 271 pages and every chapter concludes with a *Conclusions* summary. Considering the new ground that this book covers, we were delighted to see that it included an excellent Glossary of key terms. These key terms include many novel but relevant definitions referenced in the book.

General observations and recommendations

This book is well written in a clear convincing style. It includes graphics, charts and tables by way of clarification. Lists of bulleted comments emphasize major points and for those who wish to implement the book's recommendations, these also make valuable reference lists.

A significant part of the book's text is taken up with a large number of short case examples, both successful and unsuccessful, to illustrate the authors' message. We haven't counted them but there are several in most chapters. Many of these alone make fascinating reading for their otherwise unheralded insights. *Apple's Revival* is one such case that is compared to Nokia's difficulty in organizing to compete in the iPhone market.[8] This case ends with *Lessons Learned from Apple and Nokia* that is summarized in six bullets, one of which claims:[9]

> "• **The Quality of Information**. Regardless of the quality and sophistication of the portfolio selection and decision tools, information quality is essential for making accurate decisions."

In another example, *A Saga of Atom Smashers*, the authors compare the outcomes of the U.S. Department of Energy' multibillion-dollar Superconducting Super Collider (SSC) project and the European Organization for Nuclear Research's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN. This too makes fascinating reading because the authors suggest that:[10]

> "The SSC project in Texas was flawed from the beginning due to the lack of appropriate governance structure and insufficient evaluation of risks."

By comparison, the international LHC organization proclaimed that:

> "The project organization should be designed so that all participants consider themselves integral parts of the common project, as having a strong stake in its success and appropriate influence on its decision-making processes."[11] Given that about 1000 scientists and engineers from 100 countries participated, that alone must have been a significant challenge.

From this vivid contrast, the authors conclude that:[12]

> "As a result, competitive-bidding contracting practices are not conducive to forming honest, open, transparent engagements among the stakeholders. Such flexible agreements, based on mutual trust, are contrary to the mind-set expressed as, 'you show me yours, and I'll show you mine – but you have to show me yours first.'"

There is one more case worthy of mention:[13]

> "In June 2004, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in the United Kingdom initiated the National Offender Management Information System project designed to track offenders in a single system covering offenders both during their prison stay and during probation."

The project did not go well. The UK's National Audit Office investigated the project and concluded (in part):[14]

> "*There was inadequate oversight by senior management.* While the project board met at least once every two months, it did not actively monitor delivery of the project and was unaware of the full extent of delays or the implications of its decisions on project costs. It was three years after project initiation that senior officials discovered it was running two years late and that costs had more than doubled."

Sound familiar?

As a point of interest to us, the authors chose to describe the essence of project work as it relates to Enterprise Project Governance. This included a short paragraph titled: *Views of Project Management from Professional Associations*. In this paragraph, the authors observed:[15]

> "The essence of project management was traditionally represented by a triangle, depicting the need to manage time, cost, and quality. ***These core areas have long since morphed into a square***, depicting quadruple constraints, with the addition of scope management because scope is so tightly intertwined with the elements of the classic triangle. So time, cost, quality, and scope are the pillars for turning strategic projects into results." (Emphasis added.)[16]

We hope that "Professional Associations" will pay attention. We have been pointing this out for decades. Perhaps, at long last, progress is being made.

Clearly, Enterprise Project Governance is an emerging area of corporate management based on project management. In spite of this, and therefore we are treading in untested waters, this book appears to provide reliable, sound advice and make eminent good sense based on the authors' convincing research material. For the same reason this book makes for easy reading.

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Fellow, PMI

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Improving Your Project Management Skills Second Edition
By Larry Richman, 2012

Introduction

This book is based on the American Management Association's popular seminar: *Improving Your Project Management Skills.* This second edition has been updated for consistency with PMI's *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* (PMBOK®) Guide. In general it reflects the latest standards and provides current project management practices and examples. As such it follows the natural and logical sequence of managing a project from *Initiating* to *Closing*.

Thus the book guides the reader step-by-step through the processes encountered in the life of a project, beginning with defining the project scope and requirements. It explains how to create a work breakdown structure (WBS) and diagram the activities into a logical sequence using simple network diagrams. It then describes techniques for estimating work on these activities, including trade-offs in time, cost, and resource allocation. The reader may then learn how to compile their schedules, budgets, and resource plans into a comprehensive project plan.[17]

According to the Larry Richman's *Introduction*:[18]

> "Chapters [of the book] will teach you how to monitor and control project activities using your project plan as a baseline. In addition to hard project management skills, you will learn the people skills needed to lead and direct project teams to get the job done. The book also includes chapters on identifying and managing risk and how to properly close the project and document lessons learned."

Larry is also quick to point out that:[19]

"Some projects are ambitious and far-reaching in their social, economic, and political impacts. Others are less grand and more self-contained. Some require advances in basic science, and others deploy proven technology or best practices. Some projects challenge deeply held beliefs, and others uphold traditional values. And some projects fail. [Nevertheless,] The goal is always to achieve some beneficial change."

Although not specifically mentioned, it is evident that the target audience is those who have had some limited project experience in the corporate organizational world. And now it is time to smarten up with real project management tools and their consistent application.

About the author

Larry Richman is a certified Project Management Professional ("PMP") with more than 30 years of experience teaching and practicing project management. He has developed and implemented computer-assisted project management systems and has authored thirteen books, including four on project management. He lives in Salt Lake City Utah.

Table of Contents

The content of this book is set out in 5 parts covering 14 chapters and 2 Appendices as follows:
Part 1: Project Management Foundations
    1. The Core Concepts
Part 2: Initiating
    2. Defining and Authorizing the Project
Part 3: Planning
    3. Collecting Requirements and Defining Dcope
    4. Creating a Work Breakdown Structure
    5. Defining and sequencing Activities
    6. Estimating Activities
    7. Scheduling Activities
    8. Identifying Resources and Budgets
    9. Compiling the Major Components of a Project Plan
Part 4: Executing, Monitoring, and Controlling
    10. Executing Projects
    11. Monitoring and Controlling Projects
    12. Leading and Directing Project Teams
    13. Managing Risk
Part 5: Closing
    14. Closing a Project
Appendix A: Learning Resources
Appendix B: Glossary

The book has 212 pages in which a lot of credible content is covered. We were particularly pleased to note that the book includes a Glossary of project management terms (see Appendix B). All the chapters are plain and straightforward, each chapter diving straight into the subject matter at the beginning and finishing without ceremony when the topic coverage is complete.

General observations and recommendations

The contents of the book are delivered in a plain, simple and straightforward way. This has no doubt been derived from the thirty years of the Larry Richman's own experiences in practicing project management, and in teaching and receiving feed back. As may be inferred from the Table of Contents, the author covers all of the core attributes of project management, and the relevant basic tools associated with each.

There is, however, one marked absence and that is a discussion of the management of quality. We could only find only three minor references. The first is in a simple listing of the nine knowledge areas of PMI's PMBOK Guide.[20] The second, under *Organizational Plan*, is a reference to responsibility for quality by performers of the work, as a part of an organizational breakdown structure.[21] The third is a reference, under *Assessing and Prioritizing Risk,* suggesting that: "late delivery of a key component could cause schedule delays, cost overruns, and a lower-quality product."[22]

In our view, this is a serious omission considering that the Quality Grade of the project's outcome or product is a variable independent of the project's scope. More importantly, the quality grade and the assurance of quality to that standard, has a significant impact on the time and cost of the project. It is one of the drivers of the management of the project as a whole.

However, we were particularly gratified to see that the author recognizes the importance of the project manager understanding the ***Business Case*** as the reasons for undertaking the project in the first place.[23] He states that the following need to be understood: The Problem or Opportunity; The Solution and Vision; The Expected Benefits; and the Estimated Costs. How many project managers really understand that simple advice?

Larry goes on to explain that projects should be seen as investments that may be driven by different expectations such as *Survival*, *Profitability*, *Growth* and so on. In any case, "the key is that every project must be aligned with something bigger than itself. Each project should be linked to some enterprise goal, objective or strategy."[24]

The book offers light and easy-to-follow reading and is illustrated by Tables and Graphics where appropriate. In our opinion, the book is well written and provides sound, reliable, and realistic advice at an introductory level.

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Project Sustainability:
A comprehensive Guide to Sustaining Projects, Systems and Organizations in a Competitive Marketplace
By John N. Morfaw, MBA, 2011

Introduction

Author John Morfaw is no stranger to these pages. Back in June 2009 we reviewed an earlier book of his titled *Total Quality Management*.[25] At that time John was very concerned about the status and quality of healthcare projects as a result of a human resources crisis in the African continent. In this latest book, *Project Sustainability:*[26] John jumps on the bandwagon of "sustainability" to attract attention to his ideas.

As Dr. Mercy M. Tembon explains in her Foreword to the book:[27]

> "This book, "Project Sustainability", explores some of the most exciting frontiers of modern management and especially project planning and management and sustainability in the marketplace. Business consultants, students, government and non-governmental organizations and leadership and management organizations will find a body of enjoyable and useful information within the covers of this book."

Indeed, the book does relate the origins of "sustainability" and describe it in some detail. However, the book avoids lofty academic ideals but instead provides pages packed with useful project reference material that is not otherwise readily available to newly minted project personnel. It is the sort of content that a savvy person would assemble for quick and easy personal reference in bullet-listed, tabulated or graphical form on a multitude of project related topics.

For example, Chapter Two gives a quick rundown on the recommended contents of a "Project Sustainability Management Plan". It covers: *Program Summary; Identification of Stakeholders and Advocates; Results Orientation; Financial Planning and Analysis; Program Adaption to Change; Management Structure; Support Systems; Program Monitoring and Evaluation;* and *Program Documentation*. For anyone developing such a plan, that would give them a very good start.[28]

Chapter Three on Sustainable Process Development includes a section that lists all the required Process Flow Chart Symbols. That's a very handy reference for anyone who does not know what all those funny shaped box symbols represent.[29] The chapter also highlights many other types of useful graphical charts. Later in the book, John provides a very comprehensive listing of all the components of *The Project Plan Process* from *Project Plan Preparation* to *Operational Support*.[30] This is followed by other key processes encountered in the project life span, including *The Marketing Plan*, and other necessary reference data.[31]

The author's objective, it seems, is to create a business guide that explores the complex relationship between a good strategic implementation plan and the implementation actually needed to enhance and sustain a project in the marketplace.

About the author

John Morfaw has an MBA from Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, and a graduate certificate in project management from Penn State University, Pennsylvania. He is the founder and CEO of Tanyimor Project

Inc. And Tanyimor Foundation Inc. He is also a Mentor with the Africa Unbound Mentorship Program.

Table of Contents

The content of this book is set out in eight chapters and several appendices as follows:
1. Introduction
2. Project Sustainability Management
3. Sustainable Process Development
4. Sustainable Organizational Structure
5. Strategic Implementation Plan
6. Total Quality Management Fundamentals
7. Other Sustainable Management Concepts
8. Sustainable Project Management Processes
   Conclusion
   Appendices
   - Glossary
   - Strategic Implementation Training Forms
   - Common Business Jargon
   - Common Business Acronyms
   Bibliography

We found the Training Forms to be quite useful as check lists for the initial setup of a project and as a personal reference and organizer for the project manager setting up the project. However, we were particularly engaged by some of the definitions in the glossary of Common Business Jargon and the interpretations of the Common Business Acronyms. In the former, we didn't know that "Baby Boomers" were those born between1945 and 1964[32] and that "Streamlining" like "Downsize" really means "cutting back on jobs and services to save money" to say nothing of "Jump on the bandwagon" that we referenced earlier.

The book has 194 pages and includes a Glossary covering the terms used in the book.

General observations and recommendations

- ✓ Well written, clear style?
- ✓ Amount of text versus illustrations
- ✓ Light easy reading vs. academic heavy reading
- ✓ Sound advice (in our opinion):
  - Introductory vs. in-depth
  - Any special observations
  - How reliable/realistic

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[1] See Lessons from History: http://lessons-from-history.com/node/12 accessed 5/19/13

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[2] See the *Six Secret Teachings*: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_Secret_Strategic_Teachings accessed 5/19/13

[3] We and our Guests have written extensively on the subject of "governance" on this web site. Just use our Google search engine to search for "governance".However, three articles stand out in particular:

  1. Project Portfolio Governance Guidelines (2005) http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/governance/intro.htm

  2. Governance in the Project Management World (2013) http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/pm_world/exec_summary.htm and

  3. Having trouble with the latest lingo? (2013) http://www.maxwideman.com/musings/lingo.htm

[4] See http://www.maxwideman.com/pmglossary/PMG_G00.htm

[5] Dinsmore, Paul C., & Luiz Rocha, *Enterprise Project Governance*, text extracted from the book's fly sheet

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid, p xii

[8] Ibid, pp 40-43

[9] Ibid, p40

[10] Ibid, p168

[11] Ibid, p169

[12] Ibid, p172

[13] Ibid, p146

[14] Ibid, p147

[15] ibid, p103

[16] A more thorough explanation of a project and its environment can be found on this page: http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/conceptdraw/pro.htm

[17] Richman, Larry, *Improving Your Project Management Skills*, 2nd edition, American Management Association, NY, 2012

[18] Ibid, p1-2

[19] Ibid, p6

[20] Ibid, p13

[21] Ibid, pp111-112

[22] Ibid, p166

[23] Ibid, p18

[24] Ibid, pp19-20s

[25] Morfaw, John, N., *Total Quality Management*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, USA, 2006, see http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/tqm/intro.htm

[26] John himself explains that to "jump on the bandwagon" means to "join what is popular, be one of the 'in crowds.' "

[27] Morfaw, John, N., MBA, Project Sustainability, iUniverse, Bloomington, IN, USA, 2011, p xv

[28] Ibid, pp 23-25

[29] Ibid, p33

[30] Ibid, pp115-119

[31] Ibid, pp119-136

[32] Ibid, p170. Actually, the text reads "between 1945 and 2964" but we think that is an obvious typo.