

# Organizational Premortem

The **organizational premortem** (Kahneman, 2011) is a procedure in which when an organization has come to a major decision but has not formally committed itself, it gathers together individuals who have made the decision, others who are knowledgeable about the decision, and each person is asked to do the following:

*Imagine that the existing plan has been implemented. Three months later it has been a disaster. Each individual is asked to write a brief history of the disaster—the premortem.*

The organizational premortem is a powerful process to develop action strategies because it slows down the process long enough to have knowledgeable organizational members cast their eyes and thoughts into the future scanning for possible pitfalls. Although rarely used in educational administration, it should be, especially when decisions to move forward on action are particularly important. Also consider the following advantages of the premortem.

## Advantages of the premortem:

1. It overcomes groupthink.
2. It unleashes the imagination of a group of competent individuals.
3. It legitimates doubts.
4. It encourages supporters to search for threats and weaknesses.
5. It signals possible longer-term negative consequences.
6. It guards against overconfident optimism.