19. MANAGING PRODUCTION

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Project management 101 *by Zavanak*

19.2 Running production

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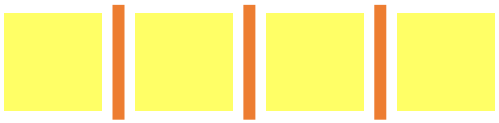
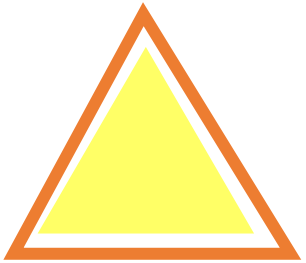
Designed for easier control

Have chunks and check-points – well-defined tasks, milestones and gateways



Define what will be measured – make it measurable

Set tolerances – how far variables can stray off baseline



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A broader view of success

Project efficiency – meeting time and budget goals

Impact on the customer – meeting requirements and achieving customer satisfaction, benefits and loyalty

Organisation performance – return on investment, achievement of benefits to cost targets, market share, growth, etc.

Sustainability – extent to which project balances environmental, societal and economic needs

Preparation for the future – new technologies, new markets, and new capabilities

Impact on the team – satisfaction, retention and personal growth

After Shenhar, A. & Dvir, D. (2007). *Reinventing project management*, Harvard Business Press

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Managing the production phase

Effective project management – maintain progress towards milestones and gateways, handle issues, run the operational aspects of having a team.

Pace – focus on progress and results, setting deadlines, sustain a sense of urgency, keep targets short-term.

Sense of purpose – reinforce the significance of the project and the importance of everyone's contribution.

Customer satisfaction – constantly focus on a successful delivery of the output, manage expectations.

Set an example – behave in a professional manner that you expect everyone to follow.

Stakeholder support – have lots of communication with stakeholders to sustain support. Who is important may change over time, e.g. end users towards hand-over.

Shape the culture – nurture a culture which is right for the project (behaviour, dress code, alignment with client's, etc.) but is also in tune with the overall corporate culture.

Trust the team – allow teams to 'perform' and manage by exception when problems occur.

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The project manager during Production

Has a bias for action

Works at a fast (not frenetic) pace

Makes sense of a confusing environment

Seeks input and advice from all sorts of people

Does lots of informal communicating

Is able to absorb, digest and decide rapidly when needed

Makes predictable, what can be made predictable

Leaves room for the unpredictable

Is skilled at reading people and situations, as well as data

Negotiates and makes deals about all kinds of things

Is a very effective delegator

Stays firmly focussed on the project objective

Steers the team towards milestones and delivery

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Delegation

- Be clear about the task
- **Show how it fits into the overall picture**
- Look for the right attitude and motivation
- **Have confidence in the team**
- Be flexible about how the task is done
- **Delegate to the point of comfort, then go a little bit further**

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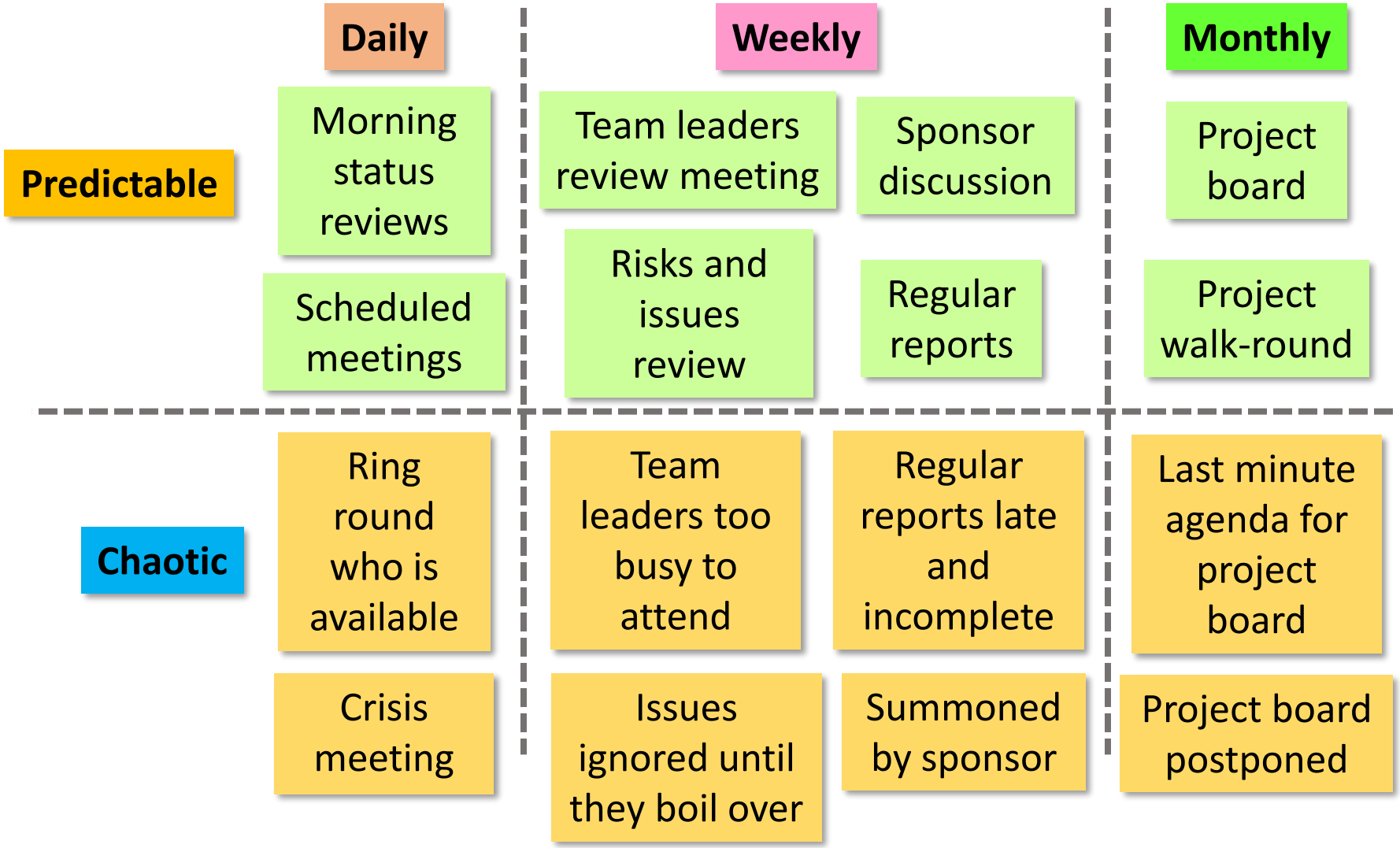
The project rhythm



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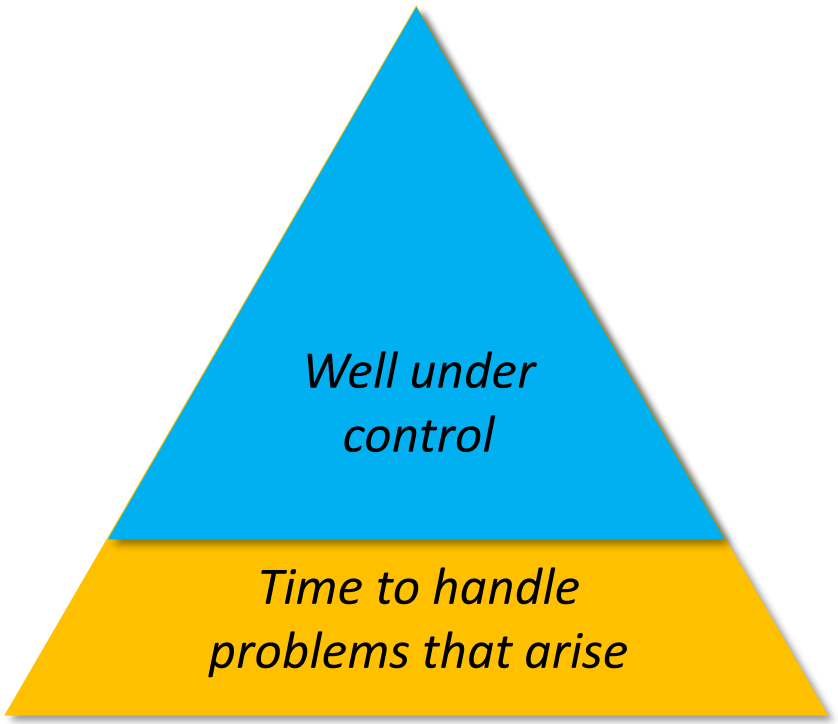
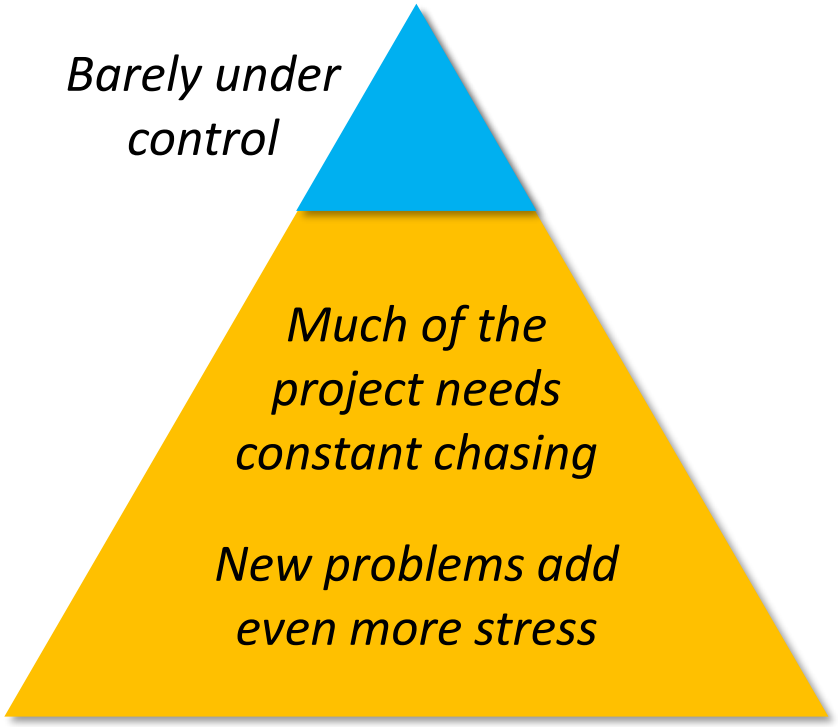
The project rhythm

Managing the project to be as predictable as possible….





…means having more time to manage the unpredictable.

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Productivity

The amount of useful work produced for a given amount of effort

Efficiency and economy in the use of equipment and resources

Optimisation of processes and procedures

Having team members work at their peak, sustainable performance

Always being clear about the project goal and what has to be done to achieve it

Aiming for no waste – in time, money or output

Looking for productivity from the customer side

Following a rigorous quality management regime

Conducting only the necessary administrative and non-productive work

Applying the right tools, techniques and skills for the job at hand

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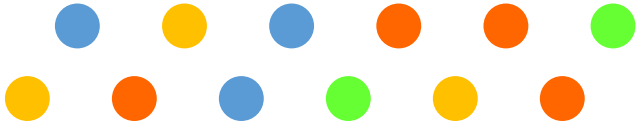
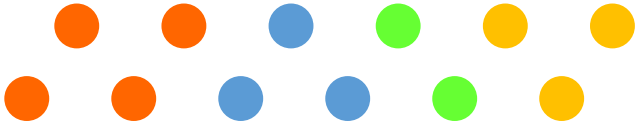
Gauging the mood



Culture – the working environment experienced across the project as a whole

- Established at the start
- **Confirmed by behaviours**
- The way we do things round here
- **Reinforce with messages and symbols**



Climate – the environment found in specific parts of the project at particular times

- Look for harmony, enthusiasm and energy
- **If climate doesn't feel right, investigate and take action**
- Boost morale, resolve conflict

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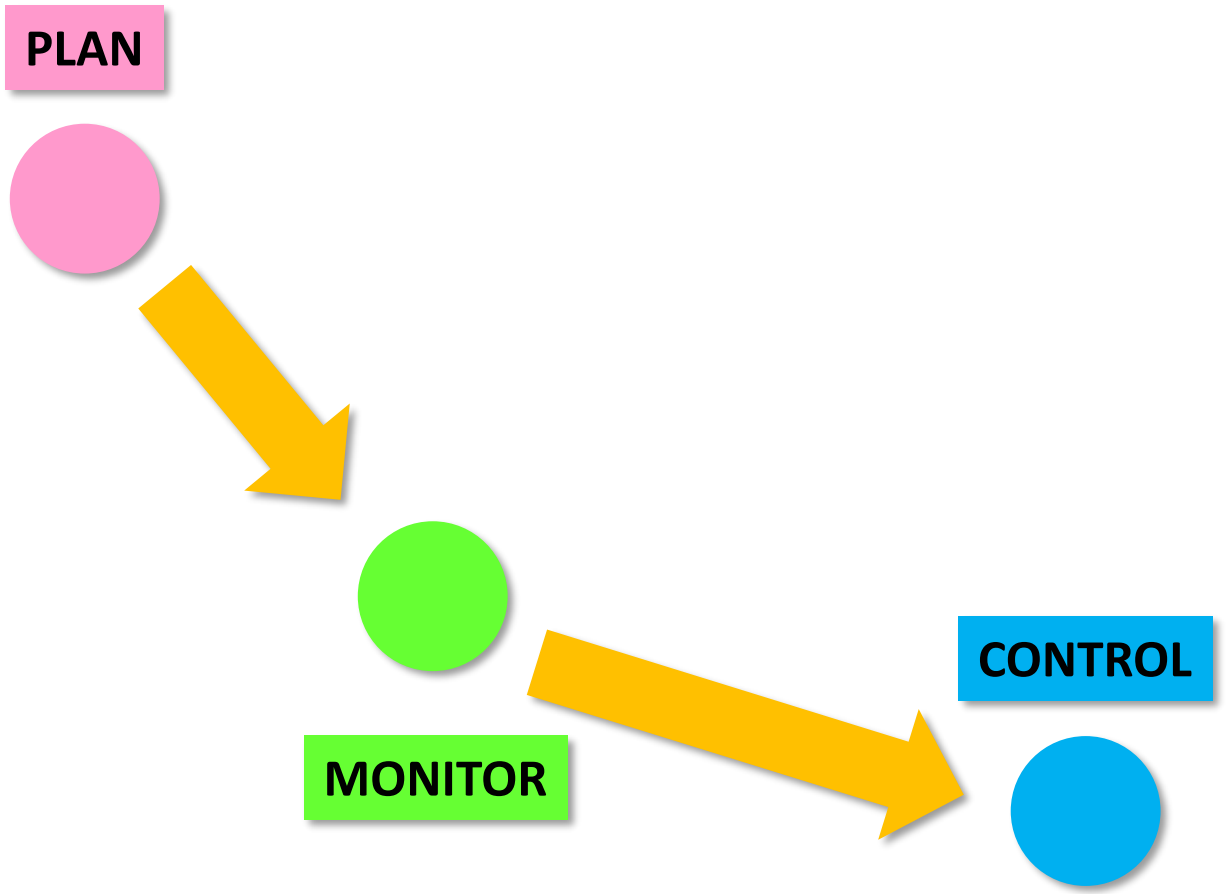
Three repeating steps



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Planning throughout the project

High level plans need to be translated into detailed work instructions.

The approved plan is only a prediction.

Requests for extra time, money and resources need to be backed up with a credible revised plan.

Stuff happens: unexpected events, inaccurate forecasts, risks materialising.

Proper planning avoids uncontrolled ad hoc adjustments that invite chaos.

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The rolling wave

Overall project plan: objectives, specification, original scope, milestones, gateways, deadline

Plan month 4 – detailed day to day plan

Plan months 5 – 6: based on achievement to date – enough detail to get organised

Plan months 7 – 9: enough detail to support ordering supplies etc, but scope is flexible depending on what happens in months 4 - 6

Planning activity in month 3

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The rolling wave

Overall project plan: objectives, specification, original scope, milestones, gateways, deadline

Plan month 5 – detailed day to day plan

Plan months 6 – 7: based on achievement to date – enough detail to get organised

Plan months 8 - 10: enough detail but scope is flexible depending on what happens in months 4 - 6

Planning activity in month 4

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Setting the pace

- Progress sags
- **Team get bored**
- Best people leave
- **Confused decisions**
- Focus is lost

- **No momentum**
- Vague targets

- Working to plan
- **Team highly motivated**
- People want to join
- **Decision making is sound**
- Focus on project goal

- **Sense of urgency**
- Short term targets

- Rushed work is poor quality
- **Team get exhausted**
- Best people leave
- **Pressure leads to mistakes**
- Focus on keeping afloat

- **Close to chaos**
- Crazy targets

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SMART

Specific - Clear, concise, and targeted on a defined area of work. Challenging yet attainable

Measurable - The extent to which the objective was achieved, and how well the objective was achieved, can be assessed

Assignable - Someone can be made responsible and accountable for its achievement

Realistic - Achievable with the time, money and other resources allocated

Time-constrained - Having a deadline or a defined budget of work time units (hours, days, etc.)

Big objective: complete the project to specification within a set time and budget

Small objective: produce an online training manual for release D by a deadline

Objectives may be set by managers, teams and individuals themselves

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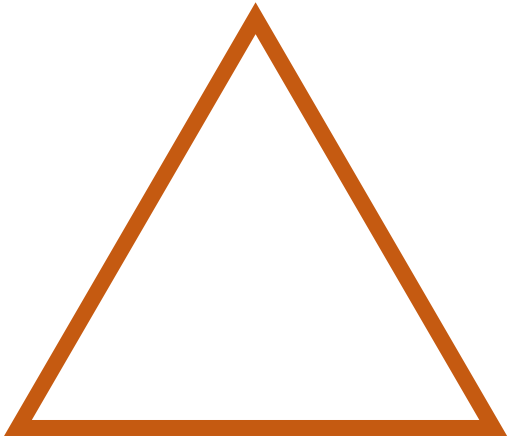
Basic baseline options

TIME:
Maintain deadline
Spend more money or reduce quality expectation



BUDGET:
Forbid overspending
Reduce quality expectation (extending deadline will probably cost more money)

QUALITY:
Protect specification and scope
Spend more money and/or extend deadline

Can be at task, stage or whole project level

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