

Executive Summary

Identifying and Managing Project Risk – Chapters 1-7

The first half of Tom Kendrick's *Identifying and Managing Project Risk: Essential Tools for Failure-Proofing Your Project* are devoted primarily to the definition of what types of project risk need to be managed and how to identify and plan for said types of risk. The first two chapters cover the need for risk management on projects of all sizes, followed by a chapter each for scope, schedule, and resource risk, and the reading ends with two chapters on documenting risks and estimating their potential impact on the project. Throughout the first few introductory chapters of the book the author quotes statistics from his own personal research (the PERIL database) as a basis for most of the conclusions drawn, which while insightful doesn't quite provide enough context to be that meaningful to an uninformed reader.

By far the most important chapter in the first half of this book is the 6th: Managing Project Constraints and Documenting Risks. This chapter discusses the scope/resource/schedule relationship and how modifications to one aspect necessitates corresponding changes to at least one of the other aspects. This idea is foundational to project and risk management, as any time risks are identified their potential effects can be viewed through the lens of a ballooning of an aspect to the scope/resource/schedule triangle as a way establish a mitigation plan.

This reading does a good job of listing a wide variety of examples of risk for each category of scope, resource, and schedule. These examples are based on the author's research and help to better contextualize what is meant by the description of each category of risk. The drawback of this breadth of risk examples is that the first half of the book reads primarily as a large list followed by an explanatory paragraph for each fairly simple entry in the list.

Overall, the first half of this book is an exhausting slog of repetition that I would not recommend to any reader. A large number of pages are devoted to listing off examples from the PERIL database and then following up with far too in-depth descriptions of each item. For example, pages 100-107 are devoted entirely to listing off categorized items from the PERIL database and devoting an overly verbose paragraph to explaining each (other examples of this trend can be seen on pages 40-47 and 70-77).

On the other hand, I can heartily recommend a read of chapter 6, specifically the section titled Analyzing Constraints, as that section does a good job of explaining the dependencies between scope,

O'Connor, Jake

schedule, and resources, and that planning for risk-induced changes to one will require changes to one or both of the others. I must also praise the examples provided at the end of each chapter that attempt to map the lesson from that chapter onto the real world example of the construction of the Panama Canal, as those sections are by far the highlight of the book so far.

References

Kendrick, T. (2009). *Identifying and managing project risk: Essential tools for failure-proofing your project*, 2nd ed. New York, NY: AMACOM.