

Book Review for 09/14/03 by Michael Thomas

Title: "Advanced Project Portfolio Management and the PMO"

Author: Gerald I. Kendall and Steven C. Rollins

Publisher: J.Ross Publishing

Length: 434 pages

Price: \$59.95

ISBN: 1-932159-02-9

Reading time: 4 hours

Reading rating: 8 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 4 (1 = average, 4 = outstanding)

"Advanced Project Portfolio Management and the PMO" is directed at the executive who has recognized the need for a Project Management Office (PMO) in their organization. While the PMO is not a new concept, literature on setting up and managing PMOs is very scarce. The authors use the methods of Deming and Goldratt to show how setting up and running a PMO can be done so that it provides meaningful value to senior management. This book particularly focuses on the need for the PMO and executives to work together identifying existing problems between executives and PMO, and suggests solutions for executives and PMO managers.

"Advanced Project Portfolio Management and the PMO" is organized into four parts. In part one, "Setting the Stage for a Successful PMO Implementation," the authors look at the past history of PMOs and explain the advantages of the "Throughput Model" of project management over the "Cost Model." Part two of the book deals with "Choosing the Right Project Mix," and explains a number of methods that the authors have used over the years to assist troubled PMO operations. Part three presents the PMO in detail, and makes the connection between the PMO and strategic project selection, portfolio management and strategic planning. Part four presents a number of road maps, lists, and methodologies that would allow a company to develop their own templates for use in setting up and running a successful PMO.

Written in a plain English, "down to earth" style, the book is extremely comprehensive covering all aspects of PMO set-up, operation and value. It lists and explains a number of tools, methods and road maps that readers can use when setting up and running a PMO. To the purchaser of the book, it also offers free downloadable templates, models, assessment tools and plans for use by the reader. Case studies are short, simple and to the point, relate well to the immediate text and give practical demonstrations of the application of some of the methods and tools described. Sometimes as you read a book you find yourself saying, "Yes, that's right, this makes sense! Why hasn't someone thought of this before?" This book, the most comprehensive ever published on this subject, is full of experiences like this and is certainly required reading for any executive or project manager involved in or about to become involved in a PMO.

Michael Thomas, an assistant professor in the College of Business at Western Carolina University, teaches full-time in the totally Internet-based Master of Project Management Degree Program. For more information on this degree program, visit the Web site at: mpm.wcu.edu.