

Absolute Beginner's Guide to Project Management – Second Edition

John Kamper,

I asked to review this book specifically because of one chapter - Chapter 23 – “Making Better Use of Microsoft *Project*.” I taught a MS *Project* class some years ago and wanted to be updated on the program. I got much more than I expected from the book. As a practical example, writing this review was a project.

The explanations and definitions are exact and precise. The definition of a project is a good example:

“A project is the work performed by an organization one time to produce a unique outcome. By ‘one time,’ we mean the work has a definite beginning and a definite end, and by ‘unique’ we mean the work result is different

in one or more ways from anything the organization has produced before. Examples of a project would include the following:

- Building a new house
- Developing a new software application
- Performing an assessment of current manufacturing processes
- Creating a new radio commercial

“This is in contrast to the operations of an organization. The operational work is the ongoing, repetitive set of

activities that sustain the organization. Examples of ongoing operations include the following:

- Processing customer orders
- Performing accounts receivable and accounts payable activities
- Executing daily manufacturing orders”

This also gives you an idea of the layout of the book, which is excellent. Each chapter starts with an overview listed in bullet form that summarizes the chapter topic. Example: Chapter 1 – “Project Management Overview” – lists the following bullet points:

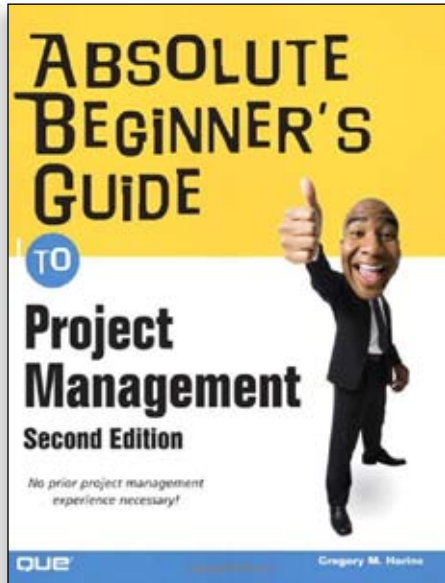
- “Clarify what project management is and “is not” (it’s likely more than you think)
- Learn why projects are challenging to manage
- Understand why project management is the key to future growth of any organization
- Learn why the future of project management is bright and why becoming a certified project manager may be a wise career move
- Review the latest trends in project management that may impact your first opportunity”

Key elements in the chapter are highlighted in tables, with shading to call attention to separate and specific items. Throughout the book, to make sure you get important information, the author includes “notes,” “tips and “cautions” appear in “balloons” in the margins.

At the end of each chapter is a chapter summary, “The Absolute Minimum” which highlights, well, the absolute minimum information you get in the chapter. It includes a “map” (diagram) showing how the elements of the chapter fit together. This is an excellent tool for review.

The 25 chapters (408 pages including the Index) are broken down into five sections:

- I Project Management Jumpstart
- II Project Planning
- III Project Control
- IV Project Execution
- V Accelerating the Learning Curve...Even More



Here are some of the chapter topics, chosen at random:

What exactly is a "Successful Project?"	p. 30
Key Project Planning Principles	p. 58
What Is a WBS (Work Breakdown Structure)?	p. 72
What is Project Control?	p. 126
Managing Project Risks	p. 181
Leading a Project	p. 211
Twelve Keys to Better Project Leadership	p. 215
Managing Differences	p. 267
Three Key Principles (for ending a project)	p. 293
Need-to-Know Features (of MS Project)	p. 303
Intriguing Project Management Concepts and Topics . . .	p. 345

I recommend this book to anyone who wants to manage any project more efficiently and effectively.

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