

# Missed it by “that much” ...

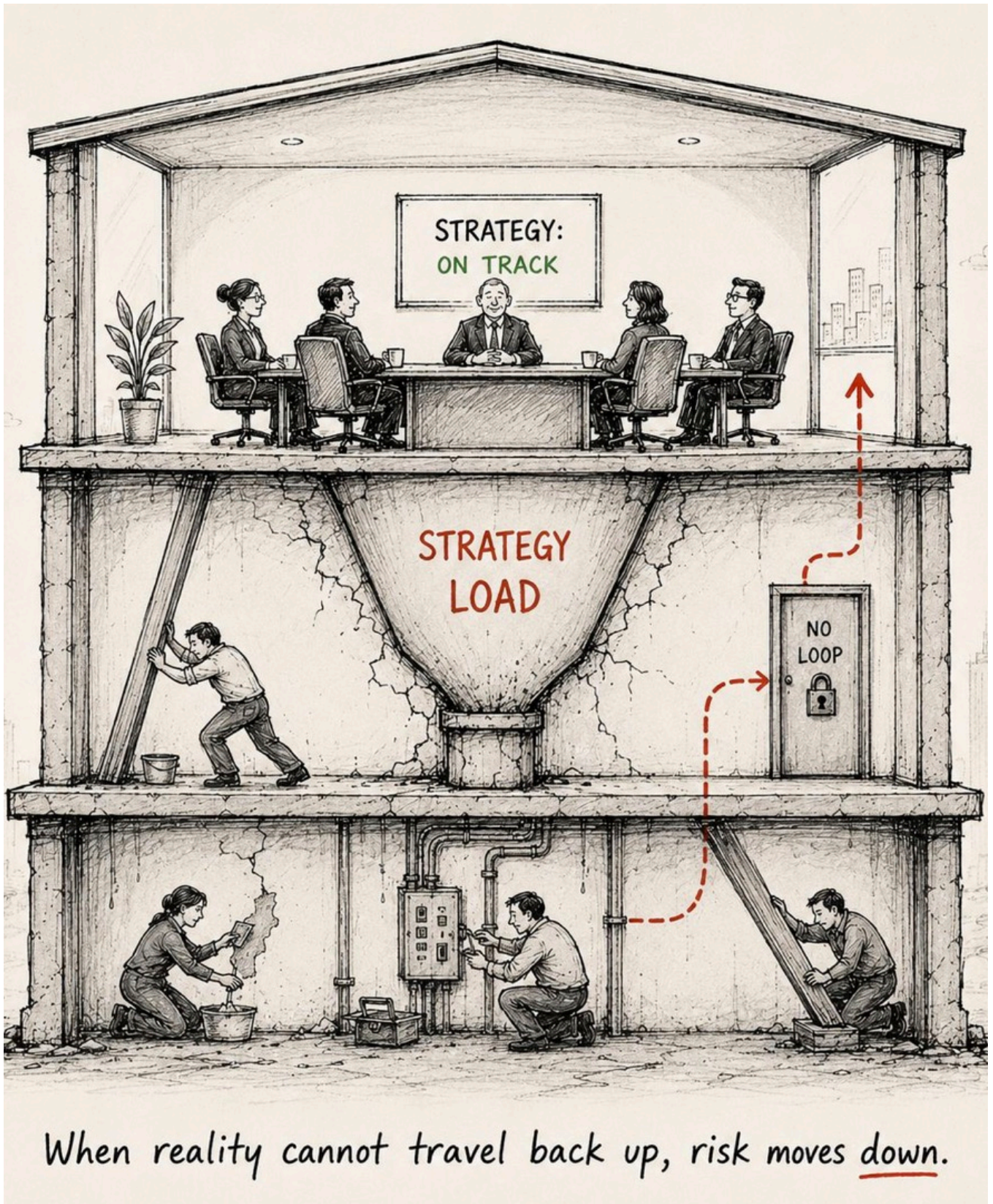
is an old joke from the TV series ‘Get Smart’

<https://youtube.com/shorts/PmMjifK0L5A?is=tO52zmmDYGT3cxcV>

This week I missed a connecting flight in Frankfurt. Having come from Australia I needed to clear the new border entry requirements. I appreciate the strategy of needing to check at the first point of entry.



I did not appreciate how poorly the integration of this requirement was being implemented in airport systems.



The failure to have adequately premised this fundamental “what if” is fairly widespread in scope, because the new EU Entry/Exit System now applies across the 29-country Schengen area, but the actual disruption is uneven rather than universal at every airport all day. The biggest problems have been reported at external-border passport control points during peak waves of arrivals, where airports and airlines have recorded missed flights and typical waits of 2–3 hours, with some cases even longer.<sup>[1][2][3][4][5]</sup>

## Where it is happening

Airports Council International Europe said data from airports in 15 countries showed border-control waiting times had “significantly increased” after full operation began. Reported trouble spots have included airports in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Greece, while other reporting also highlighted major issues in Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy.<sup>[6][7][1]</sup>

## How uneven it is

This is not a case of every passenger everywhere facing the same delay: the European Commission said the system was working “very well” in most countries and that the average registration took just over a minute, though it acknowledged technical issues in a few countries. Separate reporting also noted that some travelers clear controls quickly in quieter periods, while queues spike when several flights arrive close together or equipment and staffing fall short.<sup>[5][8][1]</sup>

## What it means for connections

The risk is highest for passengers who must clear Schengen external-border control during a connection, because that is where the biometric registration happens for eligible non-EU travelers. Industry groups have warned that these checks have already increased processing times by several multiples and, during peaks, created enough delay for passengers to miss onward flights.<sup>[3][4][8][5]</sup>

## How long this may last

There is some built-in flexibility while authorities stabilize the rollout: under the current rules, certain border points can temporarily suspend biometric collection in exceptional circumstances when queues become excessive, with this flexibility available through July and, under conditions, likely into September. That suggests the bottleneck is likely to remain a recurring issue through the busy summer period, but probably as a patchy, airport-by-airport problem rather than a constant continent-wide shutdown.<sup>[9][1]</sup>

I should have done my homework and been better prepared (a one hour and 48 minute layover was inadequate) - so revisiting your upcoming schedule might be worth considering.

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