



What could be working better?

If you take away the waste, the friction and the difficulties, and some of the time spent doing stuff that doesn't need to be done or isn't important, you will inevitably become more efficient. (Emma Burge in Unbound SBLs: Sector support and striving for excellence)

What are you doing in your role that doesn't feel like a good use of your time? Where are the friction points? The processes that could work more smoothly? Use these activities and questions to identify what could be working better and how to bring about change.

Energy wasters

Try one of these three activities to identify where energy is being wasted or processes could be smoother.

Interruption audit

For two days, keep a tally of how many times you are stopped in a corridor or 'popped in on' for a request that could or should be a formal process (e.g. ordering, maintenance, HR queries).

Energy leak identification

Identify one task you perform weekly that feels like wasted effort. For example, duplicated data entry, or data entry that is never reviewed.

Right first time?

Review the tasks you worked on today, or over the last two days. How many required a follow-up email, message or phone call because something was unclear or missing in the information you were given?

Map the process

Take one of the time or energy suckers you've identified from the suggestions above. What could make the process work better?

1. What's the goal?

What's the desired outcome of this process? For example:

- Glue sticks order received within three working days.
- Weekly newsletter for parents goes out on schedule, with all content complete and correct.
- Support staff annual leave is only input once and shows in all relevant calendars.



2. What's the current process?

List the steps towards this goal, as they happen now. Include the potentially 'hidden' steps – such as being stopped in the corridor for the request, or having to go back and check a request because you haven't received sufficient information.

Make a note of where friction or wastage occurs in these steps.

3. What's the desired flow path?

How can you make this process 'right first time'? For example:

- What's the one way a request enters the system? (E.g. an online form; a specific tray in the office.)
- What's the vital information? What data is needed for the process to move forward without a follow-up? (E.g. budget code; leave dates.)
- What feedback is required? How does the requester know that their need has been actioned?

4. What's needed for change?

What's needed to get your desired flow path into action? What steps are required? Are other people or permissions needed? Is there a small change you could make tomorrow that would ease the friction?

What next?

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