Share a book letter: *How Big Things Get Done*

Subject: *‘Think slow, Act fast’* model versus the *‘Think fast, Act slow’* model

Dear ……… ,

Why do projects, big or small, fail to be delivered on budget, on time and deliver the projected benefits? Because most projects are complex and start on the wrong foot.

Never in history the data of Big Projects around the world, all continents, were brought together to compare them on budget, timing and the realization of vision or purpose. Never before, it could be concluded that only 0,5% of projects are delivered within these parameters. In other words, average practice is a disaster, and best practice are rare. WHAT is causing these projects to go wrong all the time? WHY does this happen? And HOW to avoid the traps in complex projects.

Projects don’t go wrong, they start wrong. There are two distinct stages in any project: The planning stage and the delivery stage. Planning is characterized by creative and careful thinking and is rather cheap compared to the delivery of a project. Delivery is where projects go wrong in a big way, as real money is spent in this stage. Planning is the safe harbor. Delivery is being on a rough sea.

The authors came up with two overriding models. The first model is ‘Think slow, Act fast’. Meaning to think through all possible alternatives, paving the way for smooth delivery. This is typically NOT done, considering the disastrous outcome of this research. Most projects, all types, start on the wrong foot by applying the second model ‘Think fast, Act slow’, which are mostly crashing into disaster. This model is most often based on commitment bias. Jumping into delivery before ready. The planning stage is most often rather cheap compared with the work in the delivery stage, where serious money is spent, and projects gets vulnerable.

The ‘Think fast, Act slow’ model is based on the ‘Need for Speed’, by setting severe timelines, start right away with the delivery stage, and demand that everyone involved work at a furious pace. Get the spade in the ground fast now. This thinking is as misguided as it is common. Haste makes waste. The answer is Make Haste – Slowly.

Enthusiasm is having a deep routed commitment. Being deeply optimistic, which is our natural way of being, is a different thing. Optimism makes people overconfident species. We need optimism and a can-do attitude to inspire projects and see them through. Unchecked optimism, however, leads to unrealistic forecasts, poorly defined goals, better options ignored, problems not spotted and dealt with, and no back up plans to counteract the inevitable negative surprises. Commit to have an open mind; that is, commit to not commit.

The foundation of a successful project starts with the conversation with a simple question: “Why are you doing this project?” Few projects start this way. All should. Be aware that projects are not goals in themselves. Projects are how goals are achieved. Developing a clear, informed understanding of what the goal of the project is and why, and never losing sight of it from beginning to end, is the foundation of a successful project.

Experience is invaluable. Experience is what elevates the best project leaders, in both planning and delivery. There is no better asset for a big project than an experienced leader with an experienced team. Highly experienced project leaders overflow with tacit knowledge. Knowledge gained from personal experience about the many facets of projects they have overseen. It improves their judgment profoundly. Only people can be experienced, not things like technology.

Listen to the Podcast, study the Mindmap and the Actions for Impact, then read the Summary for more in-depth insights, ideas, and inspiration. Here is the link to the book.

Enjoy reading and listening.

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Here is the [link](https://globalreadingclub.com/books/how-big-things-get-done) that takes you straight to the book *How Big Things Get Done.*

Enjoy reading and listening.

(Your name)

P.S. Attached is the Newsletter, covering the book *How Big Things Get Done.*