

Production Measures For Cow Herd Performance

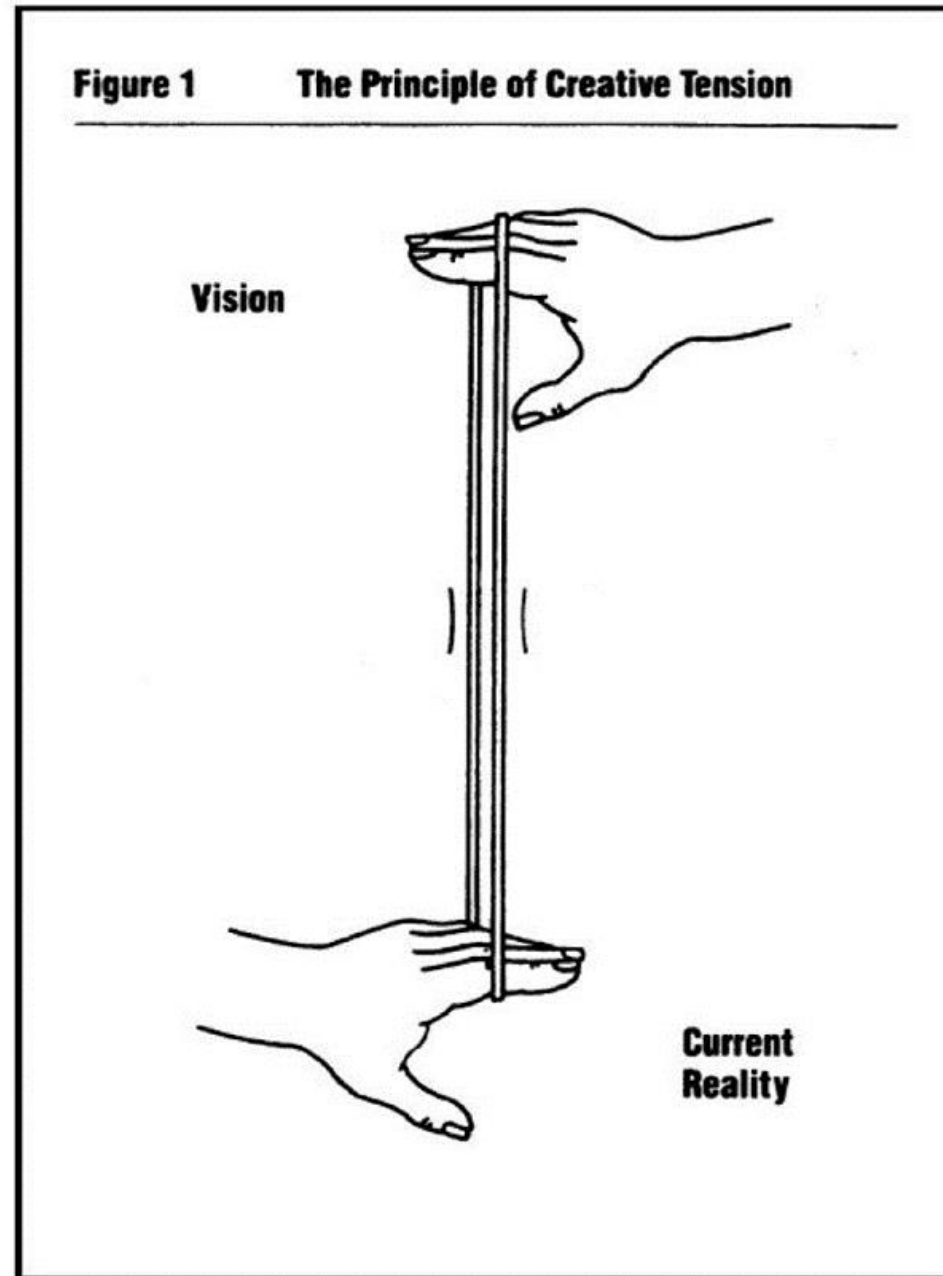
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Why is it important to measure production in a cow herd?

What production measures are important?

Vision has a very practical definition in this situation: It is what you want to achieve over an extended time (e.g., career, lifetime)



Current reality is defined as the way things are now. This usually includes a description of undesirable features of a situation. Current Reality should be moved toward vision.

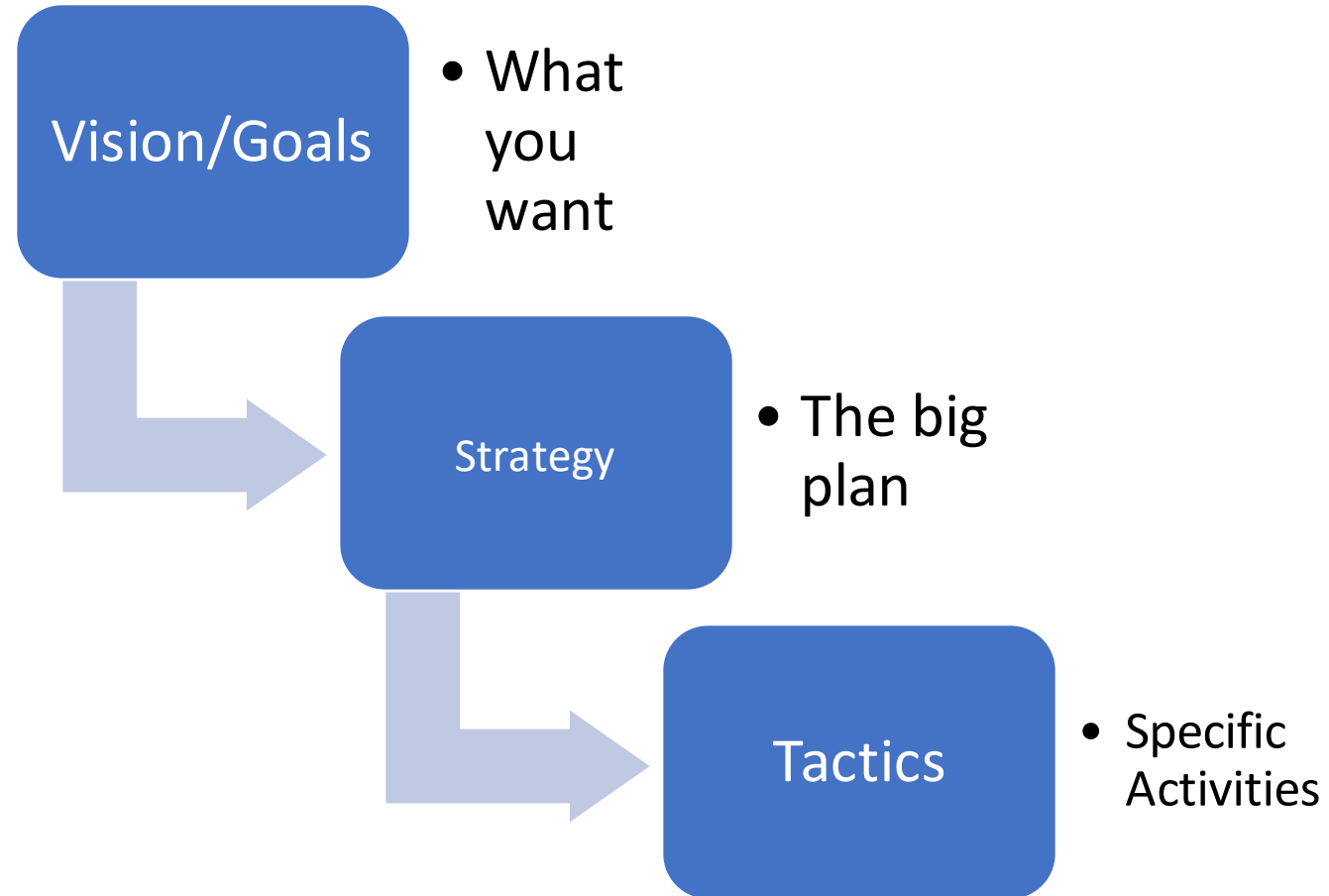
Why Measure?

- Provide data that:
 - Indicate trajectory/progress
 - Can be use for troubleshooting/diagnostics
 - Describe current reality
- What is assumed in measurements
 - A goal/standard/reference
 - Accuracy
- What is included but often forgotten
 - Delays-time between cause and measurable effect
 - Carryover-effects you can measure but may not have created
 - Variation-changes over time that are not related to things under our control
- How many big changes can you both make and measure in your career as a rancher?

Deciding What to Measure

- Identify Goals/Purpose, long and short term
- Identify strategy-the overall approach you have chosen to achieve your goals
 - Examples: least cost production, high performance, etc.
 - These can be very general or very specific (organic agriculture is an example of a very specific strategy)
 - You may have these selected or you may still need to work on this
- Identify/list your tactics-the specific activities you will use to implement your strategy and achieve your goals
 - Examples: synchronization, AI, vaccination, etc.

Levels of Assessment



Deciding What to Measure-The Objective

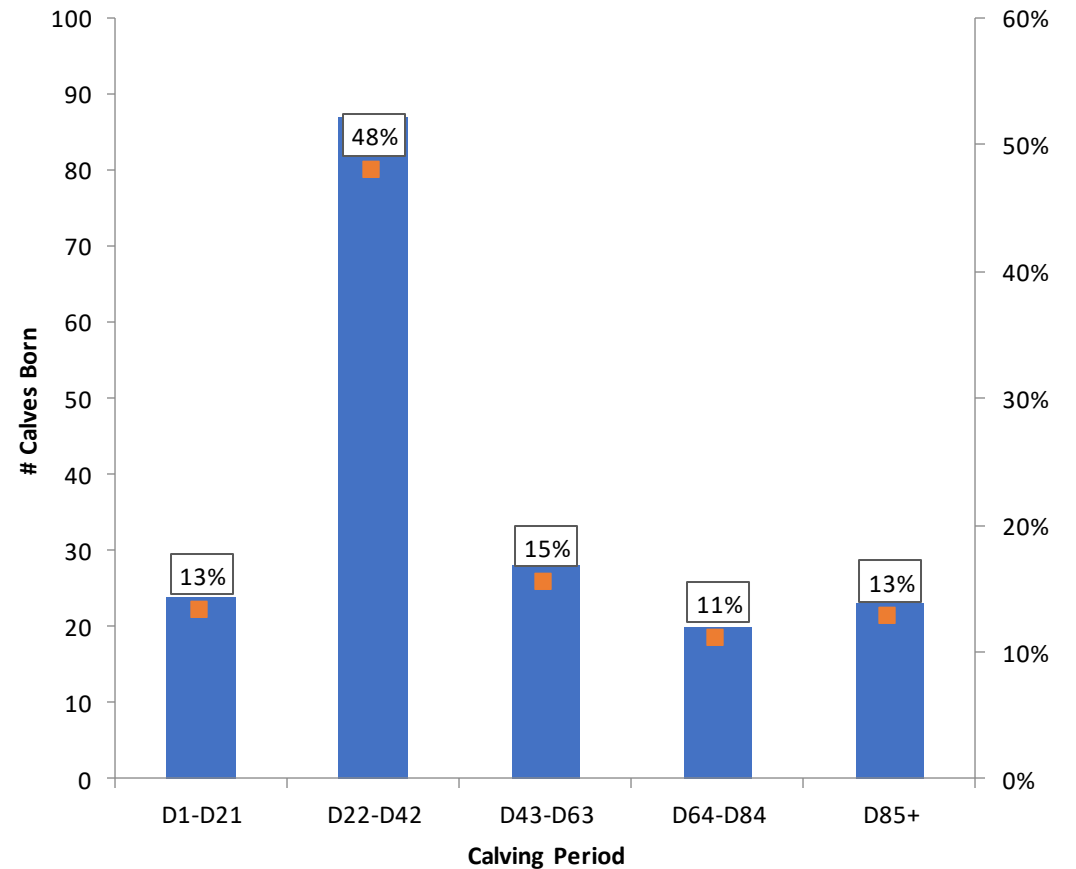
- Collect data that allows assessment and adjustments of tactics, strategy, and overall progress toward goals/vision
- Use/Create measurements to assess the efficacy of tactics
 - Preg checking with staging to assess synchronization success
 - Body condition scoring to assess nutritional management tactics
- Use/Create measurements to track success of strategy
 - Very likely to involve some accounting/financial analysis
 - May include on-ranch comparisons
- Use/Create measurements to track progress toward goals/vision
 - Most difficult and likely one that will need to be created

Deciding What To Measure-Considerations

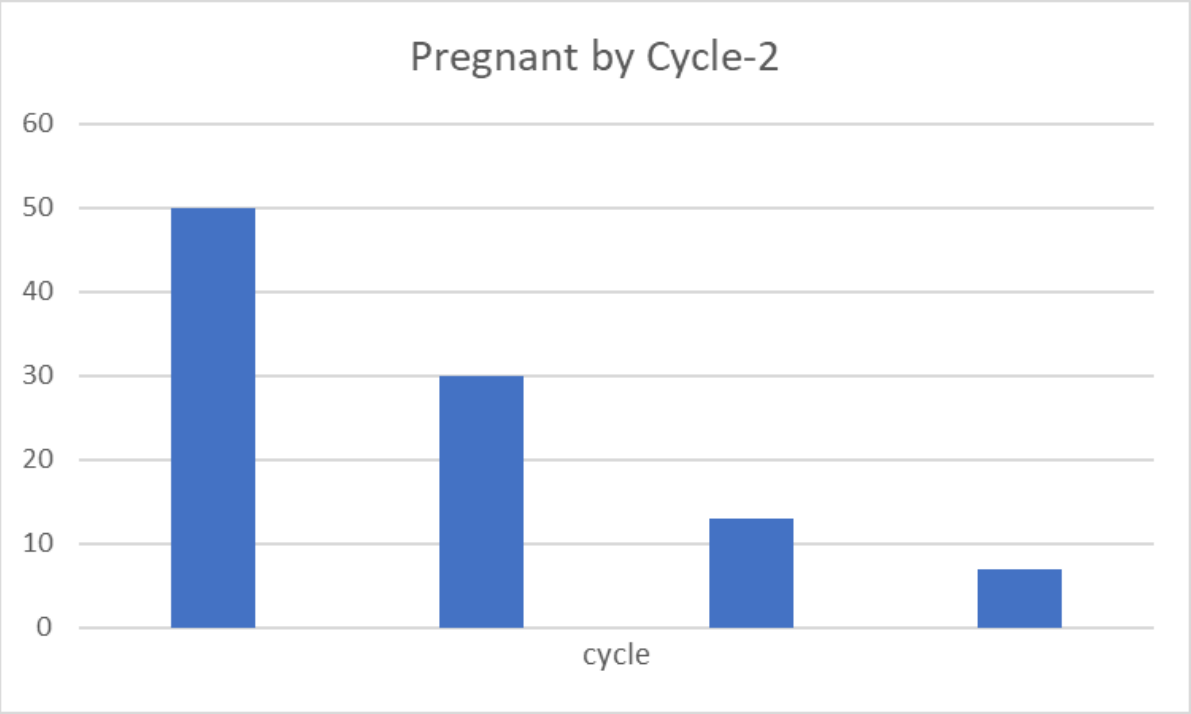
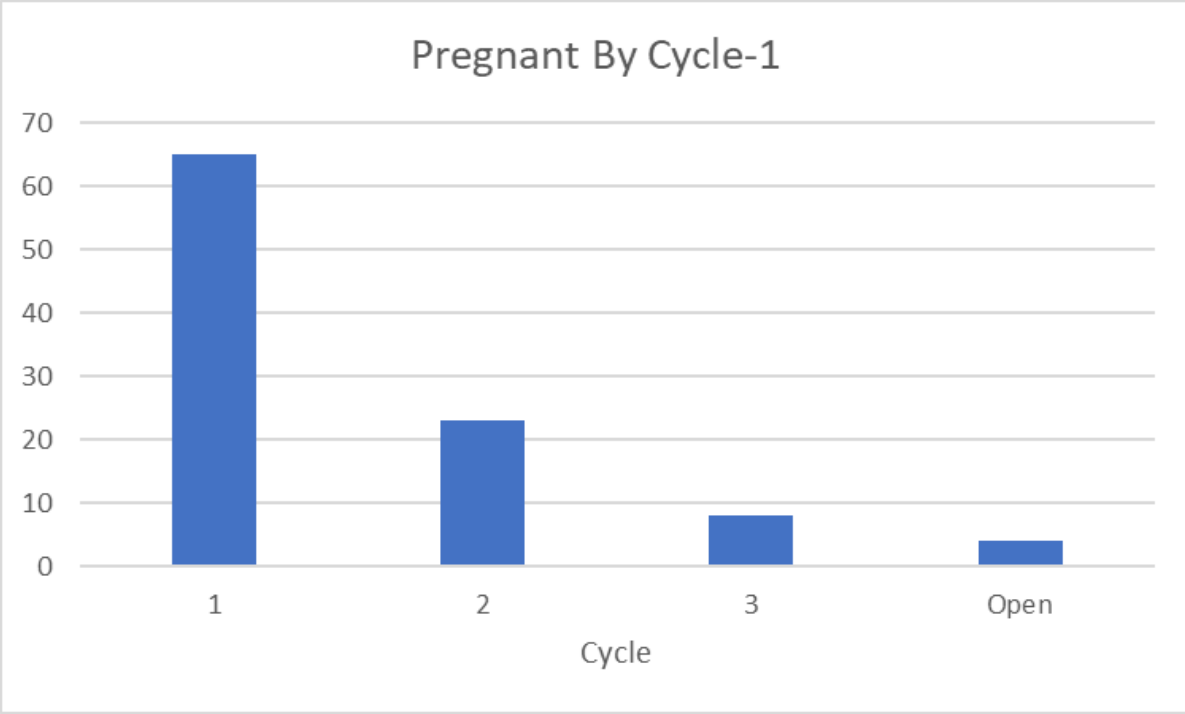
- Simplicity is highly desirable-choose measurements that are actionable in your system.
 - Not all measurements are worth the time
 - Measurements need to be worth prioritizing
 - Some data collection may be temporary or sporadic
- Consider multi-function/summary measurements
 - Calving distribution
 - Pounds weaned/cow exposed
- Choose measurements that will assess the overall health/function of your system when monitored over time

Example: Calving Distribution

- % of calves born per 21 day period
- How To:
 - Can be as simple as tallying calves born each day and adding up the totals for 21-day periods
 - Can be broken out by groups if specific questions are being addressed



Thinking about the Numbers

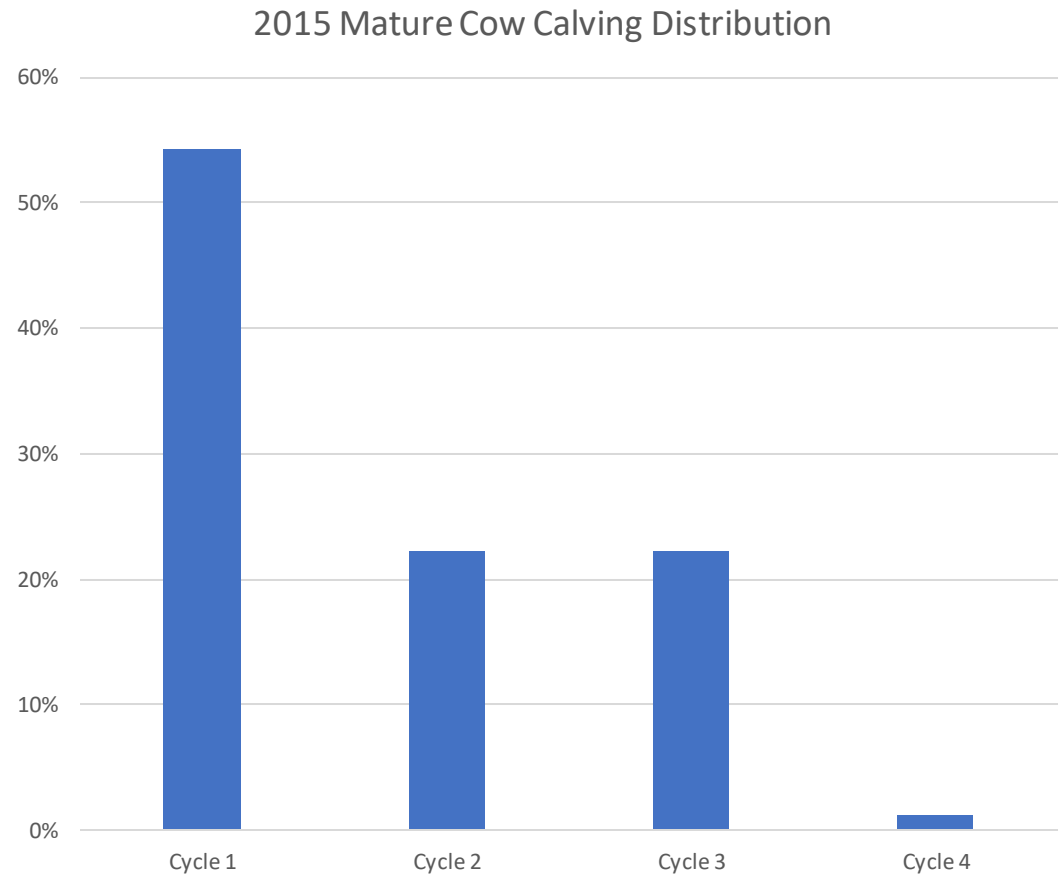


Example

- Background
- Missouri Client
- Goal: ?? (raise good calves?)
- Year 2014/15
- Spring calving cows/heifers
- 115 calves weaned
- Exposed 115 cows and 47 heifers (162 total)
- Now what?

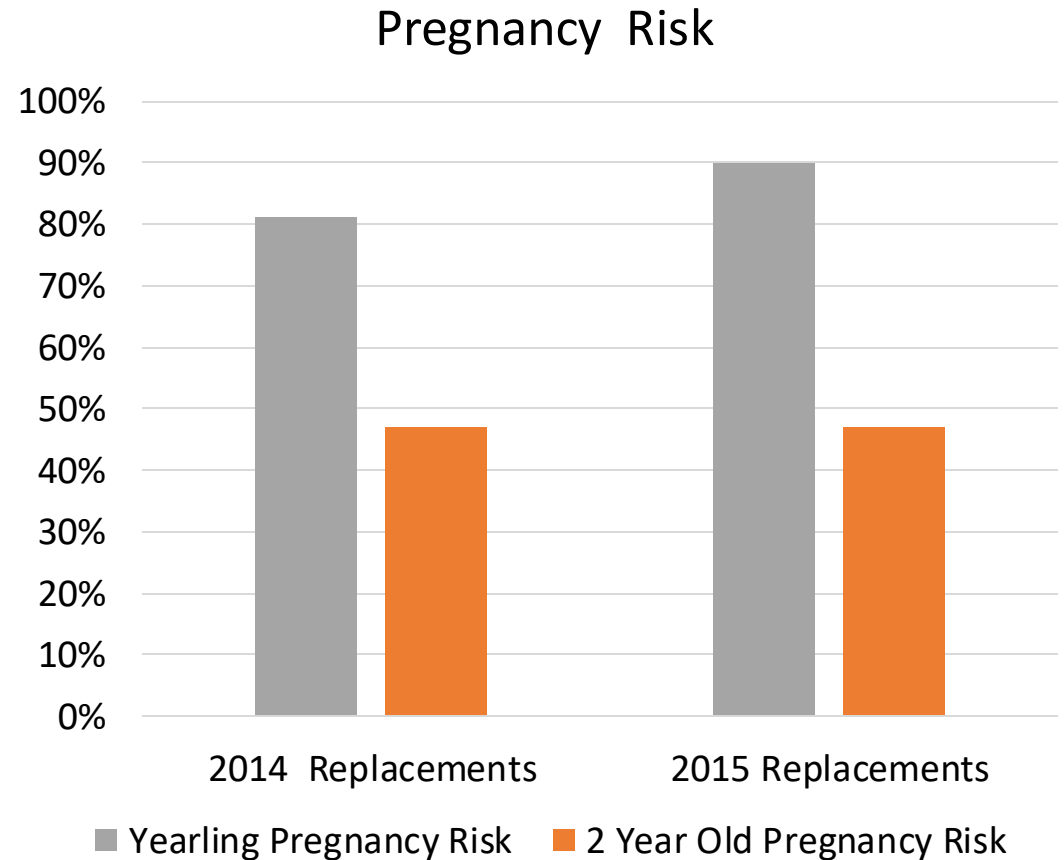
Measurements

- Weaning %=
 - Of exposed=71%
 - Of pregnant=87%
- Pounds weaned/cow exposed=373.5lbs



A Word of Caution

- You cannot manage what you don't measure, but what you measure you will manage
- Do you want to
 - Manage failures?
 - Manage successes?



Questions?

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