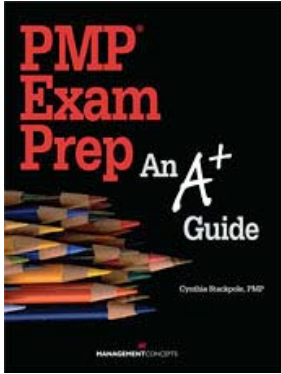


PM World Today Book Review



Book Title: *PMP Exam Prep "An A+ Guide"*

Author: Cynthia Stackpole

Publisher: Management Concepts

List Price: US\$39.00

Publication Date: 2008

ISBN: 978-1-56726-200-1

Reviewer: Jerry Partridge, PMP

Review Date: February 2008

Introduction to the Book

The book stated purpose was to provide an overview of the PMP exam and give basic information needed to pass the test. It reviews the nine knowledge areas, along with professional responsibility and intends to focus on understanding integration as well. It includes content and exercises to help gauge readiness for the exam.

The author has been active in teaching, writing and consulting for a number of years and has published three books as well as served in senior positions in PMI committees. This book is published in the same year as the author serves as the project manager for the PMBOK Guide 4th Edition, soon out in exposure draft.

The reviewer is active in coaching and hosting seminars for professionals seeking to prepare for the certification exam. Any publication reporting to aid in preparation is of immediate interest and worthy of review.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book covers the same topics in the same order as the PMBOK Guide with the same titles. The last chapter covers professional responsibility. The appendices host exercise answers for chapter exercises for all knowledge areas except Integration Management and with the addition of professional responsibility. The CD contains two pdf files: one 196 questions with answers and a second file with questions only (same questions in each).

Highlights: What I liked!

The book is easy to read with a clear font and lots of open spaces for notes. It has several focus areas to facilitate understanding the information such as "key points" and "terms to know" as well as practice exercises for most of the chapters.

The book has additional comments for certain subjects where “more than the PMBOK” coverage has traditionally been advised. These areas include organizational theory, team building, and the general subject of communication.

The author has used a flow chart shape with dashed lines to identify the numerous process “updates” and this helps clarify some of the Guide redundancy.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

The book is smaller and contains less information than the PMBOK Guide and might give the impression that you need to know less and not more to be recognized as a PMP. Also, the PMP exam is listed at 196 questions and should be 200. The table showing the number of questions by process group shows 200. The sample exams are also 196 questions.

Personalizing your study plan has great potential but not enough substance. The summary strategy for PMP study on the back cover was great as a start.

Some of the exercises need to be checked for accuracy or consistency! On page 13 an example is given of using the Time Value of Money as a Project Selection Method. The case uses two different interest rates. If the rates are to indicate cost of the project, why wouldn't the rates be the same? If the rates are indicative of 'rate of return,' it would be better to call them 'rate of return' so they could show what the project would deliver. The example concludes with the advice to pick Project Alpha because it has the lower present value where it delivers \$1 million at the end of four years at 6% rather than Project Beta which delivers \$1 million at the end of just three years at 8%. If Project Beta has a payoff of 8% over three years it will have the higher Net Present Value and would be the better choice for making the investment for several reasons.

In my opinion, Configuration Management is better treated as part of the change control system rather than the reverse as indicated on page 19. Configuration Management as a disciplined approach generally covers the product and its physical characteristics while change management covers the product and the project. This view will support very large government projects, the text in the PMBOK Guide and the Certified Professional Logistician (CPL).

Who might benefit from the Book

Two types of readers would benefit from this book:

- Readers who have English as a second language will benefit from this easy to read overview approach to facilitate further study of the PMBOK Guide.
- Readers who want to learn a little about project management and who hope to pass the exam with minimum effort and test score.

Conclusion

The book briefly touches many important topics in project management and provides a small summary book with essential information needed to pass the PMP exam. The author is the project manager for the current update for the 2008 PMBOK Guide 4th Edition.

About the Reviewer:



Jerry Partridge



Jerry Partridge, PMP, is a senior program and project manager and consultant, certified PMP since 1998. He actively supports PMI publications with contributions on development teams and in reviews of the exposure drafts. He is listed as a contributor in the 2000 and 2004 PMBOK Guide Updates as well as several of the PMI publish Practice Standards. He hosts PMP certification seminars for local universities and consultant clients. He delivers project management courses for several international clients using certified materials and own developed courses.