

Six questions before you repeat the date.

For any program you've committed to a board, a customer or an investor. Ten minutes. Write the answers down before you say them out loud.

1 What did we promise, and to whom?

Write the exact sentence. If three people would write three different sentences, that's your first finding.

2 What do we know, and what are we only assuming?

Status reports tend to blend the two into one color. Pull them apart. Count any AI speed-up nobody has measured as an assumption.

3 What has to happen elsewhere first, and who owns it?

A person's name, not a team's. "Platform" is not an owner.

4 Which decision keeps coming back around?

If it's been on the agenda three times, it probably has no owner. Write down who could end it today.

5 Whose capacity is this plan quietly counting on?

Look for the same engineer named in two plans.

6 If it ships on time, does it still matter?

Some dates outlive the reason anyone chose them.

How to read it. A name and a fact for all six? Repeat the date with a straight face. Each blank is somewhere to look before the next steering meeting. My rule of thumb: three or more blanks and the date is a hope, not a plan. Better to know that now than in a quarter.

Print this. Hand it to a colleague. It's yours to pass around. If you'd like a second pair of eyes on your answers, write to badri@deliveryliftpm.com. Twenty minutes, no pitch.

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