

Sustainability in Project Management

***By Gilbert Silvius, Ron Schipper, Julia Planko, Jasper van den Brink and Adri Köhler;
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Book Review by Joel Carboni

My Overall Assessment

This book serves as an excellent call to arms for all project managers that will allow us to evolve and embrace our roles as the key agents of change in a new era where the emphasis on sustainability is at an all-time high. The authors have done a wonderful job in conveying and demonstrating the academic principles and practical methodologies of sustainability from around the world in project management practices with a direct correlation to environmental and organizational prosperity.

What the Authors Convey

Sustainability in project management has often been relegated to a footnote found under the heading of the project manager's personal code of ethics. This book speaks of the key benefits that can be realized by incorporating the practical and measurable practices that impact the triple bottom line (People, Planet, and Profit) and what organizations that successfully adopt them have to gain.

The book opens with an overview of sustainable concepts and terms from a purely business perspective. This foundation is critical for the reader to gain a solid understanding of what sustainability is about and what it concerns itself with to successfully lay down the grounding of the six key principles of sustainability. The authors then present the implications of sustainable principles and an integration model into project processes, tools, and metrics that can be used, and ultimately forge the benefits for the future. A strong example of this is the strategic use of a project or programme as the most effective way that an organization can introduce such a major change.

As the book progresses it moves away from the pure principles into a more practical application, with the authors explaining specific methods. This is followed by the author's philosophical take to explain why project and programme managers must first take accountability to understand their organization's environmental goals to and then align them with their project's delivery to ensure they are realized.

They make use of several graphics to illustrate points simplifying the complex and explaining the complicated to the reader with clear definition in each diagram or table. In describing the stages of sustainability the authors cover the full spectrum from proactive where they tie compliance to the reactive aspect encompassing both the purpose and the passionate sides giving the reader pause to reflect on how their current initiatives could benefit by looking through a clearer more sustainable lens.

Why Project Managers Should Read This Book

As the world treads steadily forward progressing into further economic instability and as the environment degrades this book will become the stable diet for our embryonic century, leading us to an improved and more enlightened future. Gilbert, Ron, Julia, Jasper, and Adri speak of concepts and methods that are crucial for project and program managers to adopt. With this structured and disciplined approach we can all work together to meet the challenges that humanity is to face in the decades to come.

Target Audience

This book is targeted towards the project management community, as a strong and detailed academic document for immediate use as well as a research document foreshadowing the evolution of the discipline. Its subject matter and structure add to its appeal making it attractive to a larger field as it educates functional and industry leaders who need to gain greater clarity of how to apply sustainable practices, transcending the topic from purely philosophy and theory to strategic and practical.

Editor's Note: Thanks Joel! Readers, if you would like to make a comment about this review, please [contact us!](#)

Overall Rating: 4.5 (out of 5):  Joel Carboni.