

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Allan, B. **The no-nonsense guide to project management**. London: Facet Publishing; 2017. Softcover: 240p. 978-1-78330-203-1. Price: CAD \$109.42. Available from:

http://www.facetpublishing.co.uk/title.php?id=302031&category_code=#.Wq7WwejwY2w

Are you involved in project-based work? Whether you are working on simple, complex, small, or large projects, *The no-nonsense guide to project management* can equip you with practical tips, strategies and insight. Barbara Allan is an academic consultant and author, specializing in management and leadership in business schools. She has held a variety of positions including librarian, library manager, and dean of the University of Westminster Business School. Allan previously authored a 2004 book on project management; however, the information and communications technologies available to support project management have changed greatly since then. This book therefore reflects the current state of project management in libraries.

The book is arranged logically. Chapter 1 lays the foundation by defining project management and then placing it within the context of library work. Chapter 2 provides an overview of project management, and introduces 3 different approaches (traditional, PRINCE2 and Agile) commonly used in libraries. Criteria and advice for choosing the most appropriate approach are also included. Chapters 3 to 6 discuss the 4 stages of the project management cycle (getting started, planning, implementation, and evaluation and dissemination). Chapters 7 to 10 cover information and communication technology, money, people, and partnerships. Having the stages of project management addressed separately from other aspects such as technology, money and people, gives the book a more logical flow. The book contains an index and a list of the tables, figures, and case studies; this is useful for those who want to look just at specific sections or examples.

One of the major strengths of this book is the many case studies; these provide the reader with additional insight, and an understanding of real-life challenges.

Some describe simple projects, while others describe large, complex projects. This variety makes the book applicable to all library projects, regardless of size or complexity. Common library projects, such as developing a new course or online tutorial, moving a collection, or implementing a new technology or service, are well represented. The case studies span across settings and geographies, to include academic, public, national, and school libraries in North America, Europe and Australia. This attempt to provide a diverse range of case studies demonstrates the author's intent to make this book broadly relevant to all libraries, regardless of type or location.

Allan's book is 240 pages; this length provided an appropriate level of detail to be both useful and practical. The book is filled with numerous tables and figures that provide the reader with detailed processes, plans, instructions or criteria that can aid in all stages of project management. "A practical guide to project management" would be a fitting title for this book because of the many practical elements that were included. I found a few sections particularly interesting and useful:

- a) Risk management and analysis, described in Chapter 3, includes step-by-step instructions for risk assessment.
- b) Measuring impact and methods of dissemination, part of Chapter 6, covers the use of social media.
- c) Tables 7.4 and 7.5 list various software packages and collaborative tools for specific functions of project management.
- d) Chapter 9, which is dedicated to the people side of projects, includes sections on working with virtual teams, volunteers, diverse teams, and change management.
- e) The 7 case studies on working in partnerships included in Chapter 10; these showcase the variety of forms that partnerships can take and how beneficial they can be for both sides.

It would not be possible for a 240 page book to provide in-depth information on every aspect of managing a project, for each of the 3 different approaches introduced earlier. This is the only

weakness of the book that I noticed. The Agile and PRINCE2 approaches to project management are described in Chapter 2, but are mentioned only a few times in the subsequent chapters on the 4 stages of project management (chapters 3 to 6). However, Allan did include references to other resources, so the reader can find more information about the approaches or aspects that are not addressed in detail within this book.

In my current role as research and learning librarian at the University of Calgary, I facilitate an introductory workshop on project management for research projects. It is based on the traditional approach to project management and is geared towards graduate students and faculty members new at leading, or collaborating on, academic projects. My prior knowledge of project management was sufficient for facilitating this workshop and for managing small or simple projects. Having read this book, I already feel

better equipped to handle the more complex questions I receive at my workshop. And, now that I have this book to refer to, I feel more confident in my ability to plan and lead a larger project should the opportunity arise.

The no-nonsense guide to project management would be a valuable resource for any library professional involved in projects, regardless of size or scope. For health librarians in particular, the guidance in this book would be helpful for managing collaborative projects such as systematic reviews. For a librarian who is leading a project, or one who is part of a project team, this book will be relevant and useful. As for me, I do not think my copy of this book will be getting dusty anytime soon.

Statement of Competing Interests

No competing interests declared.

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