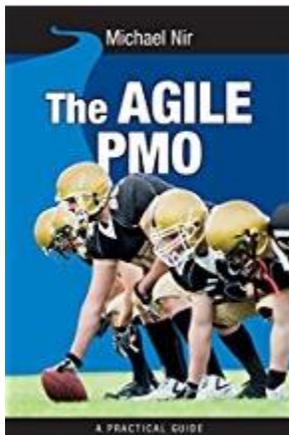


FWPMI Book Review by: Jennifer Lipschultz
"Agile PMO"
by Michael Nir

Publisher:	Sapir Publishing
Date of Publication:	2016
Number of pages:	210
Book Club rating:	2.5

Plot Summary:



In this third edition, the author describes different PMO structures (Tactical, Methodology, Tools and “Home”), how a PMO can create value, change management necessary to introduce a PMO followed by what the author states are the four steps to create a value-driven Agile PMO model.

Book Club Meeting Discussion:

Four of us attended the discussion. This was among the worst written books two of us had read. The content was presented in a choppy manner plus it was ridden with spelling, grammar and editing mistakes. In particular, it was felt that the chapters on change management would be better suited as appendices at the end. One member listened to the audio book and had a hard time following it because of missing graphics that were key to understanding the material. The fourth member enjoyed the book because he’d been in the position at a former company of being asked to do way too much and the

“recipe” suggested in the book to focus just on the essentials would have been helpful to know at the time.

Positives for the book include:

- All found the summary in the Introduction of how project management can help projects succeed to be beneficial
- Chapters dedicated to summarizing the content of “Leading Change” by John Kotter and “Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard” by Dan and Chip Heath. This material was offered to allow the reader to think through the change management needed to introduce a new PMO.
- The 25/25 rule of “Doing More with Less” is an interesting concept. It’s encouraged to visit the link on page 122. The idea is to cease 25% of the projects underway in an organization and to de-scope an additional 25%. The result will be higher focus on the most valuable projects. I imagine the difficulty would be de-scoping projects because that would require solid documentation on the scope in the first place.

Personal Comments:

At the time I picked up this book, I was learning about Agile for a job search and anticipated reading this book to enhance my education on Agile.

I was highly disappointed. First, the book contends that PMOs only provide value if they provide an up-to-date, accurate view of resource allocation. I contend that a PMO provides value if it helps the organization achieve its strategic goals. Tracking resource allocation accurately, in my opinion, is very time consuming and should only be pursued if the endeavor is believed to provide an ROI and is supported at all levels.

Secondly, having recently learned about Agile, it was apparent that the author did not sufficiently explain the definition to readers new to the concept. That is, “Agile is a project management methodology that uses short development cycles called “sprints” to focus on continuous improvement in the development of a product or service”¹. Instead, the model suggested for an Agile PMO was a combination of Waste Reduction, Prioritization, Resource Allocation and Leadership. I’d characterize these as elements of Lean and standard Portfolio Management.

I appreciated his reference to Eli Goldratt’s “Critical Chain”, however, I have not witnessed the successful implementation of buffers in project scheduling in many years of project management at three companies. PPM tools aren’t built to sufficiently create and track them and human nature tends to use the extra time once it’s known the time can be used.

In summary, my assessment of this book is that it would provide greater confusion rather than enlightenment to a new project manager, and it will frustrate an experienced PM.

¹From <https://www.cio.com/article/3156998/agile-development/agile-project-management-a-beginners-guide.html>