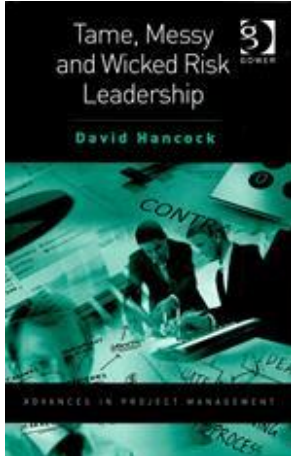


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW¹



Book Title: ***Tame, Messy and Wicked Risk Leadership***

Author: **David Hancock**

Publisher: Gower Publishing Limited

List Price: \$56.95 Format: Paperback, 114 pages

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Reviewer: **Paul L. Lagattuta, MBA, PMP, CSSGB**

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Introduction

The general attitude of most project and risk managers is that we can control the future. David Hancock, the author, states it is the most unreasonable assumption of risk management in relation to project management and risk mitigation. The author presents current and new ways of addressing risk with projects and complex systems that are realistic and practical. He proposes practical strategies on how to manage different problems and how behavior complexity with dynamic interactions making risk mitigation problematic.

Overview of Book's Structure

Part I THE BASIS FOR CURRENT PROJECT RISK METHODOLOGIES

Introduction

I. Risk and Risk Management

Part 2 THE TAME, MESSY, AND WICKED MODEL

II. Problem Types and System Complexity

III. Problem Types and Behavioural Complexity

Part 3 STRATEGIES FOR WICKED AND MESSY ENVIRONMENTS

IV. Risk Therapy – The Talking Care?

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V. Conclusion

Highlights:

David Hancock classifies problem types into Tame, Messy and Wicked Problems. He defines each category of Problems and strategies that work for each. He explains events of Challenger Disaster and the Financial Crisis of 2008.

Highlights: What I liked!

Definitions of Problems

- 1) **Tame:** straight forward, simple, and linear casual relationships; have a beginning and end.
- 2) **Messes:** puzzles we tend to resolve their complexes rather than solve them.
- 3) **Wicked Problems:** They present no definitive statement of the problem and no understanding of the problem until a solution has been developed. Complex issues based on deeply grained and fundamental beliefs, opinions and ideologies. Resolution requires buy in, understanding and common good concept by its stakeholders.
- 4) **Wicked Messes:** Occur at the boundaries of wicked problems where the solution(s) are heavily influenced by individual or group ideologies and socio-political views on subjects that are controversial.

The author spells out the different types of uncertainty and defines them.

He proposes tools and strategies dealing with different problems:

Tame: Cascade or waterfall method; systematic methods.

Messes: Interrelated or independent problem or system of problems - examine patterns of interaction among parts using cross functional groups agreeing on what overlaps.

Wicked Problems: Common good concept and social ethic with mistrust being the obstacle to overcome.

Wicked Messes: Acceptable solutions (set of outcomes) or “good enough” versus optimal solutions, shared common interests/goals.

Author expands his view of risk going into coupling (loose or tight) interactions which could mean the amount of time to respond. Tight coupling concept means less time to intervene. Loose coupling means more time.

He defines 4 types of problems to understand risk which is an illusory concept. The concept is abstract and the real world shows itself in the reality of actual harm. The book is a quick read, concise and straight forward with significant concepts and principles to think about for risk mitigation and project management.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Risk managers, project managers, process improvement managers, engineers, and public servants who are involved in complex systems of organization of activities related to an operation, business venture, or public endeavor. It can be applied in all industries related to safety and risk management issues.

Conclusion

David Hancock stresses it is critical to use the right tool(s) for the right problem. He redefines risk as dealing with the uncertainties about the decisions that other people are going to make and how we can best respond to those decisions. He says the ambiguity of risk we need to keep an open mind avoid the pursuit of fixed or predetermined results. Risk managers and project managers need to develop the ability to resolve or dissolve problems to find satisfactory outcome(s) versus an optimal solution(s).

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.routledge.com/Tame-Messy-and-Wicked-Risk-Leadership/Hancock/p/book/9780566092428>

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About the Reviewer



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Paul L. Lagattuta, MBA, PMP, CSSGB currently works for Amazon Fulfillment, Dallas, Texas. He aspires to be a project manager. “Project Navigator is responsible for the project’s position at all times.” Native of Baton Rouge, LA, earned his Bachelor of General Studies with a concentration in Business/Management from Louisiana State University. Relocated to Dallas, Texas and earned his Masters of Business Administration with a major in Business Policy & Strategy with a minor in International Management from University of Texas at Dallas. He earned his Six Sigma Green Belt Certification from Villanova University and a member of the American Society of Quality. In September 2020, he was certified by Project Management Institute as a Project Management Professional and a member of Project Management Institute Dallas Chapter. Paul has expertise in Root Cause Analysis, Employee Empowerment, Strategic Management, and Analytical Analysis.

Paul has worked for many Fortune 500 companies (Ford Motor Credit, The Bank of New York, United Parcel Service, and Amazon) as a team member that contributed to many projects that were very successful to the bottom line. As the Project Manager responsible for the Deposit Withdrawal at Custodian Migration Project involved process re-engineering that produced 60% increase in revenues, attained 95%+ customer satisfaction, and attained 95%+ execution and accuracy of dollar amounts at The Bank of New York. In less than a year, the team processed over \$100 Billion of transactions resulting in earning a prodigious company Quality Award. Paul can be contacted at 767lagattutapl@gmail.com

Editor’s note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the [PMI Dallas Chapter](#). Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published.

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