

## ABOUT THE BOOK

with

**Tom DeMarco and  
Timothy Lister**

authors of

**Waltzing with Bears:  
Managing Risk on Software Projects**

ISBN: 0-932633-60-9 ©2003

208 pages softcover \$33.95 ppd.



**DHQ:** *More than ten years passed before you released the second edition of Peopleware, adding eight chapters and making it larger by one third. But your new book, Waltzing with Bears, took much less time. How did you do it?*

**TRL:** Well, it's true that *Waltzing with Bears* is coming out relatively soon after the second edition of *Peopleware*, but we knew we wanted to write a book on risk management about seven years ago. I guess we suffer through long gestation periods for our books. We need to read about our topic, lecture about it, talk to people in our industry about it, and most of all see it in action in organizations in order to be ready to write.

**TDM:** There is something else here, too: People have a lot of trouble with the concept of risk. It's abstract, inherently counterintuitive, and often something that you'd prefer not to think about. The subject was just a lot harder than anything we'd had to present before. Ironically, it's not all that difficult to *do* risk management, but it is hard to talk and write about it in a way that makes sense and doesn't cause people's eyes to roll up into their heads.

**DHQ:** *The book's title, Waltzing with Bears, is rather intriguing.*

**TDM:** The title comes from Dr. Seuss (a source of wisdom for all managers), specifically from *The Cat in the Hat Songbook*.

**TRL:** Tom and I were lecturing on risk management, and when we lecture, we like to play some music before each session, to get everyone back in their seats. Tom had a CD with a recording of "Waltzing with Bears." I loved it. In the song, there's an uncle who sneaks out of the house on Friday nights to go waltzing with bears—the idea charmed me. The uncle is taking risks to do something he values, and waltzing with bears in itself is risky. Software efforts are full of risks, and we jump into them in order to deliver something satisfying and valuable. When we finally got down to the task of naming our book, we wanted a title with some zip to it. I remembered "Waltzing with Bears," and Tom thought it was a perfect match.

**DHQ:** *One of the key points you make in Waltzing is that a lack of risk in a project indicates a lack of any real potential benefit.*

**Why do you think so many organizations refuse to accept this?**

**TRL:** I think of it the other way; most organizations refuse to recognize that their projects are full of risk. They so desperately want to feel that they are in complete control of their projects that

(continued on page 2)

## Greetings

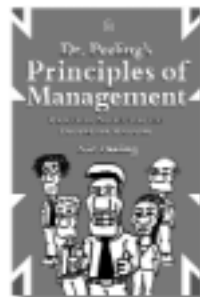
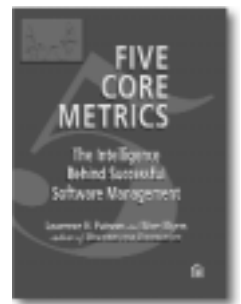
We have three brand-new books for your summer reading list: *Waltzing with Bears: Managing Risk on Software Projects*, by Tom DeMarco and Timothy Lister; *Five Core Metrics: The Intelligence Behind Successful Software Management*, by Lawrence H. Putnam and Ware Myers; and *Dr. Peeling's Principles of Management: Practical Advice for the Front-Line Manager*, by Nic Peeling. See below and page 7.

### Peopleware Authors Go Waltzing with Bears

Tom DeMarco and Timothy Lister follow up the blockbuster second edition of *Peopleware* with a new book on risk management: *Waltzing with Bears: Managing Risk on Software Projects*. The authors argue that if a project doesn't have risk, it isn't worth doing at all. See this page for an interview with the authors.

### Start with Five Software Metrics

Acclaimed collaborators Lawrence H. Putnam and Ware Myers have just released *Five Core Metrics: The Intelligence Behind Successful Software Management*. Drawing on the Unified Process and new findings from QSM's extensive metrics database of 6,300 software projects, the authors demonstrate how to control software projects with five core metrics—Time, Effort, Size, Reliability, and Process Productivity. See page 3 for an excerpt.



### Hard-Won Lessons on Moving Into Management

When software researcher Nic Peeling moved into management, he had to train himself. His new book, *Dr. Peeling's Principles of Management*, captures all the candid, eye-opening advice he wishes someone had given him. He offers practical, implementable insights on leadership, office politics, and much more. See page 4 for an excerpt.

### Communication Gaps Wins

Naomi Karten's *Communication Gaps and How to Close Them* was selected as one of the best books of 2002 by the *Journal of Object Technology*. Reviewer Charles Ashbacher writes, "This is a book that will improve all processes at the basic level, by raising the quality of communication between humans." Congratulations, Naomi!

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**Waltzing with Bears:**  
**Managing Risk on Software Projects**  
 by Tom DeMarco and Timothy Lister  
 ISBN: 0-932633-60-9 ©2003  
 208 pages softcover \$33.95 postpaid

Any software project that’s worth starting will be vulnerable to risk. Since greater risks bring greater rewards, a company that runs away from risk will soon find itself lagging behind its more adventurous competition.

By ignoring the threat of negative outcomes—in the name of positive thinking or a Can-Do attitude—software managers drive their organizations into the ground.

In *Waltzing with Bears*, Tom DeMarco and Timothy Lister—the best-selling authors of *Peopleware*—show readers how to identify and embrace worthwhile risks. Developers are then set free to push the limits.

*Waltzing with Bears* is your guide to mitigating the risks—before they turn into problems.

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Tom DeMarco and Timothy Lister are long-time colleagues as principals of the Atlantic Systems Guild ([www.sys temsguild.com](http://www.sys temsguild.com)). Other Dorset House collaborations of theirs include *Peopleware*, *Productive Teams*, and *Software State-of-the-Art*.

Read More About This Book at  
[www.dorsethouse.com/books/waltz.html](http://www.dorsethouse.com/books/waltz.html)

**About the Book** (continued from page 1)

they never can ask themselves what can go wrong. Nowadays, all projects that can deliver value are full of risk, and that is one of the dominant reasons why we tend to run over-schedule and over-budget. The projects have not taken into account the risks that may turn into problems.

**TDM:** For me, the villain here is Management By Objectives. MBO makes a big deal about getting successes on the board, having them recorded and chalked up against your name. The idea that some “successes” are worth pennies while others are worth millions of dollars is way too tough a nuance for MBO managers. In an MBO company, a project with a high likelihood of success and zero benefits looks like a godsend.

**DHQ:** *How can managers begin to cultivate a culture of risk-taking and risk mitigation in their organizations?*

**TDM:** By making risk-taking an explicit part of the organizational goal set.

**TRL:** By dealing with risk from the start. By posting the risk list for all to see. By demanding that there be a contingency fund for the project that is greater than \$0.00. By making it clear that the risks are inherent and are not the result of some inadequacy.

**DHQ:** *In Waltzing, you say that “Risk management is not the same as worrying about your project.” What is it, then?*

**TDM:** The lovely quote that “risk management is not the same as worrying about your project” comes from Tim. The first time I heard him say it, I whooped. There is something just so right about that, so familiar. Managers who are deeply worried about their projects just assume that they therefore ought to get full credit for doing risk management, even though they haven’t got a clue what it entails.

**TRL:** Risk management is about the assessment of problems in their potential state, before they materialize. It is then the determination whether to pay money at the risk state to lower that risk’s probability and/or impact, or whether to wait and deal with it if it becomes an actual problem. Risk management is about leveraging problems by deciding whether to deal with them before they occur.

**DHQ:** *You use the example of online trading to illustrate the benefits of risk-taking. What other new technologies or*

*services would companies be remiss to pass up merely because of the risks involved?*

**TRL:** You can’t answer this in the abstract because how much risk you should be willing to take has to do with how much reward (value) you’ll gain if you succeed. So, one company might get huge benefit out of looking at a newer technology like instant messaging, while another may be smart to let that technology stabilize before committing to it.

**TDM:** Tim’s answer here is technically correct, but we can point to a few areas of technical advance that most companies should be exploring aggressively right now. As Tim says, the advantage they’re likely to be able to realize from them will vary from case to case. But here are a few new fields that you’d be crazy to run away from: Web services, telepresence, multiprocessing (networks of linked plain-vanilla computers focused on a single task, such as the architecture implemented by Google to implement its search engine), and e-commerce. These are the technologies that will remake the next decade. E-commerce got a bad name at the end of the bubble, but those companies that got an early jump on it are today in the cat-bird seat.

**DHQ:** *As you point out in Waltzing, a team that presents a product early could find itself accused of gaming the schedule. Why is this?*

**TRL:** Here’s our hypothesis. We have never gotten very good at estimating because our patrons have never really valued it. We have had projects that “had to be done, no matter what, by such-and-such date.” When we have been in these situations, the deadline was a goal, not an estimate. The only way to break out of this is to break out the project goals from the project estimates. Both are useful; they are never the same.

**TDM:** I’m a bit more optimistic than Tim. I think we *have* finally gotten good at estimating. The software industry has. However, the basic skills of good estimating are not uniform across the field. The companies that have done their homework (metrics, estimating teams, informed management) are miles ahead of the rest.

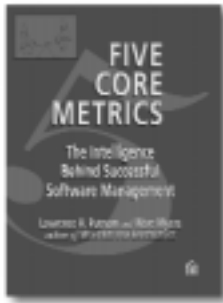
**DHQ:** *Thank you!*

There’s More to This Interview  
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## DHQ Excerpt

# Ten Great Truths

by Lawrence H. Putnam  
and Ware Myers



Adapted from Chapter 22 of  
**Five Core Metrics:  
The Intelligence Behind  
Successful Software Management**

ISBN: 0-932633-55-2 ©2003  
328 pages softcover \$49.95 postpaid

The truth is, everyone has had trouble with software development. The sad truth behind this first truth is that we, as individuals, as managers, as organizations, have had trouble facing up to this truth. In recent years, however, many organizations are overcoming these troubles. Others are not yet so successful. Successful organizations have found that it is the intelligence behind successful software management that makes the difference. The first step toward identifying that intelligence rests on the effective application of simple metrics to manage software development.

## The Five Great Truths About Metrics

**1** There must be *an accurate way* to represent in metric terms what goes on in software development:

- Establish a measure of functionality beforehand.
- Establish a measure of the productivity of your software process.
- From this functionality, given this productivity, estimate time, effort, and defect rate.

The feature that distinguishes the accurate way from other ways is the realization that time and effort are

*multiplicatively* intertwined; they are interdependent; they cannot, with accuracy, be planned independently of each other. Every estimate is a time-effort pair, an effort with an associated time.

**2** We need this accurate way to underpin estimating, bidding, project control, and the relations between client and developer or client and outsourcer.

**3** We need this accurate way, not only for these business reasons, but because it is the only way to provide development people in appropriate numbers (effort) with enough time (schedule) to do the work at the quality and reliability levels needed by the client's application.

**4** We need this accurate way to provide a satisfactory working situation. The accurate way is the only way to keep staff around long enough to grow a superior organization.

**5** We need this accurate way to measure a software organization's competitive standing. This measure—process productivity—tells management and staff not only that they are on the right track for improving their organization, but also that they can endure for the substantial time it takes to grow a superior organization.

## The Five Great Truths About Software Development

Metric truths are of great importance, but their further consequence is to make possible the realization of the five great truths about the field of software development as a whole.

**1** There must be *an activity* to which to apply the five core metrics. That activity is the *process*. A software organization must have a way of doing its work. That way may be informal or it may be as concrete as the Unified Process. At the very least, it has to be repeatable, if estimates of time, effort, and process productivity are to have any meaning.

**2** There must be some *standards*, and there have been—a lot of them, from programming languages to text editors. In recent years, the standards idea has moved on to the Unified Process and the Unified Modeling Language.

**3** There must be *reuse* of previously developed software to reduce the effort and time needed to

develop the new product. There is considerable reuse already, under the general name component-based development. The preexistence of process and standards is a prerequisite to more extensive reuse.

**4** There must be *software tools* to take over the routine tasks of software development. For example, there is no reason to make a developer hand-draw the rectangles, ovals, lines, arrowheads, and other features of UML when he or she can command a software tool to do so. Note, however, that first the modeling features have to be standardized before developing and marketing the tool becomes economical. As Jacobson, Booch, and Rumbaugh have noted, "Successful development of process automation (tools) cannot be achieved without the parallel development of the process framework in which the tools are to function."<sup>1</sup>

**5** There must be a means of bringing to the developer the *procedural knowledge* he or she needs to accomplish the task immediately at hand. This need arises out of the reality that the volume of knowledge applicable to software development is now overwhelming, with one example alone amounting to more than 20,000 pages. Mere humans need an automated tool to guide them to what they need when they need it. ■

<sup>1</sup>Ivar Jacobson, Grady Booch, and James Rumbaugh, *The Unified Software Development Process* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1999), p. 29.

## About the Authors

**L**arry Putnam, Sr., and Ware Myers have written three previous books and numerous articles together over many years. Mr. Putnam, a leading expert in the software estimation and management field, is the president of Quantitative Software Management, a software management consulting firm based in McLean, Virginia.

**W**are Myers is an independent consultant and a long-time contributing editor to *IEEE Computer* and *IEEE Software*. His current interests include the application of metrics to software planning, estimating, bidding, and project control.

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**DHQ Excerpt**

# Why Is Leadership So Frightening?

by Nic Peeling

Adapted from Chapter 3 of  
**Dr. Peeling's Principles of Management**

ISBN: 0-932633-54-4 ©2003  
288 pages softcover \$35.95 postpaid

**W**hat is leadership? Why is it so frightening? I have given both questions considerable thought over the years since I took my first job as a manager. Before I attempt even a preliminary definition of leadership, we need to understand some of the reasons why many new managers find the idea of leadership so scary:

- They worry that they cannot live up to the image of leadership that has been created by the media.
- They fear having responsibility for the long-term survival of the team.
- They panic at having to lead people who are older and more experienced than themselves.

## About the Author



Nic Peeling is an award-winning software researcher at QinetiQ, originally part of the U.K. Ministry of Defence and now one of Europe's largest science and technology research organizations. He holds

a doctorate in computing from Oxford and made the move from research to management in 1989. He now combines his management role with consultancy, focusing on technical, marketing, and management issues and developing technical briefings for the Ministry of Defence and others. To learn more, visit [www.drpeeling.com](http://www.drpeeling.com).

- They shrink at the idea of exercising authority and do not wish to be seen by the team as an authority figure.

By looking closely at leadership, I hope to take some of the fear out of the subject. The sections that follow describe the qualities of a good leader and debunk many of the damaging myths about leadership.

### What Is Leadership?

Leadership, at its simplest, occurs when a person sets the direction and goals for a group of people and leads members of the group toward those goals. When the leader is a front-line manager, the group being lead is that manager's team. In order to set goals and propel people toward them, a leader needs to create a vision of the future, and to have the respect and trust of the team so that its members will willingly follow him or her to achieve that vision.

**Vision** is a creative thing, but the essential bedrock on which your vision must be built is an understanding of the basics of your business. As leader, you must have answers to such questions as: Who are the team's customers? What does your team do that is valued by those customers? How do your customers and your organization measure the performance of your team?

**Respect** comes to a person who gets things done. Actions speak louder than words, and achievement speaks louder than actions. People respect competence and professionalism in a leader. **Trust** comes to a person who is honest and open, whose actions match his or her words, and whose willingness to face difficult issues never flags.

A leader must be endowed with vision, respect, and trust—all lofty attributes—but a leader must also be ready to perform the many different roles associated with front-line management. For example, the leader is the person who makes the tough decisions. The leader creates a community, or culture, within the team. The leader creates the organization within that community and decides who has authority within the team. The leader assures the welfare of the staff. The leader provides the

interface between the team and the rest of the organization. The leader is the figurehead of the team.

While reviewing the principles of good leadership can make the leader role less frightening, it's also helpful to debunk the many myths associated with leadership.

### Leadership Myths Exposed

The first common misconception about leadership is that leaders must "look the part." The notion that leaders should be in the mould of the comic book hero with the square jaw, steady gaze, and firm handshake, is complete nonsense. The Golden Rule of Management tells you that leadership is about what you do and is not about appearances.

It is often assumed that leaders must have charisma. Leaders with charismatic personalities certainly have many advantages over people with less flamboyant characters, but if you are such a person, you should be aware of a range of faults that charismatic leaders are prone to have:

- Charismatic leaders tend to create personality cults. Teams can become over-dependent on the leader, the result of which is often harmful if the leader were to leave.
- Charismatic leaders are often poor at delegating.
- Charismatic leaders are often poor listeners; they frequently spend all their time talking.
- Charismatic leaders often have poor self-awareness and hence are not aware of their limitations.
- Charismatic leaders often depend on their personalities to get them out of trouble, so they are not careful enough to avoid getting into trouble.
- Charismatic leaders are often workaholics who eventually get tired and make too many mistakes.

Another common myth is that leaders need to rely on the authority given to them by the organization. Sure, as the boss, you can order people to do things; but if you are a good leader, you should seldom have to issue a direct order. If you are doing your job properly, your team should want to follow you.

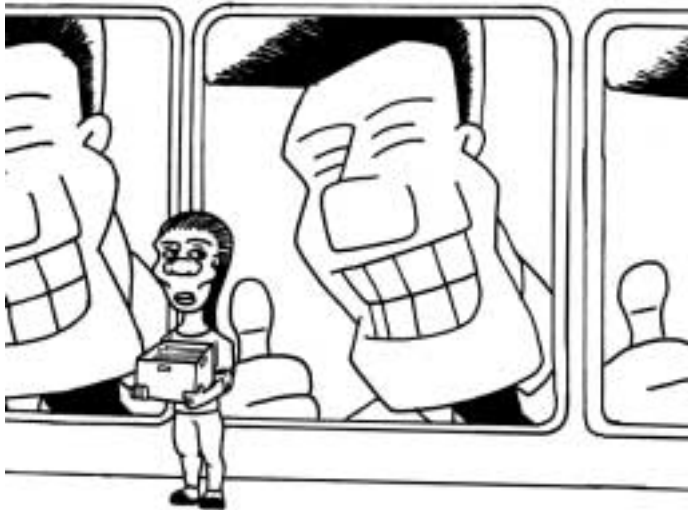
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Why Is Leadership So Frightening? (continued from page 4)

A common failing of authoritarian leaders is that they tend to behave in ways that ensure that nothing is allowed to undermine their authority. Typical examples of how authoritarian leaders behave follow:

- They don't seek advice from the team.
- They don't change their mind or reverse a decision even when it becomes clear that they are wrong.
- They delegate very little in order to avoid diluting their power, and they undermine anyone with delegated authority.
- They intentionally recruit inferior staff members who will never become a threat.
- They use fear, uncertainty, and divide-and-conquer strategies as management techniques to discourage threats to their authority.

There are dozens more characteristics that I could add to the above, but I will stop at five and leave completion of the list as an exercise for the reader. The brief list parodies characteristics common to authoritarian leaders, but I think it is worth including because so many of us have a small part of our personality that worries about someone challenging our authority. Although it is unlikely that any authoritarian leaders would ever want to read this book, the parody helps the rest of us see our borderline behavior for what it is. Whenever we hear a quiet, insidious voice encouraging us to not recruit the outstanding candidate or to not reverse a poor decision, we may recall the message and, hopefully, behave better for it. ■



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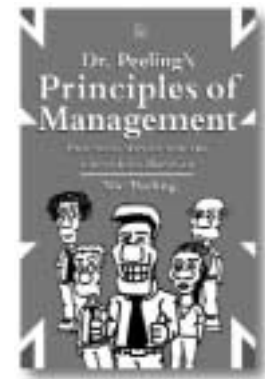
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## Author News

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**Naomi Karten:** In Boston (9/16–18), presents, "Managing Customer Expectations," and "How to Gather Useful, Usable Feedback from Customers," at the Software Development Best Practices Conference ([www.sdexpo.com](http://www.sdexpo.com)). In Phoenix (11/3–5), presents, "Building Writing Skills and Confidence: A Writing Workshop," "Delivering Presentations with Confidence and Competence," "Levity, Laughter, and Light-Heartedness: Humor During Serious Times," "Why Service Level Agreements Fail, and How to Make Yours Succeed," at the Amplifying Your Effectiveness (AYE) Conference.

Visit [www.nkarten.com](http://www.nkarten.com)

**Johanna Rothman:** In Dallas (10/7–8), keynotes, "Shattering the Myth of the Inadequate Tester," at 13th International Conference on Software Quality. In San Jose, Calif. (10/27–31), keynotes, "Shattering the Myth of the Inadequate Tester," at StarWest. In Phoenix (11/2–6), presents, "Creating a Marketing Plan for Your Consulting Business," "Seeing You in the System," "Delivering Presentations with Confidence and Competence," at the Amplifying Your Effectiveness (AYE) Conference.

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by JOHANNA ROTHMAN

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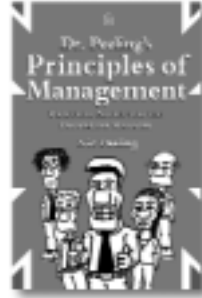
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