

The "One-Page Pre-Mortem" Canvas

Don't wait until the project is dead to dig into it



Fast forward 6 months. The project has failed spectacularly. Describe the specific state of failure.

(Instruction: Don't say "It didn't work." Say "We are being sued," or "We lost 3 key engineers.")

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People & Dynamics (The "Soft" Hardware)

Did we burn out? Did ego block truth? Did we lack skills?

The Machine (Execution)

Did complexity kill speed? Did we run out of cash/time?

The World (External)

Did a competitor move faster? Did the customer change their mind?

The Ghost (Unspoken Risks)

What is the one thing nobody wanted to talk about in the kickoff?

Select the top 3 fatal risks above. Assign a specific "Kill Owner" to prevent them starting today.

Risk

Owner

1

2

3