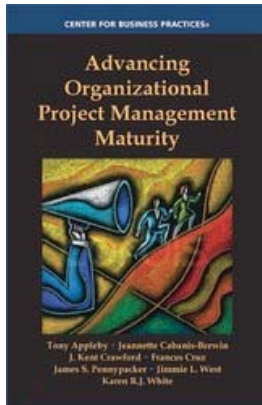


PM World Today Book Review



Book Title: *Advancing Organizational Project Management Maturity*

Authors: Tony Appleby, Jeannette Cabanis-Brewin, J. Kent Crawford, Frances Cruz, James S. Pennypacker, Jimmie L. West & Karen R.J. White

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Reviewer: Ishkhan Topalian

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Introduction to the Book

Five of the book's seven authors carry a PMP certification and are employees by PM Solutions. The other 2 are employees of the publisher. All together, they bring in a wealth of knowledge in discussing organizational project management maturity. The purpose of the book is to discuss how a project management maturity model is applied and explore related topics of organizational structure and project manager development while providing case studies and statistical analyses.

Being part of the a newly established project management process at my workplace, I wanted to read up on project management maturity beyond PMI's OPM3 model to find some results, both good and bad, of other companies who have established formal project management practices and how their models affected their successes or failures. Ultimately, I wanted to share my findings with the project manager user group committee in which I serve in how we can mature our project management maturity- not everyone in our company has had formal project manager training and I wanted to read up on it s benefits, if any, in maturing project management in an company.

Overview of Book's Structure

This is a short book and very quick read but don't let the length and the ease of reading influence your decision on it effectiveness. There is a lot of useful information packed within the 5 chapter and 95 pages of text.

Essentially the book can be divided into 3 sections:

1. The first part (Chapters 1 and 2) of the book gives a basic introduction to project management maturity. It introduces the first set of statistics here when it discusses the percentage of organizations that show performance improvements greater than 10% when they have advanced their level of project management maturity. The authors conclude from research that 90% of organizations achieve project management maturity levels of 1 and 2 (out of 5) and don't ever make it to levels 3 and above. They present certain actions an organization has to take in order to go beyond levels 1 and 2.

2. Chapter 3 makes up the heart of the book and I would consider it to be the second section. Here, the book begins its discussions on basic organizational infrastructures which need to be in place to perform portfolio management, which appears to be where project management maturity begins in an organization. Next, the book moves to a discussion of human resources and organizational structure and how they play a part in fostering project management maturity. The concept of knowledge management is introduced, where it is described (in more detail) as the mechanism of storing and sharing of new procedures and standards as part of a company's transformation to maturity. It is this knowledge that becomes an integral part of growing human capital and organizational capability coupled with open communications. The authors confirm in this section that these ideas are not just theory but a result of logical outcomes of the application of project management to business problems. It is evidenced in a *PM Journal* study from 2001, which the authors cite and display its results as an example. It identifies specific organizational features which contributed to strong project management.

3. The final section of the book (chapters 4 and 5) moves to project managers and why they fail at their tasks. Of note, it mentions that this occurs the most when non-project managers are thrust into the role of project manager while they are still carrying their everyday roles and their associated tasks. Instead of "...being viewed as legitimate functions to be valued by the organization and that requires a special set of skills." It stresses that project manager roles need to be professionalized not only for skills learning but also by providing them with the opportunities to achieve senior level positions in an organization. There is brief mention of Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits* book, specifically "Begin with the end in mind." Here, it is used to explain how a company should proceed in setting up a program designed to professionalize the role of the project manager. Lastly, the authors discuss the need to establish performance standards for each member of a project team/project office where minimum educational requirements are set and measured and some thoughts are shared on aligning projects to corporate strategy.

Highlights: What I liked!

- The book was written in everyday, non-technical terms which made it easy to read and understand
- The ideas are structured well and presented accordingly

- The case study at the end of chapter 1 was helpful in seeing results of project management maturity
- The research study results which were shown as graphs helped to reinforce the ideas presented in the text

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

- Chapter 1 has the feel of a sales pitch from the company but this is quickly resolved with the rest of the book and its context
- The book being short naturally takes away from heavy detailing of project management maturity, thus the book serves the purpose of a general introduction to the subject.

Who might benefit from the Book

I saw this book as being beneficial for all types of professionals involved in projects:

- Portfolio/Program managers
- Project managers with more than beginner experience levels
- Business Analysts
- Project team members
- All levels of functional managers especially those who manage key project resources

Conclusion

Overall, I thought the book was very informative. It dealt with a topic that interest me very much. I would absolutely recommend this book to anyone interested getting an overview on how to advance project management in an organization.

About the Reviewer:



Ishkhan Topalian

Author – Book Reviewer



Ishkhan Topalian is the Compliance Project Manager for an auto insurance company and manages all projects that result because of changes in laws resulting from legislative, judicial, or regulatory actions. He has been handling projects for the past 4 years in this same capacity. Mr. Topalian is enrolled in the Project Management EMBA program at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) and just completed the PM Certificate phase (year 1) of the program.