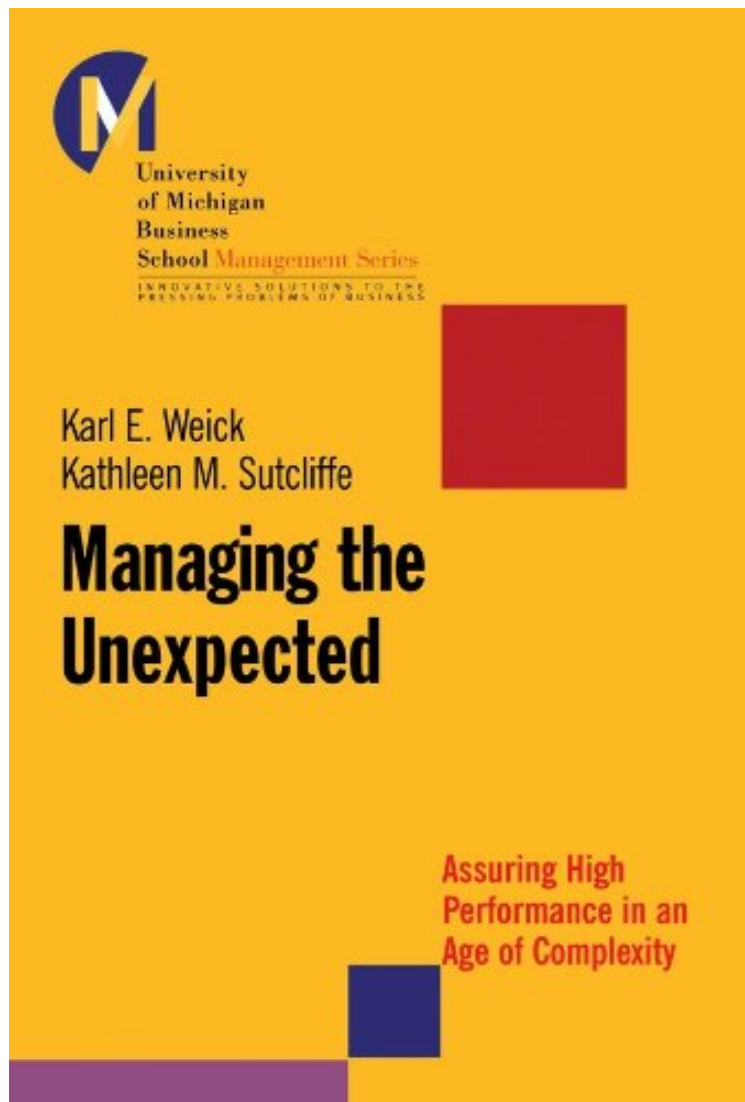


(Free pdf) Managing the Unexpected: Assuring High Performance in an Age of Complexity (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership)

Managing the Unexpected: Assuring High Performance in an Age of Complexity (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership)

Karl E. Weick, Kathleen M. Sutcliffe
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Karl E. Weick, Kathleen M. Sutcliffe : Managing the Unexpected: Assuring High Performance in an Age of Complexity (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Managing the Unexpected: Assuring High Performance in an Age of Complexity (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Loved the book, just wanted even more specificsBy E. LyonFor .01

plus shipping, this is a mandatory addition to your personal library. On the plus side, I found myself underlining and marking up this book much more than most I've read recently. There are moments where the authors spell out issues in plain language with comforting clarity. That's not always the case in Weick's other books and articles. The book is very quotable, you might say. I'm well versed in Weick's articles and other books but this book leans toward people who should be looking to learn management and leadership lessons from High Reliability Organizations. I 100% appreciated that focus. On the other side of the coin, I have two issues that would-be readers should know in advance.

- 1) The content circles back on itself quite a bit. While there is an overall arc to the book in terms of foundational concepts, then some case studies, then some takeaways, I found that the same concepts and even examples came back into the mix several times. Maybe it's my style of learning but I like call-backs in writing in limited doses. Perhaps the later editions develop in more step-wise fashion.
- 2) I would have liked the concrete advice for professionals to be even more concrete. Admittedly, there are some survey tools and some distilled lists with great advice. Nevertheless, I was hoping for just a little bit more of that practical-guide feel (e.g., how to run meetings to "surface"--love that term--bad news or unexpected data, how to have 1-2-1 conversations that treat all news as good news, even bad news, etc.). I do thoroughly appreciate the principles and lessons offered. I just wanted to take the content that extra step into how exactly these conversations can happen. Granted, it is hard to capture the in-the-moment actual conversations but I'd settle for dissections of approximate/recreated discussions. On balance, I did enjoy it and was thrilled while reading it. I plan to look at the latest edition as well.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Commitment To Resilience; Deference To Expertise By Robert I. Hedges Karl Weick and Kathleen Sutcliffe have written an eloquent and practical guide to reliability and safety that emphasizes the managerial point of view, but is also equally helpful to researchers or safety professionals. Perhaps the greatest thing the authors are able to accomplish in this book is in emphasizing the conscious mindfulness required in critical situations, and in distinguishing in observable and real-world ways the specific components of mindfulness as seen in safety-conscious High Reliability Organizations (HROs). The authors distill the essence of reliability (and safety) into five essential qualities: preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise. As a long time safety professional (with experience largely in the aviation and chemical processing industries) I couldn't agree more with the authors after reading the text associated with these five qualities. I have found that especially in larger organizations that deference to expertise is perhaps the most difficult of the five traits to be accepted in the workplace, as generally rank or seniority tend to be deferred to, particularly in a crisis. The airline industry has come a long way with the different iterations of Crew Resource Management (CRM), and of all (often unstated) the reasons that CRM has succeeded I think that deference to expertise is the single most important. I like the concept of realistic audits the authors promote, and particularly enjoyed the insight regarding the vulnerability of Singapore to Japanese attack as it came to be understood by Winston Churchill, who had a penchant for realistic self-appraisal, to wit: "I ought to have known. My advisors ought to have known and I ought to have been told, and I ought to have asked." The point is that we frequently believe what we want to believe, not because we are intellectually dishonest, but because of the human tendency to seek out information that confirms our views, and not to seek out disconfirming information. A mark of a truly reliable and safe organization (examples include airline operations, nuclear power plants, aircraft carriers, etc.) is seeking out information which points toward problem areas, rather than viewing successes as being demonstrative of the quality of institutional planning and procedures. The example concerning the Moura mine disaster on p.135 makes the point quite eloquently: "HROs assume that the system is endangered until there is conclusive proof that it is not." There could be no better single-sentence summary of the book. There are many more interesting observations in the book, the most enlightening of which can be found in chapter five. I particularly enjoyed the discussion of a "learning culture" beginning on p. 136, and find that one of their most salient observations is also one of mine from years of industry experience, that being the concept of "learned helplessness." When people attempt to bring safety issues to the fore but are quickly dismissed, they learn to keep to themselves. This is a major problem, especially in large organizations, and the advice proffered by the authors is both sound and cogent. I was absolutely delighted to see the long-overdue examination (p.140) of "de minimus error" in which context is examined as it relates to seemingly unconnected small events. In this situation, people frequently seek out separate, small reasons for each deviation, ignoring the accumulating evidence that there is actually one large problem responsible for all the disparate events. Though the authors did not note it as an example, people familiar with the Apollo 13 accident will no doubt realize how the controllers had to fight off this kind of error willfully. (I think that Apollo-era NASA was an excellent example of an HRO.) There are many more issues that Weick and Sutcliffe bring to the forefront in this book, from intelligent rule-making, to flexibility of response. My advice to any manager or safety professional is to put this book at the top of your reading list. It is easy to read, easy to digest, comprehensive in scope, yet universally applicable across industries. Even if you are not involved in an industry like nuclear power or aviation where large issues of life and death are literally in your domain, this is still mandatory reading. Any business can learn from the examples cited (which range from a merger-induced railroad meltdown at the "bad" end of the reliability scale, to nuclear-powered aircraft carrier operations at the "good" end of the reliability scale.) I highly recommend this book to managers, safety professionals, researchers, and anyone else interested in becoming more informed about reliability

and organizational safety. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good luck! By Cliente Kindle This book is to be read by anyone really interested about how organizations work. The main point could be explained in a single sentence: We can get valuable lessons if we pay attention to organizations who work in high risk and unpredictable environments. This is my own view and, actually, I tried to show this using aviation as a kind of learning field. That is why I hope the authors will be lucky. My own experience was unsuccessful and that itself shows that the authors are right. When I started to get conclusions from aviation to business management, I found that the more interested people came precisely from aviation. I'm afraid the authors could suffer the same experience and people interested in their concepts could come from air carriers, nuclear-powered plants and some other examples they use. The authors could be three or four steps in advance of the present situation in business management. They try to extract the right lessons from other fields. However, they would not be surprised if their intent "bounces back" and it is picked-up precisely from the fields that they try to show as examples, not from business management.

"Of all the people Tom and I quoted in *In Search of Excellence* Karl Weick was hands down the most influential. As a researcher and thought leader on matters organizational and strategic, Karl gets an eleven on my scale of one to ten. Now Weick and Sutcliffe have written on a subject they have been researching for a very long time: excellence in responding to crisis in organizational settings that are inherently complex and dangerous. The differences they find between these organizations and the ones that, well, kill people have much to teach us all, even those of us operating in less dangerous settings. I loved this book, even the footnotes." --Bob Waterman, coauthor, *In Search of Excellence*

"The cost of unpleasant surprises in business is escalating. Missed earnings or late and unsafe products or services, for example, can result in disastrous consequences for a company and its management . . . Weick and Sutcliffe offer five sound organizational principles for building a company that delivers what it promises. This is an exceptionally well written and practical book that can ensure your company's future." --Michael Beer, Cahners-Rabb Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School

"For anyone who wants a better understanding of how organizations and leaders can cope with and master ambiguity, uncertainty, and change, this is the first and best book to go to." --Warren Bennis, University Professor and Distinguished Professor of Business Administration, University of Southern California Marshall School of Business, and coauthor, *Geeks and Geezers*

"Breaks important new ground in organization theory and provides extremely relevant insights for leaders who want to create high performance cultures that are also truly adaptable and resilient. Written in a captivating style, filled with evocative examples and pragmatic guidelines, this book should be mandatory reading for both theorist and practitioner alike." --John Seely Brown, former director Xerox Palo Alto Research Center and coauthor, *The Social Life of Information*, HBSP 2000

"A must read for managers and others in organizations with low tolerance for error. Weick and Sutcliffe's book is filled with recipes for success." --Karlene H. Roberts, professor, Walter A. Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley

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"...it's worth reading..." (Professional Manager, January 2002)

From the Inside Flap One of the great challenges any business or organization can face is how to deal with the unexpected. While traditional managerial practices such as planning are designed to manage unexpected threats, they often make things worse. How do you organize for high performance in a setting where the potential for error and disaster is overwhelming? In this book, the ninth in the

University of Michigan Business School Management Series, Karl Weick and Kathleen Sutcliffe look to high reliability organizations (HROs)? aircraft carriers, nuclear power plants, fire-fighting crews, and others—for the answer. HROs have developed ways of acting that provide a template for all organizations that want to be more reliable in managing the unexpected. *Managing the Unexpected* shows executives and upper level managers how to manage under trying conditions. The authors reveal how HROs create a collective state of mindfulness that produces an enhanced ability to discover and correct errors before they escalate into a crisis. Through a discussion of this principle and the practices that can be used to apply it, the authors show how to anticipate and respond to threats with flexibility rather than rigidity. Their practical, solutions-oriented approach includes numerous case studies demonstrating "mindful" practices and enables readers to assess and implement mindfulness in their own organizations.

THE AUTHORS Karl E. Weick is the Rensis Likert Collegiate Professor of Organizational Behavior and Psychology and professor of psychology at the University of Michigan Business School. His book, *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (1979), was designated by James Collins in *Inc.* magazine as one of the nine best business books ever written. Kathleen M. Sutcliffe is assistant professor of organizational behavior and human resource management at the University of Michigan Business School. She has published numerous articles on cognitive and experiential diversity in top management teams and on organizational performance.

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