

Tenth Man or Prudent Man? ¹

“Should the use of the Tenth Man or Prudent Man concepts be included in Risk Management planning in order to better react to supposed unpredictable incidents in project management?”

By Gareth Pugsley

This article discusses research proposed by the author as part of a doctoral program. He is seeking feedback on the concepts mentioned.

Background information and justification for the study

Prior to it happening, the risk of having a large aircraft flown into a building was thought to be so implausible that no planning was done for such an attack; that changed on 9/11.

The risk of a global virus was talked about at the World Health Organization, for one which could cause huge numbers of deaths but be like previous lethal viruses such as Ebola, whose restricted range is due to the lethality of it. That was until Coronavirus 19.

Black and grey swan incidents are evaluated within risk reviews and can be found to have been acknowledged as a possible risk, but the probability is so low that planning for such events is regarded as non-productive use of manpower. Gray Rhinos and Black elephants get the same treatment

By using the 10th man plan it could be argued that a plan for the improbable would save time, money and in some cases people with little cost of its own.

The 10th man concept in simple terms is that if a group of 10 people evaluate information concerning prospective events or expected outcomes and 9 agree that it points to one outcome, the tenth man is to take the opposite position and plan for that eventuality. This theory is an evolution from the prudent man (Shattuck, 1951) and the more recent continuation of this study (Guercio, 1996). Where present risk matrices rely on subjective scores of risk and the probability of risk accruing being based on data which is often missing vital information, the use of the 10th man system allows for the preparation of the unthinkable without impacting on the usage of the data.

A study from NATO NCIA (NATO Communications and Information Agency) recommended further study into Risk planning and suggested that it has stayed stagnant for too long. The paper proposes the further study of risks and the development of risk management planning in a more proactive rather than reactive method should be sought.

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The 10th man will not stop the butterfly from flapping its wings (Davies,2018) but it could prepare for the event if it happens.

A Montgomery, Ogden, and Boehme (2018) study attempted to show that eventualities can be accounted for by the use of a quantified matrix rather than a qualitative matrix. It poses the question that it is not the accounting for this but rather the fact that it's probable even though low risk should be planned for. Benaroch, (2018) stated that Managerial flexibility, or *real options*, embedded in information technology (IT) investments allows resolving uncertainty not only by passively waiting for new information to arrive during deferral but also by proactively deploying *mitigations and preparing for the worst*. The Classic real option models fail to account for the value of proactive uncertainty-reducing mitigations. But by waiting and doing nothing the response time to an event is not decreased and so nothing is gained.

The perception of what is a "Risk" is examined by (Slovic,1987) and how concept of interpretation effects how risk should be managed leads to the question, if the risk of an incident is stated to be so small by a matrix, does that lower the perception of it or the repercussion of it happening?

Beck, (1984) looks at this effect of protection and of the risk from its prediction and if this changes how people choose what risks are acceptable. What it does not do is examine how the risk of an event which has not happened be acceptable and does not plan for the effect of this happens. This idea of people's choice and how this could be used in fault finding of the risk happening is studied by (Zhang, Zhang, Goerlandt, Yan and Kujala., 2019) and discusses the fault tree model used in risk evaluation of ship collisions. This only looks at how the system for risk needs to account for human error and then blame, but does not look at any method dealing with the incident, when it happens, which will occur. This does return to the concept of the prudent man (Shattuck,1951) and the idea of reducing risk in order to reduce blame rather than preparing for issues and so by reducing impact with risk being negated as the part of the equation which cannot be controlled.

A proposed study into the risk management framework using qualitative risk assessment has already been undertaken by John Piper, but looks at reducing system errors in the data processing rather than looking at the cause of the error and if a different process would assist. It uses a methodology framework of qualitative data analysis which was developed by the DHS (Department of Homeland Security) and has been used on over 500 previous studies; what it does not do is test this approach first or question its validity in providing data and just takes it as proven.

Structure being built through the literature review should be developed and be as open as possible in order to collect as much data, which is at present isnot known to the study, but which could prove invaluable.

All parts of project management are still evolving and looking to continue to grow and find better ways from agile to waterfall, from Gantt into flow. Risk and how it is dealt with has become a paper exercise to show willingness but is only reviewed when all has gone

wrong, with Black Swans blamed rather than lack of vision or use. The only part of project planning where the PM looks or thinks of what might cause an incompleteness seems to get attention; so why has it become a tick exercise and not one which looks to develop methodology and practice?

The author would welcome comments or suggestion on the validity of the proposed research.

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The prudent man theory lack of updating this concept since 1996 or the original concept from the 50's

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