



Beginners Guide to Computer Assisted Trading (2000)

Peter Alexander

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Peter Alexander provides valuable insight, information, advice and guidance to the new or aspiring trader in either stocks or commodities.

The title strikes me as misleading. Although substantial coverage is devoted to issues relevant to trading by computer, the book also covers many other topics which the new trader will find helpful as well. A more apt title might have been The Complete Guide to Issues of Concern to the New Trader.

In the area of computer matters, the author gives advice on the choice of computer hardware and operating systems. He describes several popular charting software programs, with guidance provided on the features he would be certain were included in the package one chooses. He discusses various data vendors and data formats, and the importance of clean data.

Various markets in which the new trader may choose to participate are discussed. Their risk and reward characteristics and other considerations relevant to deciding which market is best suited to the individual are covered thoroughly. The different types of orders that may be used in various markets and exchanges are explained and copious examples provided.

Important issues covered include minimum price fluctuations, commission costs, liquidity, volatility, markets (and exchanges) to avoid, and the relative pros and cons of daytrading versus position trading.

The author provides a basic education on the various types of price charting, such as bar charts, candlesticks, and point and figure charts. In the area of computerized technical indicators, he provides a concise, easy to understand explanation of most major indicators, covering their calculation, interpretation, and their use in trading decisions. The various chart formations and patterns are discussed briefly, such as head and shoulders, triangles, flags and the like.

One of the chief contributions of the book is its lucid and thorough explanation of the development, backtesting and implementation of trading systems. Several detailed case studies illustrate the principles the beginner needs to know to pursue creating his own system.

Sound investment principles are emphasized through the book, such as the importance of sound money management principles and the role of discipline. Comprehensive glossaries of technical analysis terms, financial terms, and other useful information are provided.

The author's style of writing is free flowing, interesting, and easy to understand. His colorful phrases and metaphors are, in places, reminiscent of Elder's Trading for a Living. This is a great book for new traders searching for guidance and useful information in the subject areas covered.

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