



**MARGARET
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@MBOSSSEN

CHAPTER 07

PREPARE TO ADJUST

ADJUSTMENTS ARE A PART OF REALITY

The directions we choose change the objects we make, the effects we see, and the experiences we have.

You can **adjust your course** to accommodate new forces.

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- DON'T SEEK FINALIZATION
 - DON'T PROCRASTINATE
 - PERFECTION ISN'T POSSIBLE, BUT PROGRESS IS

THE SUM IS GREATER THAN ITS PARTS

We need to understand the sum of a lot of pieces to make sense of what we have.

WE MIGHT CREATE:

- A HIERARCHICAL DIAGRAM OF HOW THE PRODUCT IS STRUCTURED
- A FLOW DIAGRAM OF HOW USERS EXPERIENCE THE PRODUCT
- A LEXICON OF TERMS THE PRODUCT WILL USE
- ALL OF THESE ITEMS CREATED TO MAKE SENSE TO OUR USERS

WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE WHOLE AND ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- What will users experience?
- Who will work on what, why, and with whom?
- When will things be released and how?
- How will things change over time?



IT'S EASY TO REACH AGREEMENT ALONE.

Your team should be able to influence and react to your tools and methods.

Make prototypes **to get feedback from users** on language and structure.

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- GETTING EVERYONE INVOLVED EARLY IS CRUCIAL
 - CHOOSE A DIRECTION TOGETHER FOR EVERY STEP
 - SPOT WEAKNESSES AND PLACES FOR IMPROVEMENT BY VIEWING THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF OTHERS

Don't hide from
other stakeholders.

Don't wait until
the end of a project
to talk to users.

~~ARGUE ABOUT~~ DISCUSS IT UNTIL IT'S CLEAR

It's totally normal for fear, anxiety, and insecurity to get in the way of progress. Learning to **work with others** while they're experiencing these realities is the hardest part of making sense of a mess.

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- TENSION CAN LEAD TO ARGUMENTS
 - ARGUMENTS CAN CAUSE RESENTMENT
 - RESENTMENT CAN KILL MOMENTUM
 - WHEN MOMENTUM STALLS, MESSAGES GROW LARGER AND MEANER

TRY TO UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE'S POSITIONS AND PERCEPTIONS:

- How does this mess look to them?
- What does their mental model look like?
- What words do they use?
- Could your language mislead them?
- Do they agree with the intent, direction, and goals you outlined?
- Do they agree on the level you're working at?



IF IT ISN'T UNDER THE FLOORBOARDS,
IT'S A FAÇADE.

IA is like the frame and foundation of a building. You can't add the frame and foundation after the building is up.

Buildings without frames do not exist.

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- WHEN YOUR STRUCTURE AND INTENT DON'T LINE UP, THINGS FALL APART
 - GOOGLE "USED TO BE A PIZZA HUT"

WE SERVE MANY MASTERS.

No matter what the mess is made of, we have many masters, many versions of reality, and many needs to serve.

Information is full of history and preconceptions.

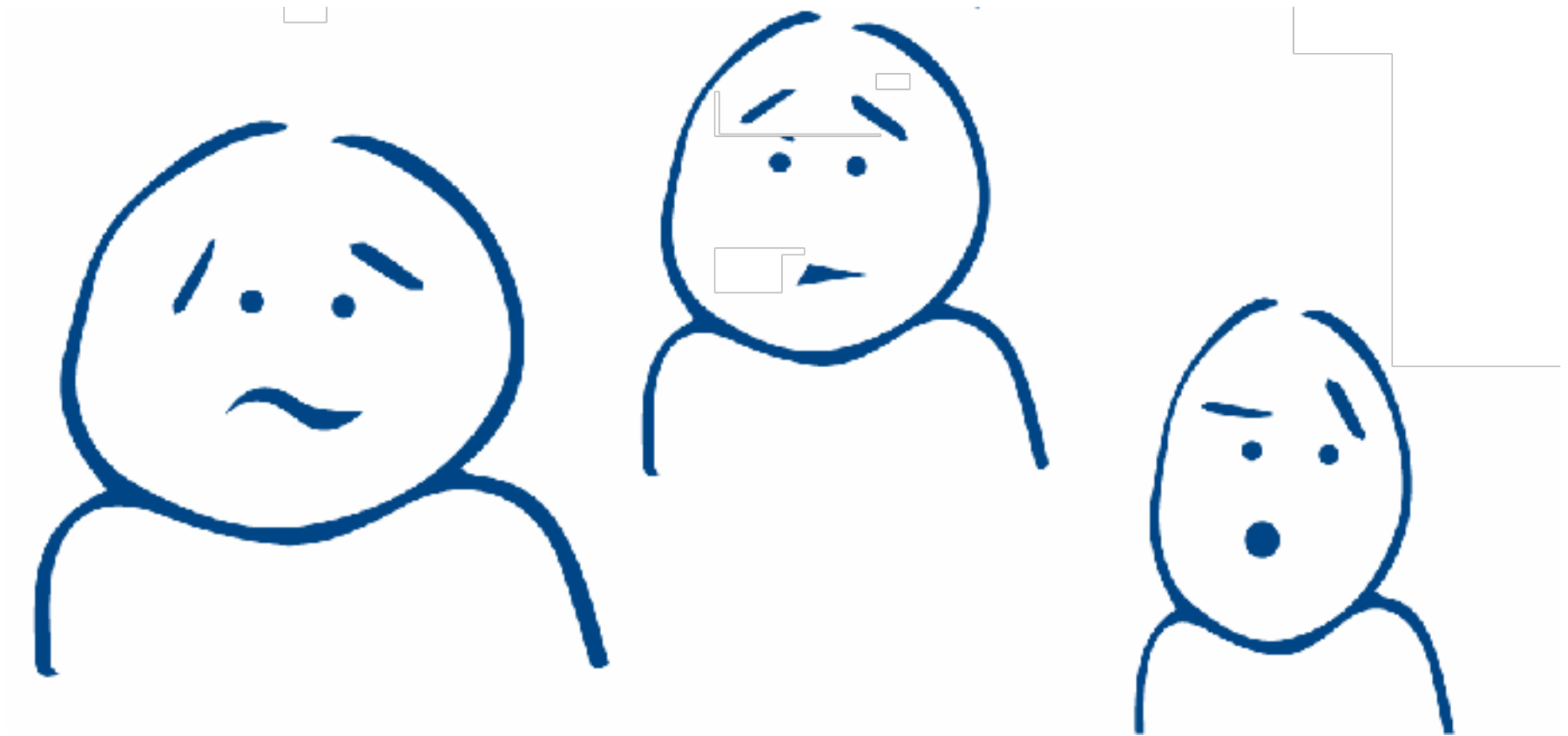
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- IT'S OUR JOB TO UNCOVER SUBJECTIVE REALITY
 - WE MUST IDENTIFY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WHAT STAKEHOLDERS THINK USERS NEED...
 - AND WHAT USERS THINK THEY NEED FOR THEMSELVES

STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO:

- Know where the project is headed
- See patterns and potential outcomes
- Frame the appropriate solution for users

USERS NEED TO:

- Know how to get around
- Have a sense of what's possible based on their needs and expectations
- Understand the intended meaning



MAKE ROOM FOR INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

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“HEY, NICE IA!” SAID NO ONE, EVER.

No one comments on the plumbing or electricity of a building unless the toilet is clogged or the lights aren't working. Then all of a sudden, pipes and wires are a hot topic of conversation.

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- PEOPLE DON'T COMPLIMENT OR EVEN CRITIQUE INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE UNLESS IT'S BROKEN
 - IF YOU PRACTICE INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE FOR THE GLORY, GET READY TO BE DISAPPOINTED.
 - BUT IF YOU PRACTICE IT FOR THE CLARITY IT CAN BRING, GET READY FOR SOME SERIOUSLY INTERESTING WORK.

BE THE FILTER, NOT THE GROUNDS.

When making coffee, the filter's job is to get the grit out before a user drinks it.

Sensemaking is like removing the grit from the ideas we're trying to give to users.

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- SHED LIGHT ON THE MESSSES THAT PEOPLE SEE BUT DON'T TALK ABOUT.
 - MAKE SURE EVERYONE AGREES ON THE INTENT BEHIND THE WORK YOU'RE DOING TOGETHER.
 - HELP PEOPLE CHOOSE A DIRECTION AND DEFINE GOALS TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS.
 - EVALUATE AND REFINE THE LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURES YOU USE TO PURSUE THOSE GOALS.

THIS IS HARD!

It's Hard to:

- ...decide to tear down a wall, take off the roof, or rip up the floorboards.
- ...admit when something architectural isn't serving you.
- ...find the words for what's wrong.
- ...deal with the time between understanding something is wrong and fixing it.
- ...get there.
- ...be honest about what went right and what went poorly in the past.
- ...argue with people you work with about fuzzy things like meaning and truth.
- ...ask questions.
- ...hear criticism.
- ...start over.
- ...get to good.

IT'S FAR MORE REWARDING THAN HARD

It's Rewarding to:

- ...set a goal and reach it.
- ...know that you're communicating in a language that makes sense to others.
- ...help someone understand something in a way they hadn't before.
- ...see positive changes from the insights you gather.
- ...know that something is good.
- ...give the gifts of clarity, realistic expectations, and clear direction.
- ...make this world a little clearer.
- ...make sense of the messes you face.

Have you explored the depth and edges of the mess that you face?

Do you know why you have the intent you have?

Do you know how you will solve your problem?

Have you thought about contexts and channels your users could be in?

What language will you use to clarify your direction?

What specific goals and baselines will you measure your progress against?

Have you put together structures and tested them to ensure your message comes through to users?

Are you prepared to adjust?

THANK YOU.

QUESTIONS?

PLEASE CONTACT:

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