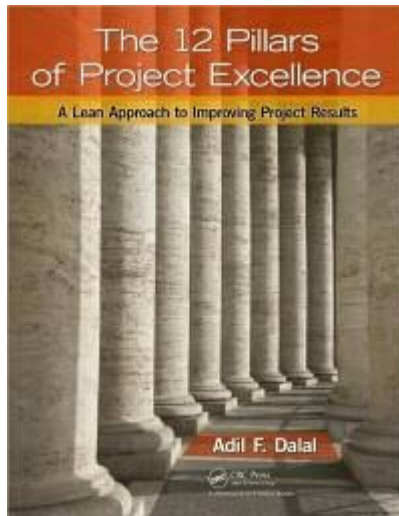


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The 12 Pillars of Project Excellence: A Lean Approach to Improving Project Results***

Author: **Adil F. Dalal**

Publisher: **CRC Press**

List Price: US \$64.95

Format: soft cover, 661 pages

Publication Date: 2012

ISBN: 9781439849125

Reviewer: ***Michele Muse, PMP***

Review Date: July 2012

Introduction to the Book

Often times in my project management career, I have wished for a wise mentor to offer advice on how to become a better project manager. I had the good fortune, at one time, to be paired with a senior executive at a Fortune 100 company in such a mentoring program. *The 12 Pillars of Project Excellence* provides this type of wisdom in the form of a book. Adil F. Dalal offers his years of experience to those willing to invest time and openness to lean project management methodology.

The book not only provides guidance to those individuals desiring to move their project careers from managerial roles to a leadership level, but also serves as a guide, with specific tools and techniques, for organizations looking for fresh ideas from lean project management methodology. The book can be utilized by organizations to pinpoint areas for enhancing organizational project leadership strengths and for addressing areas of project process weakness.

Overview of Book's Structure

Dalal divides the book into chapters based upon his 12 pillars of project excellence. Each chapter begins with an inspirational quote and then explains the usefulness and application of one of the pillars of project excellence. The chapter then offers a brief

summary of the important takeaways and one or two case studies, detailing from the author's experience, a real example of the principle at work.

To conclude each chapter, Dalal provides skill inventories for both individuals and organizations to gauge how the individual and/or organization is doing relative to applying the principles outlined in the chapter. These inventories allow an individual and/or organization to detect areas that could use improvement. Several other aids and exercises also are included to enhance takeaways from each chapter and pave the way to introduce the ideas into practical use in the organization. A CD is included with the book so that these tools can be reproduced for group use.

Highlights: What's New in this Book

According to Dalal, the goal of the book is to motivate aspiring and/or established project leaders to dream big and learn key principles. The book is intended to serve as a guide for utilizing the project management skill set of knowledge areas and process groups to develop a mind-set of project leadership and lean project management principles. Information is given to transform individuals into "master project leaders," and to allow organizations to create effective project cultures.

Key concepts include understanding the impact of organizational structure on the performance of project managers; developing project leaders, not project managers; selecting project leaders as early in the project as possible and allowing them to close the project; and encouraging "lean thinking" throughout the organization. When effectively implemented, these principles should enable executives to increase the success rate of projects in their organizations.

Highlights: What I liked!

I particularly enjoyed Dalal's passion and enthusiasm for the subject. Dalal's discussion of the difference between utilizing management principles versus leadership principles was enlightening; application of his suggestions should allow individuals to enhance their project capabilities. His discussion of lean project management is very beneficial to the success of project organizations operating in increasingly complex environments. His discussion of the importance of creating learning environments also is very beneficial to organizations, as most look to gain a competitive edge in the marketplace through creativity and innovation.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

Although the book is lengthy and gives the appearance of a textbook with its thickness and a picture of Greek style columns on the cover, it is not only very readable, but also inspirational. While its appearance can be somewhat intimidating to a casual reader, the information should not be reserved for formal classroom use. This book is very

beneficial to every practicing project manager and those running project offices. It is rare to be able to say that all of the information in a 650+ page book is practical and useful.

Who might benefit from the Book

The 12 Pillars of Project Excellence appeals to a broad audience in the project management community. Project managers, looking to move their career to the next level, can benefit from sage advice about how to develop leadership skills. The book is equally beneficial to those running project offices, looking to move their groups to leaner, more customer-focused organizations, with many practical tools and techniques to help them reach this goal.

Conclusion

Dalal believes that an organization should begin with a strong foundation of people, knowledge and skills/talents and then utilize the “12 pillars of project excellence” to allow the organization to delight customers, employees and shareholders. In *The 12 Pillars of Project Excellence*, Dalal provides both global and tactical advice related to project leadership and lean project management. The book serves the dual role as “mentor in a book” for the individual and as “consultant in a book” for the organization.

The 12 Pillars of Project Excellence, by Adil F. Dalal, published by CRC Press; 2012, ISBN 9781439849125; \$64.95 USD; 661 pages, soft cover. More at <http://crcpress.com/product/isbn/9781439849125>

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About the Reviewer



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Michele Muse has been involved in project management, primarily in technology industries, for about 15 years. She has managed numerous projects varying in size and intensity for a broad range of organization structures, including a Fortune 100 company, a technology start-up and a self-owned business. She holds a PMP credential and has a Master's Certificate in Project Management and a Master of Arts in International Business. Michele can be contacted at michele@pmologist.com.