PMLINKS · FRACTIONAL & ADVISORY LEADERSHIP

# The top 20 things leaders say **right before** they call me.

Every one of these is a symptom of how work is planned, governed, staffed, and seen. Each one is fixable, usually faster than leaders expect.



**Michael Davis**
PMO & Delivery Leadership
Portfolio Governance

## 01–04 DELIVERY

### 01
**"Our projects are always late."**

Most late projects were scoped wrong before they started. I fix scoping and estimates up front, then run a cadence that keeps dates honest.

### 02
**"We're busy, but nothing ships."**

Too many priorities compete for the same people. I sequence the work so finished pieces ship, instead of everything inching forward.

### 03
**"Our red projects stay red."**

An honest reset, one recovery plan, and weekly proof of progress, instead of another optimistic status update.

### 04
**"Customers are escalating to our CEO."**

Governance and communication rhythms that catch issues before the customer does, and rebuild trust once they have.

## 05–08 PRIORITIES

### 05
**"Everything is a priority."**

One ranked portfolio tied to strategy, so teams know what to work on and what to say no to.

### 06
**"Priorities change every week."**

A decision rhythm that absorbs change on purpose, so the organization stops paying for whiplash.

### 07
**"We can't tell which projects are worth it."**

Intake and value scoring before money and people are committed, not after the budget is gone.

### 08
**"Our pipeline says we'll be slammed. Then nothing lands."**

Honest opportunity ranking and forecasts tied to capacity planning, so delivery staffs to what will actually close.

## 09–12 CAPACITY

### 09
**"Our best people are burning out."**

Real capacity data, so leaders stop stacking new work on the same five people.

### 10
**"We keep hiring and still feel short-staffed."**

Find out whether it's a capacity problem or a prioritization problem before opening the next requisition.

### 11
**"Our PMs track tasks. They don't lead."**

Standards, coaching, and accountability that grow project managers into true owners of delivery.

### 12 AI
**"Sales sells it. Delivery inherits the mess."**

SOW review before signature and a real handoff, so what was sold is something the team can deliver.

## 13–16 VISIBILITY

### 13 AI
**"Status reports take days. Nobody trusts them."**

One source of truth and reporting built on live data, cutting the cycle from days to minutes.

### 14
**"Problems reach the C-suite too late."**

Escalation paths and risk signals that surface trouble early, while it's still cheap to fix.

### 15
**"Our margins disappear somewhere."**

Scope control, forecast-to-actual tracking, and P&L visibility while the work is still in motion.

### 16
**"Our PMO is overhead, or it doesn't exist."**

Build or reset a PMO that earns its seat at the table with decisions, not templates.

## 17–20 GROWTH

### 17
**"We're growing faster than our processes."**

Right-sized structure that scales with the business instead of slowing it down.

### 18
**"We bought the software. Nobody uses it."**

Adoption-first rollouts: people and process first, then the tool, so the investment pays off.

### 19 AI
**"We want AI, but don't know where to start."**

Governed data first, then AI applied where it truly saves time and improves decisions.

### 20
**"We just closed an acquisition. Now what?"**

Two delivery organizations, systems, and portfolios brought together into one way of working.

AI **Where AI fits:** governed data first, then AI wherever it removes manual work, like status reports generated from live project data, AI-assisted SOW and document review, and faster decision support for leaders. Look for the AI marks above.

## How the fix usually runs

1. **Assess** — Find the real causes behind the symptoms.
2. **Build** — Put right-sized structure and visibility in place.
3. **Run** — Operate it alongside your team until it sticks.
4. **Hand off** — Your team owns it. You don't need me forever.

## Hear yourself in any of these?

Fractional and advisory PMO and delivery leadership, from assessment to a team that runs it on its own.

pmlinks.com/work-with-michael
linkedin.com/in/pmlinks

© 2026 Michael Davis, PMLinks