

Pre-Mortem

Save your badge project while you still can!



RECONNECTLEARNING
2014 OPEN BADGES SUMMIT

OBJECTIVE

Often in projects, the learning is all at the wrong end. Usually after things have already gone horribly wrong or off-track, members of the team gather in a *post-mortem* to sagely reflect on what bad assumptions and courses of action added up to disaster. What makes this doubly unfortunate is that those same team members, somewhere in their collective experience, may have seen it coming.

A pre-mortem is a way to open a space in a project at its inception to directly address its risks. Unlike a more formal risk analysis, the pre-mortem asks team members to directly tap into their experience and intuition, at a time when it is needed most, and is potentially the most useful.

INSTRUCTIONS

Conducting a pre-mortem is simple. At the beginning of a project, the forward momentum and enthusiasm are often at their highest; these conditions do not naturally lend themselves to sharing notions of failure. By conducting a pre-mortem, a group deliberately creates a space to share their input, at a time when they can best act on it.

A pre-mortem is best conducted with key team members present and after the goals and a basic plan have been conceived. Use your Concept Poster as a starting point for this activity.

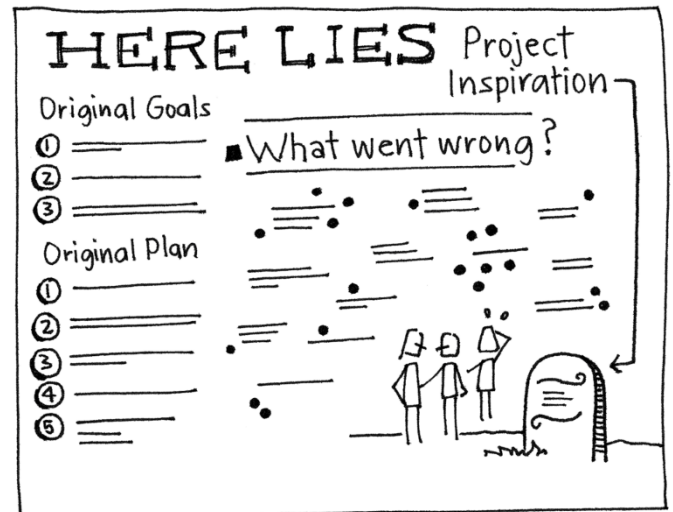
This is an opportunity for your team to reflect on your collective experience and directly name risks or elephants lurking in the room. It's a chance to voice concerns that might otherwise go unaddressed until it's too late.

Spend some time as a group considering the following questions. When you are ready, close the exercise by creating a rank-ordered list of issues that need to be addressed. Your group should decide what actions need to be taken to avoid certain death.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- what went wrong?
- why did this project end in disaster?
- why didn't we accomplish our goals?
- who should have been involved from the start?
- what assumptions turned out to be false?
- what should we have done differently?
- what if...?

NOTES:



PREEMPTIVE CARE PLAN

List the top 5 issues that need to be resolved for this project to survive:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____