

TransForge

The Tao of Project Management

- The Tao says that there is no destination, only the path - traveling it we search for fluidity, balance, and control.
- Our movements are attuned with the dynamic changes that surround us - like a child we frolic in the waves but it is prudent to dive occasionally.

Beginnings are usually aimed at ends

When one aims to manage a project one must decide on a beginning so that one knows the whole of the project: *what* was done and *why* was it done? This beginning may move forward or backward in time, but unless there is a beginning there is no point of reference for what you are doing or why you are doing it. You need to ask yourself: "*Where (or what) is/was the beginning?*"

Once you know where the beginning lies you will know what the goals of the project are!

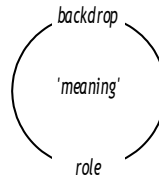
The backdrop determines the context

A play pretends to life. An actor's role is synonymous with the actor; he *is* his role. If he is a good actor he has no identity outside of his role and we talk of the sailor, the salesman, the king.

But the actor plays out his role within a context dictated by other actors, the plot as it unfolds, and the stage scenery. These (everything other than the actor) are the *backdrop*.

Put abstractly, the relationships between the elements of sets, or between the

sets themselves, constitute a *backdrop* to the role played by any specific element of a set. As the elements of the various sets play out their roles so they mutate the backdrop in a dynamic fashion. As the backdrop changes, so too does the *meaning* of the roles played by the elements. We have a recursive relationship between backdrop and role:



Any element of a project can and should be regarded in this light.

A project should not become entirely self-referential

If a project is breaking new ground it is unlikely that it enjoys a good map - in fact it might be making the map as it progresses. All projects make their own maps to some lesser or greater extent.

But defining landmarks entirely within the context of the project is a mistake easily and often made. It means that points of reference aren't anchored in reality, but in a project.

This is not to say that a project should not influence reality to its advantage.