Design Firm Leadership

Truths, Styles, Techniques, and Other Insights

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DIFFERENT WORKS

Today's Speaker

Scott Simpson, FAIA, LEED AP

Course Description

Running a successful design firm requires a multitude of skills.

Design and technical talent are prerequisites,
and you'll also need some marketing, some management,
and financial savvy.
This is true regardless of firm size, location, or specialty.

Is all of that "leadership?"
Or is "leadership" something more?

Learning Objectives

Participants in this session will:

1. Consider “big truths” of design firm leadership.
2. Evaluate 7 skills that are important for design firm leaders.
3. Review different leadership styles that can be applied in design firms.
4. Study 4 proven techniques of leadership in design firms.

The Design Enterprise Cycle

Big Truths

LEADERSHIP…

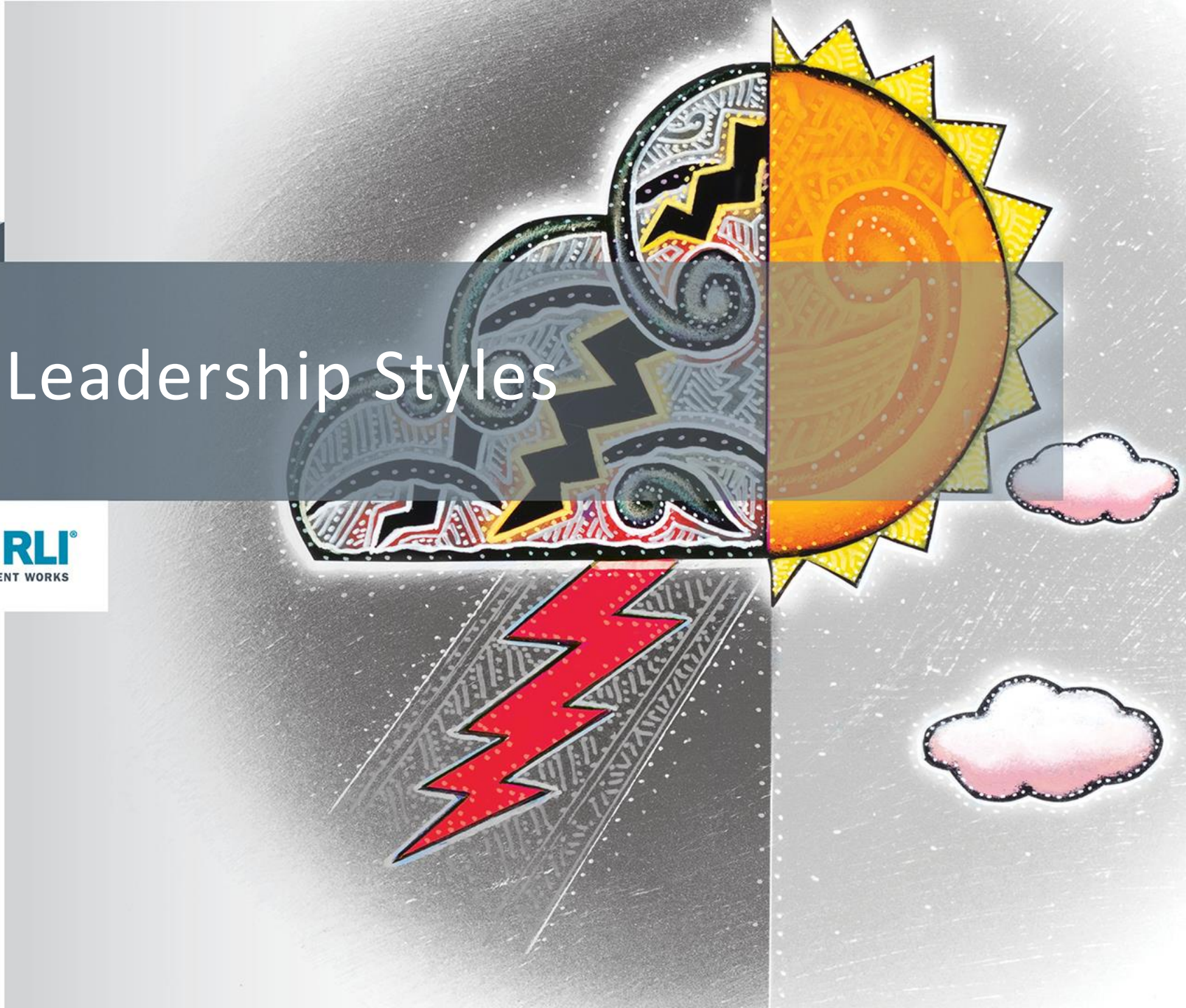
1. Is necessary for the success of any complex enterprise.
2. Is not taught in design school, but leadership can be learned.
3. Requires knowledge, self confidence, and trust in others.
4. Is deliberate, not accidental.
5. Requires a team effort.

What Is Leadership?

Leadership is the ability to:

- Understand both the big picture and the details
- Set clear goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics
- Delegate, putting the right people in the right places
- Motivate people at multiple levels
- Adjust as needed
- Hold people accountable for their performance
- Achieve results by inspiring and motivating others

Leadership Styles



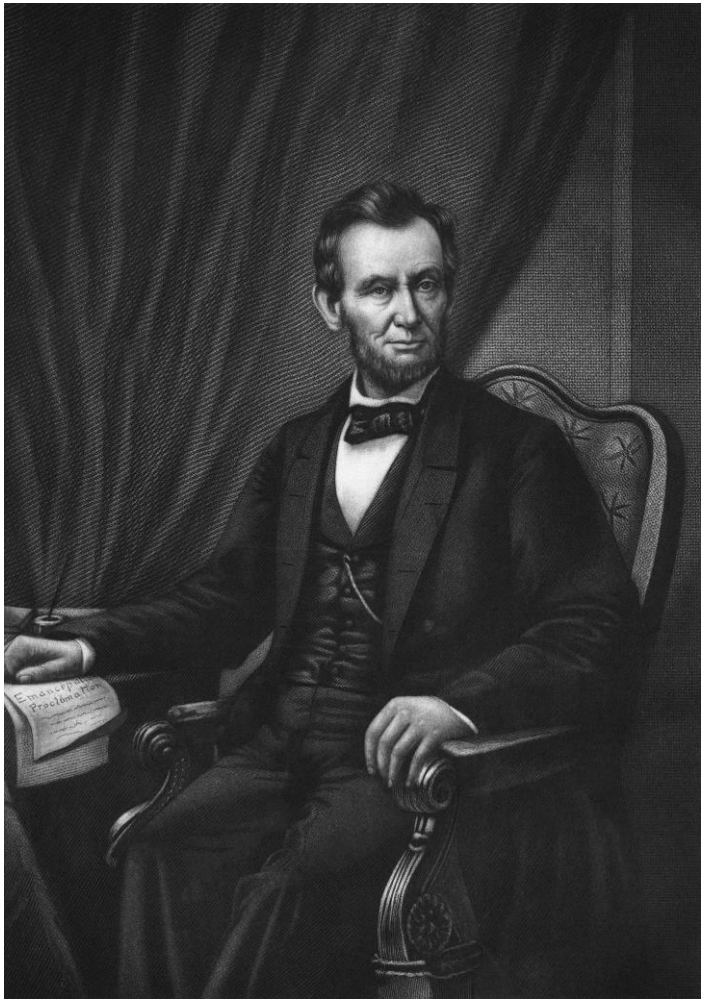
George Washington

Leadership by example

Abraham Lincoln

Aspirational

Values-driven



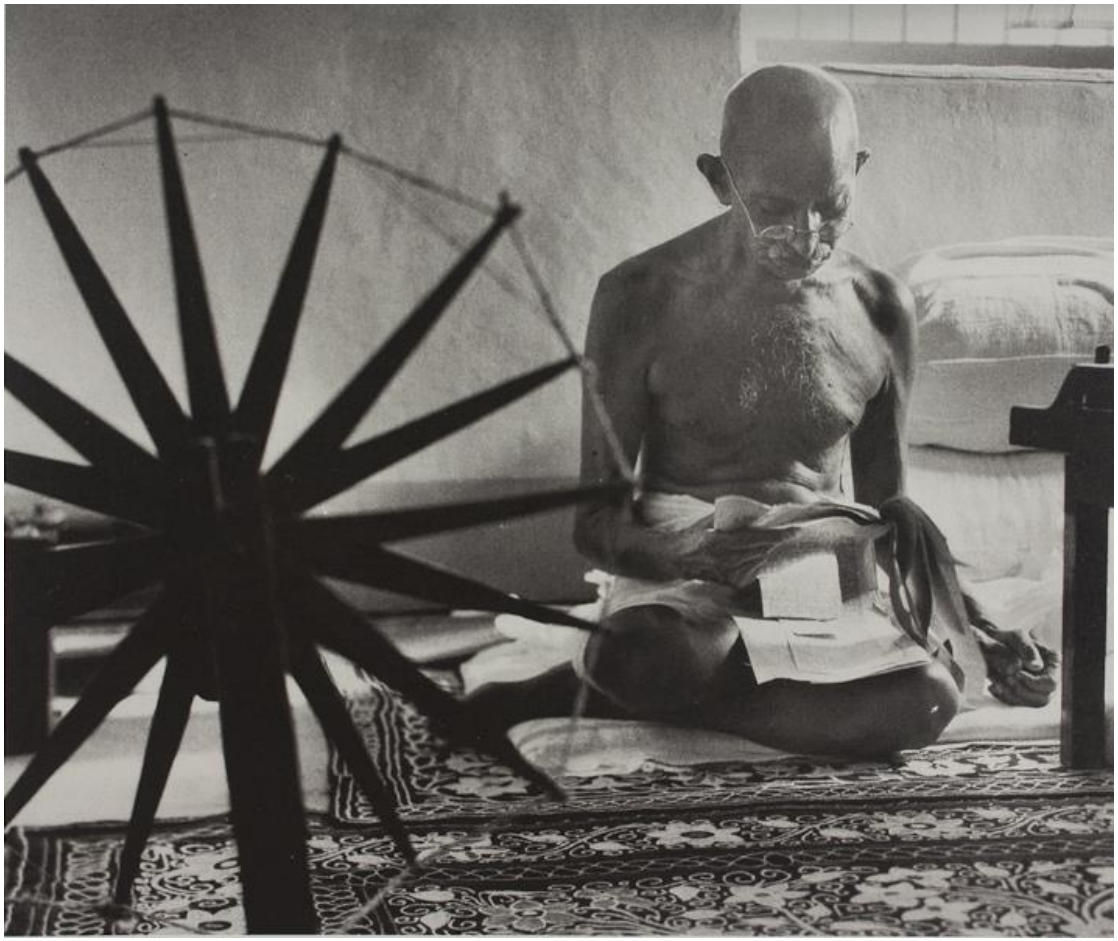
Teddy Roosevelt

Inspiring

Action-driven

Mahatma Gandhi

Passive
but
Persuasive



Vince Lombardi

Bluster

Intimidation

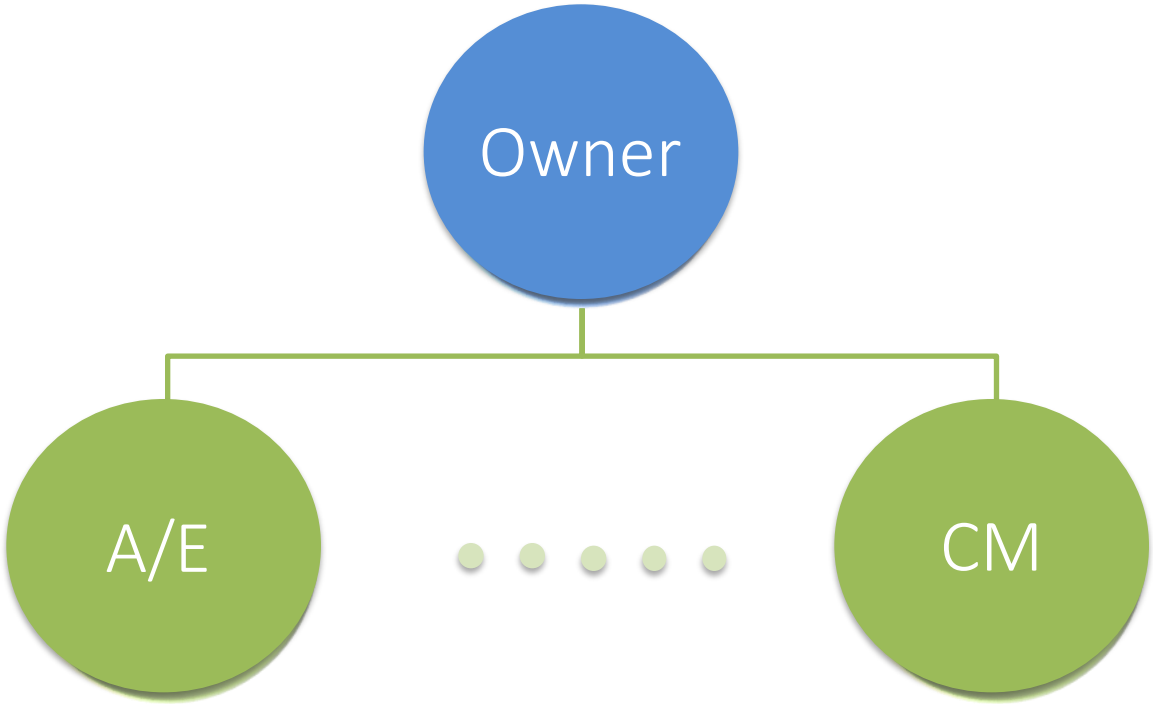
Hernando Cortes

Burn the boats

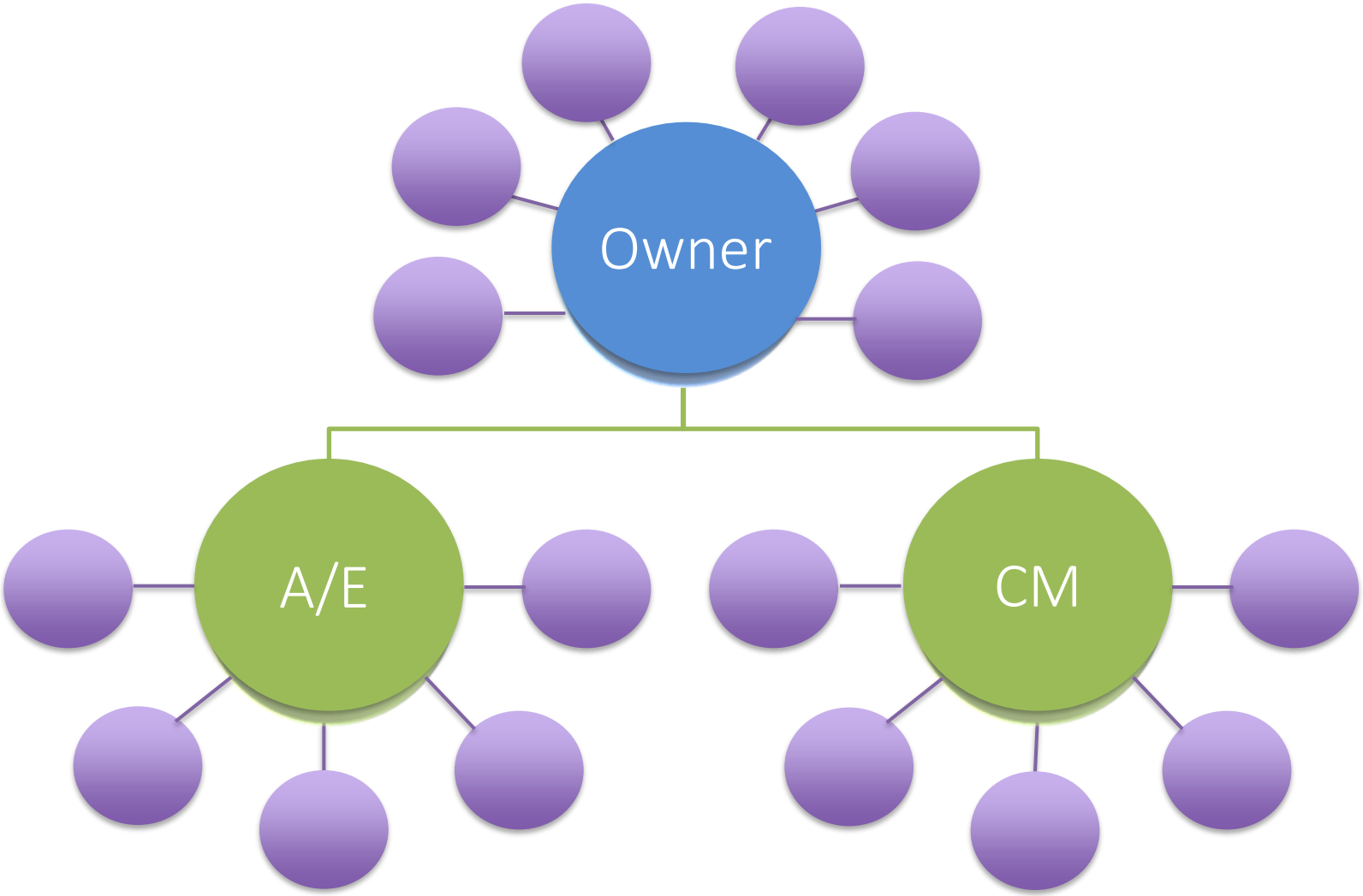
Lewis & Clark

Figure it out as you go

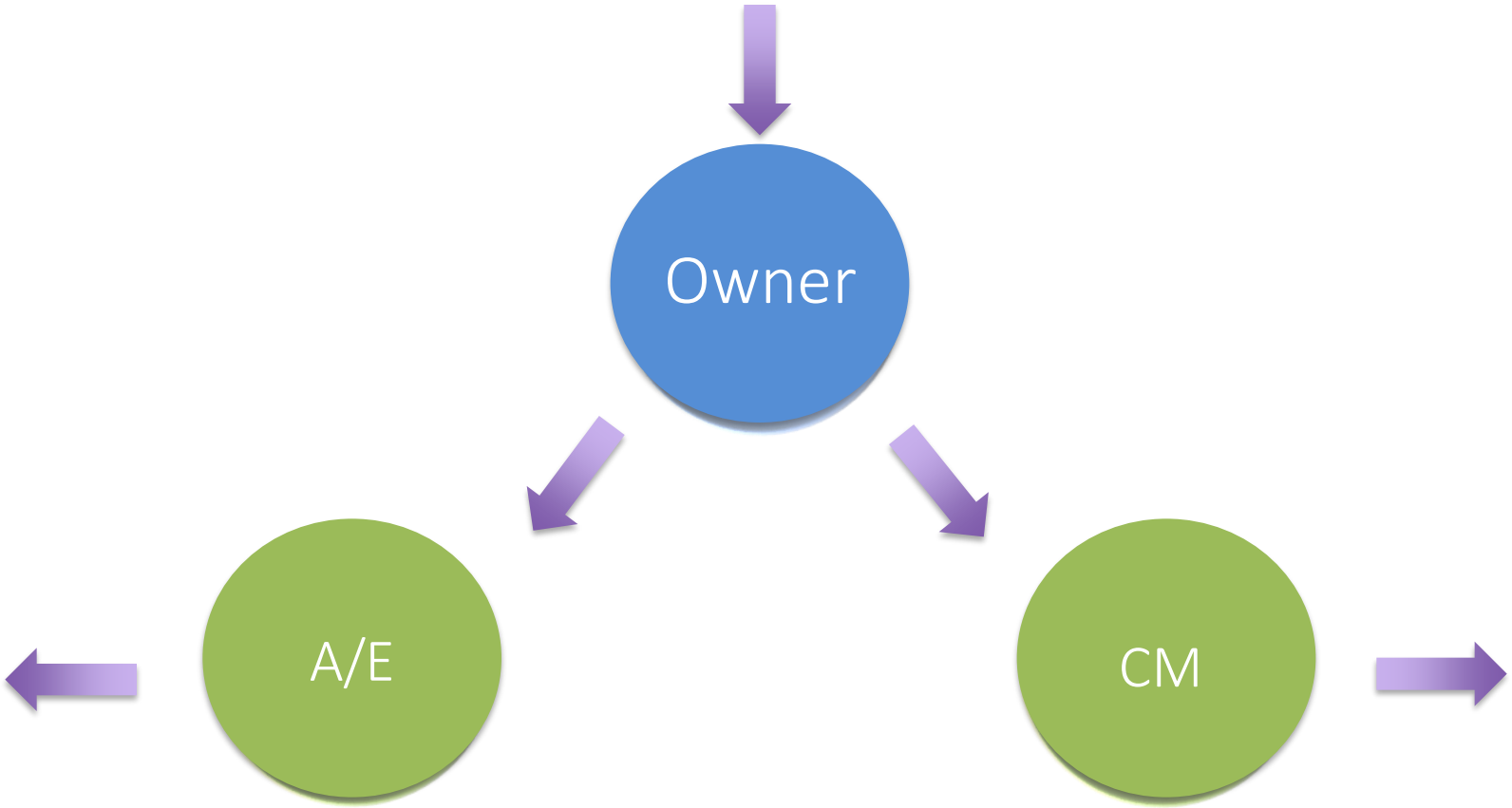
Typical Project Team: Diagram #1



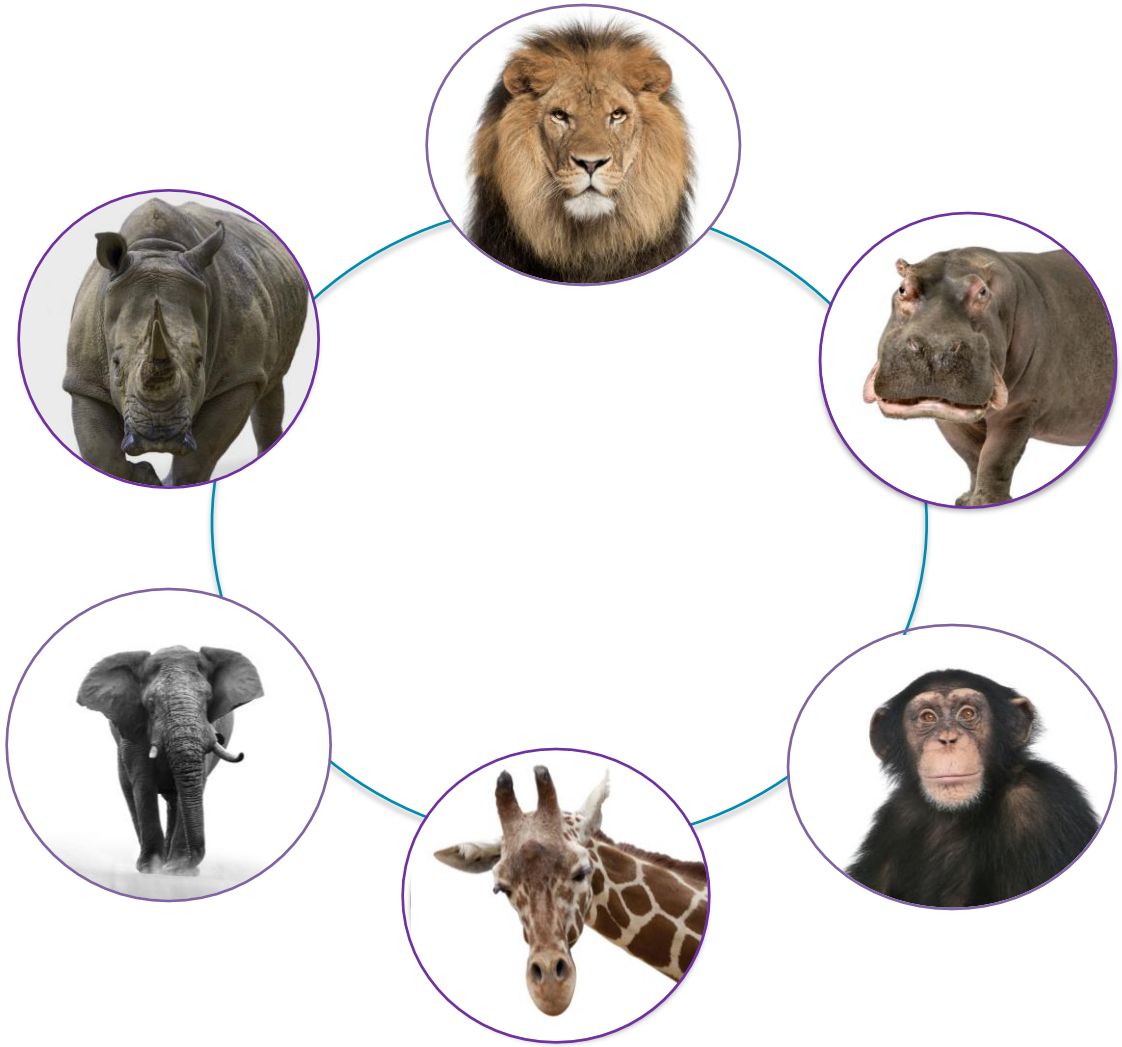
Typical Project Team: Diagram #2



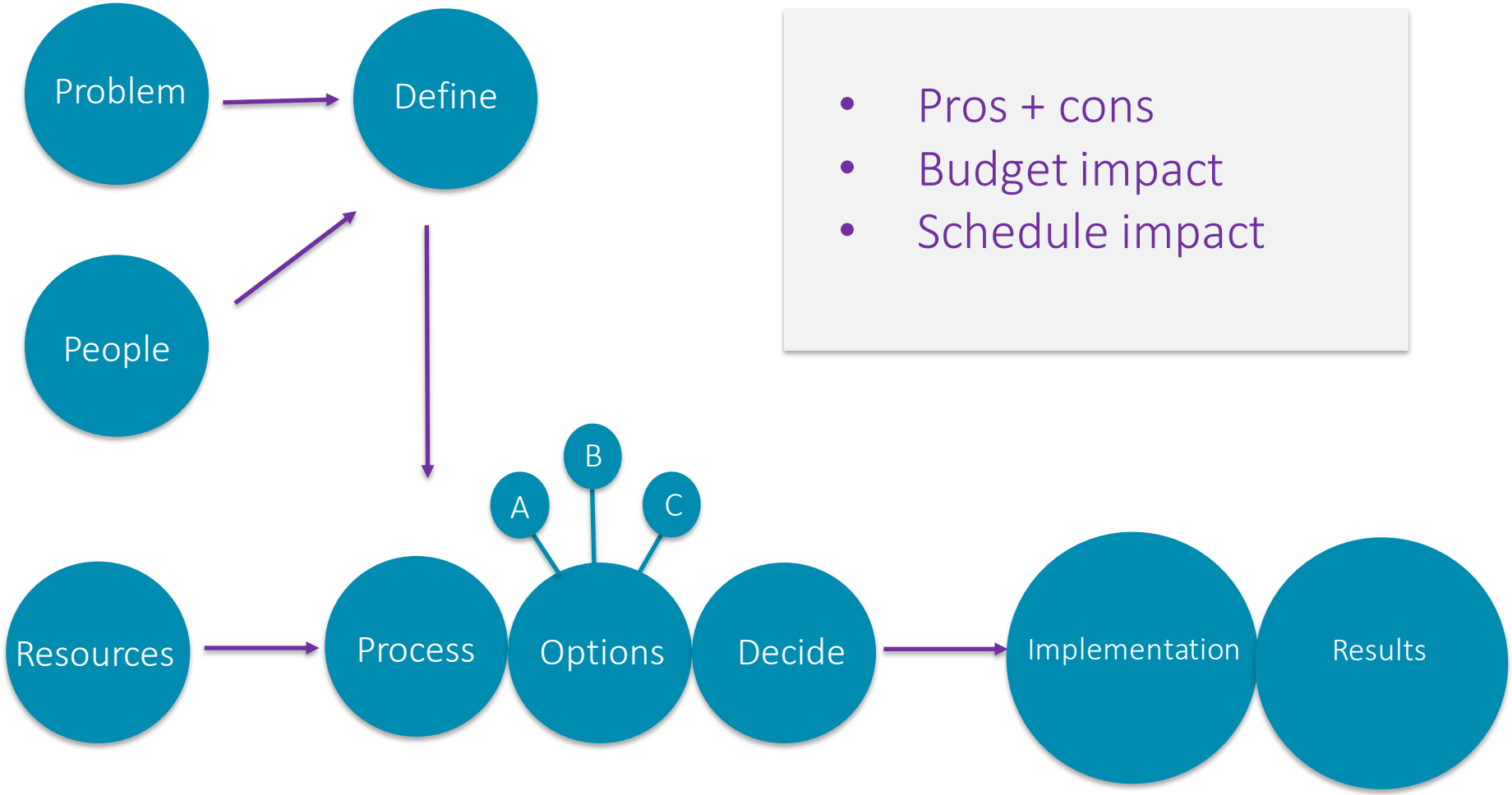
Typical Project Team Under Stress



Your Team



Decision Ready Information



- Pros + cons
- Budget impact
- Schedule impact

Leadership Techniques

1. Be clear about your expectations
2. Never undercut the mission or goals
3. Use metrics to reinforce results
4. Broadcast the “wins”
5. Different people respond differently; treat them accordingly

Thank you for your time!

QUESTIONS?

This concludes The American Institute of Architects Continuing Education Systems Program

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