



# Tracking / The Politics

*Subtitle*

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## Why this article ?

Those who are developing and implementing sophisticated project scheduling and monitoring systems, often are confronted with force fields that have many of the characteristics of dark energy: very much present but invisible.

The scenario is standard and, to the trained eye, is easily recognised:

- a layer of young and enthusiast pm's adopt the new system
- they start producing reports, analysis and recommendations
- then a layer of senior staff starts expressing worries about what the reports tell
- then a layer of more senior staff starts expressing concern about the contents of the reports, that it should not reach the customer, and certainly not top management
- and it goes on for a while until, the system is dropped, because, well, because ...
- finally, the messenger is shot in one way or another.

We've all been there, isn't it ?

Lets see if we can do something about it.

## Better to be Cardinal de Richelieu than king Louis XIII

Kings take the blame, eventually they end beheaded. The Richelieu's often escape all these unpleasantnesses. Richelieu knew everything and delivered to the king on an "as needed" basis , or better on an "as wished" basis.

This being said, what is the best attitude for a pm to take.

I propose to consider these points:

- as a pm you must know everything, the good and the bad
- use the best available techniques and tools
- it is your professional capital that is at stake
- be fully informed as a matter of personal protection
- adapt to the internal culture
  - if the culture is one of shooting the messenger, only deliver what is acceptable to the culture.
  - if the culture is one of negationism (refusing to see the reality) deliver the real messages in small quanta, exposing as few people as possible.
  - avoid making people lose face.
  - be discreet, be a diplomat: learn to wrap the real messages inside "acceptable" content.
  - use humor.

- be prepared for frequent changes of mood.
  - do not tolerate your professional capital to be degraded
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