

# Do or Die Project Management Practices

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Management

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**PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

# Premise: “All work is project work”

- Tom Peters, Fast Company, May 1999
- How important is effective project planning and management in your organization?

# Generally Speaking: Must Avoid PMs

- The suicidal over-achiever



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# Generally Speaking: Must Avoid PMs

- The software enthusiast



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# Generally Speaking: Must Avoid PMS

- The completely 'stakeholder ignorant'

**...and this is what we do to 'em  
where I come from...**



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# 13 Do or Die Techniques

The title is centered and surrounded by seven circles of varying shades of green. The circles are arranged in two rows: three in the top row and four in the bottom row. The top row consists of a white circle with a green outline, followed by two solid green circles. The bottom row consists of two solid green circles followed by a white circle with a green outline.



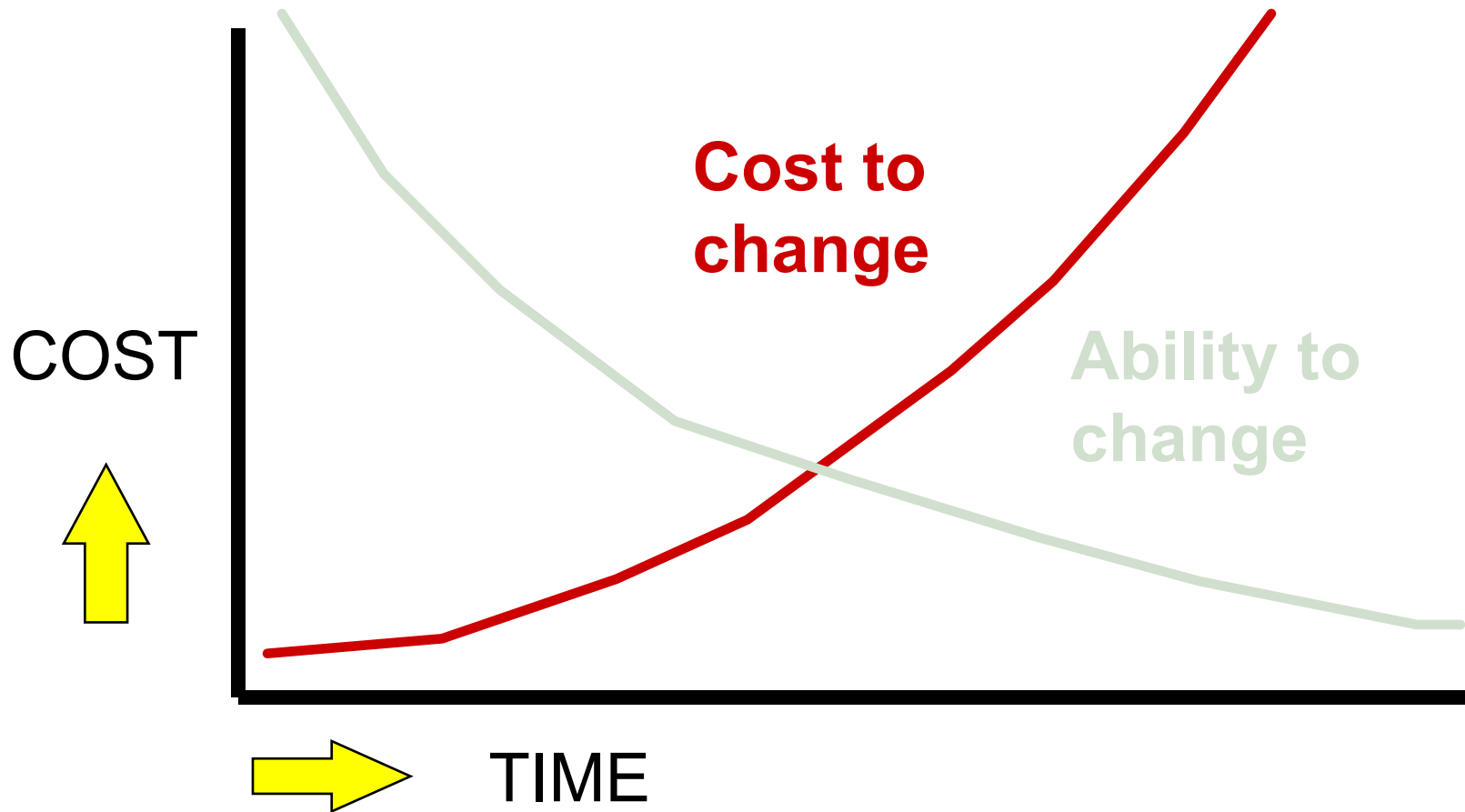
# #1: Be Clear

- Is the desired result nailed down in the project title?
- Could your executive recognize all your projects based on what they're called?
- Do project names speak to process or result?
- Mission: Use an “elevator statement”

# #2: Don't Shortcut the Planning

- Lousy excuse 1: This is a 'fast track' project
- Lousy excuse 2: We're working in 'web time'
- Planning is cheap – reacting is expensive

# The Cost/Influence Curve



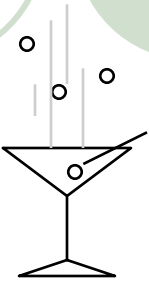
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# #3: Work Backwards - Start with the End in Mind

- The IDAHO questions:
  - 1. When is this project done?
  - 2. How will we know that we've won?
  - 3. Who gets to make the call on questions 1 and 2?
    - Who – the wrong sponsor
    - Death by Steering Committee
- The outrageous optimism of forward-based planning

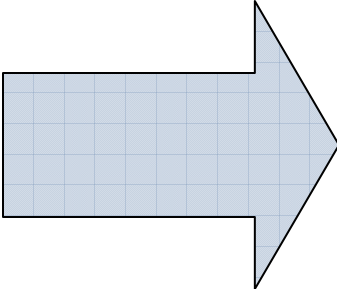
# 3-D Scheduling



**'Done' per the  
Three Key  
Questions**

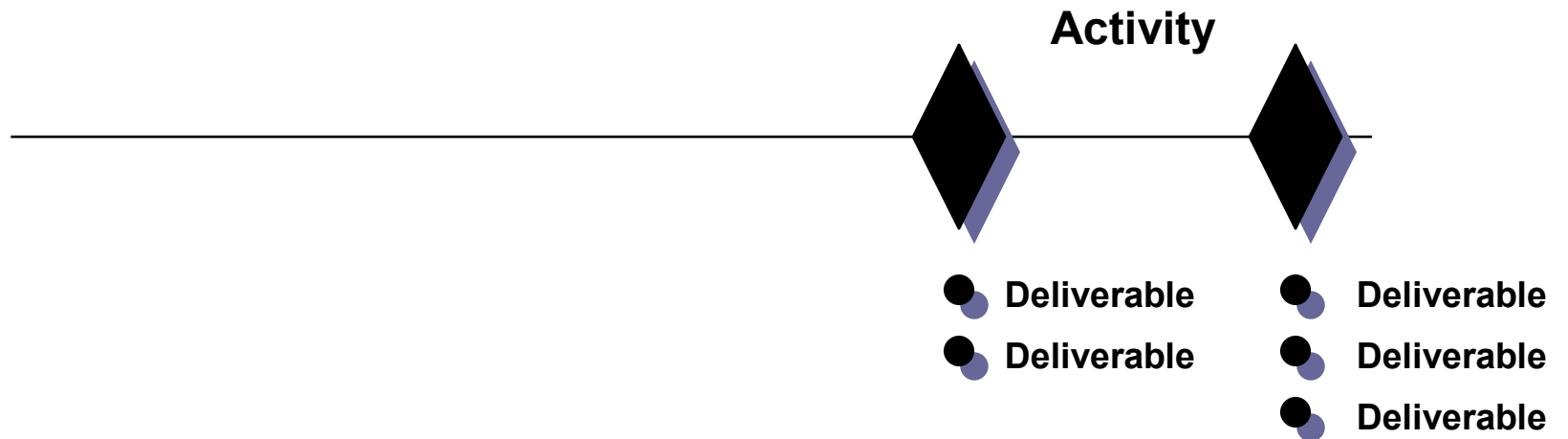
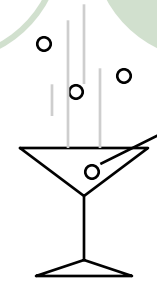


**Deliverables off  
the bottom of the  
Stakeholder  
Breakdown  
Structure**

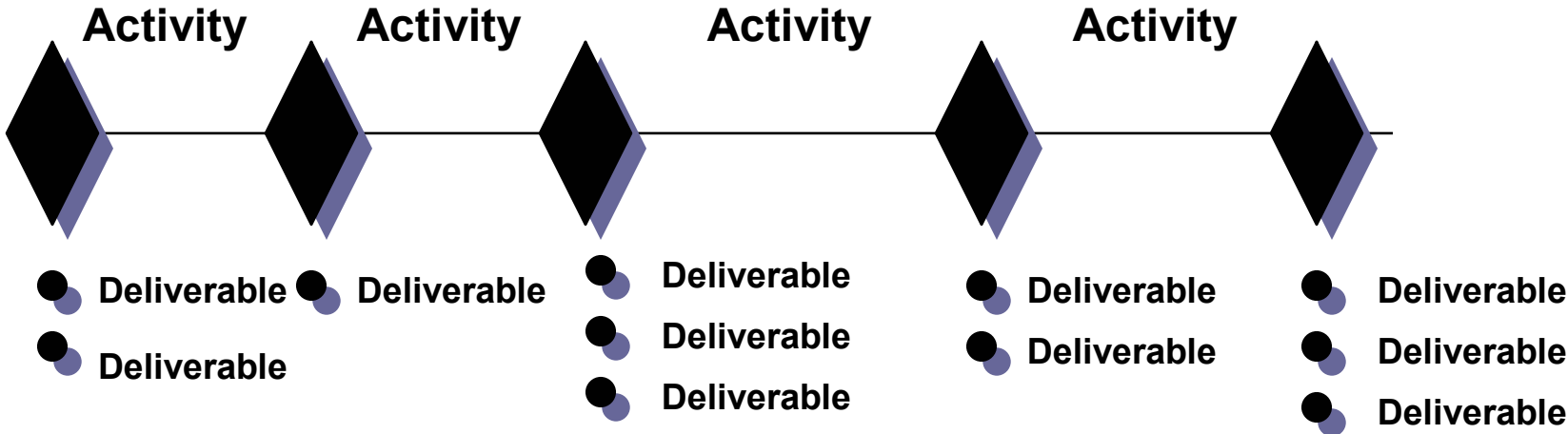
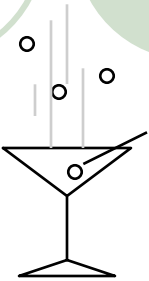


- Deliverable
- Deliverable
- Deliverable

# 3-D Scheduling

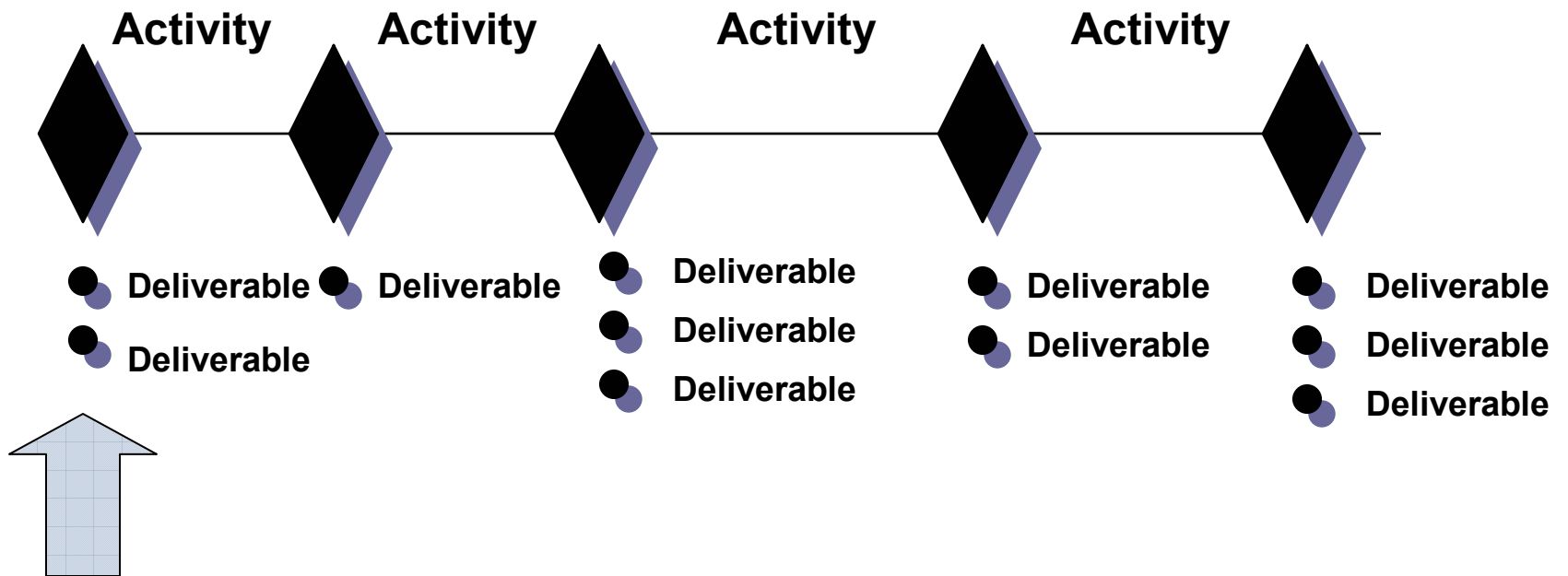
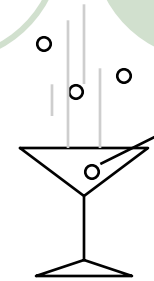


# 3-D Scheduling



# 3-D Scheduling

When you get back here, you find you should have started 6 months ago!



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**Where we are right now**

# #4: Acknowledge the Enemy - Risk and Uncertainty

- Single point estimates are inappropriate in today's business environment!
- Is this project a slam dunk?
- How do you show R and U?
- How do you estimate now?
- Eat your crow when it's young and tender!
- Columbo would have been the world's best project manager

# Acknowledge the Enemy - Simulate Outcomes

- Uses PLO estimates, not single point ones
- Uses PLO estimates as basis for many simulations
- Monte Carlo simulations?
- Look at results of these simulations as a basis for evaluating the probability of completion by a certain date or for a certain cost



# **#5: Manage project connections explicitly**

- Stakeholder expectations drive deliverables
- Stakeholder deliverables drive the schedule
- Can you see your expectations manifest in your project schedules?

# #6: Know that Nothing comes for Free on a Project

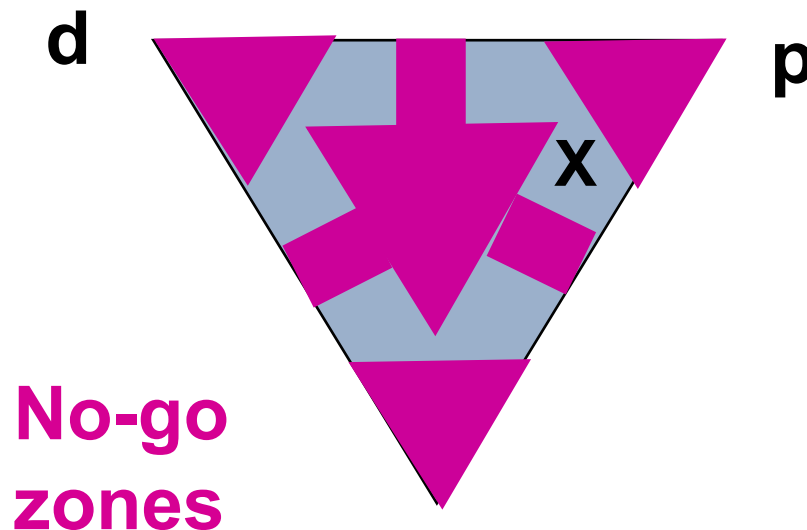
- You can have it good. You can have it fast. You can have it cheap. Pick any two.  
Red Adair
- Acknowledge...
- Manage accordingly...
- Remove the emotion...
- What are you seeing that we're not?

# #7: Acknowledge What's Driving the Project

- Performance (question #2 - how do we know we've won?), cost, or duration
- All three? Thanks for nothing
- The Project Priority Triangle

# Project Priority Triangle

- How does the sponsor want the project team to behave?
- Where is the X?
- Do we make decisions that optimize:
  - duration
  - cost or
  - performance?



# #8: Don't Manage in a Black Box

- Can you explain every step?
- Let me show you what we're seeing
- Gantt? PERT? Dangerous
- No contingency!
- No learning curve!
- No percentage complete – deliverables are or they aren't!

# #9: Assign Risk Intelligently

- Who pays for fixed price?
- Have you read all your contracts?

# #10: Build in Check Points

- Project going well? How do you know?
- How will we know we're winning?
- Performance Metrics

# #11: Plan to Cancel Your Project

- Severe check points
- What would cause us to stop the project?
- I never walk into a room...
- Practice pre-death pathology
- There's no shame in stopping if
  1. You've said you might in advance, and
  2. You've given the sponsor opportunity to reallocate resources early enough

# #12: Know where you are, where you've been, & where you're going

- Three things:
  - Performance (what everyone misses)
  - Duration
  - Cost
- Three dimensions
  - Baseline
  - Actual
  - Forecast (what everyone misses)

# #13: Eat What You Kill

- “Plan to manage, manage to the plan”
- Track like you plan
- Change per the triangle
- Acknowledge the tradeoffs

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**Thank You**