
BEFORE YOU BUY ANOTHER TOOL

You can't solve what you can't see.

A field guide to instrumenting your business before you buy another platform, automate another workflow, or sit through another demo.

NOT JUST SLIDE DECKS · I PLAN IT, THEN I DO IT

■ BASED ON A CASE STUDY

How I helped a regional cell-tower operator cut more than 10,000 labor hours a year out of their 5G rollout — by measuring the waste, killing the bottlenecks, and moving the slow work off-site.

[READ THE CASE STUDY →](#)

01 The three ideas, in order

Every operator I've worked with has hit these three walls in roughly the same sequence. The walls get more expensive the later you hit them.

A You can't solve what you can't see.

The issues you fix are the ones you notice. Most teams populate their problem list from memory, gut feel, and whoever spoke loudest in the last meeting — not from measurement. The waste that isn't visible doesn't get solved.

B The tool is downstream of the method.

Every expensive platform promises to replace methodology with features. None of them do. The teams that get the most out of Monday.com are the same teams that would get the most out of Salesforce — the value was never in the platform. It was in knowing what they needed to see.

C Automation doesn't equal scalability.

Clean process unlocks scale. Automation just scales whatever you pointed it at. I've watched this at the \$100M level in retail media, where automated reporting pipelines produced a more confident version of the wrong answer every month — because the process underneath had never been cleaned up.

02 · BEFORE THE NEXT DEMO

Three questions to ask before you buy a tool.

Run these before the next platform demo. If you can't answer them, the demo is premature.

Q 01

What decision am I trying to make that I can't make today?

Q 02

What would I need to see to make it?

Q 03

What's the smallest, cheapest thing that could show me that?

Nine times out of ten, the answer to the third question is something you already own. Two custom fields on a Monday.com board. A timestamp column in a spreadsheet. Milestone tracking in Asana. The tool isn't the constraint. The method is.

03 The four-field template

For any recurring process in your business, log these four things every time it runs. Use whatever tracking system you already have.

FIELD	WHAT TO CAPTURE
Start	When the work actually began — not when it was scheduled.
Milestones	Two or three natural checkpoints in the middle of the process.
End	When the work was actually done.
Blocker note	One line if anything stalled, even if it cleared up on its own.

Run it for two to four weeks. Not forever. Just long enough to get a shape.

04 · AFTER TWO WEEKS

What to look for in the data

- 01 **Which step takes the most time?** Usually not what your team would have guessed.
- 02 **Which step has the highest variance?** Consistent steps are rarely the problem. Variance is where the waste lives.
- 03 **What shows up most often in the blocker notes?** That's your issues list, already written for you.

05 · BEFORE YOU AUTOMATE

Three diagnostic checks

- 01 **Can you describe the process end-to-end without mentioning the tool?**
- 02 **Could a new hire run it correctly from the description alone?**
- 03 **Is the data it produces trustworthy enough to make a decision from?**

If the answer to any of these is no, automation will make things worse. Automating a messy process doesn't clean it up — it scales the mess, in ways that are harder to see and more expensive to unwind.

A NOTE ON SIMPLER TOOLS

Simpler tools don't lose functionality. They require you to be more honest about what you actually need from them. *That honesty is the whole job.*

Run it this week.

06 · TWO WEEKS OF REAL DATA

- Pick one recurring process** — not your biggest problem, your most repeated one. Runs at least 5x a week.
- Tell your team it's temporary** — two weeks — and that the data will decide whether to keep it.
- At the two-week mark**, run the three data questions against what you collected.
- Add the four fields** to wherever you already track that work. No new tool.
- Run the process as normal.** Capture the fields every time it runs.
- Bring the most interesting finding** to your next team meeting as a new issue to discuss.

IF THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR

One conversation is usually enough to know if I'm the *right fit*.

I'm a senior independent consultant based in Zeeland, MI. I work with founders and operators on lean teams who need someone senior enough to run ops, broad enough to cover the work, and fast enough to move this week — not next quarter.

Typical engagements: instrumenting a process nobody can see clearly, building the internal tools that should have existed a year ago, fixing the handoffs between sales and ops, standing up a CRM the team will actually use.

SEND ME A MESSAGE

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