Enterprise Programme Management – Delivering Value, by David Williams & Tim Parr

A book review by Carl Marnewick

David Williams and Tim Parr promise that "it is the first book to take a holistic view of programme management linked to the capabilities and strategy of the organisation." They do deliver on this promise as the book covers various topics ranging from strategic portfolio management, programme delivery management as well as the enterprise programme management office.

The book is divided into three sections i.e. *The Enterprise Programme Management Framework* which provides a framework that focuses on linking outputs to the strategic initiatives of the organisation. The second section, *Enterprise Programme Management Essentials*, refers to key capabilities that are fundamental to the development of an enterprise programme management approach. The last section provides a practical way for the reader to determine the shortcomings of their organisation as well as to understand where to enhance the capabilities of the organisation in question.

The authors provide a framework that follows a top-down approach from the outset. This is something I personally prefer as this portrays the new thoughts within the project management domain. The framework consists of four sections that are linked with each other as well as two supporting architectures. The first section focuses on the business strategy of the organisation and the authors say that "executives need to be able to lead their organisations to deliver change and embed it throughout the business." This explains the importance of having the correct strategies as well as the need to implement these strategies.

The second section of the framework focuses on portfolio management which "is the continual process of creating, managing and evaluating a portfolio of strategic initiatives focused on delivering lasting results and benefits." The objective of this section is to manage the portfolio in such a way that it is in harmony with the business initiatives. The issue here as well as with other books in the same discipline is that no definite methodology is provided on how to link the portfolio with the strategies.

The third section is the management of the programme delivery and this links the benefits of the strategic portfolio management with the outcomes of programme delivery. The focus is to deliver the maximum benefits from the investments made through multiple projects. This section provides a life cycle on how to plan, execute and control programmes. This differs slightly from the PMI's standard on Program Management as well as the book by Reiss et al on how to manage a programme. The focus for the reader should be to determine how to manage the programme to deliver the maximum business benefits irrespective of the life cycle that is used.

The last section of the framework is project management itself that delivers the outputs of the strategic initiatives. The authors did not focus on this section as various other resources are available that illustrates the importance of project management.

The first of the architectures investigate the various support structures that are needed to ensure effective programme leadership. The focus is on how the programme manager must address low morale, lack of commitment and the lack of skills to name but a few. Without going into too much detail about the competencies of a programme manager, it highlights what a programme manager must address to be successful.

Since the implementation of strategy is about change, the second architecture focuses on change and how change is managed. It addresses all issues surrounding change including the impact it will have on the people within the organisation. A high-level change plan is provided (page 91) that assists programme managers to plan for change.

A fresh approach by the authors is to include a section on governance and decision making. Governance is viewed from the importance of governing enterprise-wide change. Five main functions are identified to assist in governing the portfolio within the organisation.

The second part of the book focuses the essentials of programme management and this can be read separately meaning that organisations can focus on section 1 and ensure that the enterprise programme management framework is implemented. The first section deals with generic software systems that can assist a programme manager and why organisations should spend money on implementing EPM solutions.

Programme management risk is addressed within the second section and addresses risk from an organisation perspective from the business initiatives down to the project management level. I think this is one of the strong points of the book where a holistic approach is continuously followed.
Benefits management is addressed as an essential but should have been incorporated into the first section of the book. However, detailed descriptions are provided how benefits are linked between the portfolio and the individual projects. Emphasis is placed on the types of benefits, which are categorised into financial/non-financial and tangible/intangible. This provides a holistic view on benefits and not just the financial aspect.

A topic that is covered, that I felt does not belong in the book, is a section on the management of suppliers. It covers various aspects but does not provide a holistic view like some of the other sections.

Nothing more is provided that is not already covered within the project procurement management knowledge area of the PMBoK® Guide.

The book covers a topic that is not that familiar and that is the programme management office. Two types of PgMOs are discussed: the first where the PgMO exists for the duration of the programme and the second one is more strategically placed, where all programmes are managed by the PgMO. The last type is something of an evolution from the traditional PMO.

This book is an academic text but provides enough information to programme managers to assist them in deriving projects from the organisational strategies and how to manage this process on a day-to-day basis using the supporting architectures.