

Project management, not long ago a somewhat obscure field with loosely defined roles and responsibilities, saw a steady professionalization trend over the past 10-15 years. This trend drove a rapid adoption of formal qualifications such as the Project Management Institute's PMP™ certification.

Lately, though, the effects of globalization introduced another set of challenges that extend far beyond well-defined knowledge areas. While international project collaboration is now a reality for tens of thousands of program and project managers, so far the track record is very mixed. Individuals and organizations struggle with poorly identified project boundaries and risks, misaligned expectations, differences in values and work styles, frequent misunderstandings, and more. Luckily, a number of programs and publications that attempt to provide specific guidance have emerged in recent years.

Originally published in 2005, *International Project Management* by Owen Jay Murphy, a former defense industry specialist and program manager, was one of the first books on the subject.



The author aims high: on less than 200 pages, he covers a long list of topics specific to an international environment, from currency risks to trade limitations, political factors, time zone implications, cultural differences, and so forth. In addition, the book includes discussions of project management tools such as Gantt, PERT and WBS charts, financial control systems, and even the basics of Six Sigma quality management.

Not surprisingly, the result is a mixed bag. On one hand, wide generalizations about managing projects overseas accompany information that is far too brief to add value, such as a single page discussing international labor laws and related issues. In contrast, a far more extensive review of financial controls and variance analysis reveals nothing a domestic project manager would not already know.

At its best, *International Project Management* provides a reasonably easy-to-read summary of crucial steps and useful tools for managing international projects. Viewed that way, it may serve as a quick sanity check and memory jogger for experienced international project managers. Newcomers to the field of project management and well-versed project managers who lack international experience, however, are both left wanting a lot more than this book has to offer.

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