

## *Book Review*

# Adrenaline Junkies and Template Zombies: Understanding Patterns of Project Behavior

by Tom Demarco et. al. Dorset House Publishing, New York, NY, 2008. 248 pp., \$35.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-932633-67-5.

**Reviewed by Charles Ashbacher**, Charles Ashbacher Technologies, Hiawatha, IA, USA, [cashbacher@yahoo.com](mailto:cashbacher@yahoo.com)

I have been a fan of Tom DeMarco and Tim Lister for some time, their insights into the right way to manage information technology (IT) projects could be entitled, “The Way It Should Be Done.” In this book, they are joined by their colleagues in the Atlantic Systems Guild to describe 86 project patterns, some of which you would enjoy being used to describe how you do things and others that you would avoid if you could. The descriptions are generally short, less than three pages and include a figure for emphasis.

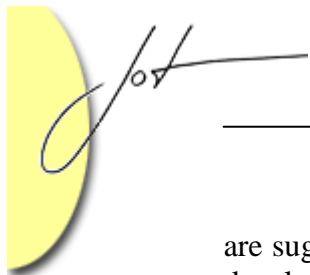
Unless you have been blessed to a level that no one to my knowledge has ever been or you have never worked, then there will be patterns in this book that will cause your head to nod in agreement. Using colorful language on occasion and consistent blunt talk, the authors tell it straight, providing advice that pulls the façade off of some of the common notions of what makes a project work. Some of the titles of the patterns are:

- Project slut
- Rattle Yer Dags
- One Throat to Choke
- The Too Quiet Office
- Everyone Wears Clothes for a Reason
- What Smell?
- Sanctity of the Half-Baked Idea
- Seelenverwandtschaft

The authors are big advocates of creatively goofing off, arguing forcefully that the most productive teams are those that do things together that are anything but work related. Eating together, attending a movie, playing together in a band and a regular poker night

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are suggested ways to build cohesion and a sense of respect between the members of the development team. They also insist that some of these things should be done on company time.

The group is also strongly opposed to strict rigidity of any form, believing that a bit of chaos, animated discussion with disagreement and respectful truth telling are all signs of an efficient and productive team. In the “Miss Manners” pattern, they point out that extreme civility is misdirected and results in deep mediocrity. Everyone is subject to generating the occasional error or bad idea and if it is accepted rather than rejected for fear of hurting feelings, everyone suffers.

This past year, I authored a new major and minor program in Management Information Systems (MIS) for the college where I teach. Two of the upper level classes in the program involve the study of the proper ways to manage IT projects. This book will be used as a supplementary text when I teach those courses.