

FLOW MAPPING

Focus on Flow, Quality and Happiness

Focus on Flow and everything else tends to fall into place. That is, sustainable Flow by addressing the system of work, not unsustainable flow by working people harder, at the expense of quality or happiness.

'A bad system beats a good person every time', W. Edwards Deming

Costs tend to drop away, as impediments, inefficiencies, constraints in the system are resolved to achieve flow. Bureaucratic processes need to be made lean. Quality tends to rise, as repetitive tasks are automated, as quality shifts left and as the change deltas become smaller, it's complexity that can fit in your head. The blast radius is smaller.

This exercise is focused on Flow Mapping* and identifying impediments to delivering value to customers. Flow Mapping is a practical way to understand and improve the fundamental pillars of flow, quality, and happiness in your value streams.

Sustainable flow enables us to streamline processes, reduce lead times, and enhance overall efficiency. This, in turn, leads to higher quality outputs, increased colleague and customer satisfaction, and ultimately, a competitive edge in the market.

As we delve into the intricacies of Flow Mapping and optimization, it is important to cultivate a mindset of continuous improvement.

Empower your teams and leaders to analyse data, visualize work, run targeted experiments, and make informed decisions that optimize the flow of value throughout our organization.

Remember, our unwavering focus is not just on productivity, but on maximizing value (valuetivity) in every aspect of our business.

To aid the creation of your flow map, use the canvas below. On a whiteboard or large piece of paper, work through each step using the canvas below for guidance

Lead Time: refers to the total time taken from the customer's request or need to the delivery of value. It includes both active working time and waiting time.

Flow efficiency is a measure of how much time is spent on value-adding activities compared to the total lead time. Divide the time spent on value-adding steps by the lead time to calculate flow efficiency.

*Flow mapping is also referred to as value stream mapping in the Lean movement

Identify the process:

- 1 Choose a process that you want to accelerate. It could be a product development process or test out this exercise, keep it really simple, like buying a cup of coffee.

Create a current-state flow map:

- 2 Choose the start and end point for the process. Write out the activities to achieve value from start to end:
Tip: don't sweat the detail
- 3 For each activity, estimate the work time required. *Tip: the work time is the actual time a human is actively working, not the waiting time before they actually get to it.*
- 4 Estimate the time waiting before the next activity can start. *Tip: for example, time waiting for approvals to happen, or meetings to occur, or work to be prioritised due to a queue*

Calculate key metrics:

- 5 Add up the total work time from start to finish. *Tip: use what ever unit you choose.*
Add up the waiting time *Tip: use the same unit as the work time*
Add work time to waiting time, this is your process **Lead Time**.
- 6 Divide the work time by the Lead Time. $(\text{Work time} \div \text{Lead Time}) \times 100$: This is your **process flow efficiency**

Create an improvement backlog:

- 7 Reflect on your flow efficiency and the sources of delay.
 - Assess whether you are satisfied with the current lead time and flow efficiency. If you are not, identify the reasons for dissatisfaction and discuss ways to improve it.
 - Identify any impediments or obstacles that hinder the smooth flow of work. If you wanted to accelerate this flow, where do you think are the greatest opportunities right now? *Tip: The best opportunities will balance where the biggest delay is where there is something you can do about it.*
 - Thus far, we have assumed every activity adds value. This might be something for you to reflect on when identifying improvements.

These can be added as notes below each step or directly on the delivery steps where the impediments are present.

Tip: identify which are under your direct control (impediments) which are not under your direct control (blockers)

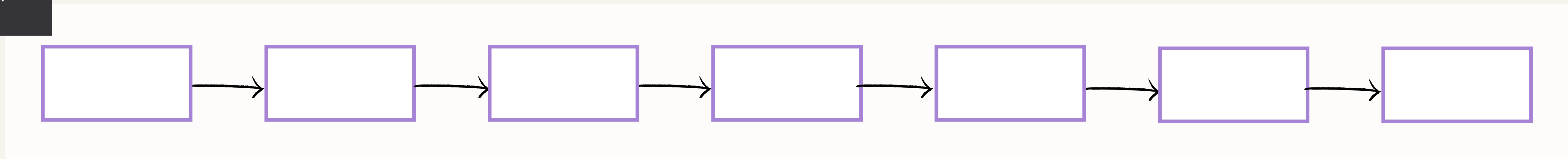
Congratulations, you have now mapped your flow and understood your flow efficiency, if you are running this exercise with colleagues for a real business scenario, work transparently using work space available for everyone to see, treat it as a learning exercise and communicate the results widely, since that will help build the case for change and embedding change

FLOW MAPPING

1 Identify the process

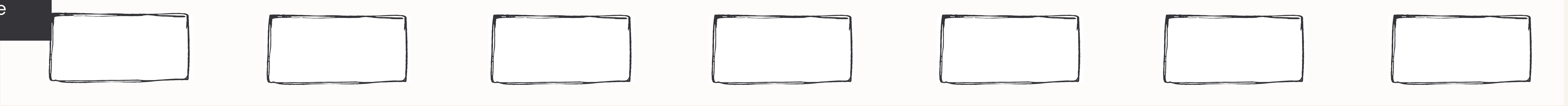
2 Identify the start and end of your process, and write out the activities

Value delivery activities



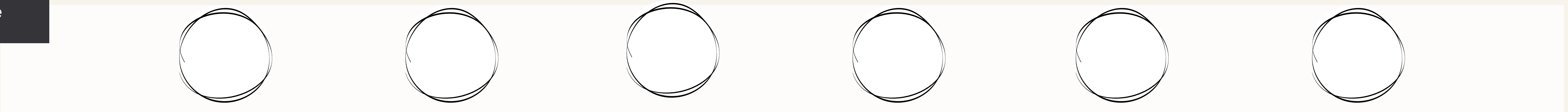
3 Estimate out the work time for each activity

Working time



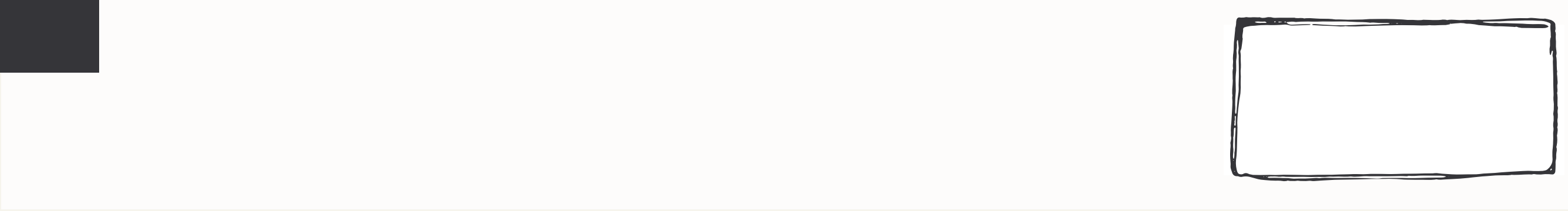
4 Estimate the time waiting before the next activity can start.

Waiting time



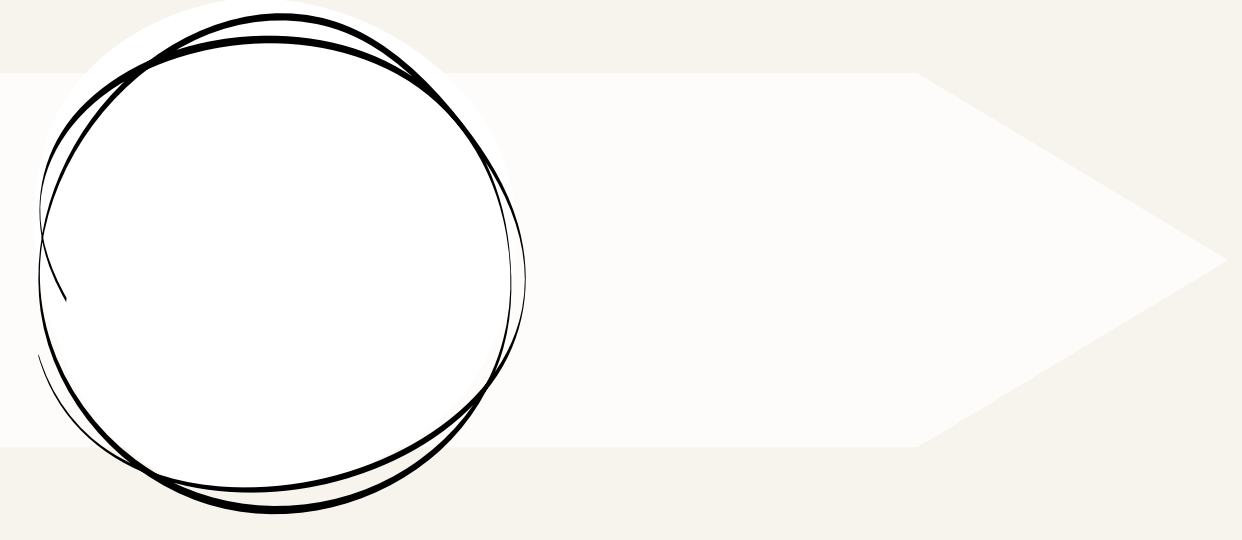
5 Write the total time from inception to delivery including the waiting time.

Lead time



6 Calculate your flow efficiency: Value Add ÷ Lead Time

Flow Efficiency:
Working time/Lead time



7 What are the impediments to flow? Add them below or directly on your delivery steps in at the points they are present

Impediments



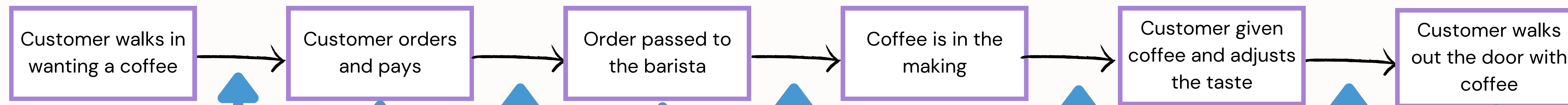
FLOW MAPPING

1 Identify the process

Coffee shop example

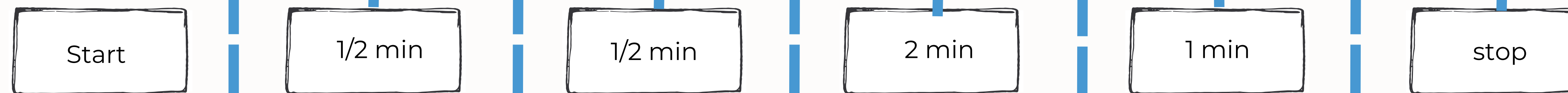
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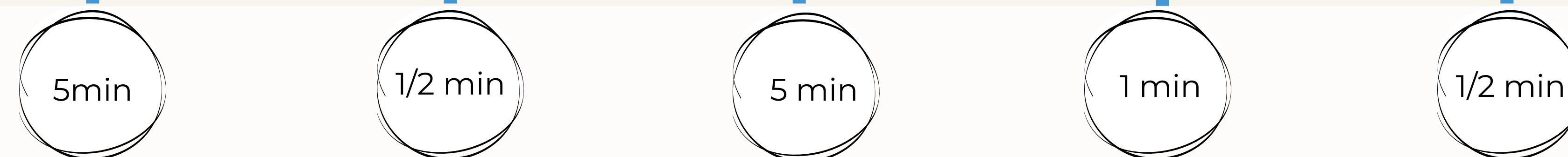
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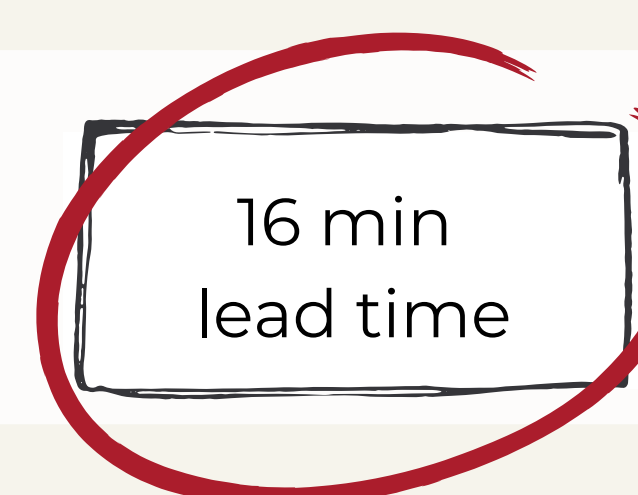
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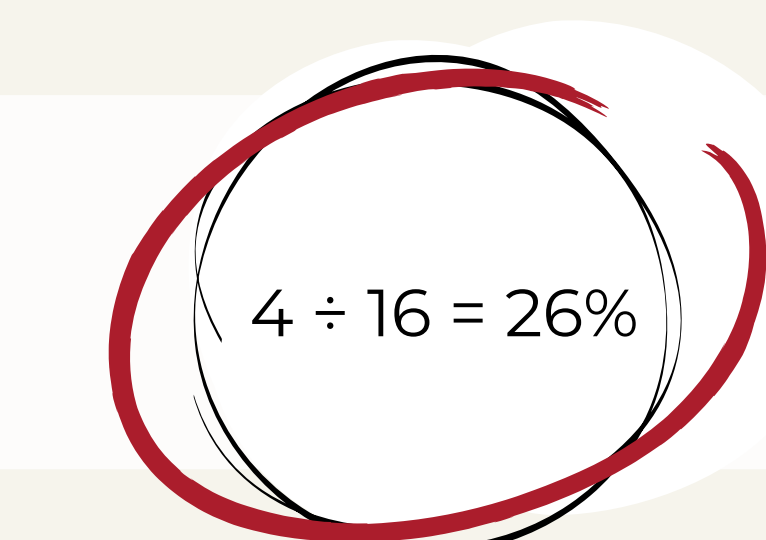
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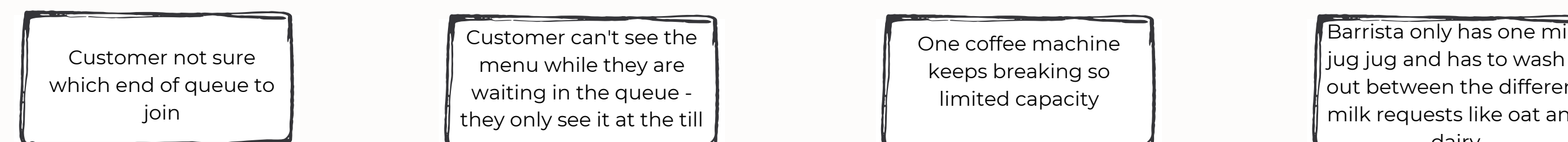
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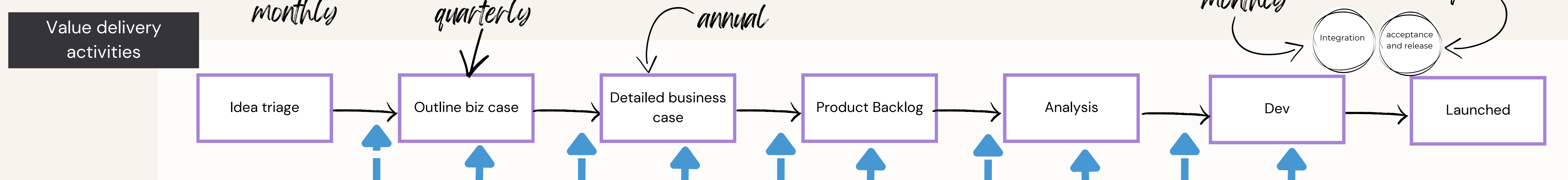


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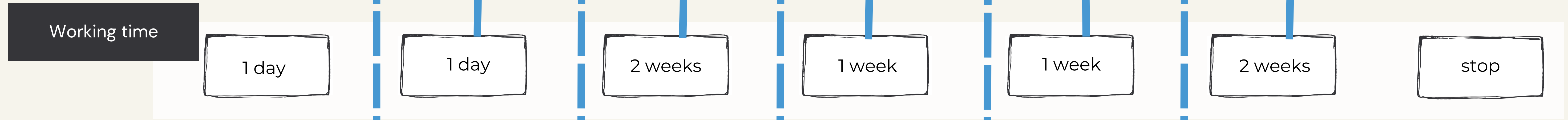
1 Identify the process

Product development

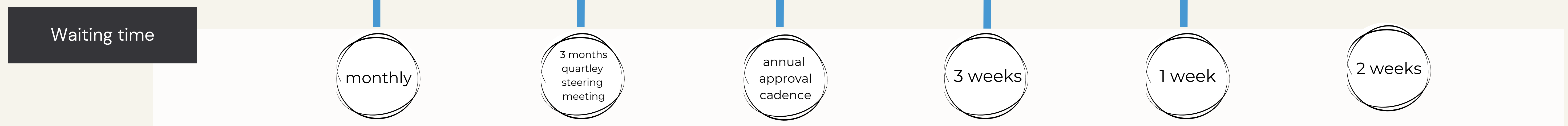
2 Write out the steps to deliver value from inception to delivery



3 Estimate out the time each step takes



4 Estimate the time waiting for the next step



5 Write the total time from inception to delivery including the waiting time.



6 Calculate your flow efficiency: Value Add ÷ Lead Time

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