

Review by Paul E. Shaltry, PMP, Catalyst Management Consulting LLC, Columbus, Ohio, for *Chemical Engineering magazine (USA)*, March 15, 2008 (website: www.che.com/career_tools/bookshelf/3714.html):

Project Management Toolkit – The Basics for Project Success

Dr. Melton covers the basics of project management well. One senses her years of experience in this efficient distillation. Most practitioners, as well as occasional dabblers in project management, would find her book to be a useful reference and compass. Theory is minimal. Practical applications of proven principles, tools and techniques abound. A novice without much business experience may find some concepts unfamiliar, but should treasure the book nonetheless.

Chapters 1 and 2 set the foundational framework with a nicely done, graphically-oriented overview of the Project Management Toolkit, showing the four common stages of a project and each of the author's recommended tools for those stages. She explains the "whys" and "wherefores" for project management and project managers in the organization.

The four core chapters, 3 through 6, reflect Dr. Melton's pragmatic rendering of the project lifecycle — Stage 1: Why?, Stage 2: How?, Stage 3: In Control? and Stage 4: Benefits Realized? These chapters have consistent structure, and the reader can follow them easily. Those in the project management field who feel short changed on the concept and application of benefits management and realization will be edified.

Project Management Toolkit aims to be entry level, primarily for process engineering projects. New case studies in the second edition broaden application by illustrating a capital engineering project and another about business change. These major case study examples consume 98 pages, demonstrating how to apply the principles and tools introduced in the first 185 pages. These are in addition to the case vignettes sprinkled throughout the four core chapters.

This is a toolkit for management of a single project. It doesn't address multiple project management or the role of projects in a program or portfolio, but this does not detract from the book's intended value.

A minor disappointing feature is that the front matter touts linkage to an outdated web address to access electronic files of the tools featured. With some exploring, the publisher's website page with the templates can eventually be found. However, there is limited use for the electronic versions, since the filled-in version cannot be saved electronically. Instead, the reader must work with a printed copy for saving and sharing.