



A Day Late and a Dollar Short

Managing Feet Draggers, Wheel Spinners,
Dawdlers, and Obstructionists

September 25, 2025



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Dana Schuler Drummmond, MA, CFRE, GPC

Who is this lady?

Dana Schuler Drummond, MA, CFRE, GPC

- **35+ years in the nonprofit sector**
- **BS in journalism, MS mass communications**
- **Grant consultant since 2006**
- **Helped clients secure \$94 million in last five years**
- **First person in OK to earn both CFRE and GPC**
- **Teacher/trainer for OSU, GPA, AFP, Grant Writing USA**
- **2022 Professional Fundraiser Award, AFP EOK**
- **Founding president, OK chapter of GPA**



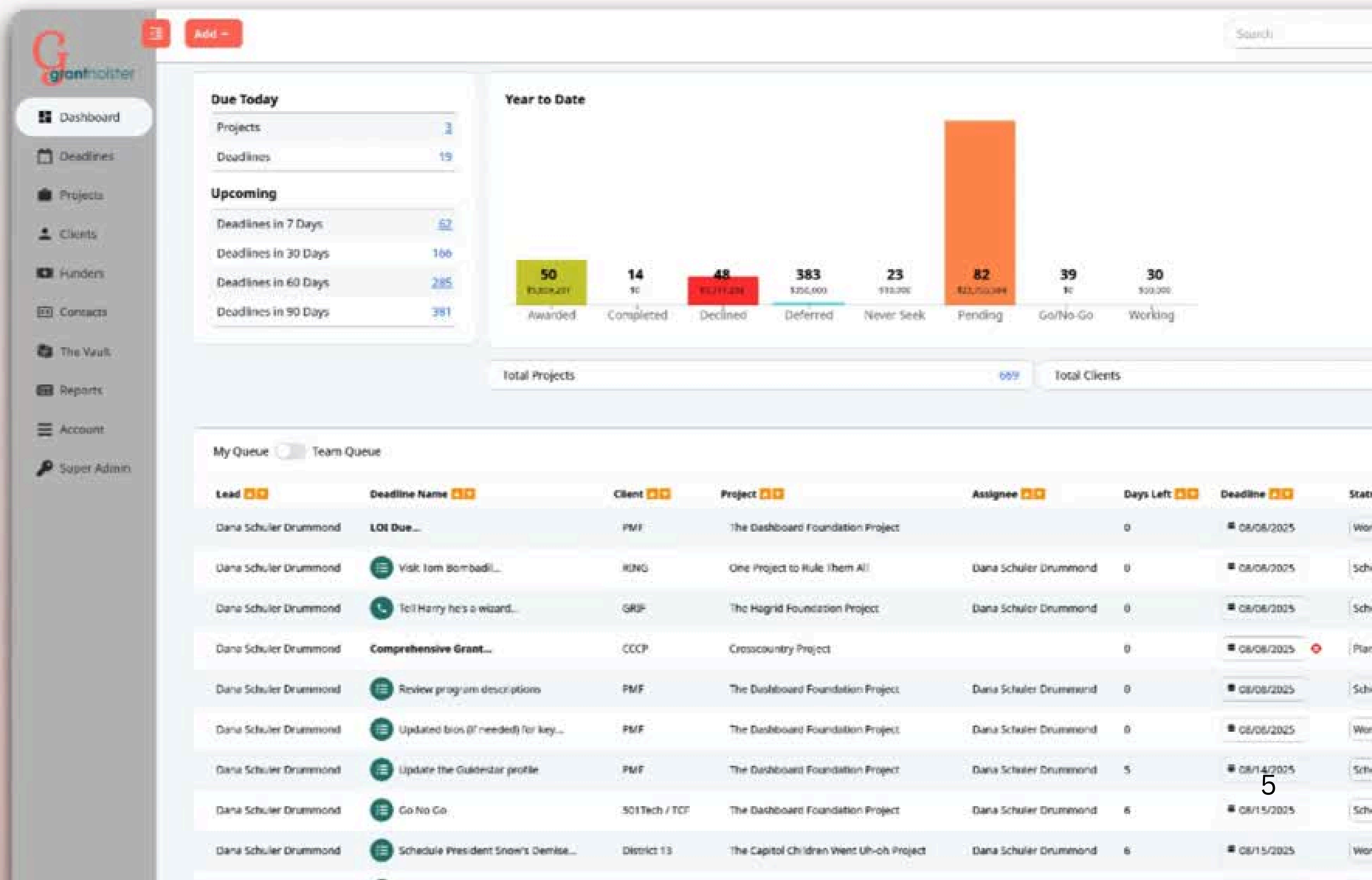
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Outcomes:

- **Identify common pain points**
- **Gain a sense of community**
- **Get specific and practical strategies to improve responses**

I solemnly swear:

- What is said here stays here
- I will participate
- If technology messes up, I won't freak out





Pain Points

Chaosasaurus Wrecks



Component Priorities

Funder Alignment

Definition of Project Support Letters

Decision

Documents

BUDGET!

Assigning Duties

OUR COMES

Funder
Portals

Approval Layers

Value Leave

Procrastination⁹







Coming Priorities
Decision Project
Decision
Management
Letters
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Get Ready!

Poll: Which persona resonates most with you?

Join at

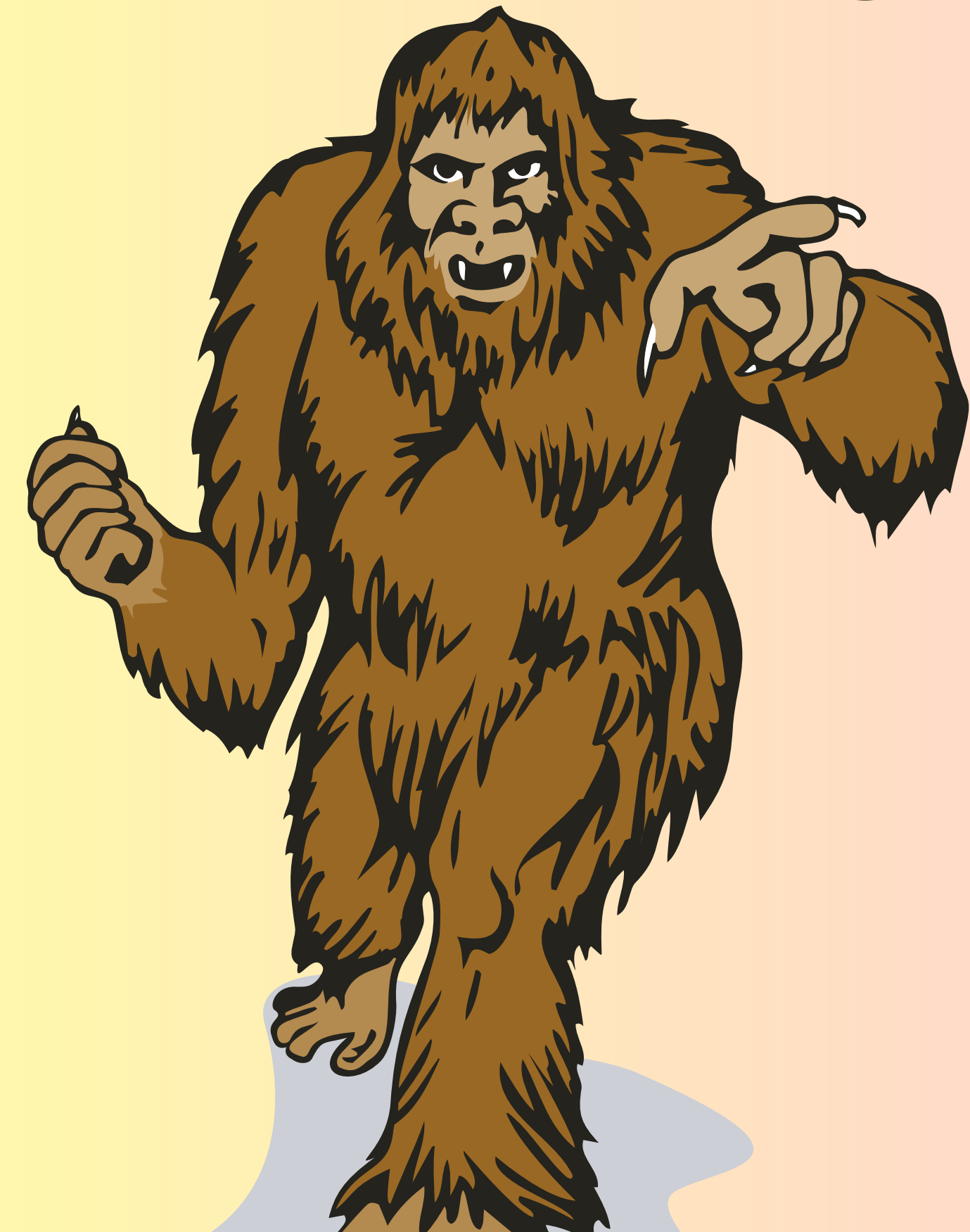
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Feet Dragger - Overwhelmed



- **Limit communication to necessities**
- **Keep emails short/bulleted**
- **Work with their assistant**
- **Give them deadlines!**
- **Remind them the day before if that's ok**

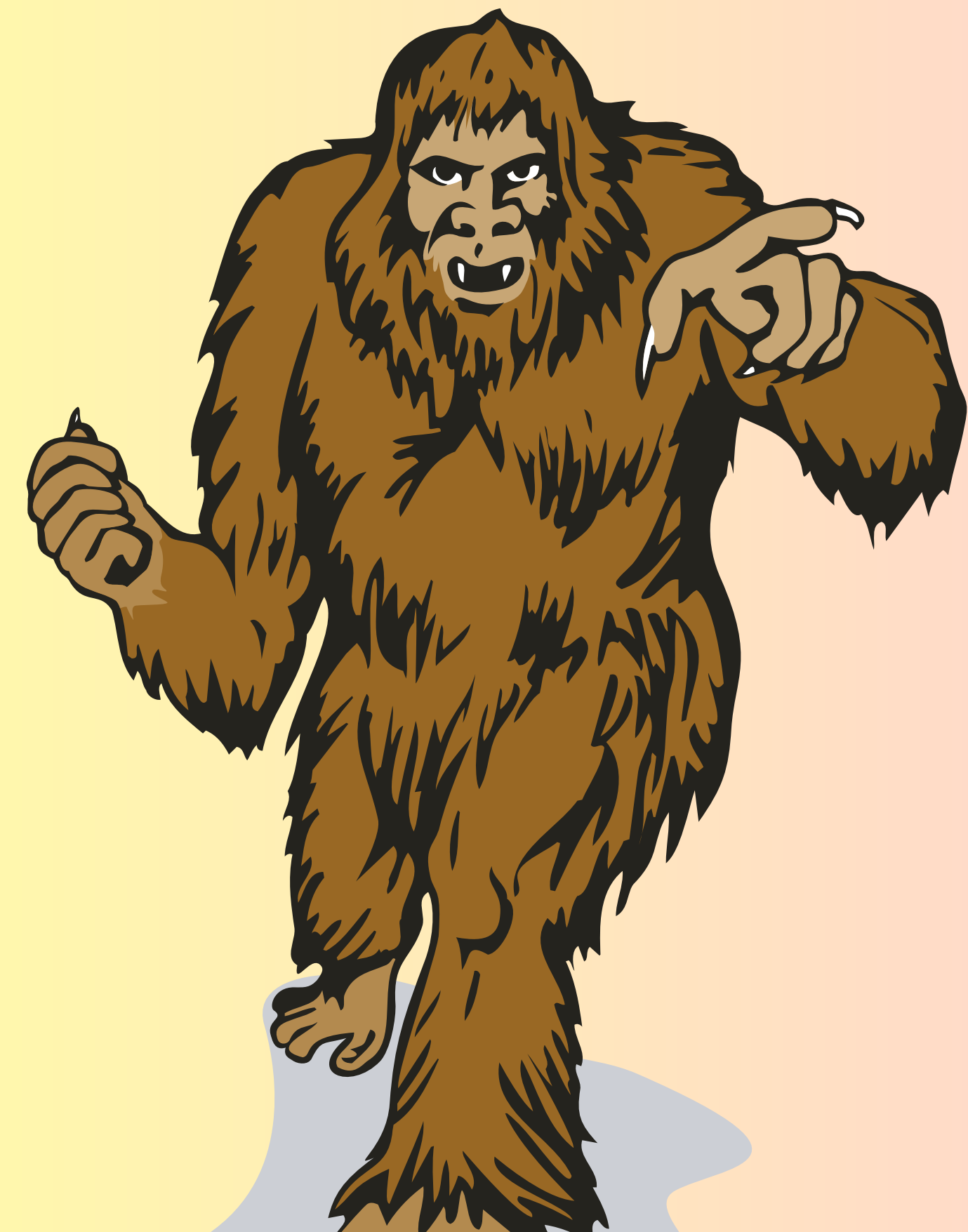
Feet Dragger - Overwhelmed



WEEKLY UPDATES

- **Your Action Needed:**
 - Due 10-15: Go/No Go Decision on Smith Foundation
- **Waiting on Others:**
 - 10-1: Kevin sending budget for Jones Foundation
- **I'm Working On:**
 - 12-15: Mr. Big Bucks Report

Feet Dragger - Overwhelmed



MONTHLY UPDATES

- **Working Items**
 - Due dates and status
- **Pending Responses**
- **Awarded**
- **Declined**

Wheel-Spinner: Indecisive



- Funder Matrix 
- Proposal Form 
- Lay out pros and cons
- Set a deadline for decision
- Changing directions takes time
- Affirm their decisions

“By Friday, we need to nail down the project or defer the opportunity.”

Dawdlers: Perfectionists?

- Have a proposal kick-off meeting where they agree to deadlines
- Talk to them in person and get info
- They might not read emails
- Write a summary based on convo (Otter)
- “Review for critical errors only”
- Create a sense of urgency - “I’ve highlighted the areas where I really need your help”



Ghosts: It's Scary

- What's really going on?
- Continue regular updates and deadlines (CYA)
- **“Is everything okay?”**
- Email, text, call, visit
- **“Are we doing this or not?”**

“I hope you are doing okay.
We have to defer the \$140K Johnson
grant if I don't hear back by tomorrow.”



Poll: Which persona resonates most with you?

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**I work with jerks,
imbeciles, and flakes**

**They don't
respect me**

**These people
suck and
I can't win**



**I work with jerks,
imbeciles, and flakes**

**They don't
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**These people
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I can't win**



The process could be smoother

**Coworkers juggle
many priorities**

**Our mission is
incredible
and I
get to help!**

Contrarians

- Feel overloaded already
- New grant = more work
- Fear losing control
- Hate change
- Been burned before
- Don't like you
- Love red tape
- Risk-averse



Potential to be Biggest Advocate



- Focus on mission and goals
- Admit your mistakes
- Over communicate - don't avoid
- “What’s the best process for you?”
- Compliment attention to detail
- Talk about reducing risk
- Send them a calendar for the whole year - lots of warning on deadlines

Let's Talk Tactics!

Tactics

- 1. Create & Fill Your Grant Vault**
- 2. Develop Annual Grant Plan**
- 3. Define Your Process**
- 4. Be the Master of Your Domain**
- 5. Personalize Your “Interventions”**

1 VAULT

**Levels of
information
needed for grants**

**Often held
by different
people!**

ORGANIZATION

DEPARTMENT

PROGRAM

PROJECT

PROPOSAL

EXAMPLE

2 ANNUAL GRANT PLAN

Share It!

- **Funding Needs**
- **Existing Grants**
- **Renewals**
- **Potential Funders**
- **Goals/ROI**
- **SWOT Analysis and Contingency Plan?**

3 DEFINE YOUR PROCESS



You need a grant

I write the grant

We get the grant

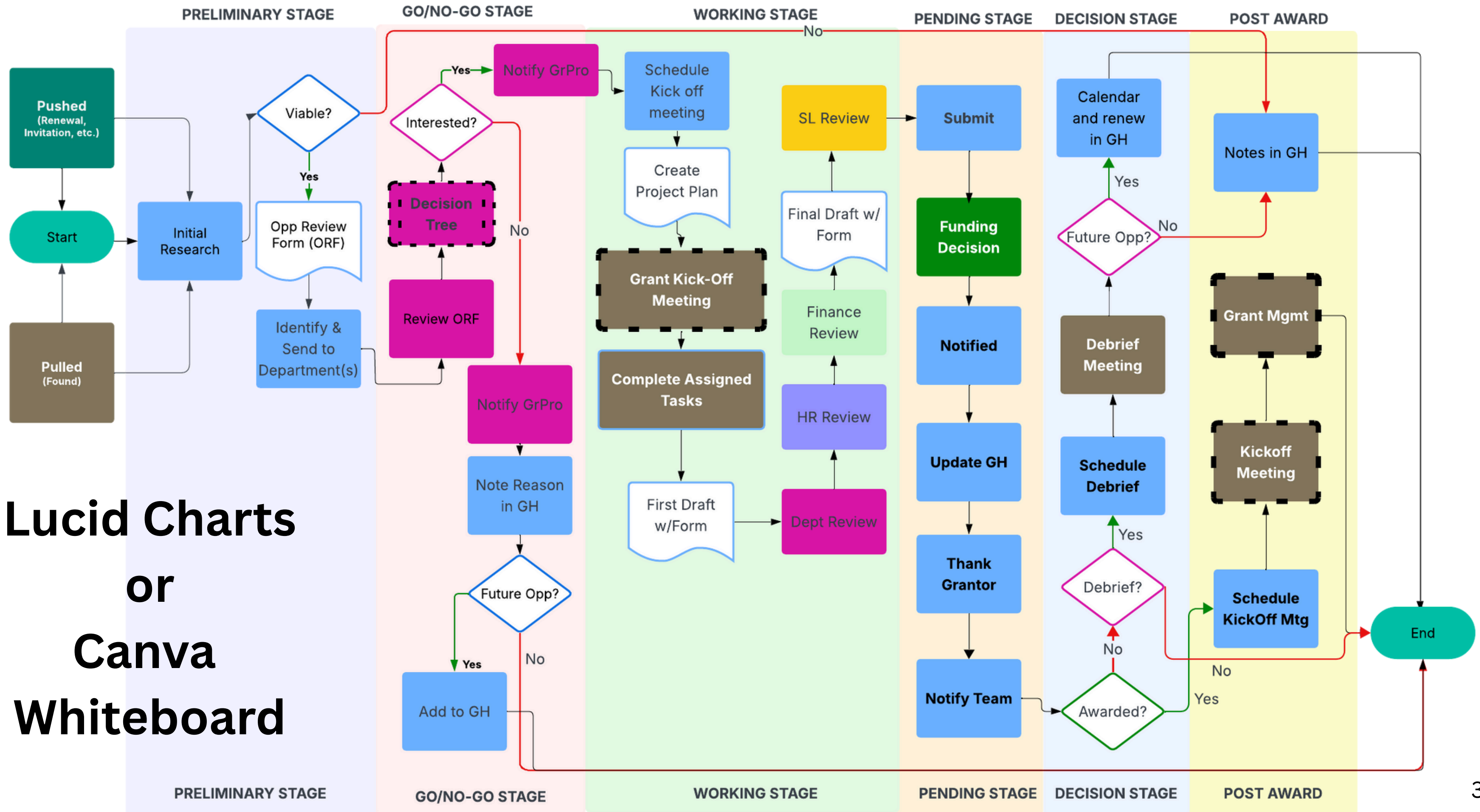
We are awesome

3

DEFER YOUR PROCESS



Lucid Charts or Canva Whiteboard



90-60 DAYS

60-30 DAYS

30-0 DAYS

**PRELIMINARY
PHASE**

- Prospecting
- Research
- Create Outline

GO/NO-GO PHASE

- Review Outline
- Talk to Funder
- Align with Org Strategy
- **Decision!**

WORKING PHASE

- Kick-Off Mtg
- Assignments
- Timeline
- Complete Proposal
- Submit!

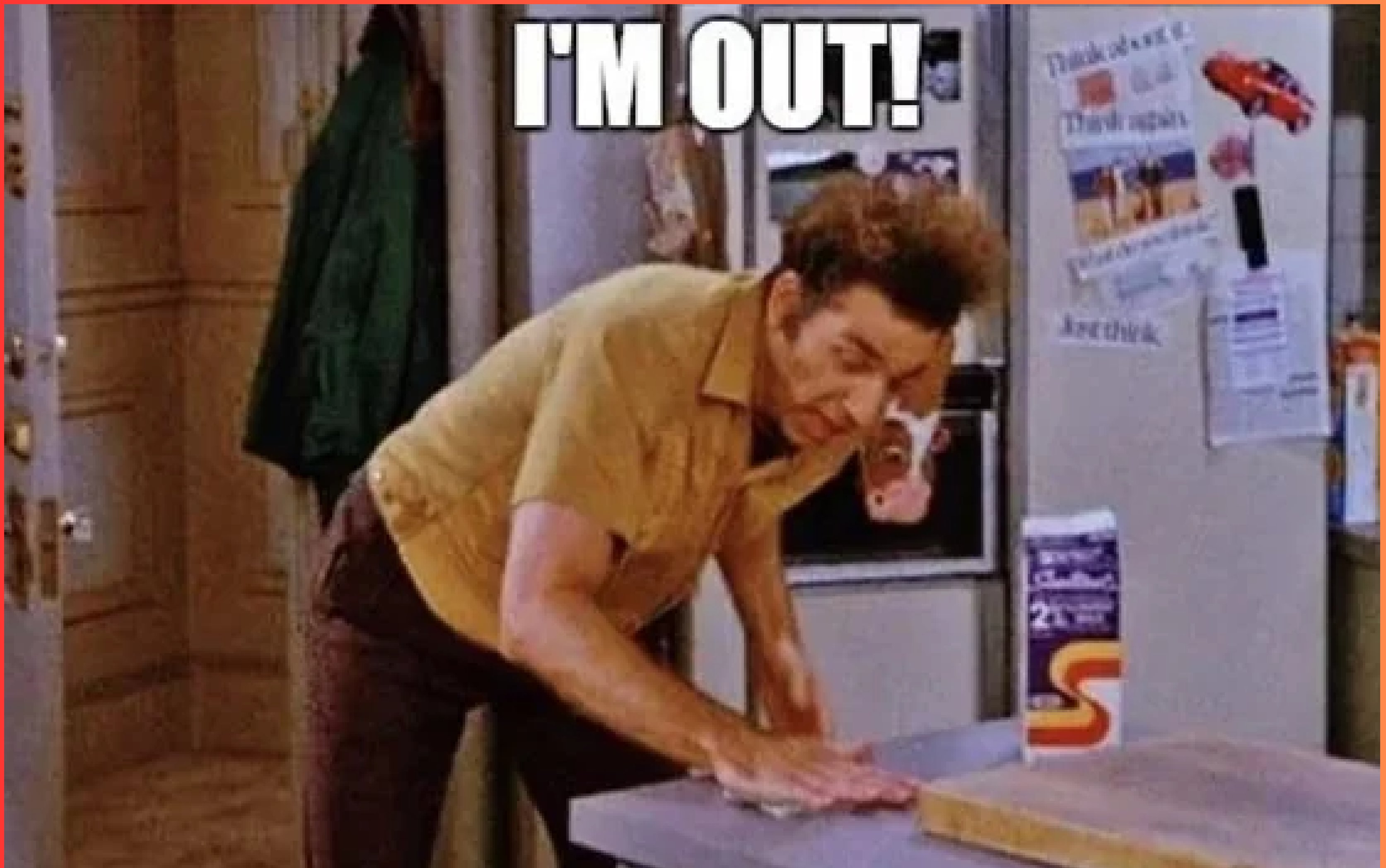
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*I am the master
of my domain*

- **Track your time (Harvest, Clockify)**
- **Block your calendar**
- **Define your team - Champions,
Super Stars, Supporters**

I'M OUT!



Random Tips

- Countdown days : “Only FIVE days left!”
- Odd meeting times: 11:37
- Write a sloppy first draft - **XXXXX** where you need help.
- Grace period deadline.
- Cultivate relationships

- Do a lunch-and-learn on how grants work
- Find a champion or poster child
- Be honest about frustration, “I’m really stressed out about not having enough time to finish.”
- Vent to your AFP/GPA friends or your family - don’t gripe to the people you work with
- Celebrate victories!
- Stay engaged with GPA

Questions?

Evaluation Link:

I would love
your feedback!



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