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AES SYSTEMS THINKING FRAMEWORK

THE SCALE WORKBOOK

Examine one recurring corporate workflow, expose effort-dependence and build a more visible, reliable and transferable way of working.

CORPORATES & INSTITUTIONS

One workflow | Five lenses | One 30-day improvement

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SEE THE WORK

Actual workflow

CLARIFY THE SYSTEM

Ownership and decisions

IMPROVE WITH EVIDENCE

30-day experiment

01 EFFORT-DRIVEN VS SYSTEM-DRIVEN GROWTH

Choose one recurring workflow; do not turn this into a whole-organization review.

Corporate inefficiency often survives because familiar controls and technical language make a process appear disciplined. In practice, teams may tolerate duplicate records, unclear approval routes, long handovers and repeated escalation. This workbook follows the work as it is actually done, then tests whether governance supports timely delivery instead of adding effort without control.

EFFORT-DRIVEN GROWTH

Results depend on extra effort, memory, personal rescue and repeated chasing. Growth adds strain because the workflow itself is not dependable.

- Quality varies according to who does the work.
- Regular overtime and firefighting are normal, and senior leaders rescue routine work.
- More people are added without redesigning the workflow, so growth increases errors, delays and supervision.
- Employees create individual workarounds because the approved method is missing, outdated or impractical.
- The same information is captured repeatedly in emails, forms, spreadsheets and systems.
- Performance falls when a key employee is absent because critical knowledge is in that person's head.

SYSTEM-DRIVEN GROWTH

The workflow makes the result repeatable: ownership, decisions, information, controls and learning work together even when pressure increases.

- The expected result, service level and acceptance criteria are clear.
- Routine work continues without executive rescue or constant chasing.
- One reliable record shows the request, owner, status, evidence and next action.
- Decision limits, escalation rules and capable backups are understood.
- Measures reveal delays, rework and exceptions early enough to act.
- Current documentation helps a new employee perform and improve the work.

SELECT THE WORKFLOW

Choose the process causing the most repeated delay, rework, complaint, dependency or confusion.

ORGANIZATION

REVIEWER / TEAM

REVIEW DATE

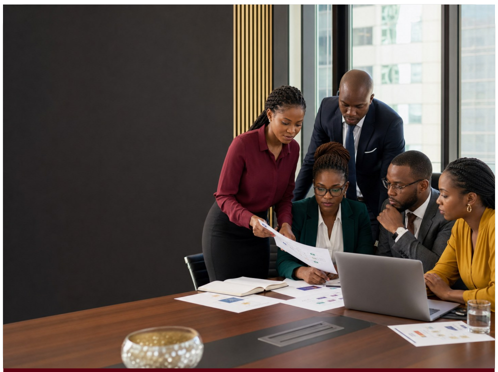
CURRENT WORKFLOW OWNER

WORKFLOW SELECTED *Name one request-to-result process.*

RECURRING PAIN *What keeps happening, and who feels the effect?*

START EVENT

COMPLETED RESULT



RUNNING EXAMPLE

Departmental equipment purchase: request to supplier payment

02 REVIEW THE WORKFLOW THROUGH SCALE

Write one evidence-based observation for each lens.

S — SEE THE WHOLE WORKFLOW

Map the work from request to result, including the informal steps.

PRACTICAL QUESTION

What actually happens, not what the policy says should happen?

Use: What event starts the work, and what completed result ends it? | List the actual steps, including email, chat, chasing and informal approvals. | Where does work wait, loop back, get re-entered or...

YOUR OBSERVATION / EVIDENCE

C — CLARIFY OUTCOMES AND OWNERSHIP

Define the expected result, owner, backup, decision rights, and escalation limits.

PRACTICAL QUESTION

Who owns the result and what can they decide without waiting?

Use: What result and service level must the workflow deliver? | Who owns that result from request to closure, and who is the capable backup? | What can each role decide without seeking another...

YOUR OBSERVATION / EVIDENCE

A — ALIGN PEOPLE, PROCESS, INFORMATION, AND TOOLS

Remove conflicting instructions, duplicate records, unnecessary handovers, and tool gaps.

PRACTICAL QUESTION

Do the roles, workflow, data, and technology support the same outcome?

Use: Where do roles or instructions conflict with the intended result? | Which information is entered more than once or stored in competing records? | Which handoff or tool gap adds effort without addin...

YOUR OBSERVATION / EVIDENCE

L — LEARN FROM FEEDBACK AND EXCEPTIONS

Review delays, rework, complaints, quality failures, and unusual cases.

PRACTICAL QUESTION

What is the process teaching us, and what should change?

Use: Which delay, error, complaint or exception repeats most often? | What does its pattern suggest about the workflow rather than the person? | What small change will be tested, measured and...

YOUR OBSERVATION / EVIDENCE

E — EXPAND ONLY AFTER THE CORE WORKS

Standardize the improved method, train the team, then add volume, people, branches, or technology.

PRACTICAL QUESTION

Are we scaling a reliable process or multiplying confusion?

Use: Has the improved method produced reliable results on real work? | Is it documented, measurable and usable by someone other than the expert? | What must remain stable before adding volume, peo...

YOUR OBSERVATION / EVIDENCE

03 TEST DEPENDENCY, AUTHORITY AND RELIABILITY

A strong average does not cancel a critical dependency.

DEPENDENCY RED FLAGS

- ☐ The workflow stops when one approver, buyer, analyst or system user is absent.
- ☐ Important passwords, supplier contacts, files or system access depend on one person.
- ☐ Routine exceptions are repeatedly escalated to the owner, CEO, CFO or another senior leader.
- ☐ There is no capable, authorized backup for a critical role or decision.
- ☐ Current status exists only in private email, chat or an individual's spreadsheet.
- ☐ Requesting, approving, receiving or paying duties are concentrated in a way that weakens control.

DECISION-RIGHTS CHECK

- Who owns the result from request to confirmed payment?
- Who may approve at each value or risk threshold?
- Which known exceptions may employees resolve without waiting?
- What must be escalated, to whom and within what time?

END-TO-END OWNER

ROUTINE AUTHORITY / LIMIT

BACKUP AND ESCALATION TRIGGER

RATE THE CURRENT WORKFLOW: 1 = FRAGILE, 5 = SYSTEM-DRIVEN

Use consistent evidence, not the best recent case.

Factor	Description	1	2	3	4	5
VISIBILITY	1: Steps, status and waiting time are scattered across emails and private records. 5: Every request has a visible stage, owner, age, next action and completion evidence.	○	○	○	○	○
CONSISTENCY	1: The route, information requested and result vary by handler or relationship. 5: A practical standard route and criteria are followed, with controlled exceptions.	○	○	○	○	○
OWNERSHIP	1: Many people approve activities, but nobody owns the end-to-end result. 5: A named owner, authorized roles, backup and escalation path are understood.	○	○	○	○	○
RESILIENCE	1: Absence, workload peaks or system disruption stop the workflow. 5: Capable backups, accessible records and tested continuity steps keep priority work moving.	○	○	○	○	○
LEARNING	1: Problems are fixed individually, while the same delay or error returns. 5: The team reviews evidence, tests changes and updates the standard method.	○	○	○	○	○

TOTAL / 25	AVERAGE / 5	INTERPRETATION

21-25	System-driven / scale-ready
17-20	Generally reliable
13-16	Developing system
9-12	Effort-dependent
5-8	Fragile / critical

WHAT THE AVERAGE MEANS

The average is the total divided by five. It shows the typical reliability of this workflow across the five factors: 1.0 is person-dependent and fragile; 3.0 is developing; 5.0 is consistently system-driven.

RED-FLAG OVERRIDE

If any red flag is selected, act on that exposure even when the total score is high. The interpretation will display + RED FLAG.

04 CHOOSE ONE 30-DAY IMPROVEMENT

Use a controlled experiment: one root cause, one owner, one measure and one review date.

WHAT TO PUT IN THESE FIELDS

- Focus: the recurring failure or root cause to improve.
- Change: the smallest practical system change to test.
- Measure: the number or evidence that will show whether it worked.
- Review: adopt, adjust or stop based on Day 30 evidence.

IMPROVEMENT FOCUS / ROOT CAUSE

OWNER AND BACKUP

CHANGE / EXPERIMENT *What will be different in the workflow?*

BASELINE *Current evidence*

30-DAY TARGET *Desired evidence*

MEASURE AND DATA SOURCE

SECTOR EXAMPLE

Focus: Reduce request-to-purchase-order delay caused by incomplete intake and unclear approval routing.

Change: Pilot one required intake record, a visible status register and a published approval-and-escalation matrix in one business unit.

Measure: Median request-to-purchase-order time, percentage returned for missing information and percentage approved within two business days.

WEEKLY CHECKPOINTS

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

WEEK 3

WEEK 4

DAY 30 EVIDENCE AND DECISION *Adopt, adjust or stop - and why.*

SAVE YOUR WORK, THEN CHOOSE THE NEXT STEP

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