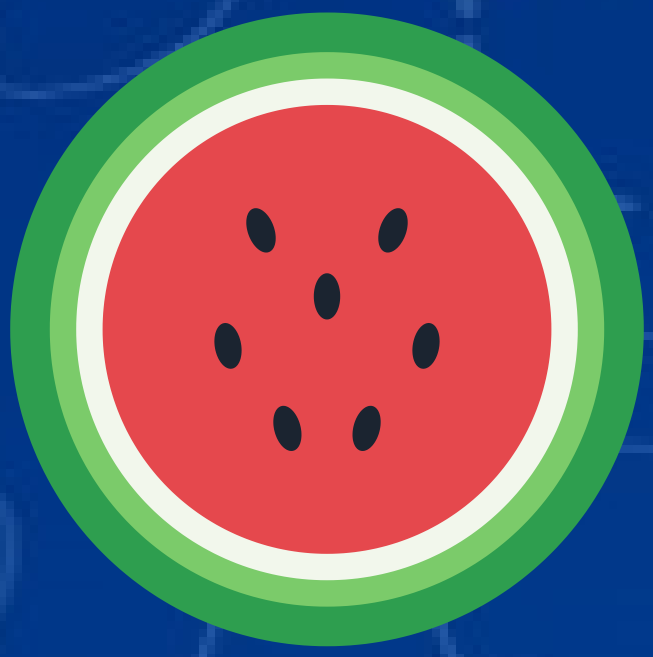
PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Is your project a watermelon?

Green on the outside. Red on the inside.

5 warning signs every sponsor should spot, and how to fix them.



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Swipe →

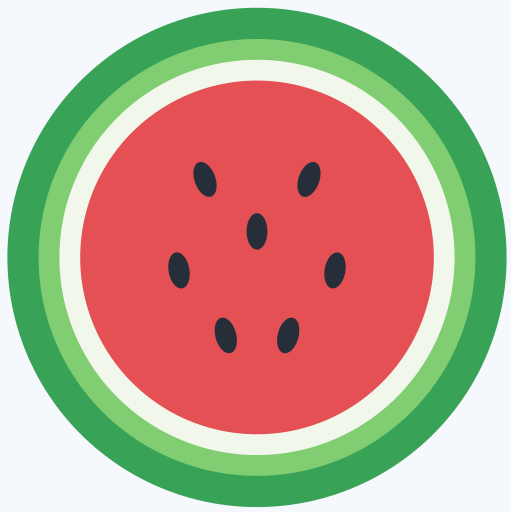
Warning sign 1 of 5

Green for weeks, then suddenly red

Status never passes through amber. Problems were there all along; they just weren't reported.

SPONSOR, ASK:

“What would have to happen for this to turn amber?”



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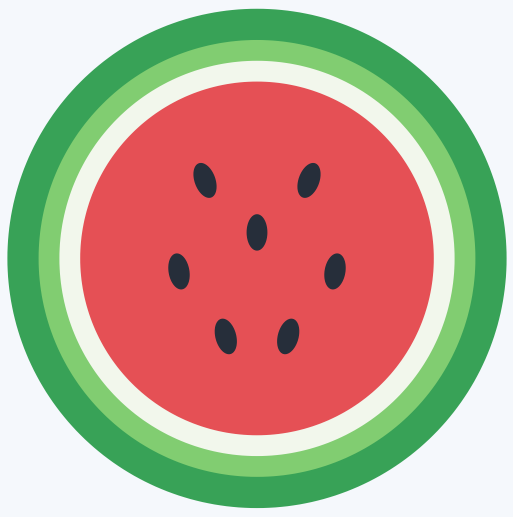
Warning sign 2 of 5

Nobody can say what “green” means

Each project manager uses their own judgement, so the colours can't be compared across projects.

SPONSOR, ASK:

“Show me our written definition of green, amber and red.”



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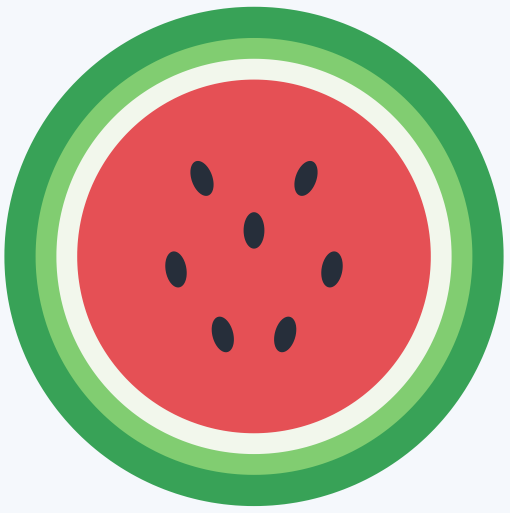
Warning sign 3 of 5

Milestones slip, but the end date doesn't

The delay is absorbed on paper. The final date only moves when it can no longer be hidden.

SPONSOR, ASK:

“How far has each milestone moved from the baseline?”



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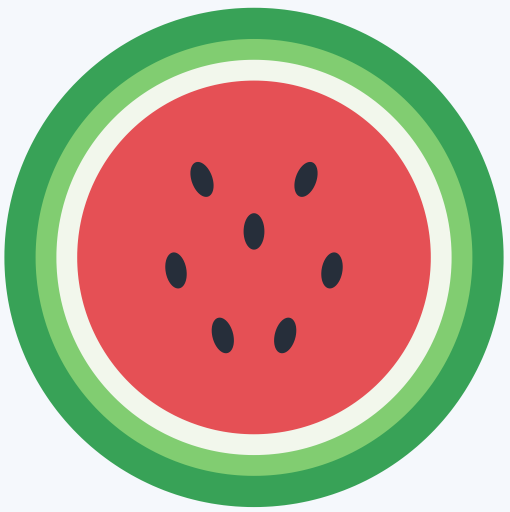
Warning sign 4 of 5

The risk log hasn't changed in a month

Same risks, same owners, no new actions. A static risk log is a sign nobody is looking.

SPONSOR, ASK:

“Which risk changed this month, and what did we do about it?”



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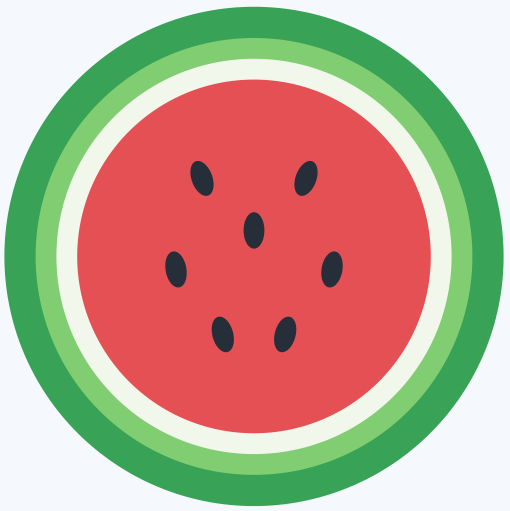
Warning sign 5 of 5

Reports describe activity, not progress

“We held six workshops” is not the same as “we finished two deliverables”.

SPONSOR, ASK:

“What did we finish, compared with what we planned to finish?”



The fix

Make status honest and useful

Green	Amber	Red
On plan	At risk; the team can recover it	Needs a sponsor decision to recover

- **Write down what each colour means** and use it on every project.
- **Report against baseline dates**, so slippage is visible.
- **Add “decisions needed”**: who, what, by when.
- **Reward early amber.** Bad news early is good governance.

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YOUR TURN

Which sign have you seen most often?

Tell us in the comments. 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.

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