



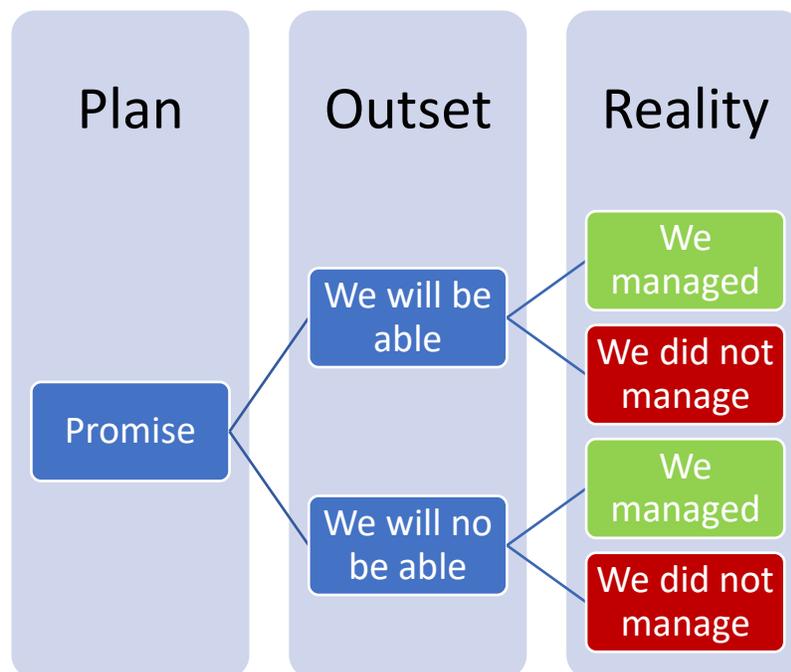
## A PERSON OF HER WORD

*A map for promising*

Of course, you are. No doubt, you are a man or a woman who can be expected to keep or follow through with his promises or intentions; a truthful, trustworthy or reliable person. But we know as well, that being that reliable is, more often than not, not so easy. And we want to help here.

Naturally, it all begins with that, what you promise. Because you would not promise anything, certainly not something you cannot keep, deliver or follow through, would you? Of course not. But being honest, we cannot be always certain about what promises we can keep and which we eventually cannot. How often it happens to us, that we are sure we can deliver something, or we can follow through about other thing, and we give our word, or we even commit ourselves in an even stronger manner (like in a contract). Only to find out later on, that we will not be able to do as we said, meant and wanted.

A map for promising would come handy here. The whole landscape of promising possibilities is outlined in the following scheme:



By promising we differentiate three stages. We call the first one “Plan”, on the far left. It refers to the pure idea of promising something. That something is abstract and surly sounds and looks nice, ideal. Of course, we will find it attractive, desirable too. Probably everybody would. At the second stage we may have thought about the chances for us about actually keeping the promise. Then,



we arrive to a conclusion, about how likely it is, that we can actually follow through or not with our promise. Regardless of our feeling, we proceed promising. Maybe we are under circumstances forcing us to promise something, in spite that we do not think, we will be able to keep it.

At the end, we come to the stage we call “reality”. At this point we have to actually pull through in concrete places and under certain circumstances which may work in favour or against us while we try to do as we said we would. At the very end, we will arrive to an outcome, which can only be success, if we managed to keep our promise (green fields in the scheme), or failure, if we did not manage (red fields).

This is no decisions tree. That is why we show too, the possible outcomes at the reality stage for the case we think, we will not be able to do as we say. There can be situations, and for sure they arise, in which you may think you will not be able to keep a promise, and at the end, it turns out, that you actually do manage, regardless of all your doubts. Three other important remarks are:

- 1) At the plan stage the four different possible outcomes have each a probability and all of them add up to 100%.
- 2) Coming to any of the possible outcomes will take from us resources of different sorts and quantities.
- 3) Success or failure will have an impact on our trustworthiness in the eyes of our direct counterpart or counterparts and in general and by extension in the eyes of our community.

Now we have a map for promising. We want to use it to reach to our objective, which is to deliver or to follow through what we promise. Because we price our trustworthiness. In our map that places are the green fields. The question is therefore: how we can make only promises, which take us always to those green fields. The map let us make some useful assertions at the time of pondering, making a promise:

- a) Consider carefully the value of your planed promise for you and your counterpart.
  - Would its value be clear enough for all involved parties?
  - Would it be really worthy for all involved parties?
  - How important is it, what you are promising?
  - How does the alternative, not promising anything, looks like? For you and your partner
  - Would your promise yield a “nice to have” or more something which will take someone to the next level
- b) Evaluate carefully the field, the circumstances and the conditions in which you will have to play and follow through your promise
  - What are the rules in place?
  - What is the mindset of the people you will have to interact with?
  - How much support or resistance you are likely to meet?



- How will you stand there, pulling your promise through?  
How comfortable you may be in the situation? How will you be perceived?
  - Will they be friendly or hostile to you, playing there?
  - What is out there, that may support you, pulling your promise through?
- c) Consider with great care, what resources of all sorts you are ready to pull together to make sure you keep your promise
- Do you know exactly what resources and in which quantities you would require them, in order to actually keep your promise under the given circumstances?
  - Can you afford all of them?
  - Are they available? Can you secure their availability for you?
  - Can you deploy them in the right place and time, to ensure that your promise will be kept?
  - Can they around you see, all the resources you are investing for keeping your promise?
  - May they around you have some reasons to believe, you may not actually deploy all your resources if you had to, to follow your promise through?