



THE PROBABILITY CRISIS

A WORKING PAPER · THE PROBABILITY CRISIS · 2026

A companion to the site

What I do, *in* *practice.*

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A COMPANION TO THE SITE

What I do, *in practice.*

The site tells you what I believe and who this is for. This is the working paper for the person who read it and wants the mechanics: what a first conversation actually is, how an engagement runs day to day, and what I need from you for it to work. If it reached you second-hand, it stands on its own; you have lost nothing by not seeing the site first.

THE FIRST CONVERSATION

Thirty minutes. *No pitch.*

Bring the one thing that is stuck. Not a brief, not a data room — the single situation you would most like to see move.

Half an hour is enough to test one thing: whether the way I read the problem is useful to you. I will ask a small number of questions, most of them about people and incentives rather than numbers, and then say back to you where I think the system is actually stuck. Sometimes that read lands and you feel the click. Sometimes it does not, and you leave with one clear framing you did not have before. Either outcome is a good use of the thirty minutes.

What I will not do is sell you the next step. If there is a fit, you will feel it before I say anything; if there is not, I would rather you knew quickly. The site puts it plainly and I hold to it: no pitch, no pressure, just a conversation to see if there is fit.

ON WHAT A FIRST READ IS WORTH

A read from five questions is direction of travel, not a finding. It tells us where to point the work, not what the answer is.

Honest note. The value of the first conversation is the framing, not a diagnosis. Anyone who hands you a diagnosis in thirty minutes is guessing, and charging you for the guess. The real work of naming the keystone comes later, and it is most of the work.

HOW AN ENGAGEMENT RUNS

Naming the keystone is *most of the work.*

The site names the method. Here is what it feels like from the inside: four things that happen in every engagement, whatever its shape.

01 Name the keystone precisely.

Most of the effort goes here, before anything visible moves. A keystone stated loosely (“alignment,” “better governance”) is useless; it has to be named as a specific intervention at a specific point: this meeting, this decision-owner, this clause. When it is named right, the path forward stops being a debate and starts being obvious. Getting there is patient, unglamorous work, and it is the work you are paying for.

02 Map the honest landscape.

Every recommendation I bring arrives with its strongest counter-argument examined as hard as the recommendation itself. Not a token “risks” slide — the real case for doing the opposite, argued fairly, so you can see the terrain around the decision and not just the answer I happen to prefer. If the counter-argument wins, we follow it. The point is a good decision, not a defended one.

03 Checkpoint, both ways.

We agree at the outset what movement looks like, then check it against reality at set points that are short, candid, and bilateral. You tell me where the read is wrong; I tell you where the plan is meeting resistance. No status theatre, no dashboard maintained for its own sake. If something is not working, the checkpoint is where we change it, together.

04 Ship movement, not reports.

The deliverable is the thing that moved, not the document describing it. Where a document earns its place — a board pack, an evidence trail, a governance matrix — it is built to be used in a room and to outlast the engagement. What gets built keeps working after I am gone.

Governance walks alongside the work from the first conversation. It is the enabling condition for value, never the tax on it.

THE SHAPES, PRACTICALLY

Some months five days. *Some months five hours.*

The site lists four engagement shapes. What it cannot show is their texture — the rhythm each one actually runs at. This is how the cadence feels once the work is underway.

Diagnostic

TWO TO FOUR WEEKS

Concentrated at the front, then quiet. A dense first fortnight of interviews and document work while I build the read, a pause while it settles, then a single sitting where the keystones and the interventions are laid out. You are close to it early and largely free of it after. It ends with a decision you can act on, not a project that needs managing.

Architecture

ONE TO THREE MONTHS

A steadier weekly rhythm. We are building the governance frameworks and decision structures that make execution inevitable, so the cadence is a standing weekly working session plus drafting between them. Front-loaded thinking, then iteration against how your organisation actually behaves. The output is scaffolding that stays standing after the build.

Navigation

THREE TO TWELVE MONTHS

Deliberately elastic. A thinking partner on retainer through a transformation or a negotiation, sized to the week in front of you: five days when a board date or a deadlock is live, five hours when it is quiet. You hold the reins; I am the counsel you can call before the room, not a resource you have to keep busy.

Intervention

AS NEEDED

Fast in, precise, undramatic. A high-stakes situation that needs senior capability now — a negotiation about to go wrong, a decision about to be made badly. Short, intense, and applied exactly where it matters, then out. No lingering, no scope that grows to fill the calendar.

The engagement flexes to the reality of what is stuck, never to a retainer designed to be billed.

WHAT I NEED FROM YOU

Three things, *and candour.*

The work is high-trust or it is nothing. For an engagement to move, I need three things from your side — and the fourth, which is the one that makes the other three worth anything.

Access to the real situation.

The room where it is actually stuck, the people who actually hold it, the numbers as they actually are. Not the sanitised version prepared for a consultant. I work with the complexity, not a tidied summary of it, and the read is only as good as what I am allowed to see.

Candour, in both directions.

Tell me where I am wrong — early, plainly, before it costs three months. In return I will tell you what you need to hear, not what is comfortable to hear. If the relationship cannot hold an uncomfortable truth in either direction, the method does not work, and we should both know that quickly.

A decision-owner.

One accountable person with the budget and the authority to act on what we find. I can name the keystone and build the case, but I cannot install the will to use it. Somewhere in the room there has to be someone who can take “do nothing” off the table and mean it.

Bring those, and the method has everything it needs. Bring only the first two and we will still learn something worth the time.

HOW YOU WILL KNOW IT IS WORKING

Movement you can *point at*.

Proof is not a testimonial. It is a thing that was stuck and now is not, that you can point at and describe without me in the room. That is the only measure that matters, and it is the one I hold the work to.

THE SIZE OF THE ROOM

R4.2B+

INDIRECT OPERATING SPEND STEWARDED · CAPEX ADDITIONAL, YEAR-DEPENDENT

Multiples

OF THEIR COST, RETURNED

21 yearsFINANCE, OPERATIONS,
PROCUREMENT**National**SCALE, PROVEN IN A
TURNAROUND

That figure is terrain, not an outcome claim — the size of the portfolio I have run, not a number to admire. The outcomes themselves live in the conversation, where they can be shown with their working rather than asserted on a page. What travels here is the shape: interventions that contributed many multiples of their cost, across equipment, services, consumables, and corporate spend.

Within an engagement, the signals are plainer. A decision that took months now takes weeks. A deadlock that had held for a quarter breaks in a fortnight. A governance structure that used to be argued around is now simply used. A supplier relationship that was heading for a costly retender is rebalanced and preserved. None of it is dramatic in the moment. Added up, it is the whole point.

If nothing moved, it did not work — and I would rather that be visible than dressed up.

AN HONEST NOTE ON WHAT THIS IS NOT

Not a bodyshop. *Not a diagnosis.*

This is one senior person, deployed precisely, with no firm to feed and no empire to protect. It is worth being clear about what that means it is not.

Honest note. It is not a bodyshop: you are not renting hands to execute a plan someone else wrote. It is not decks-for-the-shelf; if the work does not move something, it failed, however handsome the document. And it is not a diagnosis of crisis — the name points forward, to a probability you can still change, not backward at a company that has already failed. The odds are moving. The work is to see where, and press exactly there.

If that is the kind of help your situation wants, the first conversation costs nothing but candour. If it is not, you have read the clearest possible account of why, and can decline with a clean conscience. Both are good outcomes. The filter is the feature.

And if a conversation still feels early, the *Keystone Read* at probabilitycrisis.com composes a first read from five questions. Nothing leaves the page.



*Gentle is not weak. Gentle
is precise. Gentle is strong
enough to not need to
prove strength.*

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COLOPHON



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