

Practical Project Risk Management; The ATOM Methodology

Second Edition, by David Hillson and Peter Simon.

Published by Management Concepts Press, 2012; ISBN 978-1-56726-366-4.

Book Review by Stacy Goff

Overall Assessment

Over the last several months this book saw more air miles than most people do in a year! We brought it along on our busy global itinerary in support of IPMA, and this book was a welcome respite from the pressures travel. Our Overall assessment: Buy this book; read it; apply it; share it throughout your organization! We gave it a rare five checkmarks!

Book Review

Most PM practitioners know of Dr. David Hillson, The Risk Doctor, and his contributions to the practice of Project Risk Management. He has been a leading advocate of managing Opportunities, as well as Threats, in project risk. His co-author, Peter Simon, seems to add complementary experience, with useful stories and examples. Together, they have provided a deep, rich, well-illustrated, and useful book for anyone who is serious about managing project risk.

The ATOM methodology, *Active Threat and Opportunity Management*, is a well-thought-out process for implementing project risk management in a project, a department, or an organization. This is not just a revision of an area from a body of knowledge; it adds meaning and insights to often-used steps, and appears to intentionally avoid heavy use of jargon. For this reader, with over 25 years in project risk management consulting, there was a sense of no-nonsense experience shown in the writing, and a few aha's throughout.

The book's structure begins with the context and purposes of project risk management, then in Part II walks through the process steps, all richly illustrated, and supported by templates and examples.

Most interesting to us was Part III, Variations on a Theme, where the authors adapt the scalable ATOM approach on small and large projects, dig deeper into Quantitative Analysis, and discuss the method's use in Programs.

Just the Appendices are worth the price of admission; the Project Sizing Tool, which by the way is on page 224, not 212, as stated in the index, differs from ours, but is a rational and useful approach for determining the extent of scaling needed for a given project.

The first edition of **Practical Project Risk Management** was published in 2007, and was useful as the text for trainers and educators. It is now out of print. The book is available for \$42 on the Amazon.com website (\$25.20 on Kindle), and is also available from other booksellers. In a unique marketing approach, the authors have [provided a website](#) with available excerpts, templates and examples, and an order form for UK and Europe, and for the USA; [the book is also available from the publisher](#).

Target Audience

Who is the audience? With the authors' easy-reading (yet dense with information) writing style, we'd say almost anyone involved with risky projects. It would even be useful for most Executives and Project Sponsors, especially if there were more Executive Summaries, rather than each chapter launching into the meat of the subject. Project and Program managers, of course; internal managers who are victims or beneficiaries of projects; your PMO; and members of your project teams. Of course, we've already mentioned educators and trainers, and their students. Strange, that with all these great candidate audiences for this book, that it still has no reviews on Amazon.com!

Editor's Note: Readers, if you would like to make a comment about this review, please [contact us!](#)

Overall Rating: 5 (out of 5):  Stacy Goff.