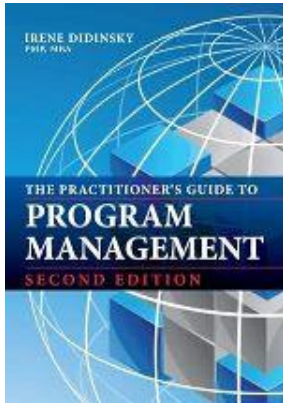

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW ¹



Book Title: ***The Practitioner's Guide to Program Management, 2ND Ed.***

Author: **Irene Didinsky**

Publisher: J. Ross Publishing List Price: 59.95

Format: Paperback with some Value Added Downloads on the
J. Ross resource center Publication Date: 2025

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Reviewer: **M. Saunders**

Reviewed: Feb/March 2026

Introduction

Reading this book has been very beneficial as I can relate to how businesses need to understand the role of the program manager and the value they bring to oversee groups of projects. Understanding there are different types of Program Managers and how they work within the overarching business framework is an essential need for all business leaders who work with or have Program Managers involved in projects.

The book highlights what is needed to be a successful program manager and how the business empowers them. Real life should include many of the practices we read about in this book as they are spot on regarding how program management “fits” into the company, projects and teams. Their oversight is necessary for groups of projects that need to be handled at a level to coordinate resources, manage financials and have someone available who can easily provide the leadership teams the information they need to understand progress/risks/etc.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is divided into easy to read sections where someone can get a good definition of Program Management, understand criteria for success, go through strategy alignment (program and business), read about business value of having program managers, governance, stakeholders, life cycles, effective execution of programs, community of practice and what the future holds for program management.

¹ How to cite this work: Saunders, M. (2025). *The Practitioner's Guide to Program Management, 2ND Ed.*, book review, *PM World Journal*, Vol. XIV, Issue IV, April.

I was pulled into this book from the aspect of carrying the title of program manager for many years within a services organization. Though I have completed many varieties of programs (internal and external facing) I found the book good to use as a standard regarding what tools and capabilities a program manager should have and be able to use. What I realized is based on company leadership and program needs, the person who is involved as a program manager may or may not be asked to exhibit the skills stated in the book. All skills discussed are relevant and good to have.

I found the information on how Agile and Hybrid Methodologies work well with many programs refreshing as many teams are trying to use the flexibility of Agile for managing complex programs that change based on a customer's needs. Blending Waterfall (for the singular projects) with Agile where adaptation can take place on a higher level really makes sense. I know AI is also considered a tool that will be helpful for future and leveraging AI for risk assessment/management activities and automation of routine activities truly make sense.

Highlights

I loved that this book discusses many companies organizational structures and proficiencies needed for program success. Table 2.2 in the book clearly outlines what the differences are between Leadership, Program Management and Interpersonal Skills. We see how time is spent when leading versus executing. It is good for leaders to recognize the various types of program management needs and understand what their program structure needs.

The book also discusses program management involvement in the project from Procurement to Execution and including Risk Management, Change Control processes and Quality (all things needed at a program level to establish standards and to ensure the individual projects making up the program meet the end customer needs).

Highlights: What I liked!

I personally liked that this book is relatable to the role of a program manager. So often roles get confused in a work environment and expectations are not met as businesses don't understand the true value (or benefits) that resources bring to the table.

I think this book provides insight into tools and templates that can be used along with formulas which can be used to look at different calculations that might be needed at a program level. (Budget/Forecast/Variations)

Who might benefit from the Book

Certainly, in a business environment Program Managers, Project Managers, Functional Managers and C Level Management would benefit from reading this book to understand the overall value of Program Management. So often when a single project has issues and it is part of the program – the issues are raised to the Program Manager to resolve or determine how best to approach.

Reading this book would allow everyone involved to clearly understand roles and delineate responsibilities.

Conclusion

As technology changes many jobs will change with it, though I believe the skills and responsibilities of the Program Manager will be needed to “tie” multiple projects together and make certain end customer needs are met. The Program Manager will remain responsible for related projects coordinated to create the added value for the customer, and keep projects within budget safeguarding organization strategy and benefits. The tools and skills required to do this work are clearly outlined in this book.

For more about this book, go to:

[The Practitioner's Guide to Program Management - J. Ross Publishing](#)

About the Reviewer



M. Saunders

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M. Saunders is retired now and enjoys volunteering at different events where she enjoys learning and practicing her PM/Pgm Mgmt capabilities to benefit others.

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