



# The Role of the Government Executive throughout the Life Cycle of Large, Complex Transformation Projects

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# Agenda

- Executive Leadership Lessons Learned
- The Top Fives
- Project Management Phases



# Leadership Lessons Learned in Project Management

Through a Massive Failure and Some Big Successes

## A Story of Child Support

- Five days of depositions and 5 days of testimony
- One of the largest IT failures in California history
- Ungovernable
- Inconsistent leadership
- Pushed distributed technologies to the limit
- Spiraled into oversight
- Lack of user acceptance



# Project Management is Hard

These studies indicate that serious project management problems exist across a broad cross section of industries

- McKinsey – 17% of large IT projects go so badly that they can threaten the very existence of the company. On average, large IT projects run 45% over budget and 7% over time while delivering 56% less value than predicted
- Center for Project Management – Successful Projects 40%; Challenged Projects 30%; Failed Projects 30%
- IBM – Only 40% of projects meet schedule
- Best organizations are 10 times more successful
- Most projects do not fail because of technical integration issues they fail because of “soft” issues



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# Why are Government Projects so Hard?

Solving a problem that you've had for years, many of the easier things have been undertaken

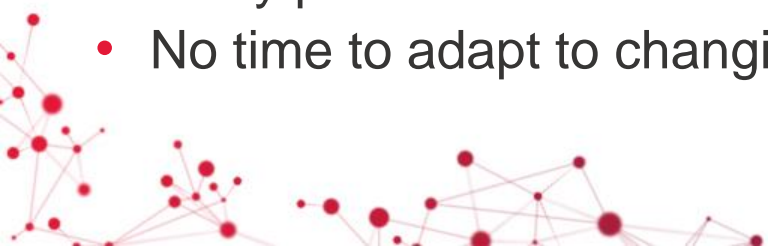
- Reengineering of business processes
- Asking people to rethink how they process work takes up to 2 years
- Move to enterprise systems with their complexities

New teams working together

- Vendor and State, State IT and Program, State and County
- New business roles for many people
- Levels of trust

Time-boxed

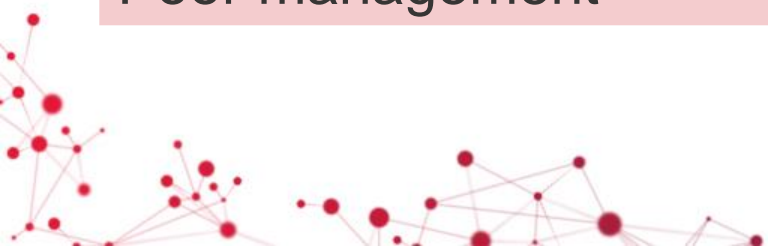
- Many parallel activities
- No time to adapt to changing business needs



# Top Reasons for Failed Projects

## Top Reasons

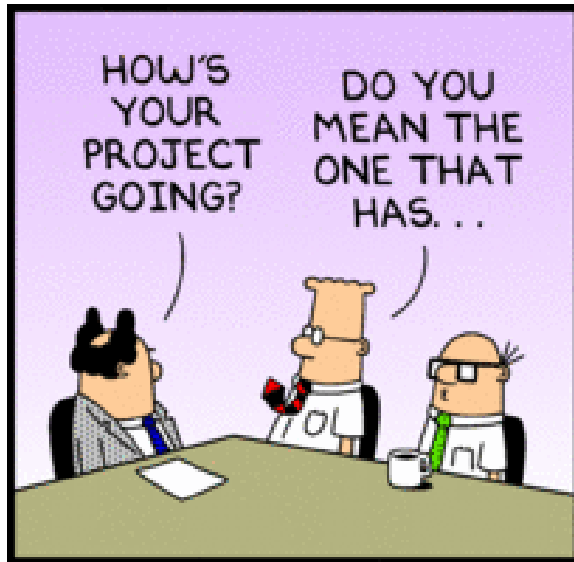
Vision not widely accepted	Inadequate Governance
Organization not ready for change	Lack of user acceptance
Lack of Management/Sponsor commitment	Insufficient budget and what money there is not invested correctly
Stakeholder conflict	Competing requirements
Inadequate or vague requirements	Technical integration failures
Unrealistic timeframes	Poor communications
Poor management	Overruns of schedule and cost



# Signals of Project Failure

- Schedule delays push one or more major milestones
- Significant data quality issues surface when new functionality is implemented
- Communications patterns change: “They” not “We”
- Governance is not a priority of the members
- Client/vendor relationship is deteriorating
- Look to the contract more often
- Project processes are not under control
- High turnover of key staff and/or high volume of staff vacancies
- IV&V or IPOC findings and project issues/risks remain open for extended periods

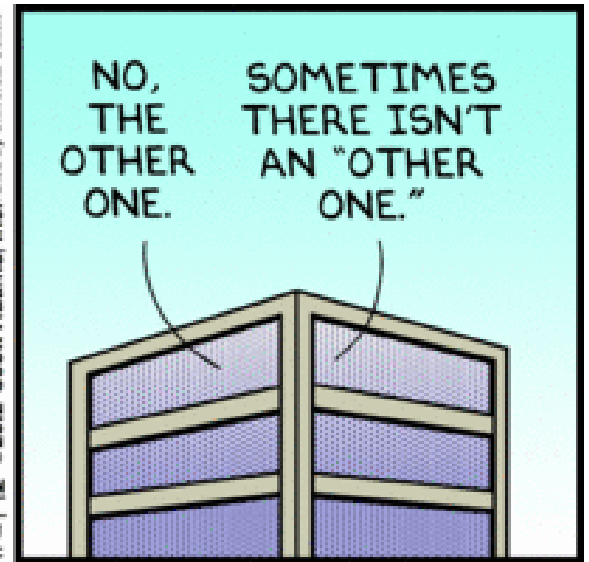




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# Executive Leader Sponsor Role

- The **Executive Sponsor** is the manager with demonstrable interest in the outcome of the project
- Sponsor should be the highest-ranking manager possible, in proportion to the project size and scope



# Executive Leader Sponsor Role

How does the executive sponsor/leader change the failure dynamic?

By Leading & remembering the top 5.

**“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”**

- Gretzky



# The Top Fives



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# Top Five Priorities for Project Leaders

1. Be strategic – you’ll have the solution for 15+ years – “skate where the puck will be.”
2. Make the project is a “business project” not an IT project.
3. Create an environment where candid and honest dialog is the norm – encourage “bad news” early and taking risk.
4. Drive the change and challenge the status quo.
5. Make timely decisions and remove barriers for the project team.



# Top Five Areas to Watch Out For

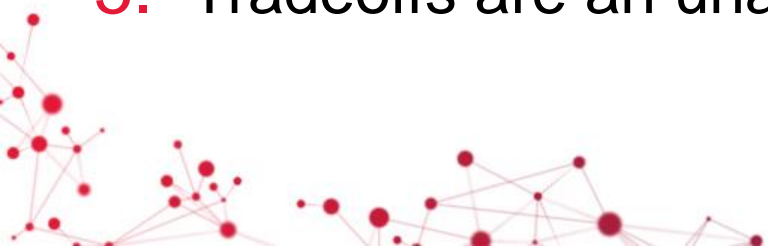
1. Workload impacts on the department and the impact on critical processing timeframes – speed, accuracy and workarounds.
2. Data quality (either newly captured or converted) and the impact on new and legacy systems.
3. External interfaces (batch or online) especially with external organizations.
4. Thoroughness of implementation planning (ramp up plans), **transition states** and contingency planning (roll back plans).
5. “Will Power” - How bad does the team (business, IT, vendor) continue to want to make this happen?

# Top Five Things to Know When Working with Vendors

1. Everyone has a boss – always know the team's management chain (names, phone numbers, etc.) all the way up to the CEO.
2. Know what motivates your vendor – (e.g., good reference, lasting client relationships, new revenue, timely payment).
3. Know quarter and fiscal year end dates – actions by these dates can be used as leverage points.
4. Communicate clearly and often – be consistent about your top risks, pain points and expectations.
5. Know your contracts – your responsibilities and the vendors'.

# Top Five Things Experienced Executive Sponsors Know

1. The best projects are the well planned projects – “take the hill” doesn’t typically work.
2. Everyone wants to report the project is “green.” The following words mean your team is behind:
  - Effort words vs. result words
  - “They” vs. “We”
3. Follow the metric trends – history tends to repeat itself.
4. Surprises are on the way – count on it and be prepared to make course corrections. Create flexibility.
5. Tradeoffs are an unavoidable component of the project.





# From Interviews with Executive Sponsors and Their Advice

1. “Every project I’ve been on, the implementation could have been better planned and better funded.”
2. “Test is different than production. Find ways to crawl, walk, run your first production days.”
3. “Select your first customers carefully – location, communication skills, willingness, political savvy.”
4. “Significant data quality issues surface when new functionality is implemented.”
5. “Conduct surveys/assessments to help you optimize the system. You will see gaps in your training and understanding of how to use the system.

**6. WHAT CAN YOU ADD TO THIS LIST?**

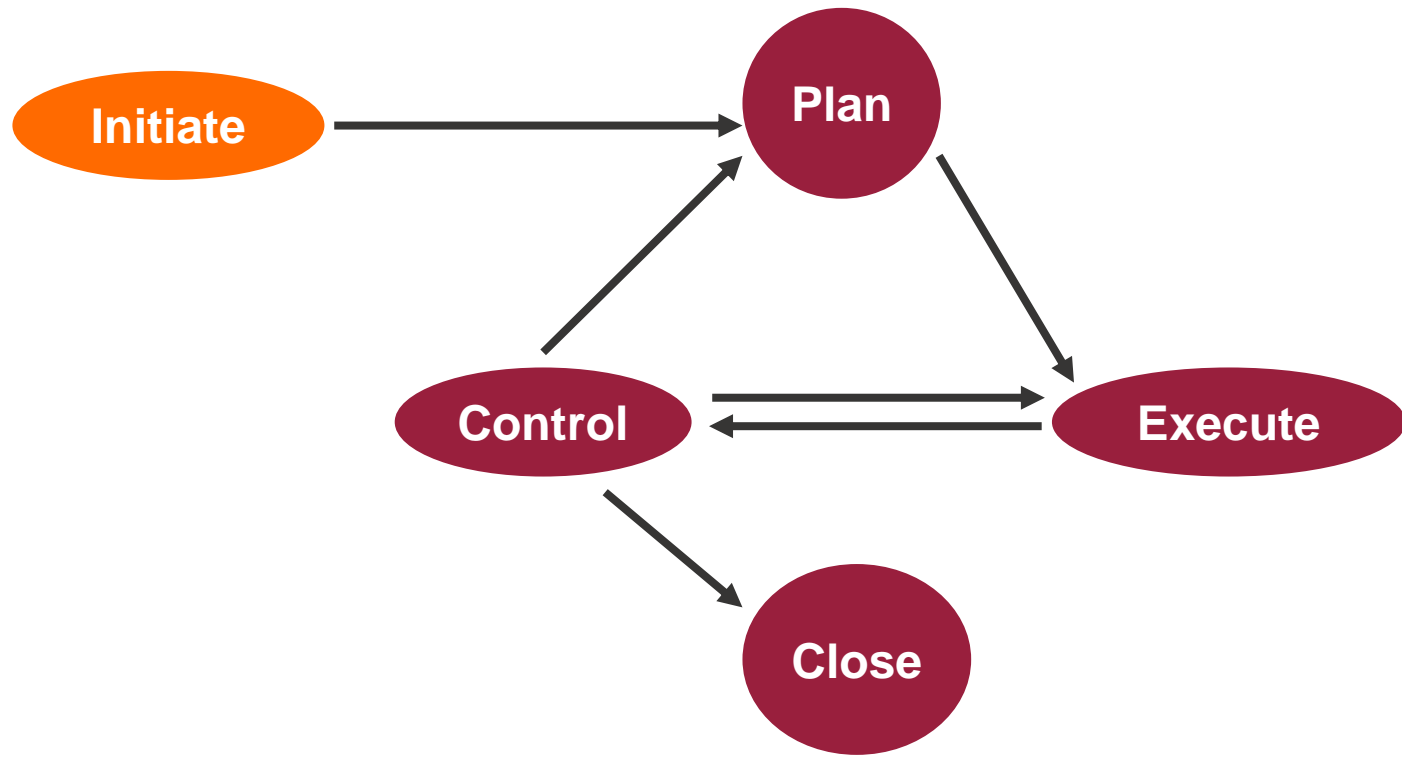
# Project Management Phases



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# Project Management Phases



# Leadership and the Initiate Phase

## Initiate

**Q1:** Is there a clear vision and objectives that apply throughout the project?

**Q2:** Do I have common objectives wherever possible?

- Vendor payment based upon business outcomes
- Penalty relief
- Additional revenue for State
- Program goals

**Q3:** Is the Governance level appropriate for the project and to the degree to which we will need it for decisions, requirements technical services, data and security?

# Leadership and the Initiate Phase

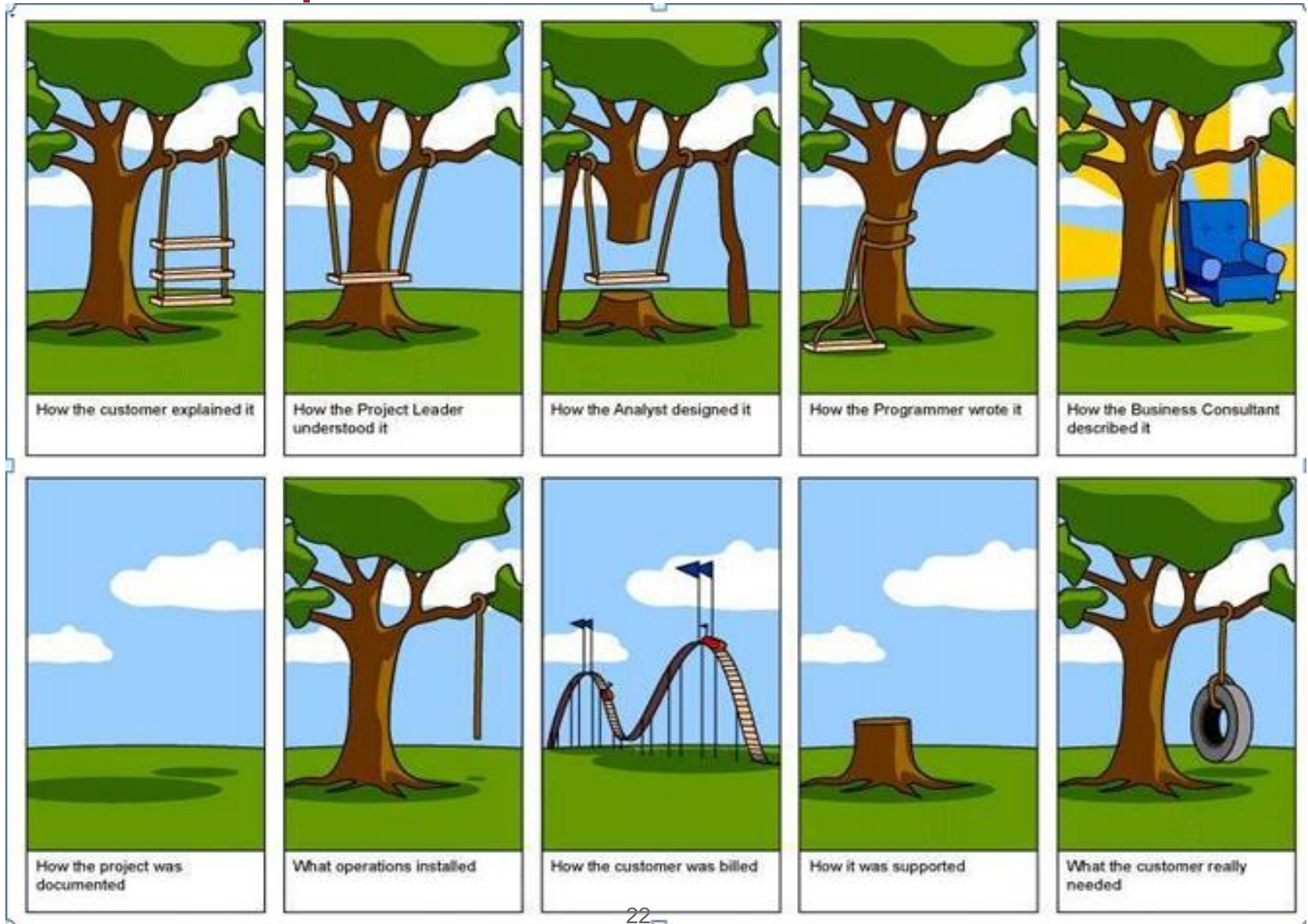
## Initiate

**Q4:** Is there a change in administration or program that will adversely impact my project?

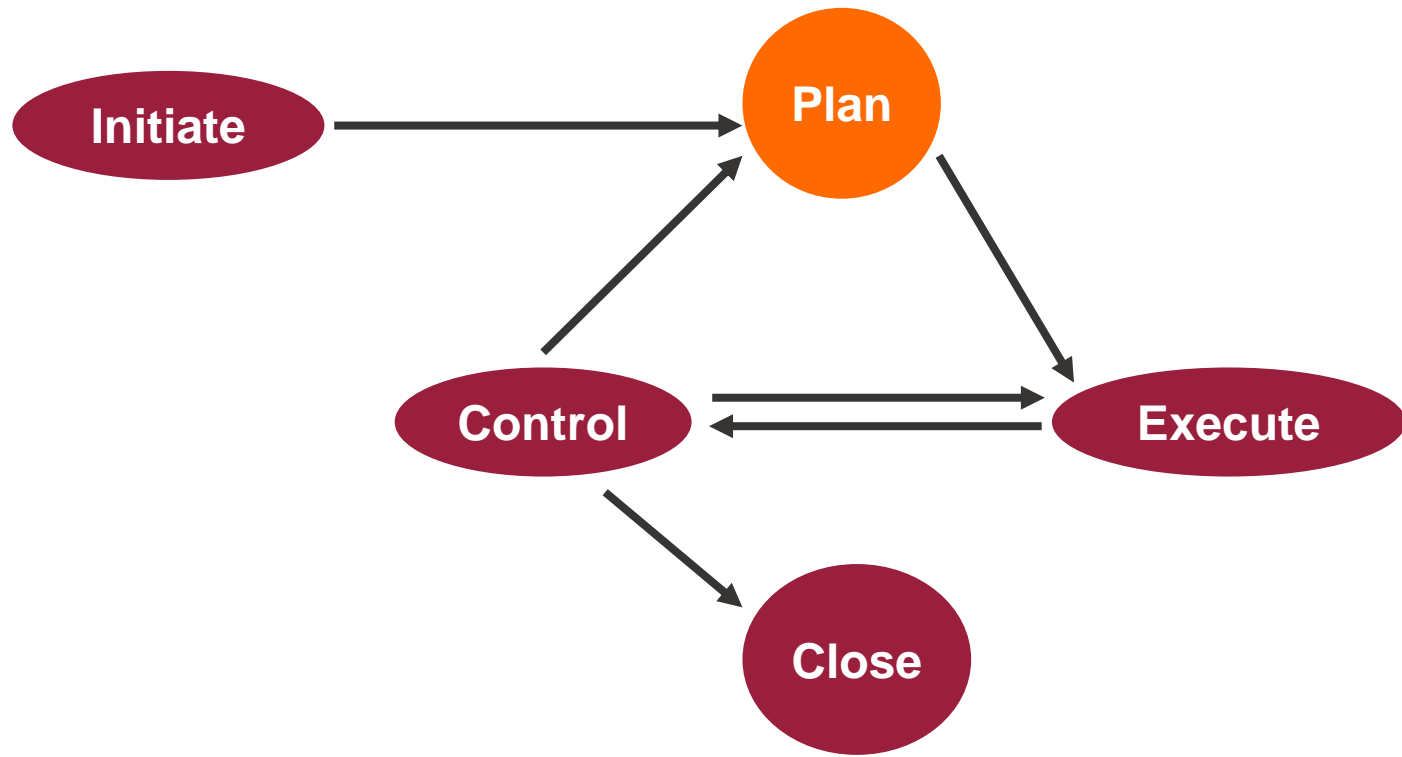
**Q5:** Am I embarking on a system/solution that can be supported and maintained by my agency/department?



# Leadership and the Initiate & Plan Phase



# Project Management Phases



# Leadership and the Plan Phase

## Plan

**Q1:** Is my project broken up so I can show business value early and not just at the end of the project?

- Early wins, prototypes, modularization, phases, waves, Agile

**Q2:** Have I assigned the right people whom I trust to make decisions that I will have to live with for the next 20 years?

**Q3:** Is the schedule realistic and does it match the pace of our organization?

**Q4:** Did we pay attention to and fund implementation activities and the “soft” side of the project appropriately?





# Leadership and the Plan Phase

## Plan

**Q5:** While the project is being implemented how am I impacting the work of the remainder of the organization and can it stand the strain?

**Q6:** Is the project too complex for my organization and should it be broken down into multiple projects so it is not too risky?



# Leadership and the Plan Phase

Low Complexity	Business Attribute	High Complexity
Static	Business rules	Changing
Known and followed	Decision making progress	Not known
Low	Financial risk to the state	High
Local	Geography	State-wide
Clear and stable	High level requirements	Vague
Few and routine	Interactions with other departments and entities	High

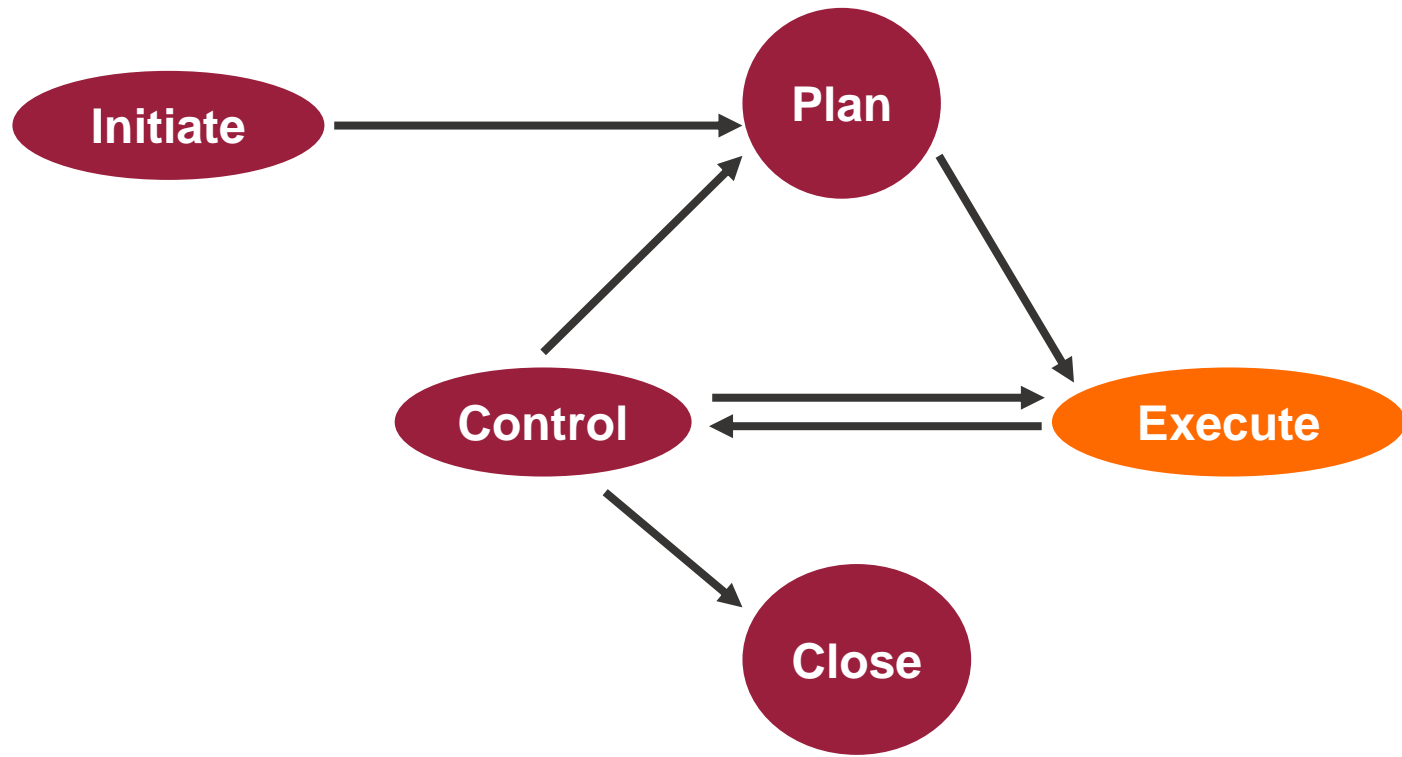


# Leadership and the Plan Phase

Low Complexity	Business Attribute	High Complexity
Proven	Hardware	New
Stand alone	Level of integration	Tightly integrated
Proven/stable	Network	New
9 to 5 Monday to Friday	Operations	24 hours/7 days
Light	Security	Tight



# Project Management Phases



# Leadership and the Execute Phase

## Execute

**Q1:** Have the requirements been well vetted by the team and is it necessary to get a second review? Requirements sign off is one of the most important decisions you make.

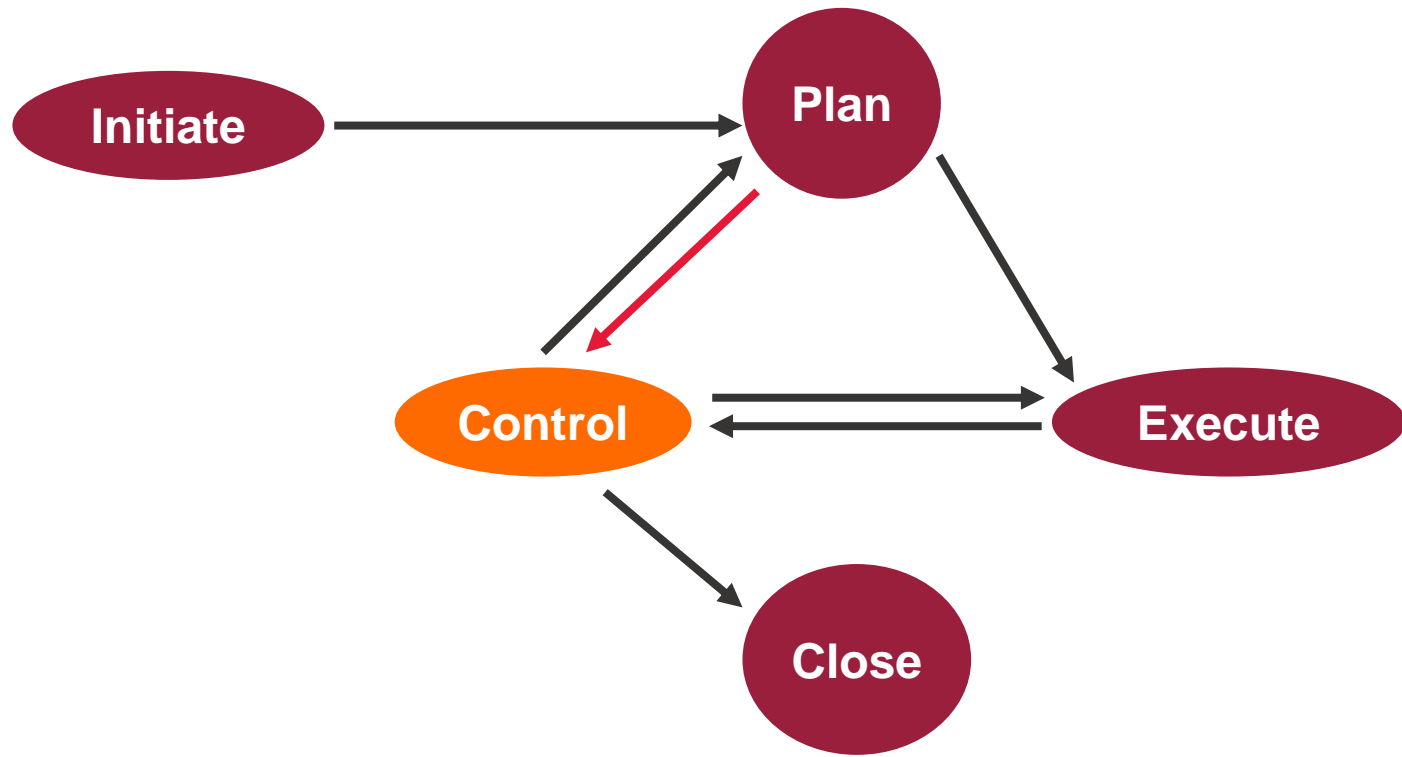
**Q2:** Do we have the right levels of communication to keep the agency and stakeholders outside the 4 walls involved and informed by not overly inundated?

**Q3:** Do I have the metrics I am interested in that show progress but do not involve me in day-to-day operations?

**Q4:** Do we have the right implementation strategy?



# Project Management Phases



# Leadership and the Control Phase



“Innovation is not about saying yes to everything. It’s about saying no to all but the most crucial features.”

– Steve Jobs



# Leadership and the Control Phase

## Control

**Q1:** Is scope being controlled so that we can finish?

**Q2:** Do we have the right processes in place that are necessary for the project? Without a process, work activity is ad hoc and not repeatable.

**Q3:** Are we learning from our lessons or do we have lessons relearned?

**Q4:** Do I and my team have a good understanding of the risk as we move into the various phases of the project appropriate for my level and the mitigations? Have I made clear the risk tolerance the agency can undertake?

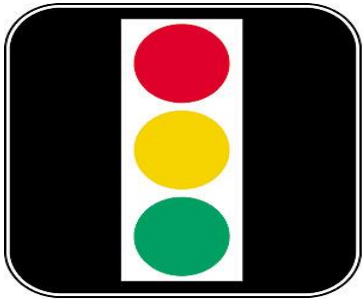




# Leadership and the Control Phase

## Control

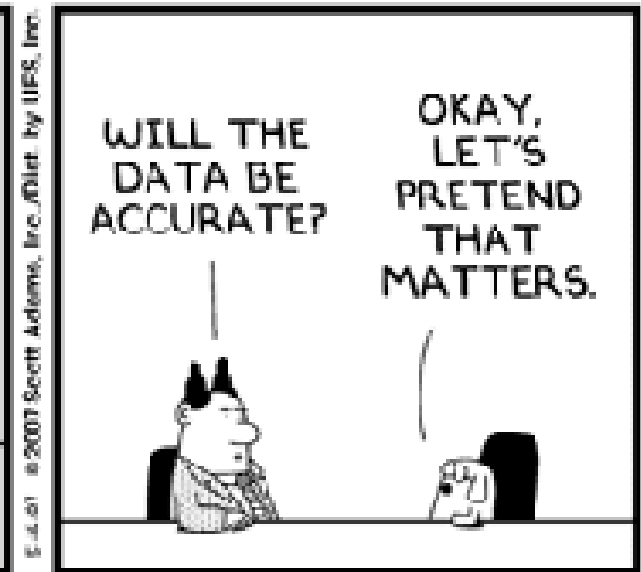
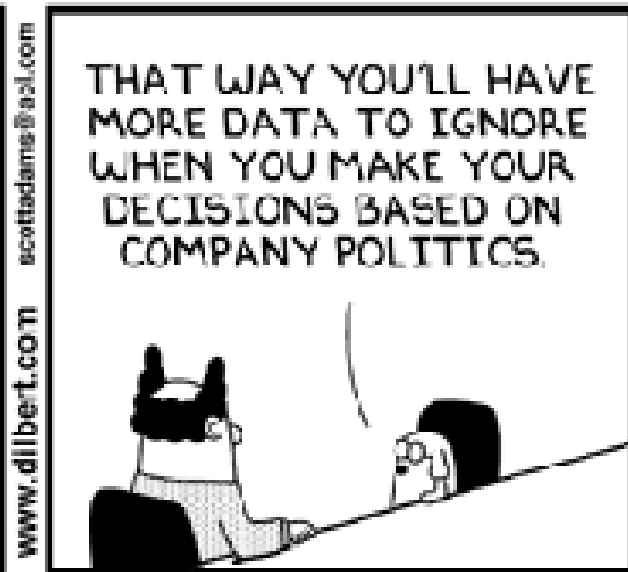
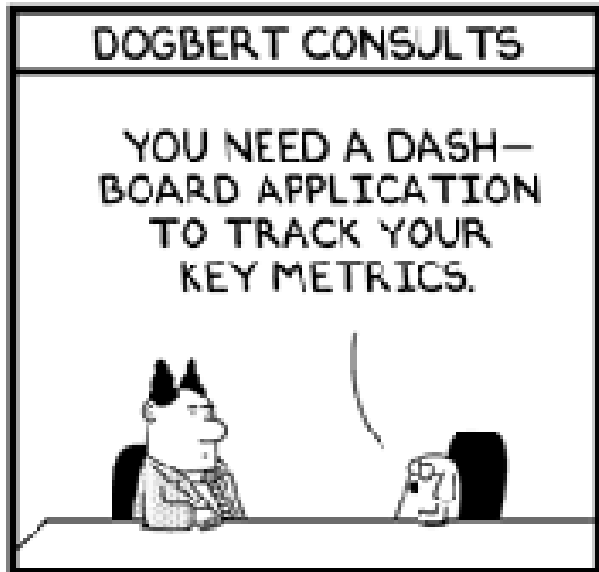
**Q5:** Is there a simple way for project assessment and to predetermine criteria for decisions?



**Green** = On Schedule

**Yellow** = Behind but have agreed upon plan so will be on schedule at next review

**Red** = Behind and no agreed upon plan



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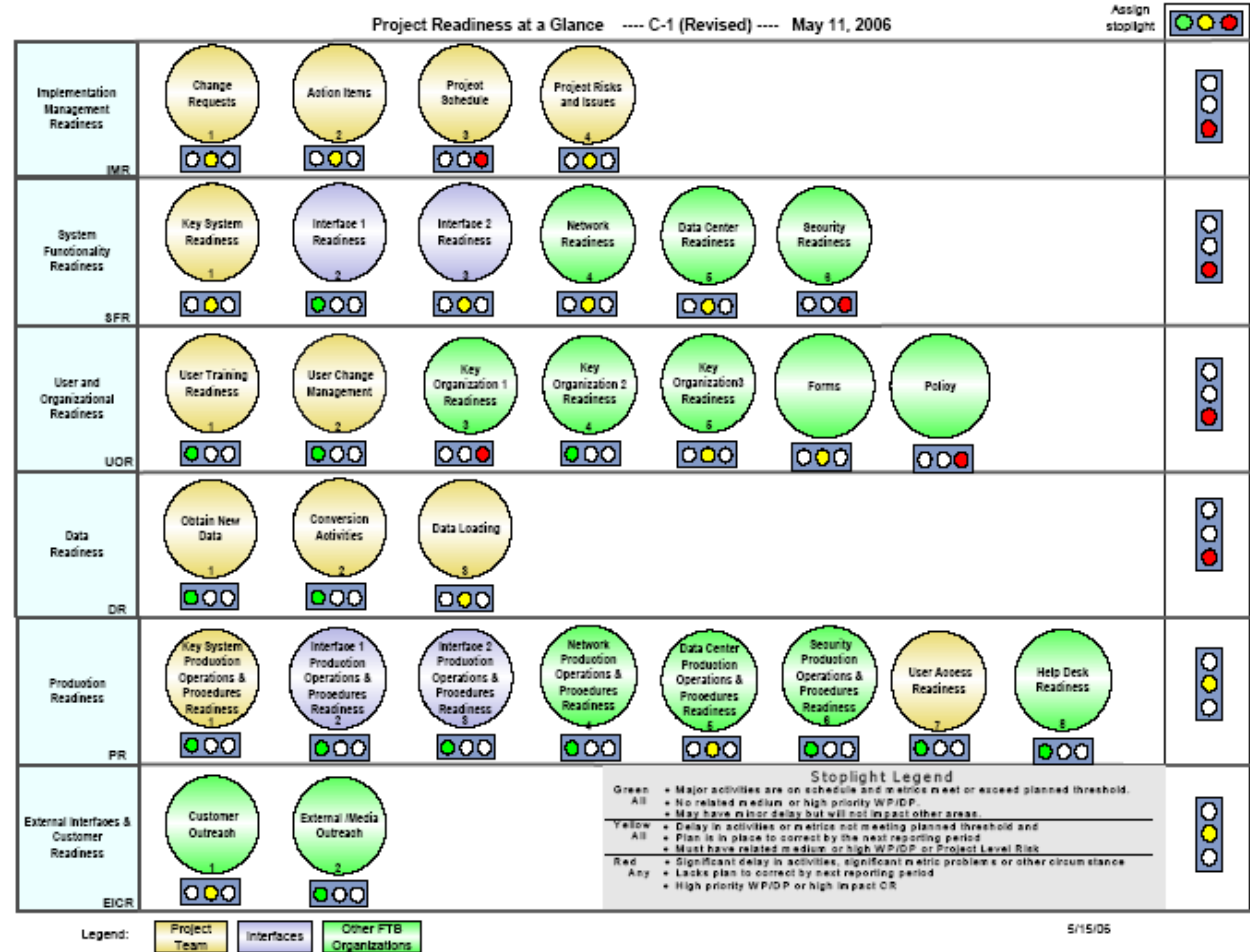
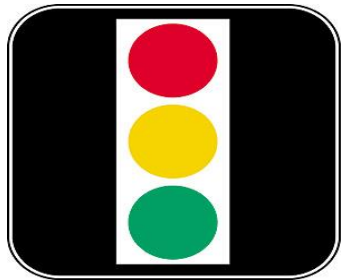
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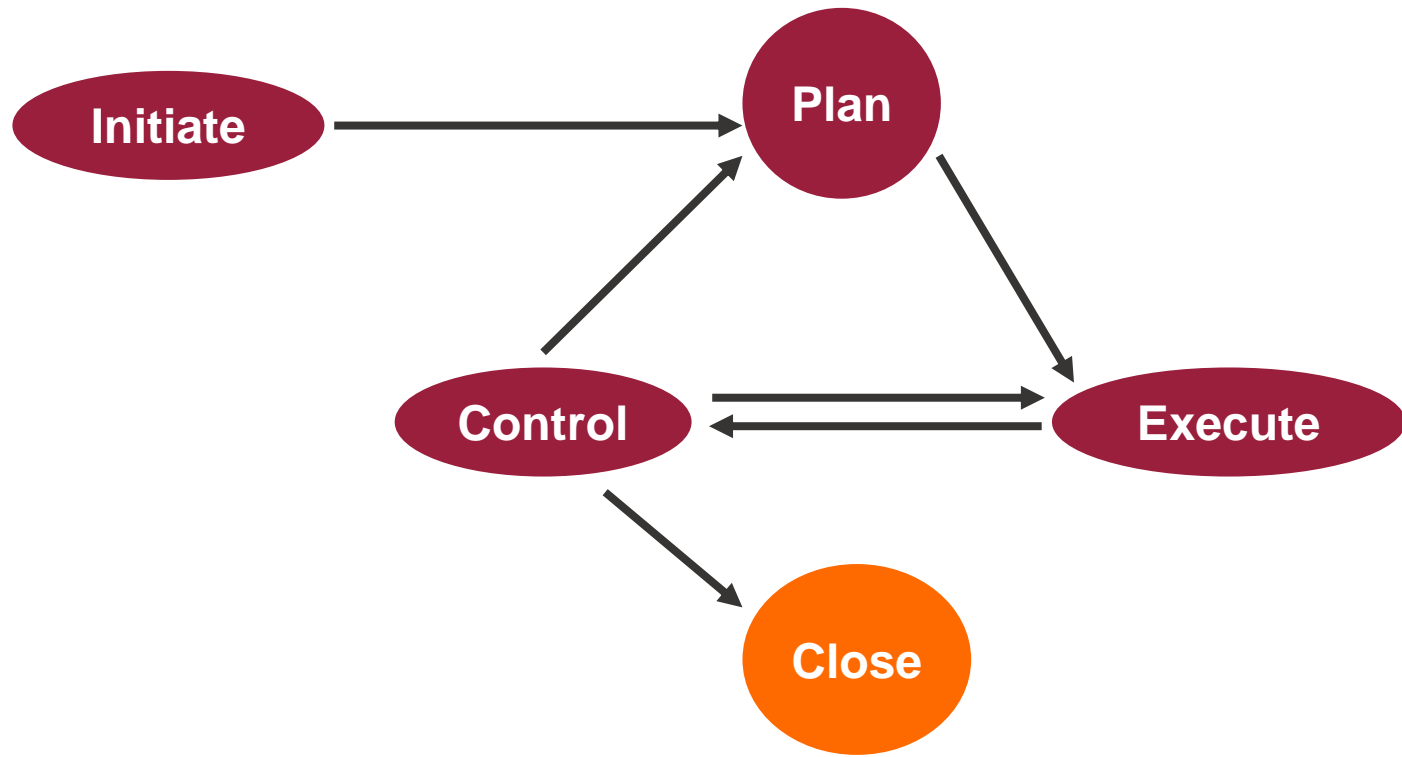


# Lessons Learned through Massive Failures and Some Big Successes

## Control



# Project Management Phases



# Leadership and the Close Phase

## Close

**Q1:** I see the line in the distance, is it the finish line or the start line?

**Q2:** Do I have the right people to optimize my system?



# Global Leadership Goals A Recap

- Be involved throughout the entire project in your executive leadership role.
- Make sure the organization understands the vision throughout the project as it morphs.
- Ensure tough decisions get made in a timely manner.
- Work to ensure a healthy relationship is present within the program and its organizations, vendor and oversight groups. And the business community.

*VISION WITHOUT ACTION IS A DAYDREAM  
ACTION WITHOUT VISION IS A NIGHTMARE*

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LEADERSHIP IS THAT YOU'RE  
NEVER SURE IF YOU'RE BEING  
FOLLOWED OR CHASED

