

CHAPTER 9 - REDESIGN THE WORK, DON'T JUST SPEED IT UP

The FLOW Card

Map the work first. Then redesign it with Find, Lose, Optimize, Watch.

The Golden Rule of AI Workflow Design

Don't bolt AI onto a broken process. Redesign the process.

Write out every step exactly as it happens today, including the boring parts. That is MAP. Once you can see the whole process on paper, apply FLOW.

Step	Ask Yourself	Example
MAP	How does this workflow actually work today?	List every step, waiting time, handoff, approval.
F - Find	Where is the real bottleneck?	Waiting for approvals or missing information.
L - Lose	Which steps no longer add value?	Remove duplicate approvals or unnecessary reports.
O - Optimize	Where can AI create the most value?	Draft reports, summarize documents, automate steps.
W - Watch	Where should a person review before it's done?	Approve recommendations, handle exceptions.

The Checkpoint Rule

Any redesigned workflow that produces output for another person should include a human review before that output is shared.

Three Beliefs That Block Real Redesign

The Belief	The Reality
Using AI on my existing process is basically the same as redesigning it.	The exact trap most teams fall into first. Real gains come from questioning the process.
Redesigning a process sounds risky and complicated.	It doesn't have to be. FLOW is a structured, low-risk way to do it.
The goal is always speed.	Speed is often the most visible win, but rarely the only one.

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FLOW Applied: A Worked Example

A reporting process that took two full days, reduced to under an hour, because the whole flow was redesigned around what actually mattered.

Find: the real bottleneck was five people waiting to find time to write in the first place.

Lose: the requirement that each person submit written prose at all.

Optimize: feed all the bullet points in at once, and a full draft appears in minutes.

Watch: the same person who used to write the report still reviews and approves it, every time.

Apply FLOW to Your Own Work

MAP: the workflow, exactly as it happens today.

Find: where does the work actually get stuck?

Lose: which step no longer earns its place?

Optimize and Watch: where could AI add the most value, and where does a human still check the result?

The goal isn't to make old work faster. The goal is to design better work for people and AI together.