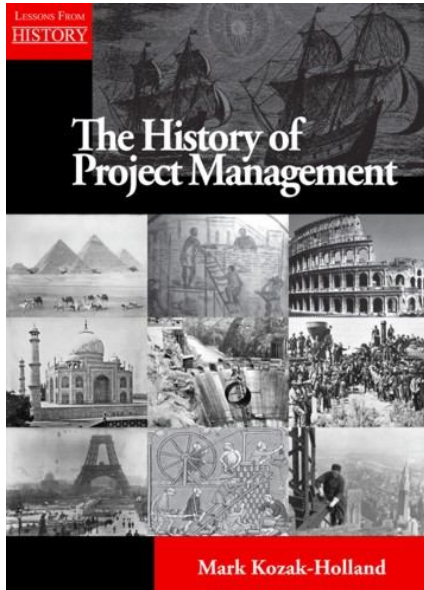


PM WORLD TODAY BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The History of Project Management***

Author: **Mark Kozak-Holland**

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Reviewer: ***Earl W. Crisp, D. P. A.***

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Introduction:

This is a specialty reference guide book of approximately 640 pages that reviews and analyzes projects from ancient times and equates them to the current procedures and processes of project management. The author routinely references the PMBOK and how it organizes thoughts and applications that have roots attributed to the great managers/leaders of the past. The author attempts to enhance many of the key concepts presented in the PMBOK with the intent of amplifying the traditional elements of project development with concepts and approaches proven by previous generations. The author describes the benefits of establishing long-term relationships with suppliers and stakeholders as many of the ancient projects carried on for years.

The author's goal is to help the reader understand the similarities as well as, the differences in projects of the ancient past with those challenges encountered today. To make his point, he breaks them down into three categories and with successful examples:

1. **Structural Construction Projects** – edifices and buildings such as the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Roman Colosseum, Gothic Cathedrals, Taj Mahal, Crystal Palace, Hoover Dam and the Empire State "Building.

2. **Transportation** – of people, vehicles, water, roads, bridges, aqueducts, canals, ships and railroads such as Hadrian's Wall, Iron Bridge, Transcontinental Railroad, Panama Canal, Golden Gate Bridge, and the London Sewer Projects.
3. **Project Expeditions** – voyages, journeys or explorations such as the sea going quests of Columbus and Magellan.

The author helps the reader discover the “*why*”, the “*reason*” and for “*whom*” the projects were initiated and funded. The author expounds on the basic essentials that need to be in place for projects to be feasible:

- Level of stability in the culture
- Governance
- Ability to plan and execute
- Ability to measure
- Financial support
- Availability of knowledge and technology along with skilled people who can use them
- Verbal and written *Communication*

Each project has its own idiosyncrasies and exceptions, however the list provides a general outline of what is required to bring a project to fruition.

The author also defines and describes the difference in terms as he compares the titles of “*Engineer*” versus “*Builder*” versus “*Project Manager*”. The author quotes the following: “... the name “*engineer*” itself originated in the 11th Century from the Latin *ingeniator*, meaning one with *ingenium*, the ingenious one. The name for builders of ingenious fortifications or makers of ingenious devices...”

The author elaborates further by making it clear that the first engineers were multi-talented in that they were considered skilled “*irrigators, architects, and military engineers*” – notably **expert** in all three areas. He also brings to light that there is a commonality across projects in that there is **a core set of concepts** shared by most projects.

Overview of the book:

The author provides the reader with an interesting preface prior to the actual introduction. Here he asks the question *Why this Book?* And then explains why the history of project management is important, how this book will help you and what can we learn from the past? The **Introduction** to the book establishes the baseline for project management that the past is rarely seen or even studied despite the number of mega projects that were complete and organized in a similar way to today's systematic

approach. The author quickly moves into the overview of project management and how it evolved through the ages and how there are a number of differing views on how to approach and manage projects. The author proceeds to explore the key elements of the PMBOK and he refers back to the appropriate sections whenever a historical project reflects on the use and mastery of the elements that were known but, not fully understood except by the leader/manager of the ancient project. Each chapter, except for the second, concludes with an identification of the significant projects for the period of history being examined and then, the author provides a list of *Key Players*, *Chapter Wrap-up* and a section for *other notable accomplishments* despite little available information, though the projects themselves were greatly admired.

The author attempts to show the commonality among projects by establishing an order of specific elements for each historical period. The following outline for each chapter includes:

- In this Historical Period
- Trends and Changes
- Impact of Changes
- Major Events
- New Tools Techniques and Breakthroughs
- Regions
- Significant Projects
- Other Notable Projects
- Key Players
- Chapter Wrap-up

The author reviews the oldest period known to man starting in 2250 to 510 BCE. The next Chapter covers the Roman Republic (510 to 100 BCE); the Roman Empire (1st Century BCE to 500 CE). The next chapters covers The Early Middle Ages (350 – 1050), the Central Middle Ages (1050 – 1300) followed by the Late Middle Ages (1300 – 1450), and the 15th Century and Renaissance (1450 – 1500). At this point the reader has covered nearly 300 pages of history. The last five chapters focus on the 16th Century, the 17th Century and the Modern Age of Engineering, the 18th Century, the 19th Century and finishes with the 20th Century. The author then presents a *Brief Summary of Projects* that also provides a comparison of projects and adds a *Conclusion* that highlights *Key Findings*, *Lesson's Learned*, *Dispelling Myths* and a look-back to see what past projects were successful. The last 100 pages of the book introduces the reader to *Appendixes A through F*, the *Endnotes*, *References*, an *Index*. a synopsis entitled: *About the Author* that gives a brief background on the author and why the ***Lessons from History Series*** helped to bring this book to a reality.

To amplify the text the author included *Appendix A* to show a sample ***Work Breakdown Structure*** for the Colosseum, and then in *Appendix D* he provides a mapping of the projects as they apply to the *PMBOK Guide Knowledge Areas*. In addition, the author provides approximately 70 pages of endnotes that document his exhaustive research,

as well as, a list of references, a bibliography and an alphabetical *Topical Index* with page numbers assigned.

What I liked about the book:

The author has researched the archives for writings and documents that could be used for enlightening the project management knowledge base. He captured the historical Lessons Learned from both successful and failed projects so that today's leaders and managers can reflect on the past and improve their skills and techniques for application to modern projects.

I was impressed with the author's discovery of so much material about the Egyptian period that led to the building of the Great Pyramid at Giza. The information dispelled the notion that ancient projects lacked scope management, or had few time dependencies, or employed slave labor, or did not have a formal project manager. The author's research provided information on budgets, materials and equipment, the size of the workforce needed, what the deliverables were expected within a specific time frame in a pre-defined scope and with an expectation for a certain level of quality.

The author described the *Lessons Learned* from the Giza Pyramid project that related to Hemenu's overall architectural design and approach. As the overseer of the logistics and construction, Hemenu managed the **triad** of *scope, cost and time*. This project required erecting **two million blocks** over a period of 20 years and planned for the Pharaoh's burial chamber to be built 200 feet above the foundation. The construction project required a system of both internal and external ramps that demanded careful planning that included the raising of the **cap stone** to the very top of the pyramid which was at a height unsurpassed for nearly 4000 years. It was very interesting to learn that Hemenu worked through *critical path activities* that included dispatching quarry teams of 500 men to Aswan, a distance of 500 miles - to hew granite blocks that would be delivered 10 years later.

The Giza Pyramid project is referenced many times throughout the book as the author had access to many documents and historical records. He shared many of the facts beginning on page 85 through 96 where he applied them to the *PMBOK Guide Knowledge Areas* beginning with Integration Management, then Scope Management, Time Management, Cost Management, Quality Management, Human Resource Management, Communication Management, Risk Management and finally concluding the chapter with Procurement Management. Each *Knowledge Area* had numerous points, details and commentaries that related directly to today's view of project management and set the tone for how the historical information would be applied to the remaining ancient projects described in the book.

Shortfalls:

The book of history has few shortfalls that need to be identified. The size of the book is similar to that of novel, not a textbook. Therefore, some of the photos and diagrams are a bit small and in black and white, and although the concept is realized, the pictorial presentation does not always have a “wow” factor associated with the author’s remarks. For example, The Great Wall of China Map on page 79 is accurate though it needs magnification in order for the reader to really appreciate the length and location of the structure. In a follow-on edition, perhaps an appendix should be added for *maps and pen and ink drawings* to make them larger where the detail can be clearly viewed. However, the size of the book is not too large and it is still compatible for travel. The author does make the recommendation to view the website: <http://www.lessons-from-history.com/> and view the **Lessons From History** series as well as many of the photos in much greater detail using the personal computer’s zoom features.

Who might benefit from the book:

The author has designed the book to appeal to those project managers who like history and appreciate how craftsman, engineers, organizers and leaders managed small, medium and large projects who succeeded without many of the tools and techniques that we have grown accustomed to today. The targeted audiences for this book will attract a wide range of persons from the beginning novice to the experienced professional project managers who wants to keep their skills finely tuned. This book could also be applied to upper level Humanities classes where culture and influence have high value in society and the projects that have been undertaken in the past. It will also be compatible with other publications such as project management handbooks and guides, especially, since this book places emphasis on the PMBOK elements. Knowing the history of project development will help organize the reader’s thought processes by reinforcing the order of all the key elements in a logical sequential order, thus enhancing learning and retention.

Conclusion:

The author has taken what was originally a series of presentations and turned them into a volume of historical significance to capture the meaning and relations of projects for the benefit of enhancing the knowledge of today’s project managers. The outline of each chapter is structured to bring out the common threads of practiced by both leaders and managers of long ago. This book certainly has a place in today’s society and will be an asset to every student of project management. The author methodically chose to highlight major and significant projects of each age and he organized them into a series of concepts, tools and techniques for monitoring and control projects in a meaningful way in order to benefit the stakeholders and the project team. The book is packed with many of the author’s insights and interpretations based on historical observations and available documents. The author helps the reader to visualize the ancient projects

through maps, charts, diagrams, paintings and other documents that show how success was achieved without the use of today's technological tools. This book has been a labor of love and the extensive amount of work that has been pulled together starting with the initial **Lessons of History series** by the author is commendable. The blending of the PMBOK with the historical approaches helps the reader to appreciate the extent of preparation and wise use of resources that were necessary to main budget, be on schedule and to meet the quality requirements expected by the ruling sponsor. The author emphasizes that many of the same factors such as timeliness, excellent communication skills, monitoring and controlling are still relevant today just as much as they were in ancient times. In addition, the author stresses the understanding of the culture(s) of the organization especially, now that many projects have international connections through suppliers, workforces and stakeholders.

I would strongly recommend this book for all project managers and students who enjoy history and who possess the curiosity to learn how things were accomplished without the use of today's technology and communication networks. This excellent book will improving the readers' understanding of how to organize a project under unusual and challenging circumstances and it will impart *pearls of wisdom* so that managers can enhance their communication skills with stakeholders, teams and employees. The fact that the author has tied the historical project research to the current elements of the PMBOK is a major feat in itself. By taking the author's advice to view the Lessons of History website at <http://www.lessons-from-history.com/>, the reader will undoubtedly receive a tremendous intrinsic value from this book and be rewarded handsomely for the investment of time and effort to improve their historical knowledge and skills that will surely benefit them in their work as a project manager.

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About the Reviewer



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Earl W. Crisp, D. P. A., is employed by the U. S. Department of Education with the Financial Institution Oversight Service division. He is also an adjunct instructor for the Management Department at the University of Texas at Arlington and for the College of Business at Dallas Baptist University. He is a former Navy C-130 pilot and he enjoyed collateral assignments in Administration, Training, Quality Assurance, and Human Resources. His Doctorate in Public Administration is from the University of La Verne and his M. S. in Management is from Troy University. He is a certified mediator, private pilot and radio announcer. He completed his Project Management Professional training in the Executive Management Program at the University of Texas at Dallas and is a member of the PMI Dallas Chapter.