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# Executive Summary

## Identifying and Managing Project Risk – Chapters 8-14

The second half of Tom Kendrick’s *Identifying and Managing Project Risk: Essential Tools for Failure-Proofing Your Project* is spent primarily reiterating concepts from the first half while adding one or two new concepts and reinterpreting earlier concepts in the context of larger and larger project structures. The majority of covered topics in this reading are how to deal with risks at the activity, project, program, portfolio, and enterprise levels, but there are also sections devoted to the all important skill of people management as it pertains to project success.

Chapter 8 starts off the reading by enumerating through the ways of dealing with risks for a single activity in a project as well as discussing the topic of root-cause analysis, which is the in-depth identification and analysis of all possible causes of a single risk. This chapter doesn’t do a great job of diving too deep into methods of risk management but it does at least define them: avoidance, attempting to reduce the likelihood of a risk; mitigation, attempting to reduce the effect of a risk; transfer, foisting the cost of a risk on some entity outside of the project; and acceptance, preparing to live with the potential cost of a risk.

Chapters 9 and 10 cover managing project risks through measurement of metrics and proper preproduction steps. These chapters discuss how using project metrics can help detect more early if a known risk trigger has happened or if some unknown risk is having a measurable detrimental effect on the project’s allotted resources and time, and how it is obviously better to know as early as possible if the warning signs of an issue appear. The chapters also cover important preproduction steps including surveying stakeholders both internal and external for risk, using simulation and analysis to identify weak points in the project plan, and defining a rigid change management workflow to prevent the dreaded scope creep.

The final 4 chapters of the book mostly cover project management from the management perspective and less so specifically from the viewpoint of risk analysis. These chapters include sections about fostering a well-oiled team with high morale and good communication, constantly reviewing and reassessing aspects of the project to learn and better predict future project hurdles, and keeping a rich and easily accessible project archive which contains all of the compiled information relating to the project so anyone who needs the information can access it. Chapter 13 also covers risk management from different levels of scale, from project up through enterprise, and how each higher level can

recontextualize earlier learnings on risk management by framing whole projects or programs as activities within a greater whole.

Personally these last few chapters of *Identifying and Managing Project Risk: Essential Tools for Failure-Proofing Your Project* were by far the more interesting and insightful. Though there were still a great deal of pages devoted to repetitive, list-based content, the majority of these chapters contained both anecdotal and well-researched examples of good project and risk management. The 11th chapter, covering maintaining a highly performing project team, is probably the most useful of all and could have easily been expanded.

Overall, I still cannot recommend this book as either an interesting, for-fun read or as reference material. The chapter layout does not lend itself to quick searches for relevant information, and the writing style is so overly verbose that if a relevant section can be found it’s contents will be meandering and rely on multiple references to earlier sections in the book. That stated, the sections applying project and risk management lessons of from each chapter to example of the construction of the Panama Canal are great, even if sometimes they don’t directly correlate.

## References

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