# ADM Project Consultants

## How to identify broken projects and fix them without the use of P3M tools

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# Overview & Definitions

- Techniques to help identify **IF** a project is in trouble and then provide a plan to fix it

> "Projects are unique, transient endeavours, undertaken to bring about change and achieve planned objectives, which can be defined in terms of outputs, outcomes or benefits "

> "A project is usually deemed to be successful if it achieves the objectives according to their acceptance criteria, normally within and agreed timescale and budget "

> "A programme is a collection of related projects when integrated together result in a desired outcome/output "

> "A Portfolio is a collection of projects/programmes within a domain or business area, with no direct dependencies on each other "

## Portfolio

| Programme A | Programme B | | Programme B |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project 1 | Project 5 | Project 8 | Project 10 |
| Project 2 | Project 6 | Project 9 | Project 11 |
| Project 3 | Project 7 | | Project 12 |
| Project 4 | | | |

Portfolio management | Ipek Sahra Özgüler interview
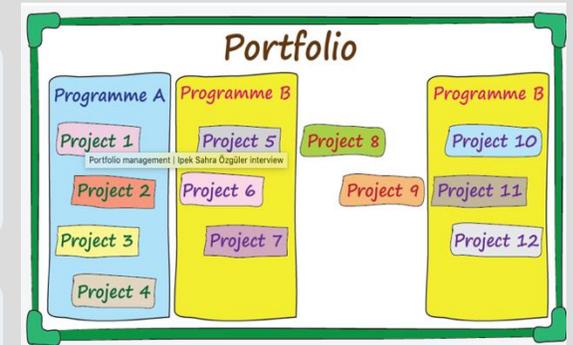
**Black swan:**
- Comes as a surprise
- Has a major effect
- Rationalized afterwards with the benefit of hindsight

Extended Project Life Cycle
Project Life Cycle

Concept

Definition

Deployment

Transition

Operation

Benefits Realisation

Termination

◆ Gate Reviews
▲ Project Reviews
● Project Closure Review
⬢ Benefit Reviews

Outputs

Outcomes

2
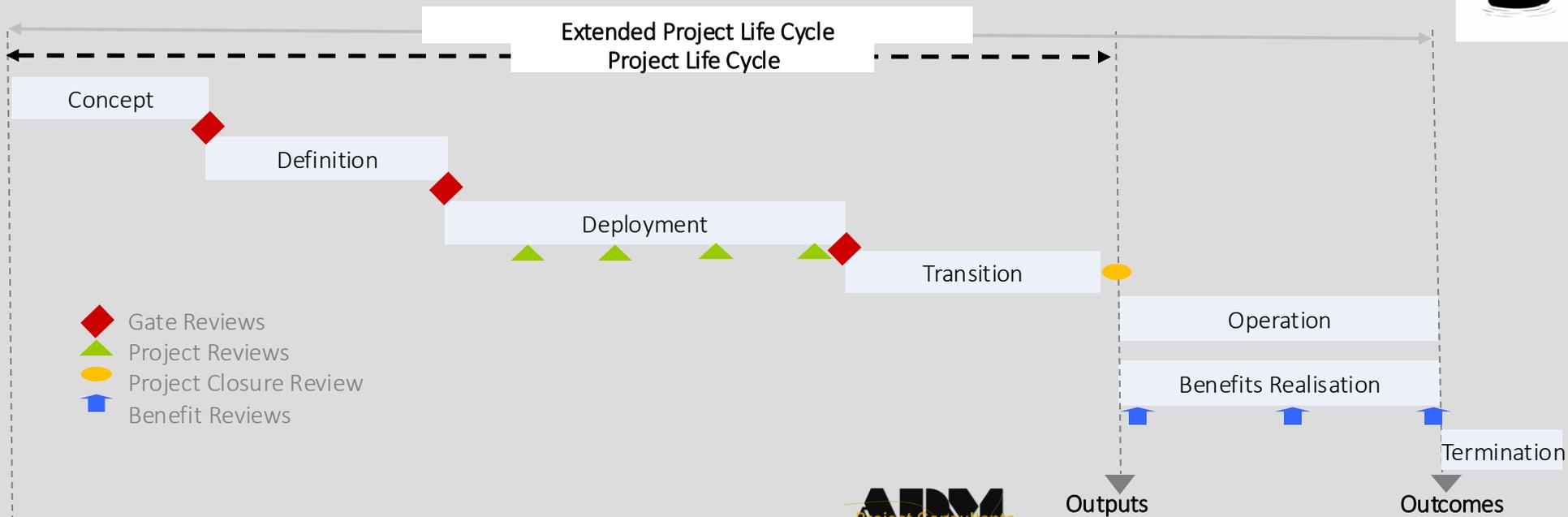
# Our world today

- World is constantly changing; pace of change is greater than our learning capability

- It is more complex, and we are seeing black swans more often

- Rules of business have been turned upside down

- Things we utilise today would have been science fiction only a few years ago

- Customers expect more for less and sooner

- Failure is no longer tolerated as part of learning

- Vision and strategy often last almost as long as they take to communicate

- Everyone is transforming

- We are expected to communicate virtually, and global teams are the norm

- Our ways of working, living, viewing, purchasing are constantly evolving

- Oh, and it's not slowing down anytime soon….

# Response to deliver change to meet this pace via projects

21st Century Projects

- Complex (VUCA) and change is the norm

- Stakeholders are prevalent and expect a voice

- Scope is developed post mobilisation and changes throughout delivery

- Benefits are expected earlier with greater magnitude

- Completion time is to key to survival not just growth

- Automation and intelligence are the norm, and are expected to give greater control and predictability

- Project leaders are expected to be multilingual

- Project management recognised as a career and a profession focussing on (People, Processes, Tools)
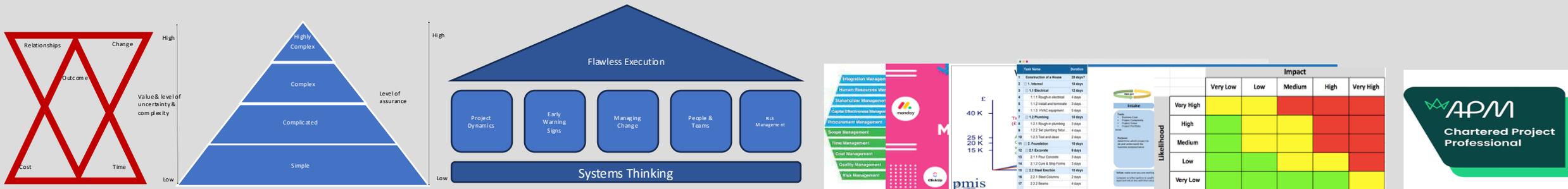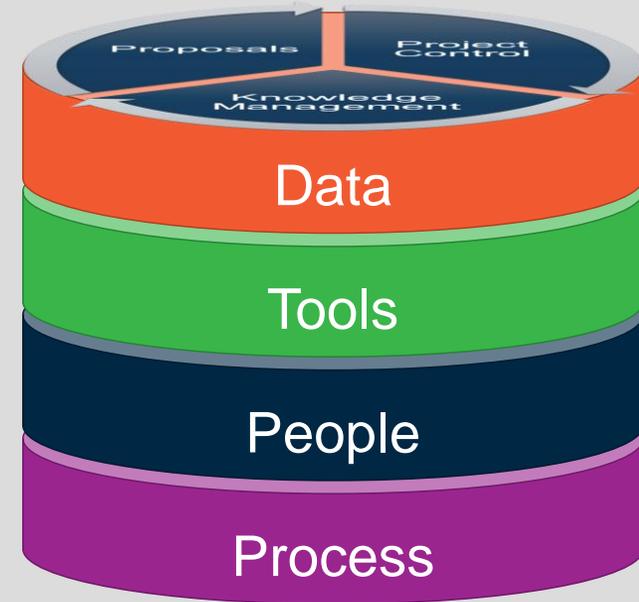
# How to ensure predictability
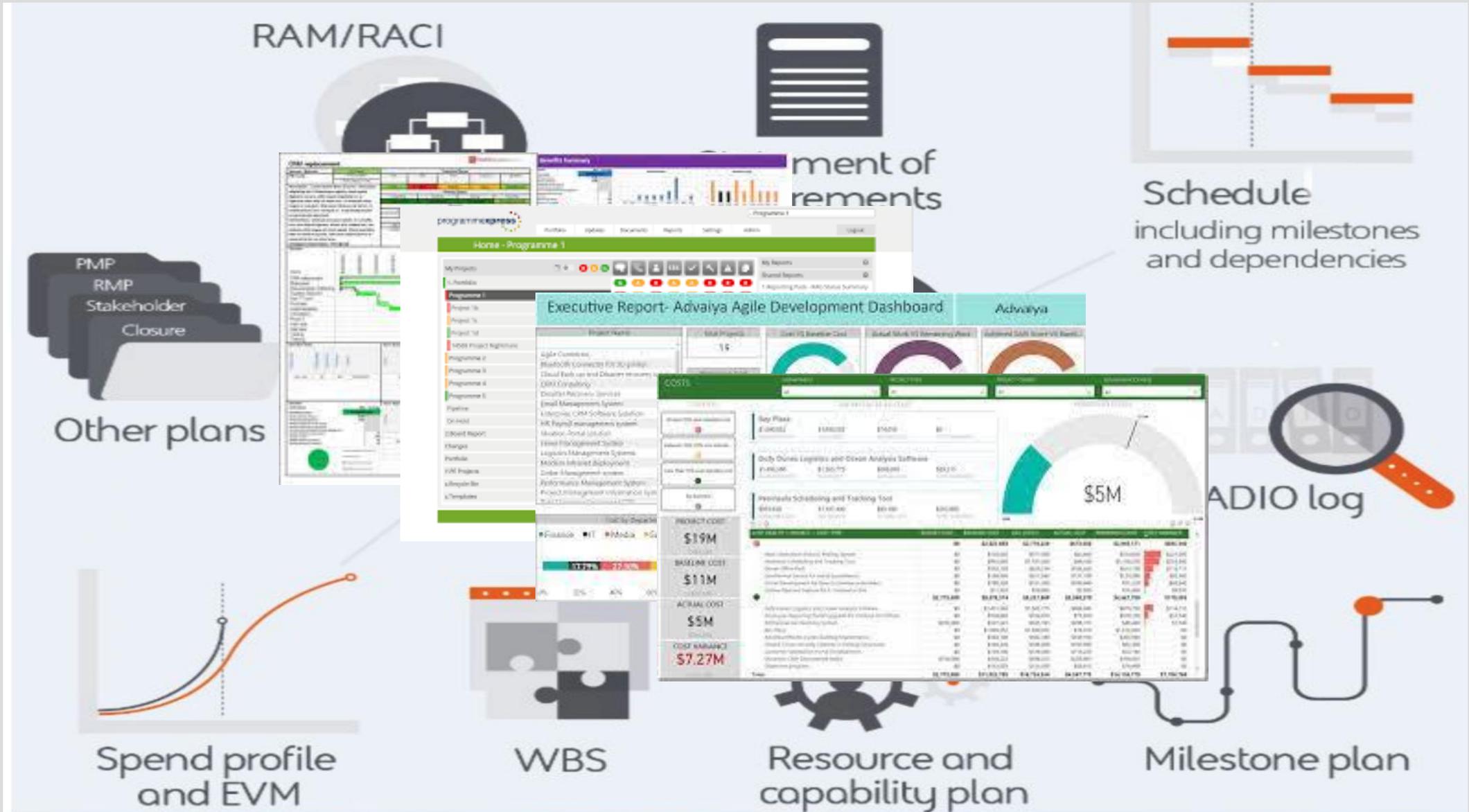
# Visuals & information – can we really interpret what we see
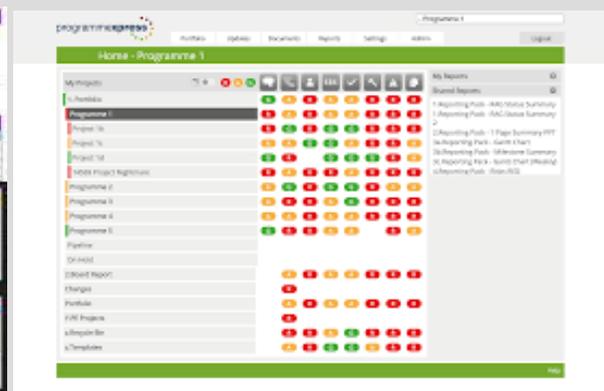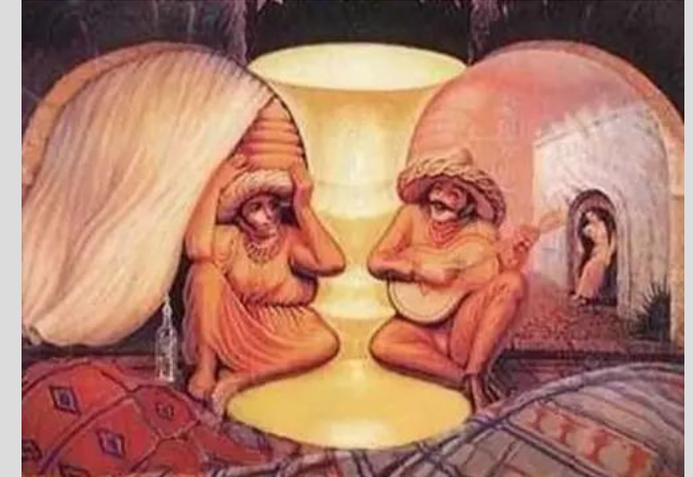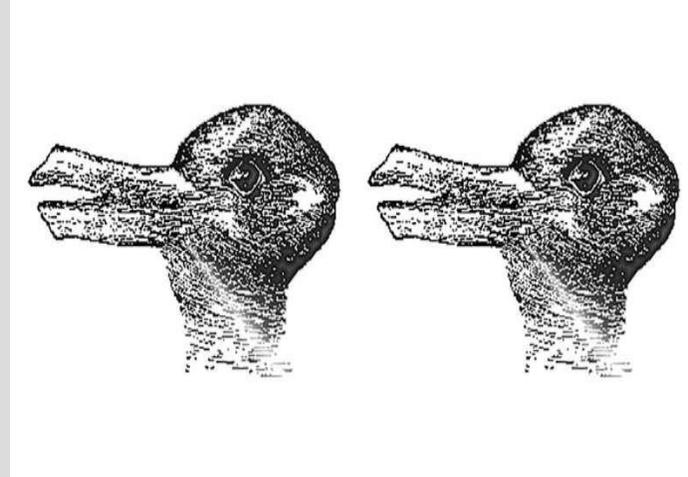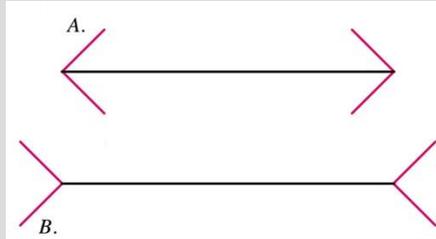
# Was it so obvious, Early Warning Signs and the Sound of silence

## Was it so obvious?

- Many factors that contribute to project failure
  - Hindsight, often obvious,
  - Difficult to understand why not taken into consideration

## Early Warning Signs

- We are not good at picking up early warning signs (EWS) of potential problems in projects.
  - Monthly reviews, stage gates, audits, multiple lenses
  - Useful in identifying EWS connected to formalities of projects (lagging indicators)
  - Complexity increases reviews less useful -rely increasingly on 'gut feeling' to pick up EWS
  - Knowledge, communication skills, networking, and soft skills more important as project complexity increases
  - People and behaviours are a better source of EWS than project review
  - Body language, behaviours, describe and feel about project - window into feelings and emotions
  - Subliminal and human EWS provide an insight as to how the project is really performing

## Sound of Silence (SoS)

- Project failure is often preceded by the Sound of Silence (SoS)
  - Body language, lack of engagement, loss of sense of humor, simple tasks missed, lateness, lack of opinions, war weary, 'running on empty'
  - SoS is the loudest noise that something is going wrong
  - SoS is a leading indicator of current and future failure
  - Team members are aware of threats and issues but unable/unwilling to speak out
  - Or maybe have tried and been 'pushed back' – so have gone silent

People deliver projects and when they aren't speaking, they are shouting to be heard

# The 5 Crucial Conversations (5CCs)

5 Crucial Conversations - removes 'SoS', identifies issues, prevents failures and aids future success

1. Are we planning around the facts
   *Scope, deadlines, deliverables, KPIs, budgets, knowledge, success criteria and benefits*
2. Is the sponsor providing support
   *Identification, leadership, support, AWOL, clout, strategy, business case, benefits*
3. Are we faithful to the process
   *RACI, governance, change, scope creep, ad hoc agreements, budget & resource reductions*
4. Are We Honestly Assessing Our Progress and Risks
   *Reporting risks, happy day reporting, stand off - blinks first, status/reviews, re-baselining*
5. Are team members pulling their weight
   *Basics missing, contributing, humor, stress, deadlines, competence, work around*

Failure in any - damage the project and outcomes, severe enough cause failure

5CCs - Key to unlocking hidden feelings/thoughts that many feel uncomfortable discussing in open forums
The answers from which with the support of the project team will help create a plan to resolve the issues.

# Best Practices to encourage 5CCs



1. Make the Case - speaking up or challenging others won't happen by accident
   - Communicate a commitment to leading candid dialogue around anything preventing delivery
2. Measure What Matters - track reliable performance and monitor behavioural and attitudes
3. Make It Easy
   - Lower the hurdle for speaking up
   - Setup informal get togethers so project team members have access to senior leaders and vice versa

4. Make It Safe - no negative repercussions for speaking up
   - Speak "Truth to power"
      - Speaking candidly about concerns related to the project should not be "career-limiting"
   - Trust needs to be earned and can easily be lost

5. Influence By Teaching
   - Teach skills for holding crucial conversations

## Keep going – this won't happen overnight

# Things I have discovered AKA "How to beat the governance & review system"

- **Jive Talking** - PM/presenter talks at pace alluding to new opportunities with customers
  - C-suite execs are always looking for ways to bolster their bonuses

- **Set in Stone** - All project milestones are hard coded (fixed) in the schedule and never move
  - Schedule doesn't flex and all future milestones are always on track. C-suite execs more interested in time than timeliness

- **Buy now/Pay later** - Take value of any delivery, don't commit/accrue then reduce ETC in line with payment terms
  - EV increases making the project look on track or ahead

- **Project Chicken** – Don't admit there are problems instead wait for someone else, hold your nerve
  - Sit and wait for someone else to fail then hide your shortcomings under theirs

- **Red is dead** - Always remain at amber, citing a Return To Green plan
  - Its underway and you have every confidence it will work, don't go Red, it means blood could be in the water!!

- **Risky Business** - Reduce risk citing good mitigations, hold the budget to cover overruns in project cost
  - Shows you are in control of risk, mitigations are working, and the project is on track

- **Shuffle** - Hold the EAC, move activities and resources between WBS items to hide any under performance
  - Reduce some, increase others, better understanding of scope or work remaining or rolling wave process

- **Dripping Tap** - Constant overruns, lateness, little here, little there
  - Blame it on estimating variations or rounding issues

- **AGILE** - Say its expected as its part of the AGILE approach to delivery
  - Why wouldn't you?

- **Changes** - Constantly in a state of re-baselining, blur performance, blame speed of CCB, internal processes
  - Come on, this is a given.

- **Others:**
  - Booking training for new personnel citing 'getting up to speed' to enhance performance
  - Re-organization or transformation, changing the stakeholder landscape
  - Fact free planning – no consideration for reality
  - Supply chain – a gift that keeps on giving
  - Oh… and there's always a global pandemic if you get really stuck !!!

# Any Questions?



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