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## Don't Park your Brain Outside: A Practical Guide to Improving Shareholder Value with SMART Management

by Francis T. Hartman

We have often heard the expression that project management involves "left-brained" (linear) thought processes and aptitudes. We have also heard practitioners comment that "project management would be much easier if we didn't have to deal with people." Many currently available texts provide practical methodologies and guides to help project managers hone tactical and technical skills. In his refreshingly provocative new book, *Don't Park your Brain Outside: A Practical Guide to Improving Shareholder Value with SMART Management*, Francis T. Hartman presents strategies that meld both the hard and soft approaches to project management as they relate to managing change and working with people.

Hartman's definition of research is simple: "If you take ideas from one place, it is theft; from two places, it becomes plagiarism. But if you take ideas from three or more places, well, that has got to be research!" Drawing from his wealth of broad industry experience, theoretical knowledge, and research, Hartman has put forth a holistic, balanced guide to project management in a straightforward and entertaining manner. Its value to readers is clearly expressed in the subtitle, *A Practical Guide to Improving Shareholder Value*. The book focuses on customer satisfaction by emphasizing alignment of business, social, and technical aspects.

The book consists of 18 chapters divided into four sections. Section A, Getting Started, introduces the reader to SMART project management™. The acronym describes the Hartman framework that is Strategically Managed, Aligned, Regenerative, and Transitional. SMART is "a balanced, cohesive, aware and effective way to deliver projects, programs, and organizational promises." It is a way of looking at the big picture and understanding what is going on in business, technical, and social contexts simultaneously.

Hartman emphasizes *creativity* as essential to SMART project management because each project will require unique approaches and the wisdom to both acknowledge this and act on it. Many readers who have had the privilege of attending one of Hartman's presentations or lectures will be familiar with his wit and creative style, which are evident throughout the book. The book is

presented with useful sidebars and icons that emphasize key points. In addition, insightful and humorous examples are interspersed throughout the chapters along with cartoons drawn by the author himself.

Section B provides principles and theory related to the SMART framework and based on project and organizational management. Simple and complex theories are presented in a clear and practical manner so that readers can quickly apply what they read. Hartman emphasizes alignment throughout the book and gives the reader powerful tools to take the "pulse" of projects to ensure and maintain project alignment. Chapter 5, Section 5.8, Fun in the Workplace, provides clever insight into an often overlooked or discounted area.

Section C describes how SMART management works on projects. Section D is a self-evaluation guide to help readers determine how "SMART" their projects are. It provides a handy set of references back to specific chapters in the book.

Hartman's book makes many contributions to the project management body of knowledge. Most significantly, it encourages "controlled anarchy"—a concept long overdue in project management. Throughout the book, Hartman challenges readers to question project management practices that are followed for the sake of following them. He encourages calculated risks that focus on those practices that add value and enhance shareholder value.

The book also provides a framework that is scalable not just to different projects, programs, or businesses, but also to different practitioners and customers at the project and executive level.

The book presents an array of useful concepts and techniques. In Chapter 14, Project Controls and Metrics, Hartman portrays the "Project Dashboard," or Carley Chart. This chart presents relevant project reporting in a simple, holistic manner with just the right attention to detail. The technique exemplifies the added strength of the book in that it takes basic project management techniques and not just simplifies them but also explains their value, thereby intriguing readers to revisit them instead of disregarding them because they tend to be confusing and complicated, e.g., earned value.

In addition, Hartman shows how organizations can achieve "absolute performance." The SMART Project Management-Based Maturity Model can be followed so that the organization can incrementally improve its project management practices to deliver successful projects consistently and predictably to satisfied customers.

At the end of the book, Hartman provides readers with an innovative toolkit called Error Messages. When readers reflect on specific project difficulties, they can refer to the Error Messages section to better understand the symptoms, problems, and a corrective course of action to take.



The value of this book is in its simplicity. Gone are the days of espousing behemoth, costly methodologies that everyone must follow to the nth degree. Instead, Hartman encourages readers to be both critical and selective of the tools and techniques that they use to improve project success (defined as happy customers).

Both academics and practitioners have applied Hartman's framework with considerable success. Reports from the field indicate that SMART methodology:

- Helps mature project management professionalism and improves the ability to deliver successful projects
- Creates a participative and open communication environment that addresses hidden agendas early on, gaining alignment on what has to be delivered and what defines success
- Reflects reality in the life of a project manager and conveys a powerful message regarding how practitioners bring projects in on time.

The book offers many different ideas, tools, techniques, and anecdotes that shatter the myth that effective project management relies on one best solution. Fresh and provocative, this book is a must-read for those who want to challenge themselves out of the linear thinking rut and for those who are bold enough to believe that there is a better way to manage projects—the SMART way.

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Available online at [www.pmi.bookstore.org](http://www.pmi.bookstore.org)

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REVIEWED BY KAM JUGDEV, PMP, MENG, MHSA, BSC, A PH.D. STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY, ALBERTA CANADA AND A PMI MEMBER.

## Calendar of Events

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**Note:** To register for PMI® Seminars World, call +800-713-8130 (U.S. and Canada), or call +847-384-7739, fax +847-698-9245 (International), or visit [www.pmi.org/semcat/](http://www.pmi.org/semcat/). PMI Seminars World 2000 cities and dates are subject to change because of hotel space and availability.

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**January 5, 2001** Deadline for submission of papers for "How Governments Matter" conference of the Academy of Management, to be held 3–8 August 2001. Washington, DC, USA. For more information, visit [www.aom.pace.edu/meetings/2001/callsub.htm](http://www.aom.pace.edu/meetings/2001/callsub.htm)

**January 7–12** 10th International Conference of IACMAG, sponsored by the International Association for Computer Methods and Advances in Geomechanics. Tucson, AZ, USA. For more information, e-mail [epd@engr.arizona.edu](mailto:epd@engr.arizona.edu)

**January 11–13** PMI Board of Directors Meeting No. 1. Philadelphia, PA, USA. For more information, e-mail [chair@pmi.org](mailto:chair@pmi.org). Members may visit [www.pmi.org/pmihq/board.htm](http://www.pmi.org/pmihq/board.htm) to view the current call for agendas and to retrieve the Board agenda template.

**February 1–3** International Advanced Training on Project Management. Sponsored by the International Project Management Association (IPMA). Copenhagen, Denmark. For more information, e-mail [infor@ipmacourse.dk](mailto:infor@ipmacourse.dk) or visit [www.ipmacourse.dk](http://www.ipmacourse.dk)

**February 13–16** PMI Seminars World 2001. Cancun, Mexico.

**March 6–9** PMI Seminars World 2001. Napa Valley, CA, USA.

**March 13–16** PMI Seminars World 2001. Tampa, FL, USA.

**March 27–30** PMI Seminars World 2001. Rome, Italy.

**March 31** Deadline for submission of papers for International Project Management Congress 2001, to be held 19–21 November 2001 in Tokyo, Japan. Notice of acceptance of abstracts by end of May 2001. Sponsored by the Engineering Advancement Association of Japan and the Japan Project Management Forum. For more information, visit [www.ena.or.jp/JPMF](http://www.ena.or.jp/JPMF)

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