

The Santiago Doctrine

The reasoning behind the rules — why judgment in this engine is built the way it is, and what each rule is defending against.

Non-technical edition · prepared for independent review

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Doctrine 1.0.0 — the companion to the enforced specification. This document carries no code, no hashes, no schemas: only the thinking.

Why a doctrine at all

Most simulation products are asked one question by serious people: **why should I believe the output?** There are only two honest answers. Either the reasoning is disciplined enough that a skeptic recognizes it as judgment rather than fluency — or the run is provable enough that the skeptic does not have to trust anyone at all. A doctrine is what forces both answers to exist at the same time, on every single run, whether or not anyone is watching.

This is why the doctrine is stamped into the engine instead of living in a sales deck. A principle applied when convenient is not a principle; it is a preference. The engine is the only place where a rule cannot be waived under pressure — and pressure is exactly when these rules matter, because that is when a founder most wants the number to be flattering.

PRINCIPLE 01

Read intent before you read the numbers

A negotiation is not a math problem wearing a suit. The same concession is wise or suicidal depending on whether the other side is building something with you or extracting from you. So the first thing the engine decides is not price — it is whether a future exists in this relationship at all. Everything downstream inherits that answer: how wide the cushion is, how much patience is rational, whether generosity buys anything.

“Margin given to someone with no future is not a concession. It is a donation.”

The reasoning behind the safeguard: humans over-diagnose hostility from a single cold sentence, and models do it worse, because a hostile sentence is stylistically easy to imitate. So the model is never allowed to *declare* extraction. It reports what it saw and how decisive the signal was; the engine accumulates evidence and owns the verdict. Judgment is a sequence, not a reaction.

PRINCIPLE 02

The correct move is usually neither yes nor walk out

The most common failure in real negotiations is a false binary: accept, or leave. Between them sits the posture that actually wins — hold a hard but not absurd position, buy time on a legitimate pretext, manufacture a second meeting, and let indifference do the arguing. Time is the cheapest form of leverage and the one people spend worst.

The debrief is therefore obligated to say when this posture *should* have been used and wasn't. A review that only grades what happened is a scoreboard. A review that names

the move you didn't see is coaching — and coaching is the product.

PRINCIPLE 03

A person inside a different institution is a different person

Trust is not portable at face value. The same counterparty, moved into another organization, answers to other incentives, other constituencies, other survival conditions. Reading only the individual is how experienced people get surprised by someone they thought they knew. So every read is anchored to two things at once: the human, and the institution modulating the human.

“Trust transfers at a discount, and the discount has to be re-earned against the new institution’s incentives.”

PRINCIPLE 04

Separate what they performed from what they believe

Skilled counterparties project on purpose: the worried face, the studied indifference, the delay dressed as process. If theater is allowed to update your model of their true position, you have handed them the pen. So performance is recorded in its own layer, named openly in the debrief as a risk, and structurally barred from making the other side look more receptive than the evidence supports.

This is also an honesty mechanism aimed inward. It stops the engine from rewarding the operator for a warm meeting that produced nothing.

PRINCIPLE 05

One observation is not a rule

Pattern-hunger is the occupational disease of analysis. A single striking behavior gets promoted to a law of the counterparty, and the law then explains everything, including things it did not cause. The doctrine only lets something be called a rule of judgment when it recurs across different subjects and different situations. Everything else stays an observation — useful, but not load-bearing.

And when a rule does earn the name, it enters the forecast as a caveat rather than a certainty. It narrows the range of surprise; it does not abolish surprise.

PRINCIPLE 06

Killing a judgment must cost more than forming one

Confidence should not be symmetric. A conclusion built from many independent signals cannot be collapsed by one soft remark — otherwise the last thing you heard always wins, and analysis becomes an echo of the most recent tone of voice. Weakening a well-supported read therefore requires more evidence than establishing it did.

Ageing, on the other hand, is mechanical. Evidence loses force with time on a fixed schedule the engine owns, because if a model were allowed to decide how stale its own evidence is, it would always find its favorite evidence fresh.

“Every claim must be falsifiable and quotable. No invented beliefs, ever.”

Why proof sits next to judgment

Good reasoning is still an opinion until something outside the reasoner can check it. The second half of the doctrine exists for one reason: to remove us from the chain of trust. Not to look rigorous — to be dispensable.

PRINCIPLE 07

Declare the objective before the story can be written

If the goal is stated after the outcome is known, the goal will always have been met. That is not dishonesty; it is how memory works. So the objective — target, floor, the things that must not happen — is fixed and sealed before the first exchange exists, and the session cannot begin without it.

What this buys is the ability to detect the most expensive illusion in business: the consolation prize. Real movement that is not movement toward what you actually came for. It feels like progress, it reports like progress, and it is how quarters get lost.

“Sealing the objective converts ‘we achieved it’ from a story into a measurement.”

PRINCIPLE 08

Split the mandate, and blind each side

The deepest doubt about simulated negotiation is behavioral leakage: the person who knows the target unconsciously steers toward it, then celebrates hitting it. The answer is to divide the roles. Whoever owns the objective does not see the exchange as it happens. Whoever negotiates does not know the sealed objective. Observers see nothing live at all.

Blindness is not assumed; it is attested, and any breach is recorded rather than smoothed over. A run where the wall was crossed does not get a lower score — it gets no score. A contaminated measurement is not a weak measurement; it is not a measurement.

PRINCIPLE 09

When in doubt, say undetermined — never clean

A blank field reads as innocence to a human eye. That single fact is responsible for a great deal of institutional self-deception. So anything the system cannot fully resolve is

stated as unresolved, in words, in the output. Silence is prohibited because silence flatters.

There is a cost the doctrine accepts on purpose: most historical runs read unverifiable or undetermined. A thin column of real numbers is worth more than a full column of generous ones.

PRINCIPLE 10

Correct by addition, never by mutation

When a published number turns out to be wrong, the tempting move is to recalculate quietly. The doctrine forbids it. The old figure is withdrawn in public, preserved as withdrawn, and never reissued. The record grows; it never gets rewritten.

This has already happened once with a perfect score of ours. Publishing the retraction was more valuable than the score had ever been — because a record that can be edited proves nothing, and everybody knowledgeable knows it.

“The only credible evidence trail is one whose author cannot improve it after the fact.”

PRINCIPLE 11

Make yourself unnecessary to the verification

Publishing a hash and asking for belief is theater. So the underlying record is published alongside it, the recipe for turning that record into the hash is published in two independent languages, the authorship signature is verifiable against a public key, and existence in time is attested by Bitcoin rather than by our word.

The purpose is not sophistication. It is that a hostile reviewer with none of our software, none of our goodwill, and no access to our systems can arrive at the same conclusion — or catch us. Both outcomes are acceptable. Only the third one, unfalsifiability, is not.

For the same reason there is no retroactive signing. Older runs are labeled by name as unverifiable. The gap is disclosed, not closed — because a gap you can see is trustworthy and a gap you papered over is not.

PRINCIPLE 12

Simulated actors must live inside their own constraints

An institutional actor that invents an instrument the era never had, or commits to something no real executive would politically survive, produces a comfortable answer and a useless one. The engine blocks the miracle instead of enjoying it, and says out loud that a new instrument would be required.

Realism is not a graphics setting here. It is the difference between rehearsal and fantasy: only one of them changes what happens in the room next week.

What the doctrine admits

Radical honesty is itself one of the rules, so the unresolved item is stated first rather than buried last.

Predictive validity is the load-bearing assumption. Every discipline described above is credibility infrastructure for a claim it does not prove: that a counterparty reconstructed from institutional DNA behaves closely enough to the real one to change the real outcome. No amount of sealing, signing or anchoring can settle that. Only pre-registered predictions, scored after real events, with the failures published beside the hits. That work is in front of us, not behind us.

Stating this plainly is not modesty. It is the only position from which the rest of the doctrine means anything: we are describing the strength of our evidence, not the strength of our belief.

The doctrine in one page

Read intent first	Numbers are meaningless until you know if a future exists.
Probe, don't binary	Between yes and walking out is where deals are actually won.
Person + institution	Trust does not travel at face value.
Theater ≠ belief	Never let a performance update your model.
Recurrence = rule	One observation is a story, not a law.
Asymmetric doubt	Destroying a judgment costs more than building one.
Seal the goal first	Otherwise the goal is written by the outcome.
Blind the roles	A contaminated measurement is not a measurement.
Undetermined, not blank	Silence always flatters the author.
Add, never overwrite	A record you can improve proves nothing.
Be dispensable	A hostile reviewer must be able to check us without us.
Constrain the actors	Miracles make comfortable, useless rehearsals.

Santiago Maspons · TACTIK · Doctrine 1.0.0 — reasoning edition. The enforced specification, with the gates and the verification artifacts, is a separate document.