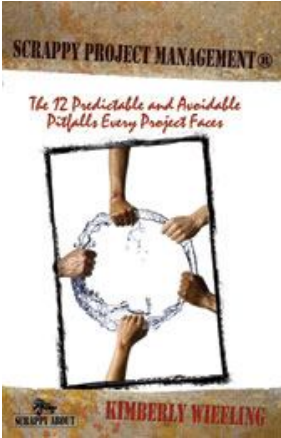


PM WORLD TODAY – BOOK REVIEW – JUNE 2009



Book Title:	<i>Scrappy Project Management</i>
Author:	Kimberly Wiefling
Publisher:	Happy About (USA)
List Price:	US \$19.95 (softcover)
Publication Date:	2007
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Reviewer:	Dr. James Brown, PMP
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Introduction

Scrappy Project Management® - The 12 Predictable Pitfalls Every Project Faces is worthy of being on every project managers bookshelf. It always pays dividends to get the perspective of other seasoned project managers because there is more than one right way to be successful at project management. The author's perspective is refreshing and insightful.

The biggest compliment I have about this book is that it is not an academic book. It is a book intended for practitioners of the project management craft written by a practitioner. I like books that provide the kind of advice a mentor would give you over a cup of coffee and *Scrappy Project Management®* fits that mode.

My top ten take-aways from *Scrappy Project Management®*

1. The very people who are supposed to be leading often abdicate responsibility in mediocre organizations.
2. Make your own team organization chart.

3. There are many people passing themselves off as project leaders when they are just occupying the position and not willing to take a stand and do the right thing.
 4. Learn to love the tunnel. There is no such thing as a light at the end of the tunnel.
 5. When tracking changes in action item due dates never change the original dates. Just mark through them.
- 5.5 Track changes to the project.
6. Humans are bad estimators and bottom up scheduling methods pay little attention to handoffs and integration points.
 7. Pre-emptive pessimism. People tend to assume something is impossible if it is very difficult.
 8. Never reward firefighters.
 9. Happiness is relative. You must do a good job of setting expectations.
 10. It doesn't matter how much your team knows if it doesn't have the ability to execute.

5.5 Track changes to the project

I could write pages about each one of these take-aways, but I will offer my perspective on *5.5 Track changes to the project* to discuss in a little more detail. This seems simple enough, and it is often not done. Tracking changes in project direction, materialized risks or issues tells a powerful story over time. It also serves to reinforce to customers and stakeholders the dynamic nature of your project.

Tracking Changes Creates Accountability

I mentioned this in a training class and a seasoned project manager responded that this was her most effective tool for controlling a stakeholder that always wanted to adjust or correct something. As she tracked the changes over time the stakeholder had to look at all his previous decisions with the team. **This meant he had to take ownership of all his previous decisions.** As the list of changes became longer and the logic for the changes began to look weak, the stakeholder backed off making adjustments and let the project run its course.

You may have experienced the “*lost in the woods*” project syndrome where after significant time and effort you seem to be back in the same place or not far from where you started. Just like someone lost in the woods, who has not marked their way, they come across a tree or a rock and intuitively know they have been in the spot before. They feel they are going in circles, but can't prove it because they have not tracked their path. Always track changes to the project and periodically communicate them. *Let stakeholders know up front that you will do this!*

Buy and read *Scrappy Project Management*®. It is a keeper.

The ten take-aways above are not the only ones. This book provides tried and true principles of project management that are presented in a pragmatic way with a tongue in cheek style to keep you interested.

INFO: <http://happyabout.info/scrappyabout/project-management.php>

About the Reviewer:***James Brown, PhD***

Dr. James T. Brown, president of SEBA[®] Solutions Inc., a Registered Education Provider for the Project Management Institute, has provided training and consulting services for dozens of companies nationally and internationally. SEBA[®] Solutions also provides OnePdu.com <http://onepdu.com> for online project management training. A recognized authority in project management, Dr. Brown is a frequently invited speaker on project management areas of interest. He is the author of ***The Handbook of Program Management*** published by McGraw Hill and is a member of the Project Management Institute and the National Speakers Association. Dr. Brown has a patent for a project scheduling methodology, and has received numerous awards including "Engineer of the Year" from the Cape Canaveral Technical Societies and is a recipient of the "NASA Public Service Medal" for exceptional contributions to NASA's mission. He is a member of the Project Management Institute and the National Speakers Association. He has a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from the University of Central Florida, a MS in Engineering Management from Florida Institute of Technology and a BS in Electrical Engineering from Tennessee State University. He is a licensed Professional Engineer (PE), a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and a certified speaking professional (CSP). To learn more about SEBA[®] visit www.sebasolutions.com. You can contact James directly at jtbrown@sebasolutions.com.