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Military Quotes - Planning

PART 2: CHANGE IS INEVITABLE

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"No plan of operations extends with certainty beyond the first encounter with the enemy's main strength."

- Helmuth von Moltke

This quote has been simplified by others more recently to say: "no plan survives first contact" or "everyone has a plan until they get punched in the nose". All of these are a great way of saying that every plan ever created will undoubtedly change the moment you begin to execute it.

So, what does that mean for us and our projects? Does it mean that we should avoid planning altogether because it will be useless right off the bat? The answer is no of course, just check out [my post from last week!](#)

What it means is that we should not rely on any process that requires us to treat the original plan as some sort of guide to the truth. Too many organizations treat the project plan as a binding agreement to which any change is seen as a mistake. Changes are simply things we have learned that we didn't know at the start, and we should incorporate them into our plan.

It also means that as soon we learn of these changes, we need to update said plan so that we can continue to use it to make decisions. If we are going to update the plan quite often, we must find a way to change it quickly so that it can be of use to us. This includes how to and when to escalate changes and get approvals.

You must ensure that your planning communicates changes clearly to all the impacted parties and that they understand the reason for the change. In the army, we used a common format to help us accomplish this (something that all plans were required to have) - whether you had 15 seconds to create the plan or 15 days.

At Clientek, we focus our entire model around the idea that these changes are just part of life and that we must embrace those changes to provide truly valuable outcomes to our customers. Any other process or frame of mind spurns your employee's ability to learn and adapt to the changing needs of your business and clients.

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