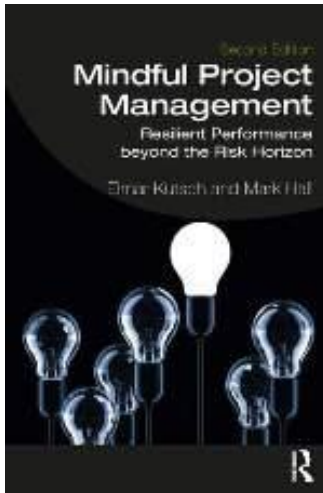


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW¹



Book Title: ***Mindful Project Management: Resilient Performance beyond the Risk Horizon***

Author: **Elmar Kutsch and Mark Hall**

Publisher: Routledge

List Price: \$42.95

Format: Softcover, 262 Pages 31 B/W Illustrations

Publication Date: 2021 ISBN: 9780367497484

Reviewer: **Maria G. Davies, PMP**

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Introduction

This is a structured read presenting a thoughtful viewpoint on epistemic uncertainty and complexity impacting nearly every project. It provides a guide to a mindset that promotes resiliency and a vantage point that spans beyond traditional project management. This book creates a safe space for out-of-the-box thinking examining projects beyond the risk horizon giving solutions with tangible application in the real world.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is broken up into 8 chapters, ascending from outlining the challenge of epistemic uncertainty and moving into the aptly titled modalities that promote resolution thinking backed up by qualitative data. Case studies from The Technology Partnership Group formed in 1987 are referenced throughout the book, where mindful project management aptitudes are considered. Nearly every chapter closes with a reflection questionnaire that could be added to any project manager's repertoire. Chapters 3 and 7 are specifically formatted, each with four main sections that discuss the 'lures' that make mindful project management difficult.

Highlights

Reading *Mindful Project Management* is like reading a well-organized term paper that isn't boring or prescriptive. Waves of validation continued to rise up throughout the

¹ How to cite this work: Davies, M. G. (2023). *Mindful Project Management*, book review, *PM World Journal*, Vol. XII, Issue III, March.

course of this read with several references that hit close to home. I was connected to a thinking process promoting behaviors easily utilized in daily practice as a project manager but also provided new tools in ensuring big picture thinking and how uncertainty may be a challenge but is also a possible opportunity. In this book project managers are empowered to exercise flexibility as a routine and ask mindful PMs to represent specific stakeholders and overall project ownership instead of merely delegating to the experts.

Highlights: What I liked!

I enjoyed the sentiment of challenging traditional project management, especially in a world where the institution of project management seems to be challenged at every turn. The skill sets outlined are referred to as different Arts within mindful project management marrying the fact that project management is both an art and science. The book encourages the identification of uncertainty and does so as a positive approach instead of something to be feared. The authors make cautionary statements to serve as a gentle reminder that commonly accepted standards may heed subpar project outcomes and ask us to go above and beyond in our thinking.

One of many cautions provided will resonate with many project managers, as it states that project estimates can easily become commitments and reminds us of the importance of utilizing outside persons that are structurally and emotionally detached from the project to assist in better decision making. While not always an easy road to go down, it is important that project managers are transparent and careful when communicating what a project can and cannot deliver.

Chapter 4, The Art of Interpreting stood out especially to me, where the question of how to make sense of epistemic uncertainty is explored. I feel one of the key components to being an effective project manager is managing key relationships and this chapter unites the management of those relationships with seeing through the many lenses stakeholders use to view uncertainty and is extremely valuable. It shares three different mindful practices; risk interdependencies, maintaining and retaining knowledge and project management software all of which are easily comprehensible for immediate application.

It is easy to perform one's role as project manager by just going through the motions, hesitant to expand beyond the parameters that are put in place boxing us in incidentally and sometimes purposefully by the environments surrounding their endeavours.

However, project managers can prove their value everyday if they take into consideration the following arts laid out in this publication:

- Noticing beyond the risk horizon
- Interpreting epistemic uncertainty with greater scrutiny
- Preparing better for epistemic uncertainties

- Containing epistemic uncertainties timely and appropriately, and how to prevent a crisis from happening
- Recovering faster and effectively when crisis occurs
- Taking careful stock that projects are being driven with 'big picture' value and there is a commitment to engaging with uncertainty with confidence.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Passionate project managers who may have forgotten or didn't know they wanted to challenge the status quo with exercises and aptitudes promoting resilience and inviting the challenges of uncertainty as opportunities to be managed. Project managers who understand that processes are constantly evolving, and the profession has growing and changing needs that require flexibility.

Conclusion

This book was the proverbial hands on my shoulders shaking me awake. In a modern-day era where project management is being morphed, pulled and stretched to suit a wide array of roles and organizational needs it is more imperative than ever to remain resilient to the many challenges that can plague a project and sharpen the tools that will heighten forward-thinking and lead to increased improvement, success, and resilience.

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.routledge.com/Mindful-Project-Management-Resilient-Performance-Beyond-the-Risk-Horizon/Kutsch-Hall/p/book/9780367497484>

About the Reviewer



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Maria G. Davies is a Project Management Professional (PMP) with experience in Technology Project Management across industries in healthcare and financial institutions. Her successes lie in the relationships she forges with her project teams

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