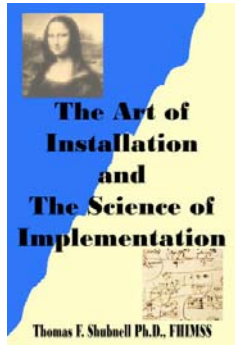


## PMF Book Review



**Book Title:** *The Art of Installation and The Science of Implementation*

**Authors:** Thomas F. Shubnell, Ph.D., FHIMSS

**Publisher:** LULU Press, Inc.

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**Reviewer:** Michael A. Martinez, PMP

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### Introduction

A software implementation failure can destroy a company. Consider the FoxMeyer Corp., a former \$5 billion pharmaceutical company. In 1996 they declared bankruptcy and were liquidated due to a failed SAP implementation. In *The Art of Installation and The Science of Implementation*, Thomas F. Shubnell, Ph.D., FHIMSS, presents his methodology for successfully managing packaged software implementation projects. Dr. Shubnell's methodology is based on his project management experience, which has shown that a successful software implementation is more than just installing the packaged software, but also includes the people, processes, technology, and business changes needed for a company to fully utilize and exploit the installed software.

Dr. Shubnell is a Principal with the CCI Group, an information services firm that delivers senior level and strategic consulting solutions to healthcare providers. He has more than 30 years of project management experience in a variety of roles. He has also achieved Fellow status in the Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) and is the President of the Dallas-Fort Worth HIMSS Chapter.

Many of the projects I manage are software deployments for wireless telecommunication networks. Although this book's primary focus is on packaged software implementations, I found most of the ideas and recommendations Shubnell presents in his methodology are applicable for the projects I manage.

### Structure of the Book

The book is divided into two sections, The Art and The Science, and includes two appendices and a bibliography. In The Art, which consists of two chapters, Dr. Shubnell highlights some of the key reasons why packaged software implementations fail and provides a basic introduction to project management and methodologies.

The Science consists of three chapters. In the first chapter of this section, Evolving from Art to Science, Dr. Shubnell identifies some of the key factors of project success and project failure. In the second chapter, Roles and Responsibilities, he focuses on three roles: Steering Committee, Project Sponsor, and Program Management Office. In addition, he looks at how managing time, performance, change, risk, resources, quality, and communications relate to project success or failure. The final chapter, The Methodology, is the most important chapter in the book. It is broken down by the four phases of his methodology:

- Plan and Prepare Phase
- Define and Design Phase
- Evaluate and Integrate Phase
- Remediate and Assimilate Phase

Each of these phases includes an activities table, deliverables table, common risks, and quality assurance. Each phase also contains additional sections specific to that phase. For example, the Evaluate and Integrate Phase also has sections on testing, user training, conversion and cut-over, and system acceptance. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major project activities and deliverables, a summary of major project documents, and a section on lessons learned topics and questions. This chapter encompasses more than half of the book and provides the three key benefits of the book to the reader.

### **Highlights: What I liked about the Book**

The first key benefit is the holistic nature of the methodology. Dr. Shubnell understands that projects exist to provide some benefit to the organization and are not an end in themselves. This is evident from the first page when he clearly states that the purpose of a software implementation project is not to simply install the packaged software but to "exploit the software as designed." This is applied in the Plan and Prepare Phase where he differentiates between the critical success factors of the project and the critical success factors from the project. The critical success factors are "those concrete and measurable items that define successful outcomes from the project." He gives several examples, such as, "Purchase order transaction times will be reduced by thirty percent within 30 days after cut-over." He compares this to the critical success factors of a project, such as a project plan, which he assumes are included in the project by default. As he states, "the project should not be allowed to take on a life of its own."

The second key benefit is the list of questions Dr. Shubnell asks in the Quality Assurance section of each phase. Some examples:

- Have items, such as training, expenses, facility changes, technology, supplies, project support, and contingencies been budgeted?

- Are post cut-over metrics and measurement being collected and reviewed?
- Is the system still completely monitored, controlled, and supported by operations and support staff?

If you answer the questions as they relate to your project, you will increase your projects chance for success. It is like having an experienced mentor advising you on your project.

The third key benefit is the table of activities and the table of deliverables in each phase. The tables provide a comprehensive list of activities and deliverables that may be needed on a software implementation project. Using the tables as a guide, a project manager can create a work breakdown structure or milestone checklist. This allows the project manager tailor his methodology by consciously including or excluding any item in the table based on their project's specific needs.

### **What could be improved**

There are three areas that I think could be improved with this book. First, I would have liked to have seen more recent references in the bibliography. The latest reference is from 2003, and even the PMBOK citation refers to the 2nd edition published in 1999. Second, Dr. Shubnell presents a large amount of information in 250 pages and an index would be a welcome addition. Finally, the structure of the book makes the reader work harder than necessary to understand Dr. Shubnell's ideas. The formatting of the section headings does not allow the reader to understand whether a section is subordinate to the previous section or is a new topic. As a result, I was constantly referring back to the table of contents to understand how a section fit into the overall structure of the book.

### **Who could benefit from the book**

This book provides an in-depth look at software implementation projects. It is primarily applicable to project management professionals. Project managers, project team members, project quality and process personnel, and PMO leaders can find guidance on software implementation projects from this book. Those new to software implementation projects will get a head start to a successful outcome while veteran software implementation project managers will benefit from the many lessons Dr. Shubnell has shared from his experiences.

### **Conclusion**

Dr. Shubnell provides a practical methodology that can be used as a basis for your own software implementation projects. If you are managing software implementation or IT projects, you will benefit from reading this book.

**About the Reviewer:****Michael A. Martinez**

**Michael A. Martinez** is the Manager of Care Project Management for North America at Nokia Siemens Networks. He has managed R&D, software development, systems integration, network deployment, and services projects. He has a B.S. in History from the U.S. Air Force Academy, a B.S. in Computer Science from Angelo State University, and a M.B.A. from the University of Texas at Dallas. He is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and has a Certificate in Project Management from the University of Texas at Dallas. He can be contacted at [michael.martinez@nsn.com](mailto:michael.martinez@nsn.com).