

Accounting Workflow Audit Worksheet

Map one workflow as it actually runs, find where work waits, and choose the right fix.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET

- 1. Pick one bounded workflow with a clear start and end, such as individual returns from organizer sent to delivery.
- 2. Interview the people doing the work, not only the people supervising it, and map the process as it runs today.
- 3. Score it against the six elements of a well-designed workflow to find the gaps behind each bottleneck.
- 4. Choose one fix you can measure: standardize, automate or redesign. Then compare results to your baseline.

1

Choose the workflow

Workflow being audited

Audit led by

Date

It starts when... (the trigger)

It is complete when...

What problem prompted this audit? (missed deadlines, write-offs, work stuck in review)

2

Capture a baseline

Record where things stand before you change anything. Choose measures your firm can actually collect and use.

Measure	Current value	How you'll collect it
Elapsed time, start to finish		
Days in each status (e.g., review)		
Items waiting in a queue		
Rework or files sent back		
Escalations or missed reminders		
Engagements over budget		

3 Map the current state

List every stage in order, including each point where work changes hands between people, teams or systems. Write what actually happens today, not what the process document says.

#	Stage	Owner (role)	What starts this stage?	What makes it "done"?	Typical wait
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Tip: Mark any stage where no one is clearly responsible for picking up the work. That is often where time goes.

4 Score it against the six elements

For each element, mark whether this workflow has it today. Every "No" or "Partly" points to a likely cause of delay.

	Yes	Partly	No	Notes or evidence
A defined trigger A clear event starts the work, so nothing depends on someone remembering.	☐	☐	☐	
A named owner for every stage Each stage belongs to a role, so it is always clear who acts next.	☐	☐	☐	
A written definition of done Handoff criteria mean the next person has what they need.	☐	☐	☐	
A cadence and escalation point Reminders run on a schedule, and stale work goes to a named person.	☐	☐	☐	
Documented exception handling Recurring exceptions have a defined path and an approver.	☐	☐	☐	
A cutoff A set point where work takes a different path, such as an extension.	☐	☐	☐	

5 Name the bottlenecks

Where does work sit waiting? For each bottleneck, note which missing element is most likely behind it.

Bottleneck 1

Likely cause

Bottleneck 2

Likely cause

Bottleneck 3

Likely cause

6

List recurring exceptions

Start with the three to five exceptions that came up most last season, not every possible edge case.

Exception	How it should be handled	Who approves

7

Choose the fix and measure it

What kind of fix does this workflow need?

- ☐ **Standardize** Owners, handoff criteria or exceptions are unclear.
- ☐ **Automate** The process is clear, but reminders, routing or tracking are manual.
- ☐ **Redesign** The stages themselves no longer fit how the work runs.

The first change we will make

Owner of this change

Date we will review results

How we will know it worked (compare to the baseline in Section 2)

After the change: did the bottleneck move or create extra work elsewhere?

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