

project failure. Readers should use care in assimilating the information presented, lest they be led unintentionally to a whip-and-spur approach to project leadership. Another chapter addresses escalation—that is, asking higher-up help in resolving problems. Whitten counsels that escalation should not be avoided at all costs because those costs are likely to be high. He offers some guidelines for the whens and hows of effective escalation.

Whitten closes with a clearing-house chapter of questions and answers that provides a wrap-up of a few loose ends and a leveling global view.

The EnterPrize Organization offers a powerful organizational approach that is applicable to a broad range of projects. Its description of key roles is compelling and complete. It offers a firm foundation for assembling an effective and eventually successful project team of any size in any organization.

Project Management Institute, 2000, ISBN: 1-880410-79-6, paperback, 251 pp., \$27.95

Available online at www.bookstore.org

Reviewed by Ken Rose, a Management Consultant in Hampton, VA, and a PMI member.

Critical Chain Project Management

by Lawrence P. Leach

Critical Chain Project Management by Lawrence P. Leach is a must-read for anyone working on a project, managing a project, or managing an organization that manages projects. The author makes a convincing argument for a need to make changes to the project management process. Those changes, as one would suspect from the title, involve changing from critical path scheduling and management to critical chain scheduling and management.

In the first three chapters, the author provides a thoughtful, well-researched description of the need for a better way to manage projects. In the first chapter, he develops a strong and well-reasoned argument for the need to change the process contained in the Project Management Institute's (PMI®) *A Guide to the Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*. In the second and third chapters, he does a masterful job of weaving total quality management and theory of constraints (TOC) into project management. TOC is the basic theory that leads to critical chain developed by E.M Goldratt.

Starting with Chapter 4, Leach describes the nuts and bolts of planning and managing projects, either as a single project or a multiproject enterprise. Chapter 9 provides a recipe for change for those enterprises that are currently managing projects using the critical path method (CPM). Leach even explains the resistance an innovator can expect

to encounter. Chapter 10 describes a quantitative method of evaluating project risk. The book concludes with a chapter on the application of TOC to project management.

Leach suggests that understanding variation and uncertainty is necessary for project management. He introduces common-cause and special-cause variation. Following the teaching of Shewart and Deming, the manufacturing community has come to understand that taking action when variance is within the expected variation band is wrong. *Common cause* is the term coined for the within-limits variation. In fact, if one attempts to correct for common-cause variations, the result of this "tampering" always degrades the performance of a system. A simple understanding of the difference between common-cause or within-limit variation and special-cause variation in the project management world has the potential to allow the project team to keep the project under control, if not within budget and on schedule.

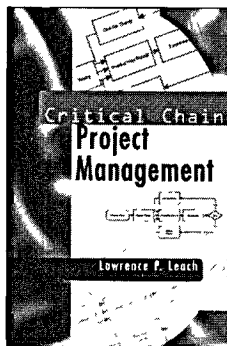
Leach takes a small detour into the world of behavioral physiology and the teachings of Alfie Kohn. He points out what is old news to the behavioral physiologist is for the most part undiscovered by the management community. At this point, he offers a tutorial on TOC, which is the basis for critical chain scheduling. He introduces the subject via some interesting discussion of the theory of knowledge. He also introduces the five focusing steps that are used in TOC.

The book explores the faulty "statistics" that are generated by the reward (and punishment) system that exists in most project management systems. Why finish early? If you do, you will be given less time for the next project, and your funding will be taken away. The result of these drivers to finish "on-time" results in statistics that are misleading and that produce a skewed statistic. He also explains the "student syndrome" and how it affects the schedule completion statistics. Finally, the theory of the first three chapters concludes with a very convincing argument against multitasking. All of this development is punctuated with a number of logic tools that Leach describes along the way.

Chapter 4 begins the description of a comprehensive process of planning and managing a project. Leach then builds on this "learned" development, and provides a very complete and knowledgeable primer for the process of planning and managing a project. The process he describes is complete and easy to understand. He explains in detail how to develop critical chain schedule and how to manage with critical chain schedules. Many professionals believe that the schedule is the ring in the project management bull's nose. If you get the schedule right, then it is a simple matter to deliver the scope on budget.

In addition to providing a clear understandable method to use critical chain, Leach provides a crisp, understandable method to plan the project, utilizing things like milestone sequence charts and bases of estimate. This process alone is a strong point in favor of reading this book.

Critical chain is an approach to project scheduling and management that is gaining popularity and acceptance. (*Ed. Note: In the PMI® Bookstore, critical chain books are among the bestsellers.*) The information contained in this book will give



you food for thought and a practical, powerful alternative to consider.

Artech House, Inc., 2000, ISBN: 1580530745, hardcover, 330 pp., \$65.55

Available online at www.pmibookstore.org

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PM 101 According to the Olde Curmudgeon

by Francis K. Webster, Jr.

Among the many project management texts currently available, few provide a concise, practical summary that serves both beginners and old hands. *PM 101 According to the Olde Curmudgeon* by Francis K. Webster, Jr., is a new addition to the literature that does just that.

PM 101 arises from a series of articles originally published in *PM Network* that have been expanded and improved over time. The book addresses defining and planning projects as well as essential project management skills. *PM 102*, a follow-on book due out in 2001, will address areas of scheduling, resources, cost, risk, reporting, and control.

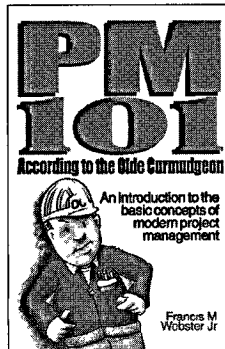
Webster's down-to-earth style speaks directly to those who must get things done. Throughout the book, he presents examples from the Mars Pathfinder Project that show how concepts apply in the real world.

The book begins by differentiating projects from other modes of work. A discussion of modern project management follows that explains how today's methodologies differ from previous practice or other forms of management. A concise summary of the nine project management knowledge areas in the *PMBOK® Guide* concludes this section of the book.

Webster defines three dimensions of managing a project: technical, leadership, and administrative. He addresses each fully in separate chapters. Technical skills are important, especially in smaller projects where the project manager may have a significant technical performance role. As projects become larger, responsibilities expand and leadership and administrative skills become more important.

Scope management receives complete coverage that includes initiation, planning, definition, verification, and change control. Webster suggests that a good way to deal with uncertainty is to conduct a scope review at the end of each project phase. Good scope management will result in fewer disputes, higher customer satisfaction, and lower project manager stress.

Discussion of the work breakdown structure logically leads to a comprehensive review of network diagramming that includes essential conventions for graphics, notation,



and computations. Webster transitions smoothly to planning techniques, misconceptions, and best practices.

PM 101 is an introduction to basic concepts. It will not make a project manager from scratch. It provides a firm foundation that will serve well in professional growth. For more experienced individuals, it provides a benchmark and a view of the forest for those who may have become too closely focused on the trees.

Project Management Institute, 2000, ISBN: 1-880410-55-9, softcover, 201 pp., \$34.95

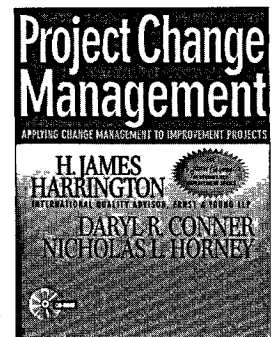
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Project Change Management

by H. James Harrington, Daryl R. Conner, and Nicholas L. Horney

Project Change Management by H. James Harrington, Daryl R. Conner, and Nicholas L. Horney suggests that the traditional nine elements of project management be amended to include a tenth element, one dealing exclusively with the management of change. The book details the level of effort at each phase of a project that would be required to achieve increased success and uses three backdrops to illustrate the effort required: Phases I and II of a Process Redesign Project (Chapter 6), Phases III and IV of Process Redesign (Chapter 7), and applying the suggested methodology to a SAP (R/3) Project (Chapter 8). The book is informative and on the mark in terms of providing effective suggestions to project managers.



The book includes a CD-ROM that provides extensive, valuable summary material presented in parallel to the book, as well as additional material. It offers free, limited-trial software that would assist in some aspects of project implementations. The combination of book and CD is effectively done, and worth the effort, yet may leave the reader wanting for more detailed concrete information.

Early chapters make a solid case for incorporating change management methodologies; that is, those that deal more directly with the human element concerns of change efforts. The book repeatedly offers diagnostic solutions to real issues such as determining the level of commitment among project stakeholders, assessing organization culture, and studying the relationships among key project players in order to make more informed decisions that gather "ownership" for achieving goals rather than degrade buy-in. The authors frequently refer to forms and tools that can be used to perform the diagnostic work, but the "forms and tools" facsimiles are not included in the book or the CD. An experienced project manager could,