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Slow Down to Speed Up

BUSINESS INSIGHTS

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We all want to move fast on projects and complete them as quickly as possible. It is simply within our nature. Yet we commonly see organizations take that objective to an unhealthy level and severely impact their desired end state. It can be challenging to convince an organization (or individual) to speed up by slowing down when their sole focus is on getting “stuff” done, but in order to run a resilient project taking the necessary time to plan is essential.

When we encounter this situation with a client, we change our language to match theirs but with a focus on planning. We don't say “slow down to speed up”, but rather align with their desire to move quickly and help them do so through planning. Our process is designed to help our clients realize when they've skipped over this crucial step. Asking, understanding, and articulating the value of why, what, how, and when we must deliver certain pieces of value.

The goal is to lead with process and plan the project deliverables based on their expected value. This upfront roadmap and value definition allows us to drive directly to the meat of the engagement. Aligned with the client we focus our efforts deliberately and the result allows us to move faster through this upfront-planned approach. We call this activity our Inception, which results in a proposal to the client and typically lasts 1-2 weeks. This Inception is crucial to a project's success. Without it, we end up just doing “stuff” and we leave the project execution to chance.

Once we move beyond the Inception, we must continue to be planful. Change is inevitable, and as it occurs, we must adjust our plan accordingly. We take the time in every sprint to detail our plan for the next sprint and 3 sprints following. That planning allows us to define, in detail, the expected outputs, inputs, and process necessary to bridge the gap

between them. I remember my professor in college drilling this into his students, "inputs, outputs, process... process is always last!". We cannot have a team work on "stuff" when we have not yet defined the inputs and outputs and expect them to create a valuable process. This planning is what allows our teams to be resilient to change and execute fast alongside our clients.

Come pay us a visit and we'd be happy to provide an example of this process alongside our taste of the month. Imagine our expected output is the beverage, our inputs are the ingredients, and the process is the method and order of mixing them. As for the value, well that value can vary from person to person, but we see it as the ensuing conversation.

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