Making Things Happen: Mastering Project Management

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In the updated edition of this critically acclaimed and bestselling book, Microsoft project veteran Scott Berkun offers a collection of essays on field-tested philosophies and strategies for defining, leading, and managing projects. Each essay distills complex concepts and challenges into practical nuggets of useful advice, and the new edition now adds more value for leaders and managers of projects everywhere.

Based on his nine years of experience as a program manager for Internet Explorer, and lead program manager for Windows and MSN, Berkun explains to technical and non-technical readers alike what it takes to get through a large software or web development project. *Making Things Happen* doesn't cite specific methods, but focuses on philosophy and strategy. Unlike other project management books, Berkun offers personal essays in a comfortable style and easy tone that emulate the relationship of a wise project manager who gives good, entertaining and passionate advice to those who ask.

Topics in this new edition include:

How to make things happen
Making good decisions
Specifications and requirements
Ideas and what to do with them
How not to annoy people
Leadership and trust
The truth about making dates
What to do when things go wrong
Complete with a new forward from the author and a discussion guide for forming reading groups/teams, *Making Things Happen* offers in-depth exercises to help you apply lessons from the book to your job. It is inspiring, funny, honest, and compelling, and definitely the one book that you and your team need to have within arm's reach throughout the life of your project.

Coming from the rare perspective of someone who fought difficult battles on Microsoft's biggest projects and taught project design and management for MSTE, Microsoft's internal best practices group, this is valuable advice indeed. It will serve you well with your current work, and on future projects to come.

Making Things Happen: Mastering Project Management Details

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From Reader Review Making Things Happen: Mastering Project Management for online ebook

Antonio Karlovi? says

Good introduction to Project management. Simple and honest, at times very humorous writing.

Pete Aven says

Great, Quick Read. A lot of useful information here. I've read many books on managing software projects, and they often tend to tell you what goes wrong or can go wrong, which I know already, as I've lived it. This book actually provides many helpful solutions. The book makes an effort to recognize that processes should support the workers, not the other way around, so the topics are not obsessed with schedules and charts and the rigidity you find in most pm books. The author takes into the human and organizational aspects of the project and intertwines these with the goals to present ways to organize yourself for success and stay there. I don't think you need to be leading a project to get something out of this book. I think the content is great for everyone from the manager(s) to individual contributors. Its a solution kit for succeeding at software projects and I plan to keep it by my side as a reference and re-read in the future. If you're doing any agile or feature driven development, this will be very useful.

Nicolle says

A true classic in PM - even though I coordinated some projects already, I learned a lot by reading this one on strategizing, planning, leadership and employee happiness. It has some great tips and tricks, even if some of it is a bit straightforward. Though the examples come from IT, they apply to a broad range of sectors. This is must read for everyone who wants to get things done and plan better in any business!

Erika RS says

Excellent book. My main complaint, if you can call it that, was that as an overview, it could only give a taste of the topics covered. Fortunately, Berkun sprinkled follow-up references liberally throughout.

This book focuses on the essence of project management: allowing a group of people to work together to accomplish some goal. It's not tied to any particular technique or methodology. Because it's so general, some individual ideas and recommendations come across as common sense. The value comes from how the ideas support each other. E.g., the notion that schedules are highly uncertain at the beginning and become more certain over time is common sense, but when that is combined with approaches for developing specifications or making decisions or managing risk, it becomes a powerful foundation for running a project.

I don't know how useful this book would be for someone trained as a project manager, but for someone like myself, who has had to pick up project management because someone has to do it, it's a great transition from intuition to a reasoned approach.

Pwilczewski says

This book taught me a new respect for project management. In a lot of ways my job isn't too different from software development. But this book really applies to any job where you (1) deliver something to a client or (2) work as part of a team. Project management is hard, that's why some people make careers out of it. At work we don't really have project managers, in fact they try to keep responsibility as diffuse as possible. Which is fine if you want to avoid drama and internal strife but really bad if you actually want things to get done. One idea that has really stuck with me is "management by walking around." The idea her is that with software development it can be very difficult to appreciate the team aspect. A lot of people work independently and other people only get involved when you screw up or they screw up. But a good manager will stop by, ask "what problems are you dealing with?" and provide input. Lots of other good stuff in the book, I really liked the section on writing good emails as well.

My only complaint is that the book is very wordy, though well organized. The author will have the first sentence / main idea in bold and then 4-5 lines explaining it. More often then not I could just read the bold sentence and understand his point.

Bruno Fernandes says

A little too wordy for my personal taste, nevertheless a great book. Good advice that clearly comes from a place of experience.

Yingying says

This book is really good. A recruiter from Microsoft recommended it to me, saying if I would like to know something about project management, I don't want to miss this book. I bought it and yes it's true! The author gives plenty of details on how to get people involved and how to deal with difficulties in project management. Pretty useful. However, as a student then I could not remember or experience all he said in the book. I took a class in software management and the professor used this book as the textbook. How excited I was! We not only had lots of discussion around the tops of this book, but also acted as project managers for sophomore students in a six-week long project.

I think this book is great for experienced project managers, but for beginners, it's good to scan and skim at the first few times and get to understand the content within gradually.

Prakhar Chandna says

One thing I liked about it was the fact that it did not talk about complex theories or models being used in the industry. Rather, it stressed on the underlying principles and concepts.

Nikolay says

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Franck Chauvel says

This book provides very general strategies and tactics to carry out successful software project management, including communication, politics. Yet this book does not include practical techniques, such as how to come up with a work breakdown structure, how to make estimates, etc. Still it raises interesting question about challenging situations, which most of us (I believe) have not been exposed to.

Asher says

FINALLY!

This a very long-winded read. The author beats about the bush and pace around hot porridge like a cat. It seems like he wrote this book for software designers (that I'm not), and the chapters towards the end were more relevant to me. He would often advise you to skip a few lengths, and I wonder why he bothered to include it at all. It does contain useful information, but it's also a boring book.

Lo says

I definitely learned many things while reading this. If you're going into a PM position, definitely worth a read.

Denis Vasilev says

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Joel says

I recommend this book to anyone who works on projects, especially software projects. The author is a former product manager for Microsoft. The book covers many of the aspects of typical projects. It's not specific to

any one methodology, but it does provide an overview of agile and waterfall. If you are not a project manager, you still need to know how projects run, and this book is very accessible and the essay format gives a good overview of things like planning, estimating, project schedules, gathering requirements/user stories, writing specifications, and common things that can go wrong on projects.

Ayuni Yoon says

I want to read this book cause my lecturer