

Professionalism in Risk Management¹

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Are you a “risk professional”? How do you know? Or do you use the services of “risk professionals”? How can you tell they’re really professional?

The **Risk Management Professionalism Manifesto** (Hillson, 2002) provides ten criteria that risk practitioners and their clients can use to determine whether the risk services being offered can be described as “professional” or not.

The full Manifesto is available online* and it includes a set of test cases. Before you start your next risk engagement, as either the provider or receiver of risk services, consider how you would answer these questions:

1. **Scope.** If the risk professional discovers a risk which is important but clearly outside the agreed scope of the engagement, what should they do?
2. **Context.** If the risk professional gives advice that the client thinks is not “industry best practice”, how should the discrepancy be resolved?
3. **Competence.** If a particular risk area is very technical, how much should the risk professional rely on the advice of the client’s engineers or technical specialists?
4. **Processes & tools.** If the client has a preferred risk tool or process, but the risk professional thinks these are not appropriate for this engagement, how should this be addressed?
5. **Quality of advice.** If the risk professional considers that a risk analysis is robust but the project or business is highly sensitive to the accuracy of the results, to what extent should they be concerned about that sensitivity?
6. **Language.** If agreed risk management actions have been poorly implemented by client staff leading to problems, should the way the risk professional communicated these actions be reviewed?
7. **Recommendations.** If the risk professional considers that the client is jeopardising third parties by not managing risks effectively, how should the risk professional raise the resulting ethical issues?
8. **Conflict of interests.** If a risk professional discovers a risk that might affect a colleague working on an unrelated assignment, should they ask the client’s permission before speaking to their colleague?
9. **Inappropriate application.** If the client chooses to use a contract to transfer risks to a supplier, but the risk professional considers that those risks would be managed more effectively by the client, what should they do?

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10. Objectives. If the client has concealed the true purpose of a project from the risk professional because of its strategic sensitivity to the business, what should the client do if the risk professional identifies business-related risks?

If you're not sure how to answer any of these questions, the **Risk Management Professionalism Manifesto** may help!

* The full **Risk Management Professionalism Manifesto** is available online at <http://risk-doctor.com/docs/Risk%20Manifesto%20Layout%20V3.pdf>

To provide feedback on this Briefing Note, or for more details on how to develop effective risk management, [contact the Risk Doctor \(info@risk-doctor.com\)](mailto:info@risk-doctor.com), or [visit the Risk Doctor website \(www.risk-doctor.com\)](http://www.risk-doctor.com).

About the Author



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Known globally as *The Risk Doctor*, David Hillson leads The Risk Doctor Partnership (www.risk-doctor.com), a global consultancy offering specialist risk services across the world. David is and Honorary Fellow of the Association for Project Management (APM); Fellow of the Project Management Institute (PMI); Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Risk Management (IRM); and a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

David has a reputation as an excellent speaker and presenter on risk. His talks blend thought-leadership with practical application, presented in an accessible style that combines clarity with humour, guided by the Risk Doctor motto: “Understand profoundly so you can explain simply”.

He also writes widely on risk, with eleven major books, and over 100 professional papers. He publishes a regular Risk Doctor Briefing blog in seven languages to 10,000 followers, and has over 6000 subscribers to the RiskDoctorVideo YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/RiskDoctorVideo).

David has advised leaders and organisations in over fifty countries around the world on how to create value from risk based on a mature approach to risk management, and his wisdom and insights are in high demand. He has also received many awards for his ground-breaking work in risk management over several decades.

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