



PMF Book Review

Book Title: Program Management for Improved Business Results

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Introduction to the Book

These are tough times for management book authors. It seems as if general and topical management books are being printed out once or twice a week. To survive in this highly demand driven and competitive environment, authors need to distinguish themselves from the crowd. Dragan Milosevic, Russ Martinelli and James Wadell have managed this feat in their *Program Management for Improved Business Results*. Program Management is one of the management topics that is rapidly gaining interest on a global scale. The fact that institutions like the Project Management Institute (PMI) were quick to jump on the bandwagon of standardization and certification in program management tells a lot.

Even though program management is recognized as an effective approach to managing product, service, and infrastructure development efforts, there is a lot of confusion and controversy about even basic concepts or terminology. Program management has been in practice for decades, but misunderstanding still exists concerning *what* it is; *why* it is used in business development; and *how* it is applied in practice. The authors of the *Program Management for Improved Business Results* provide not only answers to these vexed questions but a comprehensive holistic view of the program management. They define program management as "the coordinated management of interdependent projects over a finite period of time to achieve a set of business goals". The book views program management as a strategic business component that can be used to gain competitive advantage, and goes into details of showing how a program should be managed to improve business results.

Format & Review Discussion

The book is laid out as follows: The first (1) part "It's About the Business" with four chapters introduce readers to the program management discipline and illustrate how program management can be implemented as a major element of an organization's business model. The text is then divided into four major parts: (2) Managing the Program, (3) Program Management Metrics and Tools, (4) The

Program Manager, (5) Organizing for Program Management. Each major part of the text contains two to four chapters for a total of 15 chapters. The sixth part of the book contains four industry case studies based on the application of the program management discipline in real world examples. This part in addition to numerous case studies spread through the book; along with wealth of real-world details make the book appealing as a textbook for teaching program management principles.

Part 2 covers management of a single program from its inception to end of life. Chapter 5 discusses critical factors of importance for structuring the program team. Chapter 6 continues the discussion on successful program implementation with a focus on program definition and planning. Program definition involves the integration of business strategy with customer and technology research to develop a product, service or infrastructure concept. Program planning aligns the product, service, or infrastructure concept into a cross-project, multidisciplinary implementation plan. Chapter 7 focuses on the execution of the program implementation plan to create the final product, service, or infrastructure and prepare for its launch into the market or customer's environment. Chapter 8 describes the primary program management processes that program managers can utilize to make the operational aspects of a program more efficient, predictable, and repeatable.

Part 3: Program Management Metrics and Tools focuses on performance measures and applicable tools which enable the effective program execution. Chapter 9 discusses performance measures (metrics) as the critical success factors in both, programs and global business results of the organization. Chapters 10 and 11, present respectively five strategic and the same number of tactical program management tools for program planning and execution.

Part 4 focuses on the program manager's primary roles and responsibilities and the competencies that she (he) needs to effectively manage a program. Chapter 12 introduces two primary roles of the program manager: managing the business aspects of the program and leading the program team to success. In chapter 13, the authors present the program management competency model.

Part 5 covers the organizational aspects of program management. Chapter 14 provides an interesting look at the process of transitioning to program management and a comprehensive how-to plan for implementing the transition. Chapter 15 focuses on the role the Program Management Office plays in establishing program management as a functional discipline within an organization.

Part 6 demonstrates through comprehensive case studies how program management is applied in four real organizations. Four cases cover multiple elements of program management as they interact in complex business environment. The examples are from four different industries, namely, high-tech manufacturing, software product development, space exploration, and IT.

Summary & Conclusion

This is a well-written and readable book. Overall, the authors did an excellent job of approaching the complex and controversial material in an understandable and useable way for both, industry professionals and academic researchers. This book will help executive, portfolio and program managers to understand the business values and competitive advantages of implementing a program management model. For academics, the book can be used as research resource and recommended reading for their undergraduate and graduate classes. In any case, all practicing management professionals would benefit greatly from reading it.

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About the Reviewer:



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Jovica Riznic earned his B.Sc., M.Sc, and Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, and is a registered Professional Engineer in Ontario, Canada. He has more than twenty years experience in research and development, energy and thermal engineering and science, software development and project management. Currently he serves on the Board of Directors of the PMI Ottawa Valley Outaouis Chapter as the director of the Outreach programs. He is the lead organizer and founder of the Student Forum on Project Management which is in its fifth year as the annual event gathering academics and students from North America and Europe. He teaches courses in the Project Management Certificate Program at Algonquin College in Ottawa, and has published 2 books and more than 100 papers/ articles. Jovica also serves as a member of the Editorial Board for the International Journal of Nuclear Governance, Ecology and Economy. He is an active member in several other professional societies including Professional Engineers of Ontario, Canadian Nuclear Society, American Nuclear Society and American Society of Mechanical Engineers. Recently, he received the College Award for 2003 from the Algonquin College in recognition for his contribution to the project management certificate program.