Presentation By General John Caine "Raisin' Caine"[1]

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

15 August 2026

Dear David and Subscribers

On 14 August, 2026, I happened to listen to a two-minute response to a question from a reporter on "Lessons Learned" to General John Caine "Raisin' Cain", Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, in his Pentagon Live Briefing, 14 August, 2026- from minute 45:05 to 47:10: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2yjClq9ipU.

It so impressed me that it is worth publishing it as presented to serve as advice from a PRACTITIONER with 55 years of experience as both an OWNER and as a CONTRACTOR where my own money has been, is now and will probably remain in the future, to be based on SUCCESSFUL "initiation, planning, executing, controlling and closing" projects as the "delivery system of choice" to "create, acquire, update, expand, maintain, repair, replace and eventually dispose of ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS", his advice has been EXACTLY the same FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH that I have been passing along to my student/clients for the past 32+ years.

> *"I do want to talk about how I think about this and how we think about it. Uh, and this is something that I'm pretty passionate about. I believe the joint force has to be a very **fast-learning organization early, often, and always**. Um, and in each case, at the **strategic, operational, and tactical levels**, we've charged the joint force to look at itself and ask, "What was our plan?" Well, first, did we have a plan? Yes or no? The answer is always **yes because we plan for literally everything**. Did we execute our plan? Yes or no? **If we did, did it work? If not, why not? If we didn't execute our plan, but did something better, what's the lesson learned associated with that?** Then how do we quickly **capture those lessons after every loss or engagement, adopt them, and share them across the entire joint force**? And inside the Joint Staff, we've tasked our J7 directorate, led by General Lieutenant General Lzooski, a United States Marine, **to be extremely entrepreneurial in harvesting and capturing those lessons proactively,** not reactively. In fact, we've got teammates from the J7 who are now spread out across the SenCom Theater, both here in the States and forward to ensure that in **every opportunity we do not miss a chance to grab that lesson and quickly accelerate it into the practice that we adopt** inside the joint force so that if there's a loss or if there's something that we can learn from that we learn it not only in the SENCOM AO but we adapt it across all of the combatant command. Not just into paycom, uh, and it's across all of the war-fighting functions. I've asked them to **look rigorously, to check our egos at the door, to remember this is about what's right, not who's right, and to be clinical***

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> ***in how we look at lessons learned because we owe it to the force to do that.*** *Thanks for that question."*[2]

With 32+ years in the COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT and ASSESSMENT business, and literally HUNDREDS of papers from my graduates featured in the PMWJ over the past 15 years, I want to emphasize that project management is a broken system. The research published by KPMG/AIPM is just one of many studies showing project management is failing us.
THE INCONVENIENT TRUTHS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT "SUCCESS."

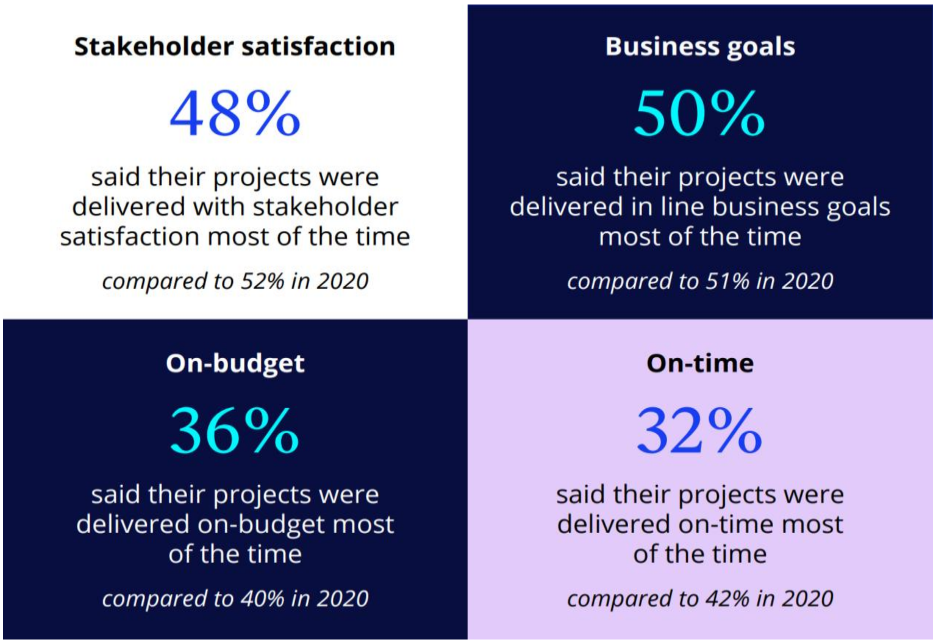


Figure 1- Five Years of AIPM and KPMG Australian Project Delivery Performance

This is not only PMI, but also IPMA, APM/APMG, et al. They are all playing pretty much the same tunes from the same sheet of music.

Lesson Learned #1-

My late friend and mentor, R. Max Wideman, told us way back in the mid-1980s that there are 4 "actors" in the world of project management. Somehow, when the late Bill Duncan and his team removed this important element, they wrote the 1996 PMBOK Guide. So the first "action item" is to follow the advice of General Caine, especially for PMI (as they are the "900 lb. Gorilla" of project management, but also for IPMA, APM/APMG et al to add back in the role of ASSET MANAGERS and OPERATIONS MANAGERS, just as shown in the 1987 PMBOK on page 1-3.

[2] General John Caine "Raisin' Cain", Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, in his Pentagon Live Briefing, 14 August, 2026- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2yjClq9ipU from minute 45:05 to 47:10.

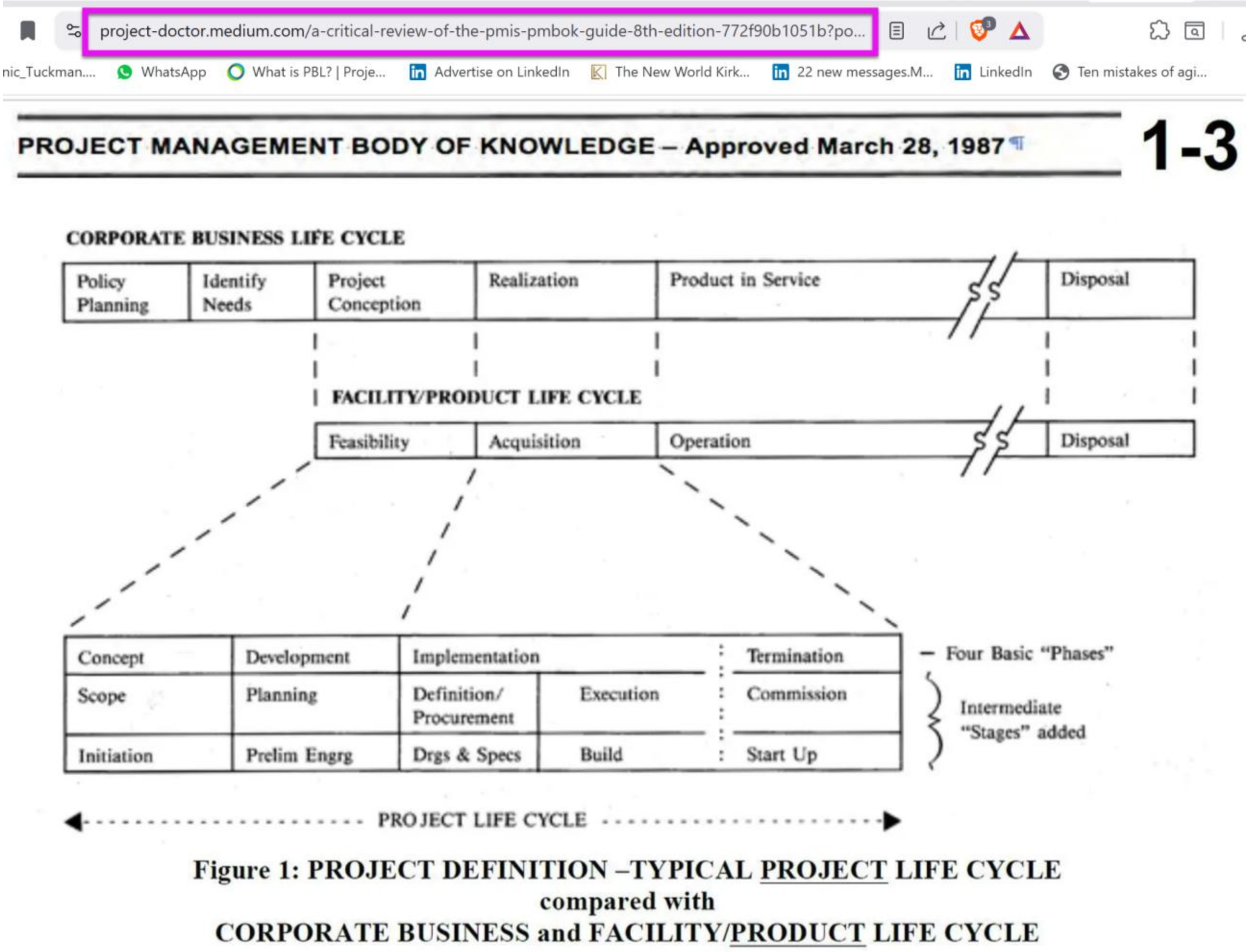


Figure 2- Asset and Operations Management as was originally published in the 1987 PMBOK.

This concept evolved over the intervening years, working collaboratively with Max as my mentor, into a more sophisticated and complete concept as shown in Figure 3, which was not only validated by research having originated by Sun Tzu 2500 years ago, but also research indicating that this remains the predominant structure of most companies today, as well as most military and governmental organizational structures, as evidenced by General Caine's comments.

We need to STOP trying to turn the Project Manager into a Strategic Decision Maker. It serves no practical function, and it sets expectations of a project manager that are unrealistic and inconsistent with his/her time horizons or formal authority. As project managers, we are the "make things happen" people as front-line foot soldiers. We are the Lieutenants, Captains, and NCO's who are the "pointy tip of the spear"- the people responsible for getting the project done on time, within budget, with as few possible violations of safety, health, or environmental laws or rules. We accept that, and for many of us, that is a very satisfying and rewarding career. Many of us have no need or even desire to move beyond that role into "Operations" or "Senior Management."

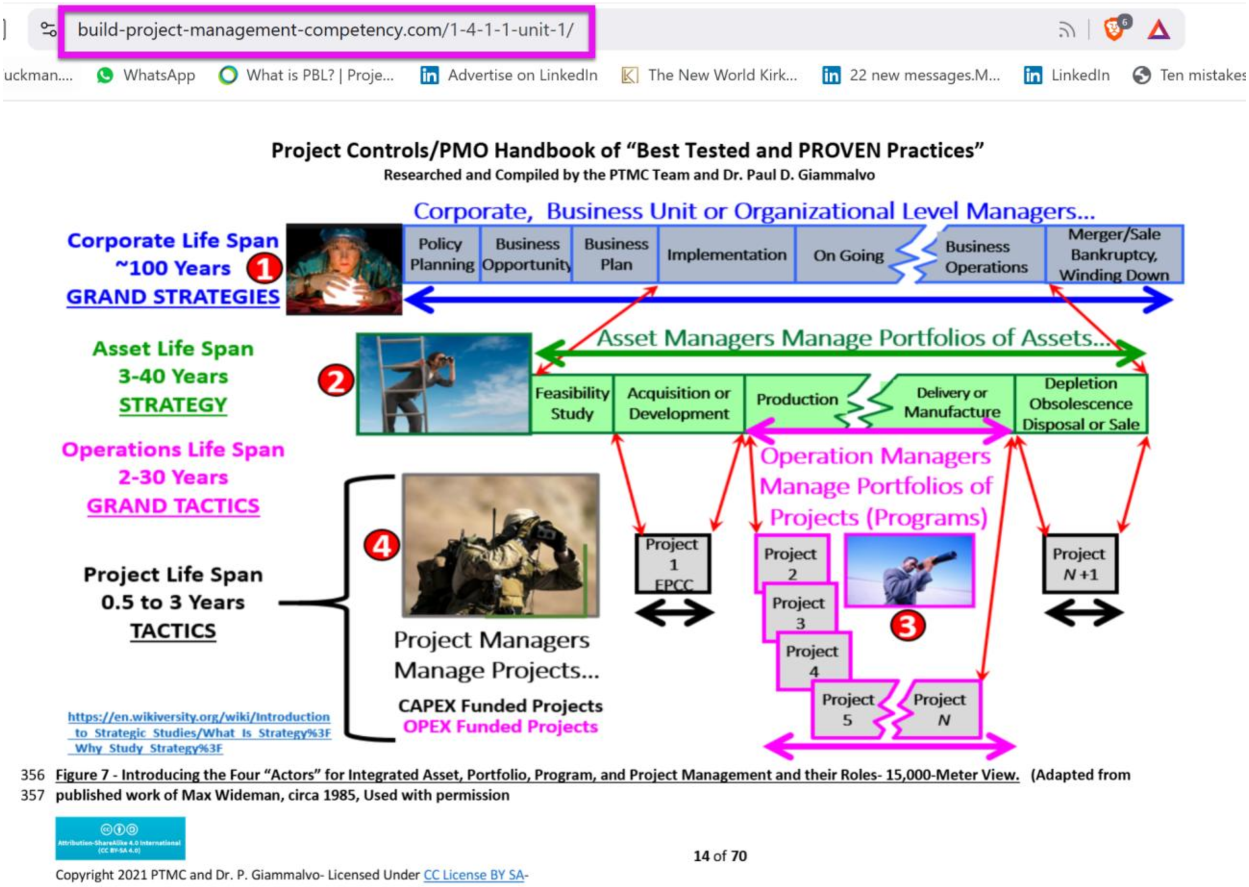


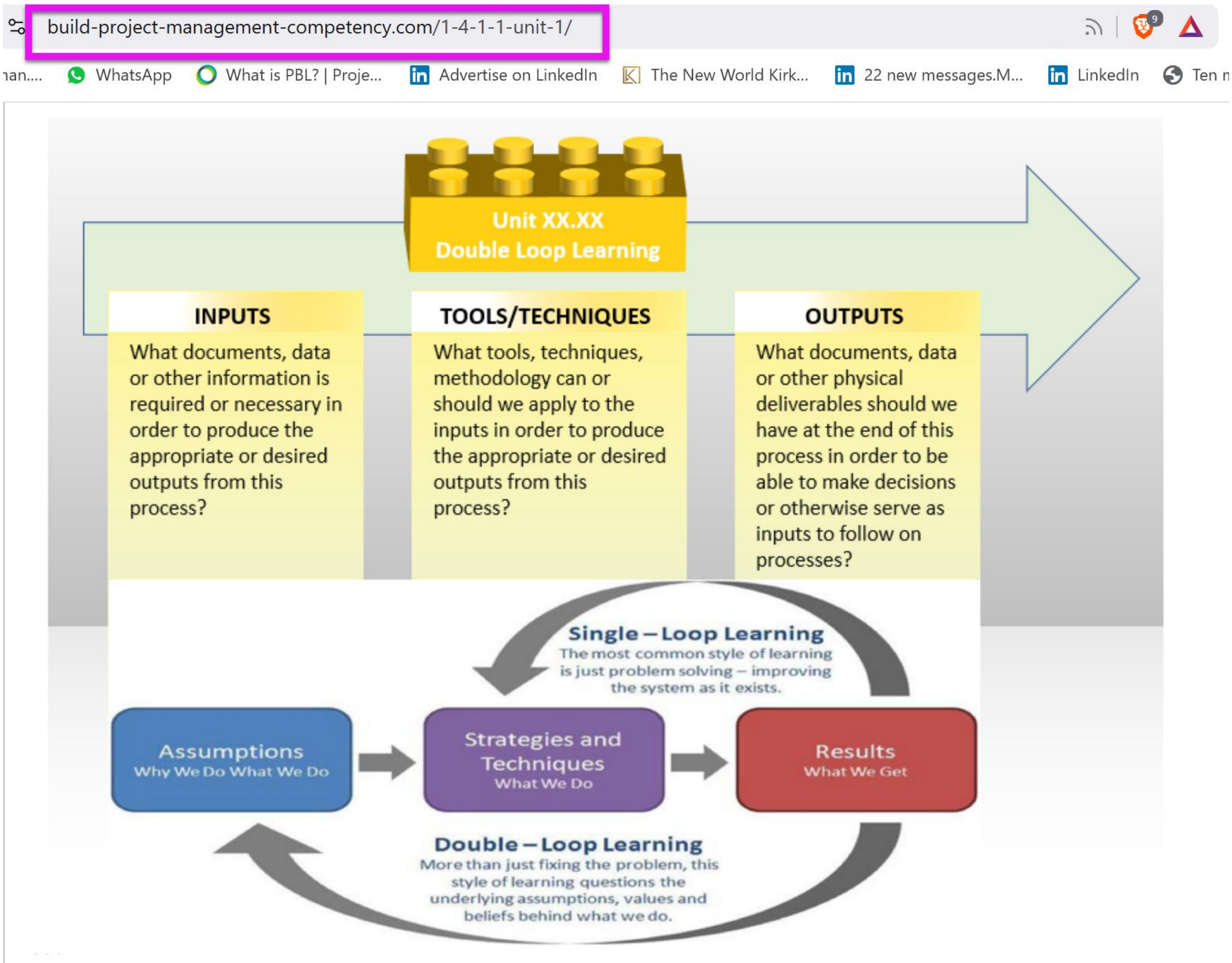
FIGURE 3 – Originated with Sun Tzu but adapted from work by R. Max Wideman circa 1985.

This is the model referenced by General Caine with the inclusion of the Project Manager. So how much longer will it take for PMI, IPMA, APM/APMG, et al. to embrace this REALITY? The only KNOWN global professional societies or organizations that recognize and reflect these 4 levels of management are AACE with its Total Cost Management Framework, the Guild of Project Controls with their "Compendium and Reference," and the Institute of Asset Management with their "Anatomy of Asset Management- V3.0".

Lesson Learned #2-

Both PMI and AACE advocate the adoption of Shewhart/Demings PDCA cycle and as we do projects as both OWNERS and CONTRACTORS where our own money is on the line if the projects fail or succeed or if the Asset created by the project fails to generate the necessary Return on Asset (RoA) or Return on Investment (RoI) to generate a favorable payback that actually adds value to the organization.

To achieve this, we have long used Argyris and Schon's Double Loop Learning Method. While Shewhart and Deming worked well for OPERATIONAL environments, Argyris and Schon's approach worked much more effectively for project management, which involves more unique processes. All we can do is urge you to TRY IT YOURSELF and see if it doesn't improve your WORKFLOW PROCESSES.



1331 **Figure 35– Process Mapping from 100 Meters Showing Continuous Process Improvements**

Figure 4- Argyris and Schoen's Double Loop Learning Process

Lesson Learned #3-

Another element seems missing, especially in the IT sector and the Agilist community. PROJECTS do NOT add value to ANY OWNER'S organization. For OWNERS, projects are always COST or INVESTMENT CENTERS. For an OWNER, all projects are a DELIVERY SYSTEM to "create, acquire, update, expand, repair, maintain and eventually, DISPOSE OF ORGANIZATION ASSETS. Only CONTRACTORS, Consultants, and Vendors can realize BENEFITS directly from a PROJECT, for whom a project is a PROFIT CENTER. Thus, the only REALISTIC model that illustrates the relationship between PROJECT MANAGEMENT and ASSET MANAGEMENT completely understandably is the work of Cohen and Graham in their 2000 "The Project Manager's MBA: How to Translate Project Decisions into Business Success"

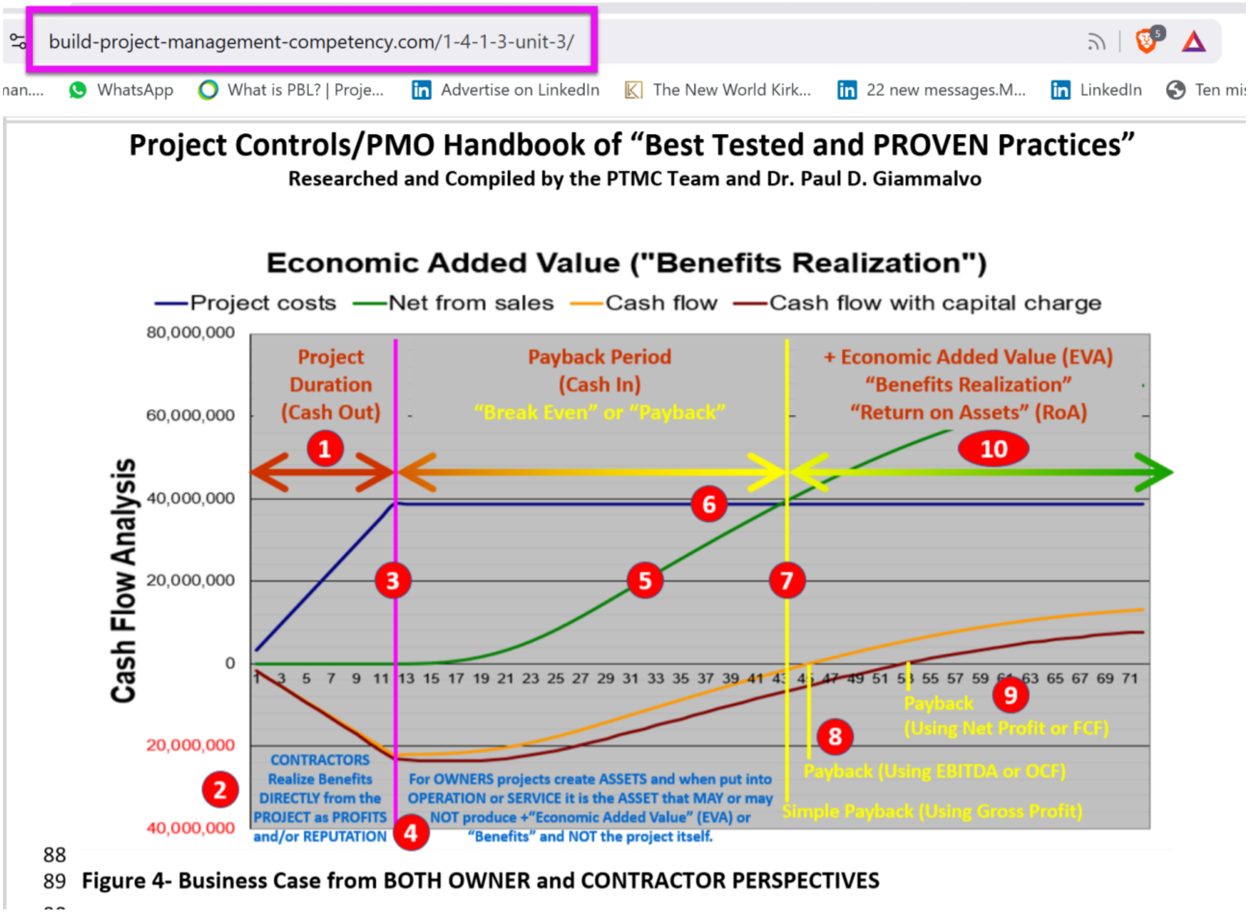


Figure 5- Cohen and Graham's 2000 "Benefits Realization" model

What Cohen and Graham have DEMONSTRATED is that there can be no POSITIVE BENEFITS to be realized from an ASSET until it has not only paid for itself, but also the cost of money to create the ASSET in the first place. This should be a CORE or FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH published by ALL professional societies.

Lesson Learned #4-

Speaking as a Disabled Vietnam War Veteran, there are several important elements the professional societies all seem to ignore, and that is there are 5 CORE or FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS coming to us from the Military.

Because we never seem to learn these lessons, KPMG/AIPM research showed that only 32% of projects finish on time. That is not the sign of a profession, but prima facie evidence of misfeasance, malfeasance or non-feasance.

What are the **NATURAL LAWS** of Planning & Scheduling?

RULE #1- "No battle plan survives first contact with the enemy." [9]
RULE #2- "Plans are USELESS, but planning is ESSENTIAL." [10]
RULE #3- "Amateurs study STRATEGY while Professionals study LOGISTICS."[11]
RULE #4- "Reality eats strategy for breakfast." (paraphrased) [12]
RULE #5- "God (or the devil?) lies in the details."[13]

9 Field Marshall Helmuth von Moltke (1880) https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001/q-oro-ed4-00007547;jsessionid=1B2F912F0CEDA2AD73C47D6CEEA5A833
10 General Dwight D Eisenhower (1950) https://quoteinvestigator.com/2017/11/18/planning/
11 General Omar Bradley (n.d.) https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/8785615-amateurs-study-strategyprofessionals-study-logistics
12 Drucker, Peter (n.d.) https://www.thecorporategovernanceinstitute.com/insights/lexicon/what-does-cultureeats-strategy-for-breakfast-mean/
13 Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe (n.d.) https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/the-devil-is-in-the-details.html

FIGURE 6- The FIVE NATURAL LAWS or TRUTHS of PLANNING AND SCHEDULING

The SOLUTION to these very real problems is to STOP trying to develop detailed Master Schedules looking out 2, 3, or more years into the future. Those are destined to be overly optimistic at best and dishonestly predicting what is impossible to achieve.

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Project Controls/PMO Handbook of "Best Tested and PROVEN Practices"
Researched and Compiled by the PTMC Team and Dr. Paul D. Giammalvo

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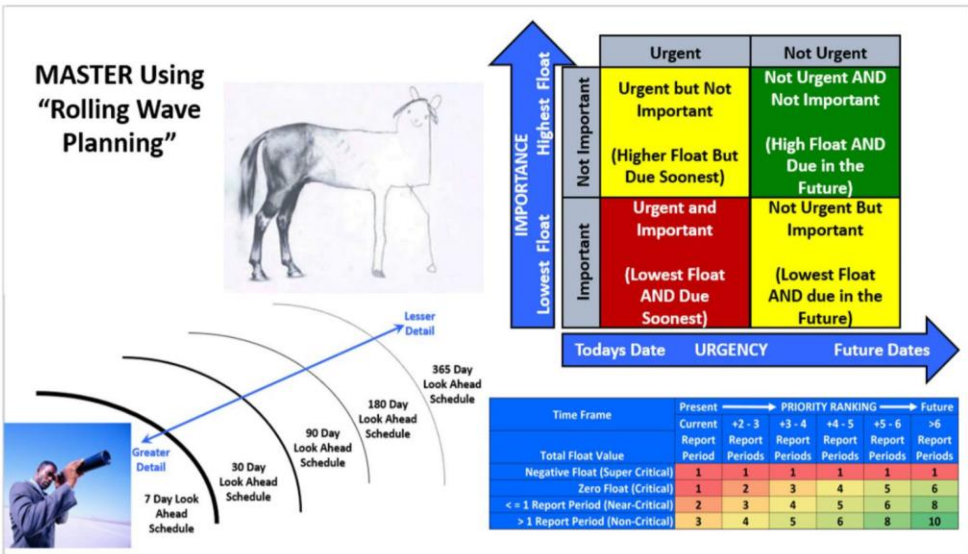

Time Frame / Total Float Value	Present → PRIORITY RANKING → Future					
	Current Report Period	+2 - 3 Report Periods	+3 - 4 Report Periods	+4 - 5 Report Periods	+5 - 6 Report Periods	>6 Report Periods
Negative Float (Super Critical)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Zero Float (Critical)	1	2	3	4	5	6
< = 1 Report Period (Near-Critical)	2	3	4	5	6	8
> 1 Report Period (Non-Critical)	3	4	5	6	8	10

Figure 74- Bringing the SUCCESSFUL SYSTEM together

Figure 7- Managing Total Float Using Rolling Wave Planning

Probably the most misunderstood or ignored practice in applied project management is the inability to apply Float Management as a core competency effectively. Effective float management directly impacts productivity, costs, and the ability to complete any project on time.

Lesson Learned #5-

Another concept we turned to from the military: General Caine touched on the topic but didn't dig too deeply into Centralized Control / Decentralized Execution and why it works.

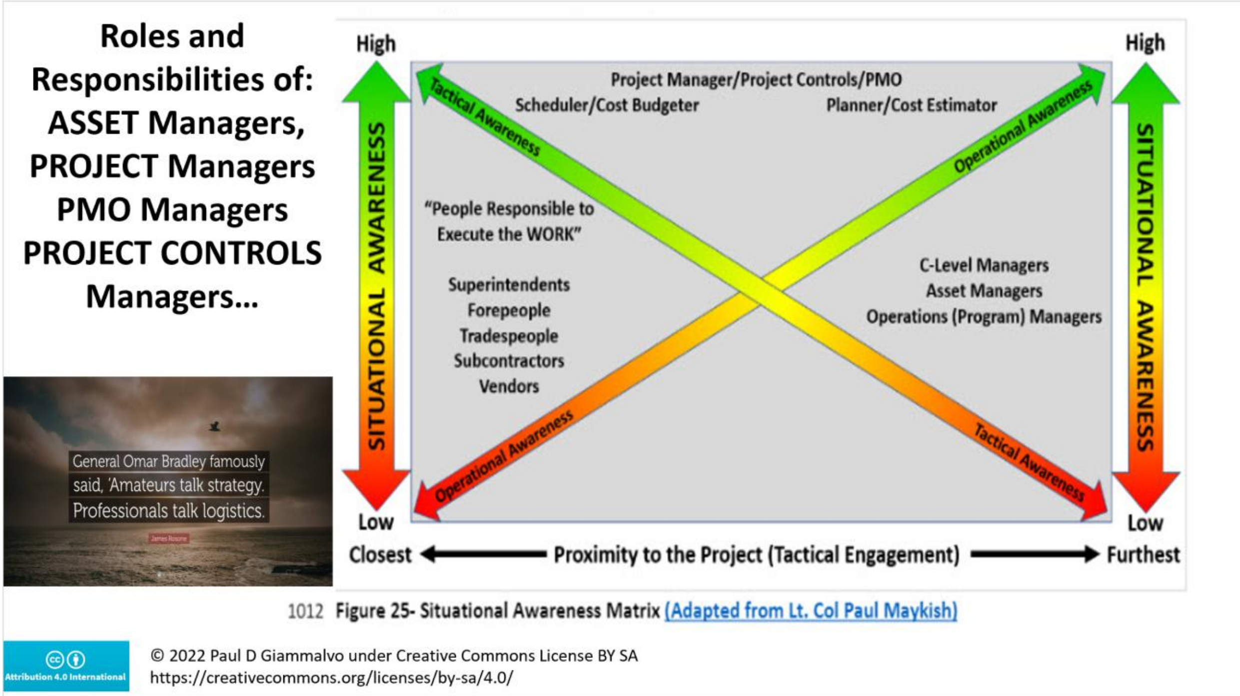

FIGURE 8- SITUATIONAL AWARENESS and the IMPORTANCE of ASSET MANAGEMENT

This dates back directly to General Omar Bradley and his observation that "AMATEURS study STRATEGY while PROFESSIONALS study LOGISTICS. Folks, Project Management and Asset Management are very much about LOGISTICS, and PMI's PMBOK and nearly all other references fail to emphasize how critical logistics management is to successfully producing ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS using project management as the DELIVERY SYSTEM. Anyone who has ever worked on a remote site construction project (Negev Airbase Construction, Ovda, Israel, Camp David Peace Accords and Distant Early Warning (DEW) Radar sites, Barrow, Alaska) quickly learns that you cannot simply run down to the nearest ACE hardware or Home Depot to pick up a replacement tool or another box of screws or nails.

Lesson Learned #6-

The final "Lesson Learned" was touched on by General Caine, and it is worth sharing: there is an OPTIMUM TIME and OPTIMUM COST, and every deviation from that OPTIMUM MIX INCREASES the RISK to the "success" or "failure" of the ASSET being created by the PROJECT.

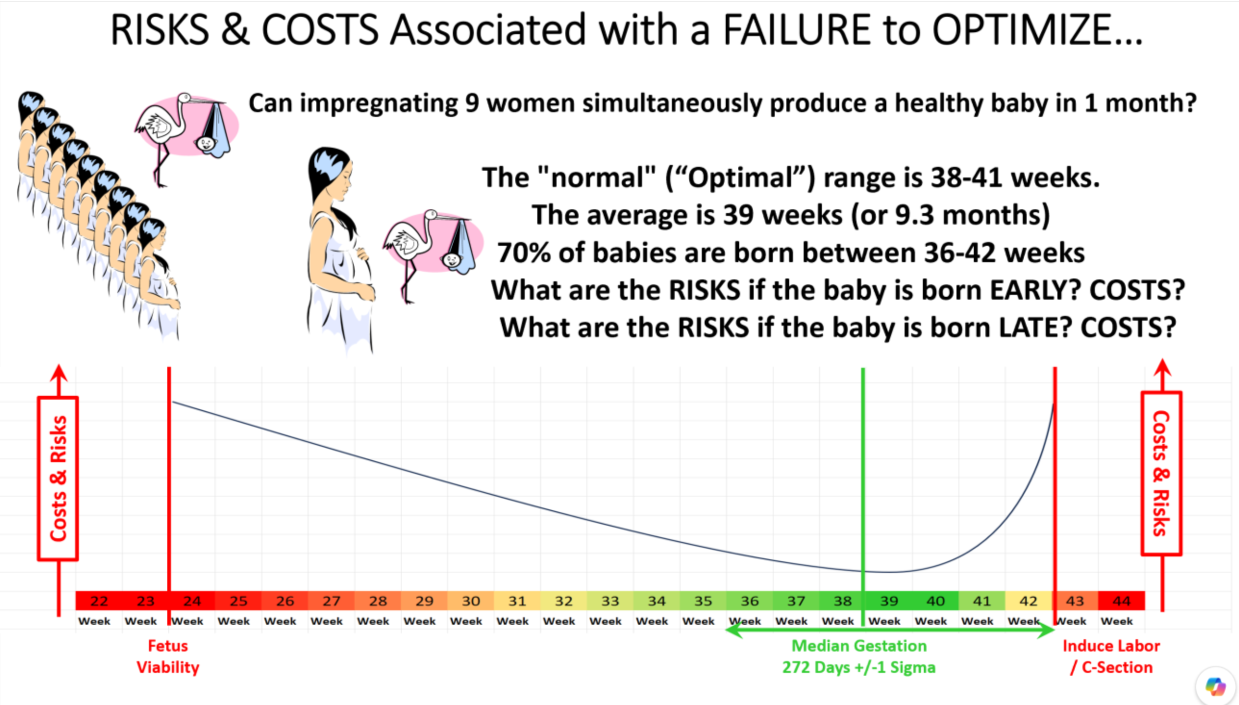

Figure 9- Risk vs Time vs Cost Optimization Visualized

This should be patently obvious to anyone who is a parent, but the same FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH applies to every project. This is another concept that is never covered in any PMI, APM/APMG, or IPMA standards or publications. Going back to my favorite researchers, Glenn Butts at NASA and Professor Bent Flyvbjerg at Oxford University, you will find that this concept underlies many of the root-cause problems identified in Figure 1.

As a final suggestion, I hope PMI, PRINCE2, or an organization like IPMA would hire General Caine to speak on this topic, as he seems truly passionate about "Lessons Learned" and its importance to the future of project management.

Dr. Paul D. Giammalvo

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