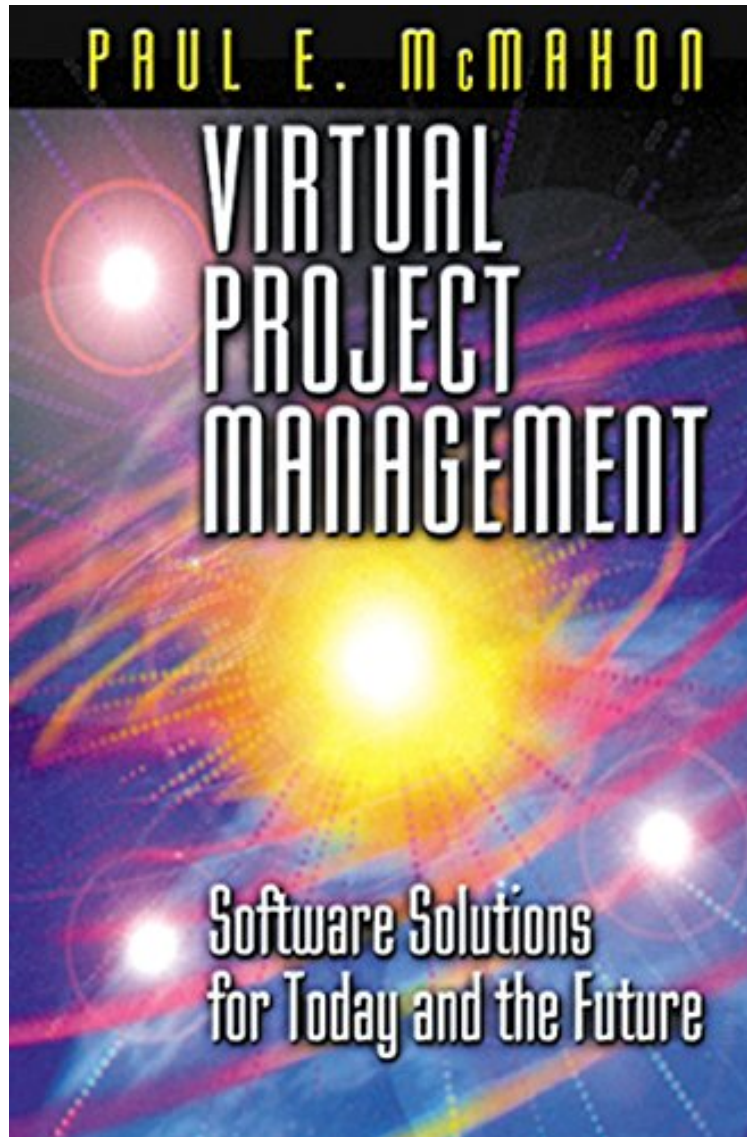


# Virtual Project Management: Software Solutions for Today and the Future

*Paul E. McMahon*

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**Paul E. McMahon : Virtual Project Management: Software Solutions for Today and the Future** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Virtual Project Management: Software Solutions for Today and the Future:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Ahead of its time - especially relevant todayBy Mike TarraniWhen this book was first published nearly four years ago from the date of this review, it addressed a narrow niche -

managing virtual teams in large-scale engineering projects. Moreover, the book is more biased towards product management than project management, although there is considerable overlap in the two domains. Fast forward to today, and the material no longer addresses a narrow niche, making this book an important resource to a much wider audience. I am evaluating this book from the perspective of an IT professional, and see the audience as follows:- project and program managers overseeing development that has been outsourced to off-shore providers, especially in the IT environment- IT professionals who have (or are in danger of) losing their jobs because of the trend towards off shore outsourcing. Managing virtual teams is a viable, alternative career option in which this audience segment can employ their technical knowledge and gain the management knowledge to be successful.- executive management exploring the feasibility, risks and challenges of outsourcing to off shore providers and who are seeking a management strategy for making it work. Of course, the audience is wider than I've cited, and the best way to determine if you are among it I'm giving my assessment of the knowledge and approach the book imparts. First, the author weaves in cases, personal experience and anecdotal stories into the text making the book highly readable. He approaches the way to establish and effectively manage a virtual team by focusing on the key barriers and offering solutions. The biggest barriers are communication and cultural differences (both company and human varieties), so much of the book is devoted to overcoming those in all of their forms. I particularly liked the knowledge dissemination and retention strategies the author provides because knowledge management is directly linked to communication, but is an often overlooked element that will make or break a geographically and culturally dispersed team's success. The core of this book, however, is the structured and methodical eight-step framework in which you can establish a virtual team. This framework has the following steps: 1 - Careful selection of team leaders with an emphasis on leadership and conflict resolution skills. 2 - A clearly defined architecture upon which work splitting and tasking are based. 3 - Develop a build plan and ensure that the proper supporting infrastructure is in place. 4 - Establish and enforce communication rules. 5 - Identify and implement the low level project organization. 6 - Detailed planning that takes into account all elements of the virtual team. 7 - Test the organizational concept. 8 - Execute. For each of the above steps the author provides in-depth details, challenges and how to overcome them, and supporting rationale. In addition, the appendices in this book are invaluable in that they contain templates, checklists, and other information that fleshes out what is required to effectively manage a virtual team. Appendix L, "Synopsis of 34 Insights and 50 Solutions", is especially valuable because it summarizes the key challenges of virtual team management.

Virtual Project Management: Software Solutions for Today and the Future explores the technical management issues involved in the revolutionary new way of building complex software intensive systems faster and cheaper by employing the power of distributed operations. The book examines the implementation issues that cut deep inside present day collocated engineering organizations and recommends practical and affordable actions to aid organizations seeking increased productivity through distributed operations. The demand for integrated solutions constructed from a combination of existing and newly developed software increases daily. Many organizations find themselves with shortages of the critical skills necessary to compete in many of these newly created markets. Employing virtual collaborative development provides a dramatic increase in a company's opportunities to successfully compete. Virtual collaboration provides a broader skill and product knowledge base coupled with a deeper pool of personnel to potentially employ. It removes two of the major barriers - company affiliation and physical location. Virtual Project Management: Software Solutions for Today and the Future focuses on critical characteristics underlying how work actually gets done in traditional collocated engineering environments. It examines the changes taking place on virtual projects through a series of anecdotes based on real project experiences. The book provides an 8 step practical and affordable plan that can be used as a framework in either setting up and executing a new virtual project, or in instituting improvements to a project that has drifted off course. Others have lived through the pain of learning lessons the hard way. You don't need to follow their path. The insights and solutions offered by Paul McMahon answer the questions virtual project leaders will be asking well into the 21st century.

"addresses one of the most challenging problems facing modern software development in an Internet world." -Dr. Jeffrey S. Poulin, Chief Technology Officer, Atlas Commerce "hits a grand slam in Chapter Seven!" -Bob Epps, Manager, Architecture Integration Technology Center, Lockheed Martin Management Data Systems "I got "hooked" and couldn't put it down This book will guide managers to make collaboration-at-a-distance a far smoother, more reliable operation. It introduces just the right amount of rigor; it discusses methods for preventing things from falling through the cracks; it shows managers how to deal with the many very real human emotional reactions in working with collaborators (especially competitors) with whom communication is necessarily restricted; and it illuminates the strong role of informal communication." -William S. Bennett, Independent Consultant, Author: "Visualizing Software: A Graphical Notation for Analysis, Design, and Discussion," "I would highly recommend that Engineering/Program Managers read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section in Appendix J This book will help you understand the inevitable problems and put you on track with effective techniques to create an efficient and successful collaborative team on day one of the contract; earlier if you implement the recommendations during the proposal phase." -Bruce

Crandall, Program and Technology Development Manager, TRW Corporation "The cultural semantics in today's global economy is a big deal. The notion of using a common project memory (RFPM) makes a lot of sense to those of us that grew up in a culture that embraces collaboration." -Dr. Frank Tsui, Associate Professor of Computer Science, Southern Polytechnic State University, Chief Technology Officer, River Logic, Inc. "A timely answer to a pressing management dilemma - how to bring distributed critical skills together without collocation accurately hits the "high nail" issues facing today's management challenge of collaborative development excellent job in highlighting both the potential pitfalls as well as recommended formulas for success." -Bob Wuestner, General Manager NLX Corporation