"Imagine it’s a year later. Why was the decision a success? Why was the decision a total disaster?" -

THE PREMORTEM TECHNIQUE

Invented by Gary Klein. Celebrated by Nobel laureates like Daniel Kahneman.
Before you make that big decision, call a meeting and...

1. Ask everyone to imagine that it's a year later.
2. Split the meeting participants into two groups.
3. Have one group imagine that the effort was a total disaster.
4. Have the other group imagine it was a roaring success.
5. Ask all to generate reasons why the success or failure occurred.
6. Have each person in the “failure” group read their list or story aloud.
7. Record and collate the reasons.
8. Repeat this process with the “success” group.

Use the reasons from both groups to strengthen your plan.
When generating reasons:

- Ask each member to work independently
- Ask them to write a story, if possible, instead of a list
- Instruct them to be as detailed as possible, to identify causes that they wouldn’t usually mention “for fear of being impolite.”

If at the end of the process you uncover overwhelming and impassible roadblocks, then go back to the drawing board.

The Premortem technique helps:

- overcome blind spots
- bridge short-term and long-term thinking
- tame excessive optimism and
- challenges the illusion of consensus.