

Tone and Momentum in a Construction Project

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The Owner sets the tone for how other members of the project team will work. When the Owner loses focus, the project loses focus. Conversely, if the Owner keeps focus, the project keeps focus. The best way for the Owner to maintain focus is by using a Demands Action-Demands Accountability (DA-DA) system-both internally and externally. When this happens, all project team members begin to act in a similar manner.

Project personnel need to know that if they promise something by a certain date, the Owner will be expecting it on that date. They need to know that if a piece of paper or email crosses their desk related to the project, they need to act on it *right now*. If the Owner demands such actions, project personnel will comply.

If, however, an Owner does not make decisions at the time agreed upon with the team, or if the Owner is lazy about internal and external management of the project, then the other project team members will know they can let other work take priority, because no one will be worrying about it.

The Owner should also develop, then maintain, the project's momentum. This is slightly different from setting the tone. It means doing things in the right order, in the most efficient manner, making decisions at the right time, crawling before you walk, walking before you run. It means moving slowly and methodically at the start to take enough time to set the foundation for a successful project. Then, when all project parameters are established and have been met through rigorous planning (around the end of schematic design), it is the responsibility of the Owner to kick the blocks out from under the wheels, let the machinery start rolling downhill, and jump in, ready to work the steering wheel and brake (but only if absolutely necessary).



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