



Middle Office

By Philip Lawton

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- *Middle Office: Managing Financial Institutions in Turbulent Times*—Philip Lawton’s new book for bankers and investment professionals—contains short, readable essays on key concepts and current issues in leadership, ethics, and training; regulatory compliance; risk management; and investment performance measurement. The writing style is fluent, and there are footnotes for readers who wish to consult sources or learn more about particular topics. The book is brought to life by John Rubino’s photographs of the steel sculptures in his powerful series, “Anatomy of a Calamity.”
- **WHAT THIS BOOK COVERS**
- *Middle Office* contains an Introduction and 68 short articles. Here are highlights of the contents:
 - Part One: Leadership, Ethics, and Training addresses such topics as complexity leadership theory; employee loyalty; on-the-job training; organizational silos; and the volunteer’s dilemma.
 - Part Two: Regulatory Compliance considers principles-based regulation; the employment impact of securities regulations; and international regulators’ approaches to leverage, intraday liquidity, credit rating agencies, and OTC derivatives.
 - Part Three: Risk Management tackles such topics as the distinction between risk and uncertainty; reputational risk; intraday liquidity risk; causal dependence; and managing central counterparty credit risk.
 - Part Four: Performance Measurement and Client Reporting discusses fair value accounting and credit valuation adjustments; after-tax performance measurement; benchmark management; and the GIPS® standards for alternative investments.
- **WHO SHOULD READ IT**
- *Middle Office* is written for compliance officers, risk managers, and the heads of investment performance measurement groups at banks and investment management organizations. However, because this book accurately explains technical concepts and issues in plain language, board members and C-suite

executives—as well as financial journalists—will also find it valuable. In addition, regulators will find that the author does not sacrifice insightfulness for brevity in discussing issues they are vitally concerned about, such as the elements of sound internal risk management programs at financial institutions.

• EXCERPT FROM THE INTRODUCTION

- “Every age has its problems, but managing banks, investment firms, and broker-dealers may never have been more challenging. The short essays collected here represent an unsystematic attempt to clarify some of the issues and, occasionally, to indicate lines of thought that seem promising.
- The present volume contains most of the posts on leadership, regulatory compliance, risk management, and investment performance measurement that have appeared to date in a WordPress blog called, simply, *Middle Office*. During the period in which these pieces were composed, we witnessed a series of untoward and rather unnerving events at well-known financial institutions: MF Global failed and clients’ funds went missing; a rogue trader was found out at UBS; JPMorgan Chase sustained huge losses in derivatives; Barclays and others were accused of falsifying LIBOR; Peregrine Financial entered bankruptcy amid charges of fraud; HSBC allegedly laundered money for drug cartels and dealt with firms linked to terrorism; and Knight Capital lost control of a high-frequency trading algorithm.
- Such occurrences—for the most part ethical lapses and operational breakdowns—raise pressing questions for regulators, boards, and senior management....”

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