

## Book review

### MANAGING PROJECT UNCERTAINTY

David Cleden, Gower, Farnham, 2009, ISBN 978-0-566-08840-7, £26.50, 127 pp.

This text is one of a series on project management topics that provides a short positional guide on emerging aspects in this field. *Managing Project Uncertainty* provides a practice-based rather than a theoretical approach, so consequently it is better suited to the practitioner than the academic. Its intended readership is thus project management professionals or senior managers seeking to extend best practice within their organisation. The text is well written and, as the title suggests, focuses on project uncertainty rather than risk. As the author confirms early on in the text, 'there are many excellent texts on risk management, managing uncertainty is a much more neglected and frequently misunderstood topic'.

The book is divided into seven chapters, covering

- (a) living with uncertainty
- (b) uncertainty in project and programme plans
- (c) problem-solving strategies for managing uncertainty
- (d) knowledge-centric strategies

- (e) anticipation strategies
- (f) resilience strategies
- (g) learning strategies.

The first chapter defines uncertainty and introduces the uncertainty lifecycle around which the four strategies (knowledge-centric, anticipation, resilience and learning) are introduced and covered in the last four chapters. Chapter two places uncertainty in the context of projects and programme plans. Chapter three provides an understanding of problem solving with uncertainty.

The author provides the reader with a clear understanding of the difference between risk and uncertainty (which is frequently not made in similar texts) and also presents a range of strategies for managing uncertainty during its lifecycle. A criticism, if any, would be the requirement for more project examples to illustrate uncertainty concepts. While those provided are mostly informative and relevant, the references to yachting examples – possibly the author's passion – were an unnecessary distraction.

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