

Managing Smaller Projects, by Mike Watson

A Book Review by Catherine Vilaga

Managing Smaller Projects is a practical guide to incorporating principles of Project Management to smaller projects simply and easily. When applied to smaller projects traditional project management methods and techniques often prove ill-suited and result in overkill. Watson sets out to devise a system that will help people control smaller projects in a logical and effective way without incurring the expensive overhead costs associated with traditional project management methods, tools and techniques. The result is his proposed Smaller Projects (SP) Method.



As a Human Resources (HR) professional, I find that project management is an important skill set in my profession. But because most HR projects are considered small to medium in size, the application of traditional Project Management is daunting and not always practical. The author's approach allows me to introduce the foundations of project management to human resources projects in a more efficient manner that is tailored to the smaller scale of most HR projects.

Managing Smaller Projects provides the what, why, and how of managing smaller projects; a series of standard forms to be used, copied or adapted to fit the reader's environment; and checklists that will remind the reader of the various techniques that could be applied at each stage of a project.

It is relatively easy to read and is divided into sixteen chapters

covering the

following topics: project initiation, roles and responsibilities, project planning, estimating and budgeting, managing risk, controlling the project, managing quality, managing change, reviewing the project, managing several projects, managing a crisis, using a computer for project management, implementing the SP method, managing stakeholders, and managing e-commerce projects.

Watson holds true to his claim that this book is simple and easy. Anyone without project management experience can benefit from this book's simplicity. Special topics of interest include:

- managing several projects,
- using a computer (don't do it!),
- and implementing the SP method.

A major cause of project failure is the common effect of "over-optimistic dumping of work". For small projects, managers typically appoint a skilled and experienced person to the role of project manager to be responsible for achieving the project's objectives while maintaining his regular work responsibilities. Watson outlines techniques to assist the SP manager to document and manage competing priorities.

Who might benefit from the Book:

Anyone that must manage smaller projects would benefit most from this book: layman, novice, and the seasoned project manager. Because smaller projects are largely ignored, they are not subject to the regular controls that large project are; thus, their implementations remain largely uncontrolled and haphazard. These smaller projects taken together may represent certain financial risks; the only way to circumvent these risks is to apply the principles of project management – SP is just more effective with smaller projects.

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Information about purchasing this book can be found at www.mmpubs.com.

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