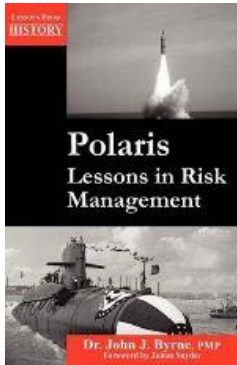


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: **Polaris Lessons in Risk Management** ¹

Author: **Dr. John J. Byrne, PMP**

Publisher: Multi-Media Publications Inc.

List Price: \$29.95

Format: Paperback, 216 pages

Publication Date: 2011

ISBN: 978-1-55489-097-2

Reviewer: **Kristyn Popejoy, PMP**

Review Date: February 2023

Introduction

The author of Polaris blended risk management project techniques taught from PMBOK methodology and real-world government project work.

Low project success rates were highlighted at the beginning to justify the importance of proper risk management and grab readers' attention.

Russia's launch of Sputnik in 1957 jumpstarted the U.S. government response with the Polaris Submarine Project, a missile and submarine project, to retaliate and maintain leading edge military capability. The author applied risk management theory to Polaris to showcase how risk management techniques were applied in the real world for a successful project.

Overview of Book's Structure

Polaris is well organized for a project manager to reference risk management techniques at a later time for application.

The major sections of the book are risk planning, risk identification, risk qualification, quantitative risk analysis, risk response, monitoring and controlling, and conclusion. Each section is broken into smaller sections that covered tools and techniques and how those were applied to the Polaris project.

Risk Planning: This chapter summarized project areas that influence risk planning including people, schedule, budget, risk tolerance, and risk reporting.

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Risk Identification: This chapter showcased several ways to identify risks to help populate a risk register. Some of the risk identification techniques covered included brainstorming, nominal group, Delphi, interviews, and Ishikawa Diagrams.

Risk Qualification: This chapter referenced three- and five-point scales including probability, impact, rating, as well as color scales with red, yellow, and green.

Quantitative Risk Analysis: This chapter showcased quantitative techniques including PERT, Monte Carlo, Expected Monetary Value, and Decision Trees.

Risk Response Planning: This chapter summarized positive and negative risks and how to develop risk responses.

Monitoring and Controlling: A very short chapter to remind the reader risk management is an active ongoing process and that needs regular review.

Conclusion: A chapter on Polaris successful project results.

Highlights: What I liked!

I enjoyed reading the project results.

The conclusion chapter summarized the results of the project and the following scope/achievements were highlighted:

- Ship Inertial Navigation System to enable submerged submarines to precisely navigate while staying underwater for months
- Live Support System to generate oxygen for the crew, enabling the submarine to stay submerged for months

The conclusion chapter also highlighted the project leadership team and key roles that undoubtedly contributed to the project success.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Polaris is a quick and interesting read for project managers and curious history civilians. New project managers can reference this book for high level risk management templates and examples.

Conclusion

Polaris was a good read to re-emphasize the importance and reason for proper risk management planning and execution. The U.S. government restructured and prioritized projects in the 1950s to keep up and exceed capabilities of other countries. Without proper risk management technique, it's unlikely the Polaris project would have been a success.

For more about this book, go to: <https://lessons-from-history.com/page/polaris-lessons-risk-management-page>

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About the Reviewer



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Kristyn Popejoy, PMP, is Director of Program Management with 16 years in the transportation and trucking industry. Her experience ranges from sales planning, procurement, supply chain, product development and project management experience.