
PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Top Gun Project Managers***

Author: **Richard Morreale**

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Reviewer: ***Stephen Rojak***

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Introduction to the Book

We have an ever-greater amount of information on how to do the hard skills components of project management: the planning, the organizing, the thirteen knowledge areas. Why, then, do we still have the problems we do?

Richard Morreale invites us to refocus ourselves. Yes, the hard skills are necessary — but not sufficient. They are openers: they let you enter the game, but they are not enough to win. The book presents the elements that, from his experience, can lift a project manager from entrant to winner.

Overview of Book's Structure

In the first chapter, Morreale presents his statement of the problem he is writing to solve. He enumerates and discusses nine reasons that he has found to commonly cause projects to be unsuccessful.

The second chapter provides a decomposition of what he finds to be the elements of project success. It is the framework for the rest of the book.

The remaining chapters explain the details of eight strategies to make the difference between successful and typical project management.

Highlights: What's New in this Book

When we talk about issues such as soft skills and tradeoffs, many people will object that there is not much new to cover. But then, why do we have the results that we do?

Sometimes, presenting issues in a different way can reach a person where previous attempts have not done so.

Highlights: What I liked!

Chapter 2, where Morreale discussed the success factors for project managers, was the most valuable part of the book. His list of soft skills is a good place to start. A project manager who can recite the PMBOK from memory but does not seek solutions, care for his people or focus on what can be done will neither obtain good results nor enjoy the process very much.

Even better was his presentation of the Master of Paradox. There are many contradictory pressures on a product manager. One must be confident in the ability to deliver results *and* have the humility to listen to others. One must be detail-oriented *and* see the big picture. One must have a sense of urgency *and* the patience to preserve relationships when working with others. This is one of the few treatments of these tensions I have ever seen in print.

Shortfalls: What was Missing!

The material in Chapter 2 is simple but not easy. The reader who does not normally focus on such matters may require several alternative approaches in order to fundamentally apprehend, rather than merely intellectually comprehend, the concepts the author is presenting. Because of this, it might have been more effective to expand this into 2-3 chapters, at the expense of more brevity in the remaining material.

Who might benefit from the Book

The project manager who feels stuck and frustrated in her or his career, who is doing what s/he believes to be doing all the right things and not being recognized. Particularly, the project manager who takes pride in getting things done and does not understand why management is not appreciative of the project manager's efforts.

Conclusion

In a practice with a professional standard, it is easy to get absorbed in the knowledge required for the professional standard. But what is on the test is only a part of what you need to be successful, and not the principal part at that. The author discusses the aspects of project management that are not on the test but essential to the successful project manager.

For more about this book, go to <http://topgunprojectmanagers.com/>

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). 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.

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