WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Find Where the Work Gets Stuck

A visible journey through one process, with a wait worth investigating together.

15-20 minutes | A small flow map

Use it in three moves

1. Follow one typical item from a clear start to a clear finish. Ask the people who do the work.

2. Use minutes throughout. Separate active work from waiting before the step, and mark estimates honestly.

3. The total assumes sequential steps for one item. Overlapping work, rework, and different calendars need a fuller map.

What item are you following, from where to where?

For example: a routine access request, from submission to usable access.

What are these times based on?

Observed case, sample, or estimate? Include when you looked.

Find Where the Work Gets Stuck

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

Which condition could reduce a wait?

Investigate approvals, information, batching, or access. Do not simply ask people to work faster.

Who should shape the change?

Include the people whose work would move or grow.

How and when will you check the effect?

Notice quality and hidden work as well as elapsed time.

One item at a time

Copy this page for additional items. Use one row, option, task, or possibility per copy. The web tool handles calculations and comparisons where included.

Step

Active minutes

Time working on this item, not an entire batch.

Waiting minutes before this step

Use 0 only when you know there is no wait.

What is the wait connected to?

A question for me

Where am I rewarding heroic rescue instead of changing the condition that requires it?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

What item are you following, from where to where?

A routine access request, from submission to confirmed access.

What are these times based on?

One observed request on Tuesday. Calendar minutes, including the waits between steps.

Which condition could reduce a wait?

Explore a backup approver and a clearer routine-access policy before changing the queue.

Who should shape the change?

Requester, approver, and the person doing setup.

How and when will you check the effect?

Map five more routine requests next week and ask whether errors or support work increase.

Example item 1

Step: Check the request

Active minutes: 5

Waiting minutes before this step: 60

What is the wait connected to?: The inbox is checked hourly.

Example item 2

Step: Approve access

Active minutes: 3

Waiting minutes before this step: 240

What is the wait connected to?: One approver checks twice a day.

The example continued

Example item 3

Step: Set up and confirm

Active minutes: 12

Waiting minutes before this step: 30

What is the wait connected to?: The confirmation waits in a shared queue.

The thinking behind it

When the process relies on someone constantly rescuing it, the rescue can hide the condition that needs to change. Ask what support would let people do the work without becoming its permanent workaround.

Value-stream mapping makes the flow of work and information visible, including time spent between steps. The Lean Enterprise Institute describes it within lean practice. This small sequential map borrows that perspective; it is not a full value-stream map and does not identify a process bottleneck from one case.

Lean Enterprise Institute: value-stream mapping

Read The Magic of Mr. Greenleaf - A Servant Leader's Guide to the Impossible by Nic Payne