

Six-Word Lessons

For
Project Managers

100 Six-Word Lessons
To Make You A Better
Project Manager

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6wordlessons.com

Legend has it that Ernest Hemingway was challenged by some friends to write a story in six words. Hemingway responded to the challenge with the following story: *For sale: baby shoes, never worn.*

The story tickles the imagination. Why were the shoes never worn? Were they too small? Did the baby die? Was the baby not able to wear shoes? Any of these are plausible explanations left up to the reader's imagination.

This style of writing has a number of aliases: postcard fiction, flash fiction, micro fiction, and sudden fiction. A dear friend of mine, Tom Fowler, introduced me to this style of writing over a cup of coffee. I was entranced with the style of writing and started thinking about how this extreme brevity of writing could apply in today's micro-burst communication culture of text messages, tweets, and wall posts. Thus the inspiration for **Six-Word Lessons**.

In **Six-Word Lessons** you'll get a bevy of wisdom nuggets with a practical explanation of how to apply the nuggets in your day-to-day routine. Rather than pore through pages and pages of content trying to mine nuggets, **Six-Word Lessons** gives them to you straight up; no strainer needed.

My hope is that you're able to mine some great take-aways from **Six-Word Lessons** and improve how you do things day-in and day-out. Tell me how it's impacted you at story@6wordlessons.com.

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**Know the
Problem,
Define the
Need**

1

Can't write down problem, kill project.

If the Project Sponsor cannot clearly articulate the problem, don't bother proceeding.

Get the sponsor or designee to physically write down the problem statement for all to understand.

2

Sponsor feels problem pain, project on!

Projects that are worth doing mean the sponsor feels some pain that the project can cure.

Make sure you have the right sponsor who feels the benefit of project success and the pain of status quo.

3

Team doesn't understand problem. Build what?

When the team doesn't understand the problem the likelihood of a satisfactory solution is left to chance.

Take the time to ensure the team understands the problem the way the sponsor understands the problem.

4

Sponsor doesn't care
about problem. Thud.

A problem that is no longer on the sponsor's radar means it will die a slow death.

Things change. Make sure the sponsor still considers the problem a priority and one which needs to be fixed now.

5

Requirements unclear: team gets to decide.

Unclear requirements leave too much interpretation up to the team which results in building the wrong solution.

Take the time to ensure the requirements are clearly understood and agreed upon among all parties.

6

Bad requirements: do bad stuff faster.

Poorly written requirements can cause you to build a solution that just does stupid things faster.

Don't accept requirements which are of poor quality or don't focus on solving the stated problem.

7

Requirements are outdated. Still using microfilm?

Requirements written eons ago may not apply in the world here and now and very likely won't meet the current need.

Do take advantage of work previously done; just make sure the requirements are relevant for today and tomorrow.

8

Business evolves. Do requirements keep up?

Business changes cause even the most current requirements to change; ignoring change means weak solution.

Be cognizant of sudden or anticipated changes and ensure the requirements reflect the new business environment.

9

Problem not measurable. Solution not doable.

A problem that cannot be quantified makes solving the problem highly subjective and more subject to failure.

Ensure there are clear and objective criteria for knowing that the problem was solved. No squishy criteria.

See the entire Six-Word
Lesson Series at
6wordlessons.com

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