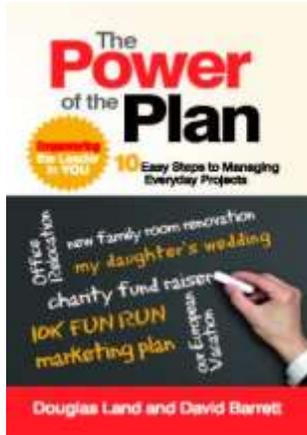


---

## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The Power of the Plan: Empowering the Leader in You***

Author: **Douglas Land and David Barrett**

Publisher: **Multi-media Publications**

List Price: US\$24.95      Format: soft cover; 116 pages

Publication Date: 2012      ISBN: 1554891361

Reviewer: **Stephen Rojak**

Review Date: April 2013

---

### Introduction to the Book

This is an introduction to project management for people who do not ordinarily manage projects. It is not a book for people who want to become PMI-certified. However, a project manager might want to consider giving away copies of the book to key stakeholders who are not project managers, in order to improve their understanding of what project management requires and thereby set expectations.

### Overview of Book's Structure

The book walks through the various focus areas of project management, one chapter at a time: staffing, costing, scheduling, risks and communication, among others. It does so in an accessible and jargon-free manner, but does not talk down to the reader.

The book also addresses questions such as, "Do you want to take on this project in the first place?" This is a necessary and underappreciated question, as many people who have been talked into volunteering have learned to their sorrow.

Similarly, there is a chapter on closure, discussing how to end the project and hand it off. This is valuable for the person who cannot commit to an effort in perpetuity.

### Highlights: What's New in this Book

For the intended audience, much of the content will be new. Many people who ordinarily do not manage projects may be called upon to organize a fund raiser, move offices to a new building, or gut and replace a kitchen. These can be daunting tasks, and the book provides a framework for decomposing what will be required.

### **Highlights: What I liked!**

The authors kept to a just-enough approach. They did not introduce unnecessary jargon and held process to the minimum necessary to be effective. Their treatment of risk emphasized mitigation, not finding everything that could possibly go wrong. The authors strove to identify the right level of detail: with too much, the project manager is inundated with data, while with too little, the project trips over its own loose ends.

The authors provide hints that are appropriate for the casual project manager. They provide estimating guidelines to up-factor time and costs in the early going; these are valuable when working with people whose biases you do not know, and gets people used to the idea that activities often cost more and take longer than the experts tell you they will.

The authors have created a website, [www.thepoweroftheplan.com](http://www.thepoweroftheplan.com), with some templates. While this site was rather sparsely populated last month, the authors have been at work adding content. There are now several templates showing examples relevant to projects such as office relocation, home renovation and event planning.

### **Shortfalls: What was Missing!**

The change management chapter was somewhat underdeveloped. The authors could have taken their example of a kitchen remodel and examined what you would do if you opened the walls and found rot or other surprises common in such work. If scope is your priority, you just shrug and pay. How would you respond to prioritize budget or schedule?

### **Who might benefit from the Book**

Anyone who does not manage projects professionally can benefit from this book. Not only will it help the casual project manager be more effective, but it can provide a framework for understanding why the professional project manager cares about risks, makes conservative estimates and wants to control changes during the project.

### **Conclusion**

In the words of the authors, “This is not ‘PM 101’. It is simpler than that.” It is really project management for people who never wanted to be project managers, but who need to manage the occasional project. The book provides valuable tips to help the person in this role focus on essentials and succeed in the effort. In doing so, s/he may obtain a deeper appreciation of what is required to manage projects successfully.

The Power of the Plan: Empowering the Leader in You, by Douglas Land and David Barrett; published by Multi-Media Publications, April 2013, more at <http://www.mmpubs.com/the-power-of-the-plan-book-p-532.html?osCsid=06aa4027ba5bbfc6936c6b96b86633bf>

*Editor's note: This book review was the result of cooperation between the publisher, PM World and the Dallas Chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMI Dallas Chapter – [www.pmidallas.org](http://www.pmidallas.org)). Publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members are generally mid-career professionals, the audience for most project management books. If you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact [editor@pmworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@pmworldjournal.net).*

---

## About the Reviewer



**Stephen Rojak, PMP**



Stephen is an experienced software developer and manager, with experience in the manufacturing, retail, marketing services, digital media and computer software industries. He is also an economist and historian. [srojak@srojak.com](mailto:srojak@srojak.com)