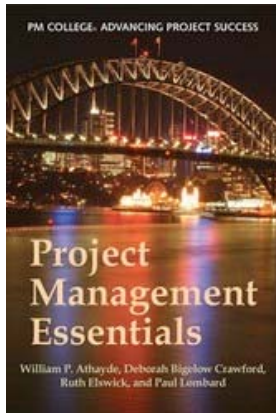


PM World Today Book Review



Book Title: Project Management Essentials
Authors: William P. Athayde, Deborah Bigelow Crawford, Ruth Elswick, and Paul Lombard
Publishers: Center for Business Practices, PM Solutions
List Price: \$34.95 softcover
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ISBN: 1-929576-24-2
Reviewer: Anwar Ali
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Introduction to the Book

I myself being a student of project management found this book brief, concise, and yet encompassing the essentials of the project management. The authors - William P. Athayde, Deborah Bigelow Crawford, Ruth Elswick, and Paul Lombard are senior faculty members of PM College and they surely have understood the learning curve involved in knowing the intricacies of Project Management. Hence, they have utilized their business, project management, and academic experiences to put forward this book with simple chapters, relevant points, and important concepts for the students of Project Management.

The main purpose of this book is to provide basic understanding of various project management processes and knowledge areas and build a solid foundation to become a successful project manager. There are many reasons why I choose to write a review on this book. One of the main reasons is, when I first started to read PMI *PMBOK*[®] *Guide* I wished I had access to a book which can give me a brief broader view of concepts in Project Management before I can delve into all the details of process ITTOs (Inputs, Tools & Techniques and Outputs). Once I found this book, I thought this can aid other students to overcome the difficulties which I went through before making a sense out of *PMBOK*[®] *Guide*.

Overview of Book's Structure

This book covers the basic concepts of five fundamental project management processes, project schedules, project costs, project risks, and change management. This book is based on *PMBOK*[®] *Guide* standard but it is not organized in the knowledge areas, which makes easier for a new student to internalize the concepts and then move to the *PMBOK*[®] *Guide* for more detailed study.

Highlights: What I liked!

Some of the highlights and positive features that interested me are listed below:

- The authors have done a wonderful job describing what happens even before a project is started and a project manager is brought to work on. It gives insight on how the projects are selected and prioritized by the organization. The roles and phases of Project Portfolio Management (PPM) are eloquently described in the first chapter.
- The second chapter lays the foundation of the solid ground to kick off a project in the right direction. It discusses Project charter development, processes and phases of project management, preliminary project scope, and the identifying the key stakeholders in order to make them tuned to one radio station – WIIFM (What’s in it for me) to realize the success of the project.
- The authors remind in the third chapter that the failure to plan is essentially to plan to fail. Hence adequate attention should be given in developing the project scope and other baselines like cost baseline, schedule baseline, performance measurement baseline and technical baseline. Also it important to note the importance of the triple constraints, which reminds us that quality has an impact on, and is impacted by all three elements of the triple constraints – scope, schedule and cost.
- In my own experience when a project members work as a team rather than a group the miracle happens. The author describes the difference between a group and a team, and empowers the reader with the art of persuasion for managing project team members to bring in positive synergies.
- The project execution is illustrated with the example of road trip. Before we start the journey we make sure that we have complete trip plan and information on the road conditions. And when we are on the road, based on the traffic or road conditions sometime we need to detour and revise our route and keep the passengers updated. Similarly, in the case of project, the project manager, need to make sure he/she has all the information ready needed to start the execution of the project. In case of scope changes, it should be approved through the change control board and everyone concerned is properly informed.
- In the last three chapters the authors emphasize the need for proper monitoring and controlling procedures. The project closeout and topics on lessons learned are very useful as well.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

I would not recommend anyone to use the project management life-cycle processes chart given on page#11, as it has missing processes like Cost Control and Communication Planning.

Who might benefit from the Book

This book can be useful for anyone who is starting to learn project management or would like to prepare to attend the PMP certification and inundated by the thickness and terminology of the *PMBOK® Guide*. Hence, it would be a good idea to first read the Project Management Essentials book and then *PMBOK® Guide*.

This book can also useful for someone who has already read the *PMBOK® Guide* and would like to gel in important concepts in the mind concerning project management.

Conclusion

In my conclusion I would like to say that this is a good book for someone who is just starting to learn the project management. This short book is easy to read and understand the basic concepts. However, this book does not have all the details to hone the skills of project management.

About the Reviewer:



Anwar Ali

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Anwar Ali is currently a Team Lead at Atos Origin, a global information technology company with revenues EUR 5.4 billion and worldwide IT partner for Olympic Games. He has worked for some of the fortune 500 companies in design, development, implementation, training, functional and technical team lead roles for US and Global Projects. He has 12+ years of experience in various areas of SAP including Human Resources, Materials Management, Sales & Distribution and Product Lifecycle Management. Anwar has a degree in Computer Science and is pursuing an Executive MBA in Project Management through the University of Texas at Dallas. He can be contacted at Anwar.Ali@AtosOrigin.Com