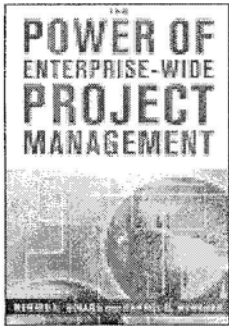


# THE POWER OF ENTERPRISE-WIDE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

BY DENNIS L. BOLLES AND DARREL G. HUBBARD



**T**oday we have organizations that employ thousands of Project Management Professional (PMP®) credential holders. We are talking here about companies such as IBM, EDS, Motorola, and Hewlett-Packard. These are large bureaucratic enterprises with many corporate divisions and many layers of employees. Clearly, their commitment to employing project manage-

ment practices is substantial. A big challenge they face is how to incorporate project management into their operations so that they can tap into the substantial project management capabilities that reside within their organizations.

*The Power of Enterprise-Wide Project Management* by Dennis Bolles and Darrel Hubbard is directed at helping such enterprises harness their project management capabilities. It is not enough for these organizations to train thousands of employees on good project management practice and to support them to earn their PMP certification. They must also figure out how to adjust their organizations to use all this hard-earned talent effectively. Bolles and Hubbard's book aims to help them in this effort.

Enterprise-wide project management is based on establishing an enterprise-wide project office (EPMO) whose function is to lead the project management efforts of the organization. Because we are dealing with huge enterprises here, Bolles and Hubbard propose a model that employs multiple levels of project offices. At the pinnacle, we have the EPMO, which oversees all project management policy within the organization. At the next level, we encounter the Divisional Project Management Office (DPMO), which focuses on project management efforts at the divisional level. Next, we have the Business Unit Project Management Office (BUPMO) and then the basic Project Management Office (PMO) that actually addresses the execution of real projects.

This book is a prescriptive "how-to" book that lays out the steps that large organizations should follow to establish enterprise-wide project management policies and practices. It is filled with bulleted checklists of things that should be taken into account when implementing mature project management practices in organizations. It contains page after page of tables that show you how to implement enterprise-wide project management, based on the Project Management Institute's five project management process groups: project initiation, project planning, project execution, project monitoring and control, and project closure. If I were charged with implementing good project management practice at Humongous Inc., I would certainly study this book carefully. Its prescription is realistic and accurately reflects conditions faced by large, bureaucratic business enterprises.

PMI project management geeks beware! The book hardly looks at project management tools, and with good reason. It takes the position that when implementing project management practices in large organizations, we need to approach the effort as a business undertaking. PERT/CPM, Gantt charts, and cost curves are secondary (perhaps even tertiary) concerns. The real issue is: How to implement project management to serve the organization's strategic business goals. This makes a lot of sense to me. When dealing with the affairs of multibillion-dollar enterprises, who cares if you standardize on Microsoft Project or Primavera? The important issue is: Are we implementing project management practices that enable the enterprise to achieve its strategic business goals?

This is a thoughtful book, based on the substantial project management experiences of the authors. As someone who has been working with project offices since the late 1980s, many of the observations made by Bolles and Hubbard resonated with me. Like the authors, I too was amazed in the early 2000s to see large enterprises obliterate their project management initiatives with the downturn of the economy. I too recognize that unless project management is institutionalized in enterprises, it can be crucially important to the enterprise one day, then gone the next. Also, I think that the checklists and tables that abound in the book are useful to anyone wishing to establish coherent project management capabilities in large organizations.

My principal criticism of the book is that it should illustrate its points with more concrete examples. For example, it dedicates a chapter to the use of work breakdown structures (WBSs) and suggests that WBSs can be employed to lay out the operations of the enterprise-wide project office. But no sample WBS is offered and I can only guess at how a WBS can be employed in the way the authors suggest. Another example: the book states that enterprise-wide project management is being adopted by project-based organizations, but it doesn't name names. Exactly what organizations have adopted enterprise-wide project management practices? To what extent do the adopted practices in these organizations reflect the methodology that Bolles and Hubbard propose?

Still, this insightful and realistic book provides a lot of food for thought and practical advice for anyone thinking about establishing an EPMO at Humongous Inc.

Amacom, 2007, ISBN 13: 9780814474044, ISBN 10: 0814474047, hardcover, 343 pp., \$47.45 Members, \$49.95 Nonmembers

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