

College of Business Book Review for \_\_\_\_\_ by Michael Thomas

Title: "Project Planning Techniques"

Authors: Parviz F. Rad, Vittal S. Anantatmula

Publisher: Management Concepts

Length: 260 pages

Price: \$39:00

ISBN: 1-56726-165-5

Reading Time: 4 - 5 hours

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

Overall Rating: 3 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

As the authors state in their preface they were motivated by two factors in writing this book. The first was to produce a non-disciplinary, rather than the normal disciplinary-specific text, on project planning. Their second motivating factor was to produce a "...book that reflects a balance of both practical experience and academic rigor in project management." This book therefore should appeal to both professional project managers from across a wide range of industries and the academic community including graduate and undergraduate students.

Within the book, nine chapters deal with various aspects of project planning. The introduction deals with project scope and objectives, project business case, and project initiation a comprehensive introduction to these important aspects of project initiation. Other chapters deal with Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), Resource Breakdown Structure (RBS), Estimating Models, Scheduling, External Projects, Progress Monitoring, Change Management, Managing Project Knowledge. The chapters on WBS and RBS are comprehensive, detailed and written in a style that is simple and easy to read and absorb. Both chapters have extensive examples of WBS and RBS from different industries for the reader to view.

It could be argued that Chapters 6 External Projects and Chapter 9 Managing Project Knowledge should not be included in a book dealing with Project planning. Chapter 6 addresses the topics of contracts, bidding, specifications, indirect cost, and overhead which are important knowledge areas for the professional project manager wishing to plan his/her project successfully. Chapter 9 "...addresses the emerging concept of the relationship and similarities between knowledge management and project management, stressing the importance of managing project knowledge by integrating project management and knowledge management systems." (p.xiv) The concept makes interesting reading however I am not sure of its absolute relevance to Project planning.

An accompanying CD-ROM includes further examples of WBS and RBS material. The book is extremely comprehensive covering all aspects of project planning techniques. The authors have a smooth and simple writing style that makes it easy to read and absorb the material being discussed with tables, charts and diagrams used to explain difficult concepts. The book is a worthy addition to the professional project manager's library.

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 <http://mpm.wcu.edu>. For previously reviewed books, visit our Web site at [www.wcu.edu/cob/bookreviews](http://www.wcu.edu/cob/bookreviews).