



Failure Forum: What Have We Learned from Challenging Implementations?

Your Guides:
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About This Roundtable

A conversation, not a lecture. We trade real stories—what worked, what didn't, and what we learned.

⇒ **How it works:** I pose a prompt; we go around the table. Jump in whenever something resonates.



Ground rules: No wrong answers. What's shared here stays here. The messier the story, the better.



The goal: Everyone leaves with at least one idea they can use in the future.



Warm-Up: Everybody In

Before we dive deep, one quick lap around the table.

What's one small thing that went sideways this week — at work or at home?

One sentence each. No fixing, no explaining—just name it.



Everyone Fails—That's the Point

Every person at this table has failed—probably more than once.
That's exactly what makes this room worth being in.

“Sometimes when you innovate, you make mistakes. It's best to admit them quickly and get on with improving your other innovations.”

— Steve Jobs (Apple)

“If you're not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late.”

— Reid Hoffman (LinkedIn)

Great work is built on the failures nobody talks about. Today, we talk about them.

It Took 40 Tries to Make WD-40



40

formulas to get it right

- The name is literal: **Water Displacement, 40th formula.**
- In 1953 a tiny team set out to stop corrosion on aerospace parts. The first 39 tries didn't work.
- Formula 40 worked. Built for a rocket — it ended up in millions of homes.



The takeaway: *The breakthrough came from not quitting, even after 39 attempts.*

Angry Birds Was Attempt #52



- Rovio launched in 2003, and spent six years building games for other companies.
- By 2009 they were nearly bankrupt and down to about a dozen people.
- Angry Birds was roughly their 52nd game. It passed a billion downloads and became a global brand.



The takeaway: *No one remembers the first 51 games – but that effort built the one everybody does.*

Let's Get the Conversation Started

Pick whichever one you want to answer first—no order required.

- Tell us about a project / enhancement / etc. that went sideways. What happened?
- What's a mistake that taught you the most — and what did it teach you?
- What early warning signs do you wish you'd caught sooner?
- When something's failing, what's your move: push through, pivot, or pull the plug?
- What failure are you now genuinely grateful for?

Before You Go: One Question

What would you attempt if you knew no one would judge the outcome?



No need to answer out loud. Just carry it out the door.

Thanks for sharing the messy stuff.

Questions?



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