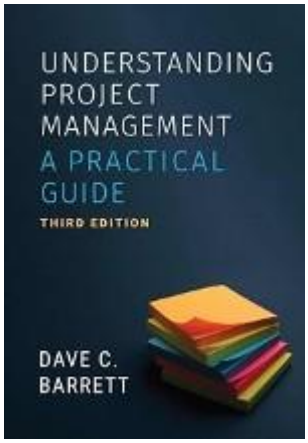
PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW [1]



Book Title: **Understanding Project Management, A Practical Guide, 3rd Ed**.

Author: **David C. Barrett**

Publisher: CB Business Press

List Price: $99.95 Format: Soft cover

Publication Date: 2024 ISBN: 978-1-7738-421-4

Reviewer: **Lauren Davenport**

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Introduction

Understanding Project Management- A practical guide third edition is clearly written by an author who understands not just the principles and terminology of project management, but has also practiced project management in the workforce.

The book takes the reader through the processes end to end and each phase of the project lifecycle. The book is comprehensive and clear, allowing the reader to fully understand how to maintain a project's overall objective through planning and execution phase for a successful delivery.

Overview of Book's Structure

A key attribute of the book is the singular case study that is threaded throughout each section of the material. The author uses the case study as an illustration of how a project should be conducted and how the members of the team need to be in constant communication as well as maintain trusting relationships. The example project team needed to work in conjunction to determine the most ideal product to build for the illustrative company at the time while knowing there are other viable options. The group prioritized one product based on the business case analysis and agreed to complete the other viable options when resources allowed based on the determined priority list. As the case study project is executed the team encounters hurdles but they work in unison to mitigate and transfer risk to complete the project on time. The case study project manager also continually uses analogous and historical data to support her decision making process. I have also found this to be helpful as a tenured project

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manager that you can leverage information from past projects and apply them to current ones even when the product or benefits may vary. For example, printing timelines for brochures or distribution material are generally fixed and the quotes are reliable, so you can use those stated quotes to determine the best vendor even if there is no prior relationship.

The author closes the book with a section on agile and hybrid project management. Agile project management requires time to grasp and learn. Agile project management work allows for a fluidity within a project team as each stakeholder contributes their input as the requirements and needs change. Each member of the team must remain flexible and alert to account for and cover as they craft the final product. Everyone must maintain the sight of the overall objective regardless of the changes and keep a nimble approach. An agile approach also requires constant communication and alertness. Each member of the team must rely on their strengths within their role and leverage one another and communicate while mitigating any upcoming issues or risks. I have found that agile methodology takes most stakeholders practice, but becomes the preferred methodology for most teams when the project allows. Agile teams learn the power of effective communication and educating one another on what each workstream requires from one another.

Highlights

The book has definitions that are easily grasped for the general project management terminology. These definitions allow for someone studying project management to be able to apply to practice.

The project case study also heavily supported the knowledge shared in each chapter.

The graphs and charts helped show project managers how to organize the information in a way that will allow them to readily see any upcoming risks or alert them to scheduling or budgeting conflicts.

The content of the book is outlined in a way that supports the understanding as the author walks the reader through the processes and then includes supporting highlighted terms as well as review of the important content highlighted through each chapter.

Highlights: What I liked!

The example project sponsor is heavily discussed in the illustration. The project manager works well with the sponsor to ensure that everything is addressed correctly, and they discuss any foreseen and unforeseen risks. This is a dynamic that is usually missed in other project management materials but this type of key relationship is imperative for most projects. Based on my experience in working with different cross functional sponsors, quick key face to face conversations when the opportunity allows, helps provide impact and ensure the sponsor understands any impediments and can

offer partnership. Most project sponsors have oversight to a breadth of work and these swift touchpoints can be powerful.

Who might benefit from the Book

Anyone can benefit from this book, project management is everywhere in the world. We all have deliverables that need to be completed and most of them are pertinent to a specific goal and or an overall product or service to be delivered. There is emphasis on strong communication and relationship as well as documentation and how both skills are necessary, this is well highlighted by the author.

Conclusion

I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in project management. This resource will strengthen the readers understanding of the terminology and how to put each tool into practice throughout the project lifecycle. The book's case study highlights the importance of communication with key stakeholders and documenting whether it be in a RACI chart or cost estimations ledger. The project manager's function is to oversee the team and their assigned tasks, and provide any support or guidance needed while also maintaining communication with the project sponsor who has a vest interested in the benefits realized at completion of the project.

The author covers the importance of keeping stakeholder registers, risk registers, and well documented communication plans. They also share the importance of looking out for the project team and leveraging their strengths and knowledge and leaning on them for their expertise.

For more about this book, go to: https://www.amazon.ca/Understanding-Project-Management-Third-Practical/dp/177338421X or https://canadianscholars.ca/book/understanding-project-management-third-edition/

About the Reviewer



Lauren Davenport

Texas, USA

Lauren Davenport has over 20 years of experience in the corporate workplace across varied industries including retail, telecom, and financial services. Her career focus has been project management in the last 10 years and she specializes in working with cross functional teams including technology, business, and marketing. Her main focus in the field of project management is to manage as a servant leader to her project teams as well as educate the stakeholders about the importance of their peer's efforts across all workstreams and how it all works in conjunction.

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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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