Book review

Case Studies in Project, Program and Organisational Project Management

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Teaching cases provide a rich tool that instructors can use to effectively explain tricky, multi-faceted concepts that are best understood in context. This collection of short cases from a wide variety of industries, project stages and different process groups provides such a tool for academics teaching project and program management. The authors have targeted this collection of 90 short cases at practitioners and academics; however, I felt that it would prove to be more useful as a teaching tool, as mere snippets of practice (which do not link to the evolution of that practice, or the variations therein) would prove to be less valuable for practitioners who would require a more holistic picture that can be provided through in-depth cases and not short cases such as these. Having said that, the cases may be useful in executive education programs.

The cases are grouped under chapters, each with a brief introduction explaining how each case fits into the overall scheme of projects and programs. The cases allow instructors to explore a diverse set of soft and hard areas of projects, for example, organisational culture, appropriate tools for project monitoring, understanding the competencies required of project teams, etc. Each of these simple cases can be used, if prepared well and supplemented by appropriate material, for leading class discussion towards finer details of the primary subject introduced. As the audience for which the cases have been written are not teachers alone, the questions provided at the end of the cases, I think, should be supplemented by references to supplementary readings or other cases providing insights into the same issues. When used in class, for example, I would suggest that instructors pose their own questions as well and refer to texts that support the key ideas so that the class can be led towards a wider, deeper discussion of the practice areas introduced.

Typically, books on project and program management tend to follow the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBoK) structure in one way or another. What is refreshing about this book is the fact that it's NOT! While it covers both hard and soft areas of project and programme management, it does so in a more fluid manner,

moving from the simple to the complex, rather than follow the inception-planning-execution-closure cycle. I would recommend it to academics who teach project and program management.

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