PROGRESSIVE TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

# Best Practices in Strategic Communications Planning

# 1. Set clear, measurable objectives.

The single most important step to sound communications planning is carefully setting objectives.

**Focus on what you're trying to achieve, rather than how you'll achieve it**.

## 2.  Drive alignment.

Think about what your organization is trying to achieve **first** – then consider how communications can help you get there.

# 3. Set yourself up for success.

Before embarking on any strategic planning exercise, **make sure that you have the right information and insights to guide the process**.

# 4. Focus on audiences.

Adopting an audience-centric approach is critical to effective communications planning.

**Executing on this strategy will require that you collect appropriate information about your audiences**, including mapping out stakeholders as appropriate.

# 5. See messaging as your core product.

Consider that messaging is ultimately the core product of your strategic communications planning process.

**It's not about all the "stuff" to get your messages out – fundamentally communication is about bringing your message to life**.

# 6. Design the tactical mix strategically.

Think strategically about your communications tactics.

**Consider what communications activities best meet your needs, based on your understanding of the strategic landscape, your audience profile and your message**.

# 7.  Establish the fundamentals.

As part of the strategic communications planning process, take the time to consider the fundamentals for success. Specifically:

- **Project management**
- **Resources**
- **Buy-in – both with staff and with your members/ constituents**

# 8. Measure, refine, report.

Evaluating your communications program is critical to your value, your success and your internal credibility.

**Think about what would let you know you've succeeded**. For example, if media coverage is an important indicator of performance, media monitoring is the logical measurement tool required.

**Build de-brief sessions into routine project management approaches so that evaluation becomes part of your day-to-day operation and culture**.
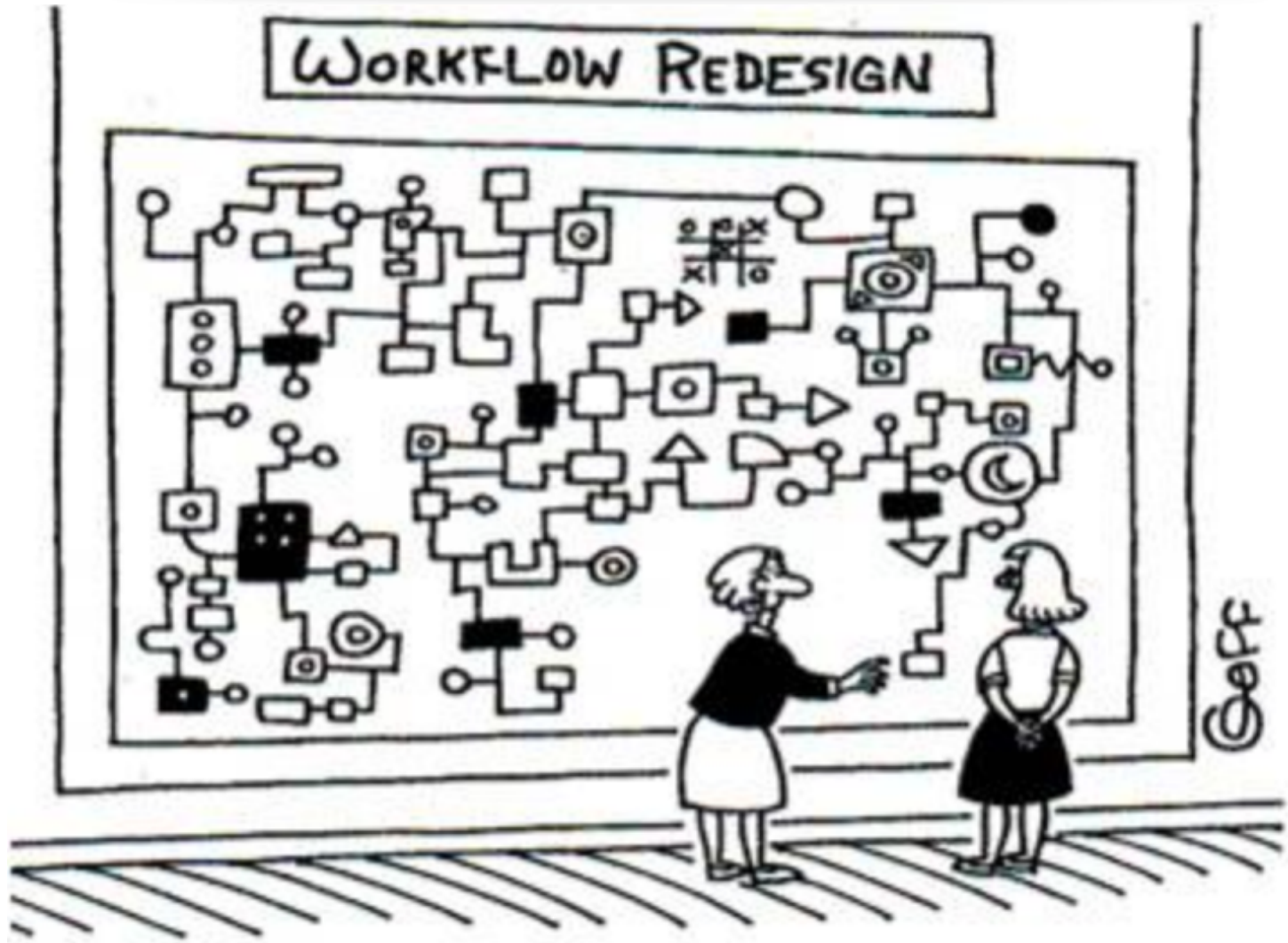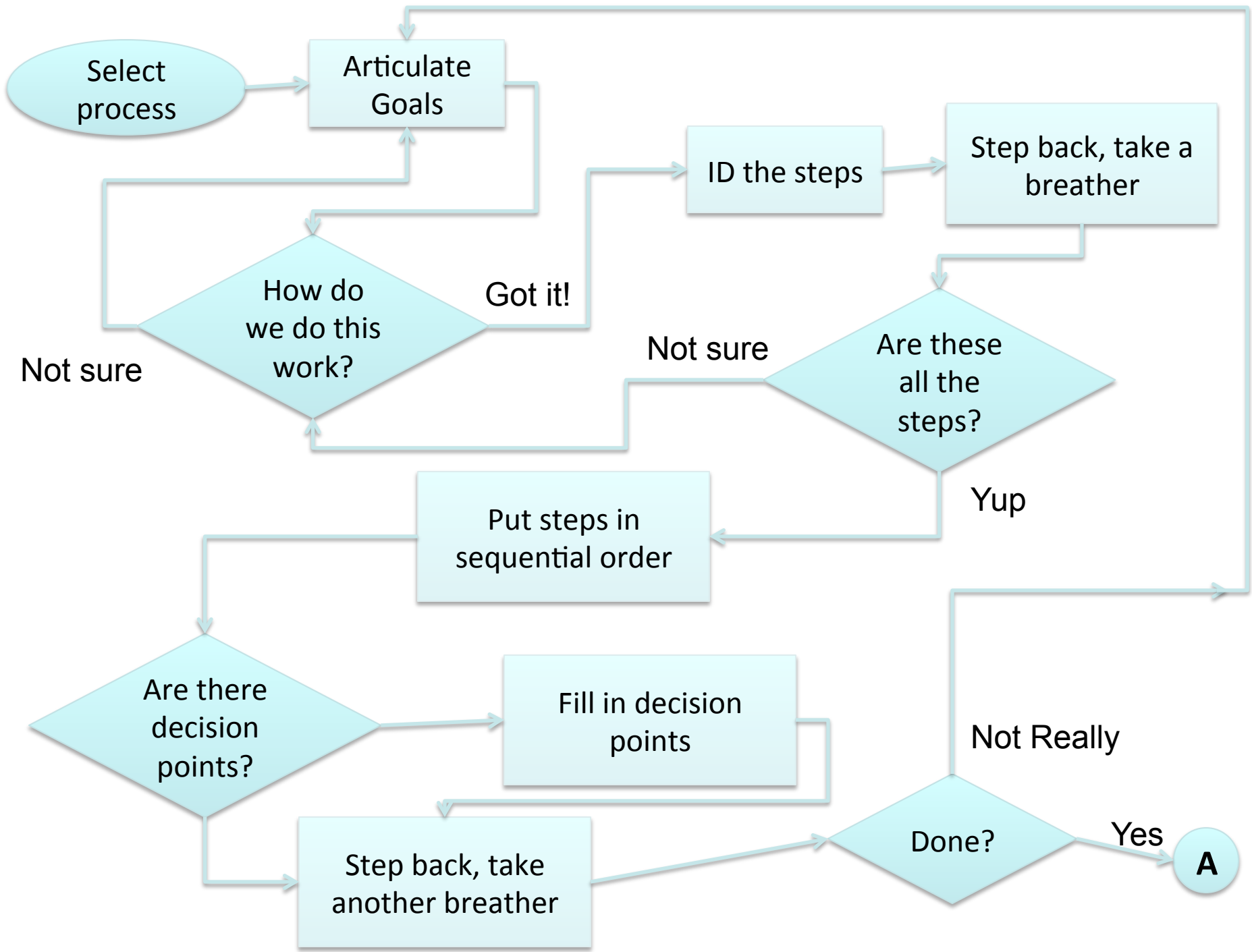
"And this is where our ED workflow redesign team went insane."

# **Workflows Revisted**

# Workflow Takeaways:

- It's a tool to help you restructure, refine, and streamline your work – can use symbols/pictures or lists
- When it's Visual – makes work obvious, quick
- Start with Goals
- Build up not down – start with what you know
- It's a participatory exercise - can be done informally
- It's just an entry point – start the conversation

Select process → Articulate Goals → How do we do this work?

How do we do this work? — Not sure → (loop) ; Got it! → ID the steps

ID the steps → Step back, take a breather → Are these all the steps?

Are these all the steps? — Not sure → Articulate Goals ; Yup → Put steps in sequential order ; Not Really → A

Put steps in sequential order → Are there decision points?

Are there decision points? → Fill in decision points → Step back, take another breather → Done?

Done? — Yes → A

**A**