

# PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

## WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

*Good Practice in Local Government*  
26th February 2019



INTRODUCTION

PLANNING

REFLECTIONS

HOUSING

[edooley@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:edooley@waterfordcouncil.ie)  
[jhawkins@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:jhawkins@waterfordcouncil.ie)





# INTRODUCTION

*Experiences from introducing process improvement to Waterford City and County Council*

## Topics

- Continuous Improvement
- Housing Inspections Process
- Development Management Process
- Reflections
- What's Next?

Continuous  
Improvement

Principles  
and  
Methods



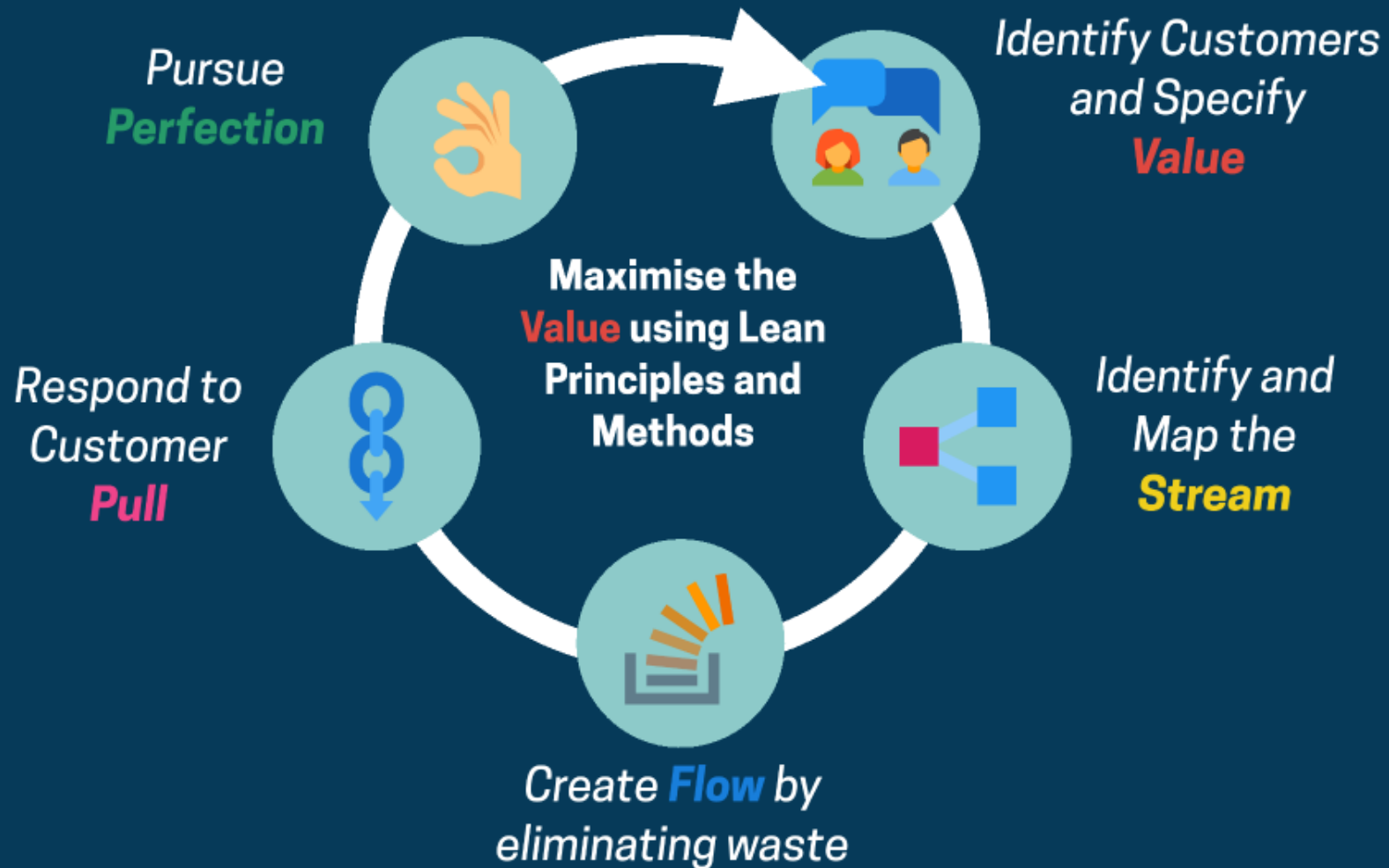
# The Continuous Improvement Cycle

## What can it deliver

- *Up to 50% more efficiency within a section*
- *Ensuring KPI's are met*
- *Greater level of staff engagement*
- *A user centered approach*
- *Better customer service*









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# HOUSING MAINTENANCE

PROBLEM

GOAL

METHOD

SOLUTION

RESULTS



# MINIMUM STANDARDS INSPECTIONS

- New legislation - Minimum Standard
- Pressure on stock due to housing crisis
- 3,000 of 5,000 annual inspections completed
- 22 weeks for turnaround of voids
- Manual processes
- Unreliable and static data
- Reactive maintenance (+7,000 calls p.a.)





# Our Goal

- Introduce a data collection app for social housing inspections
- Increase inspections from 3,000 to 5,000 p.a.
- Improve turnaround time for voids from 22 to 14 weeks
- Better reporting based on quality and timely data
- Proactive maintenance program





# Break down the problem

## Initial Brainstorming session

- The Big Picture

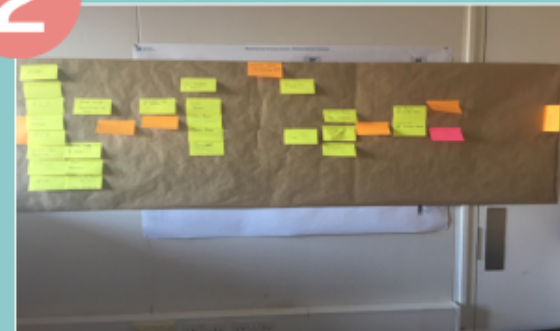
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## Value Stream Mapping Exercise

- Understanding process and where there was room for improvement
- Opinions matter

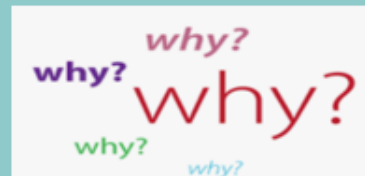
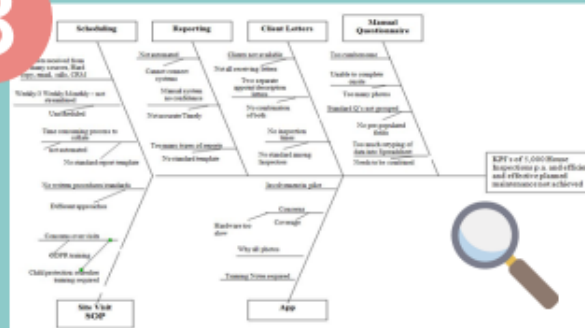
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## Root Cause Analysis

- Asking questions
- Finding solutions

3





# A slide of its own

- Coming out from behind the desk to walk the process
- Staff more comfortable in their own environment
- Highlighted different approaches to scheduling and Inspections
- Engaging champions and a successful pilot





# Current state

**Scheduling** requests for appointments in different formats

**Reporting** is manual and time consuming (30-180 min)



Different types of **Manual Questionnaires** being completed on-site and back at the office



**Data** not easily accessible, complete and up to date



**Extra Processing and travel time** to re-enter data into spreadsheets (+30 -60min)

**Lack of SOP's** for site visits





# Data Collection App

## Better Engagement = Better Solution

Clarity and commitment from all involved

### What the staff say:

"We couldn't go back to the old way"

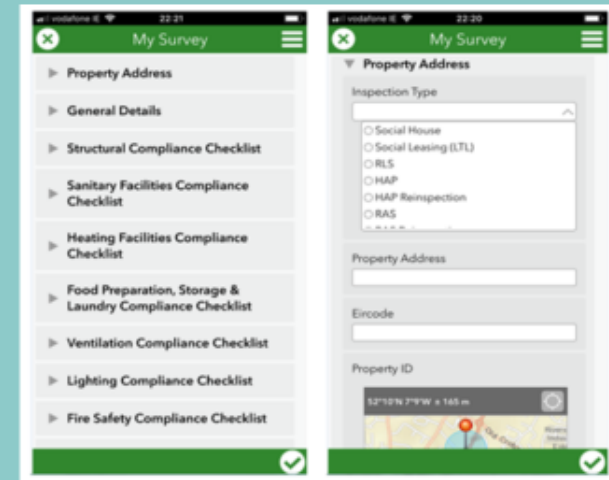
"One click and I have my report"

"We spent hours on paperwork, I don't know myself now"

### What I think:

"Straight forward solution"

"Easy implementation and training"





# Scheduling & reporting



- Standard format
- Quality and timely data
- Driving planned maintenance schedule
- Clarity around procurement and tenders
- Strategic planning





# Results: **The Good**, The (not so) Bad, **and The Unexpected**

**Inspections  
increased by 50%**

Turnaround of voids from 22 to 18\* weeks (\*procurement 12 weeks)

**Change in mindset  
and behaviours**

Team has taken ownership of the process from start to finish putting the customer first

**Instant and reliable data**

Proactive planned maintenance schedule and budget agreed by Council

**New role for Leaders**

Change Champions resulting in additional 2,500 Private rented inspections



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# DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The background of the slide features a close-up of architectural blueprints. A large, semi-transparent blue circle is positioned on the left side, containing the main title and a sequence of four smaller circles representing a process. The fourth circle, 'THE SOLUTION', is a darker shade of blue and stands out. To the right of the circles, a blue ink stamp with the word 'APPROVED' is visible on the blueprints. A person's arm and hand are partially visible at the bottom right, suggesting a professional setting.

THE  
PROBLEM

THE  
PLAN

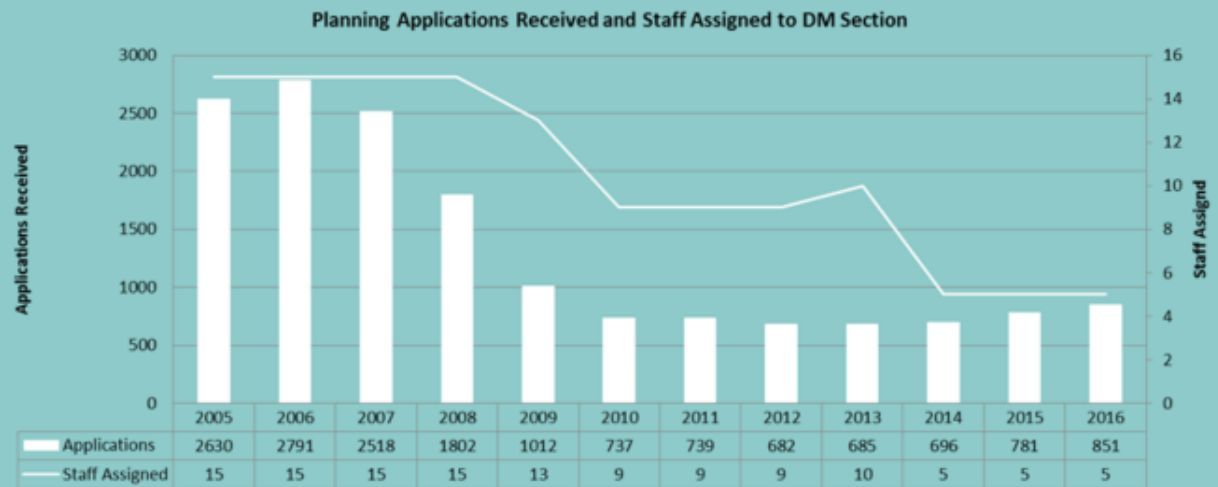
DATA  
COLLECTION

THE  
SOLUTION



# THE PROBLEM

- Meeting deadlines for processing planning applications
- But, struggling to meet preplanning and enforcement targets





# THE PLAN

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*Process Owner identified two areas, described as “**on the margins of the statutory process**”, which could possibly be improved upon.*

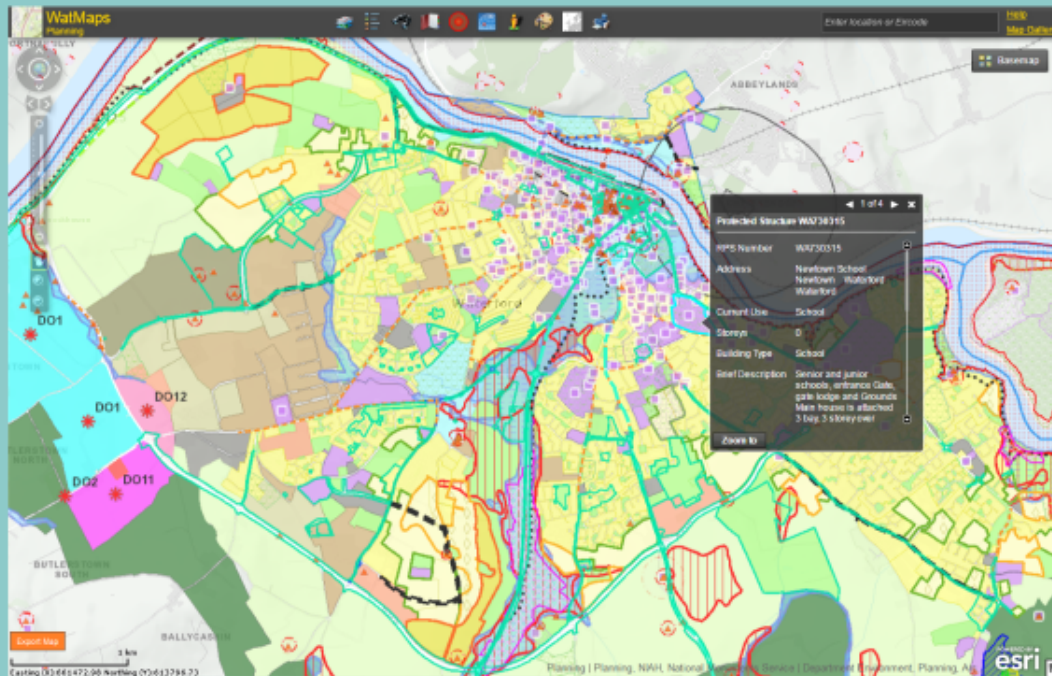








# ACCESSING PLANNING POLICY AND CONSTRAINT INFORMATION



**Volume of data** that must be considered when making a decision **has grown** due to local, regional, national, and European policies. This **increase in data has made accessing and querying the policy and constraint information very time consuming.**



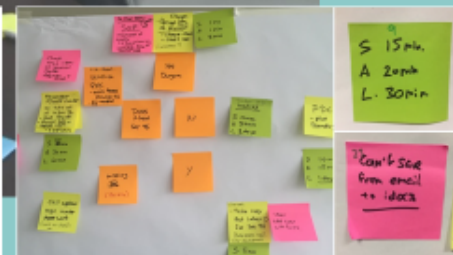
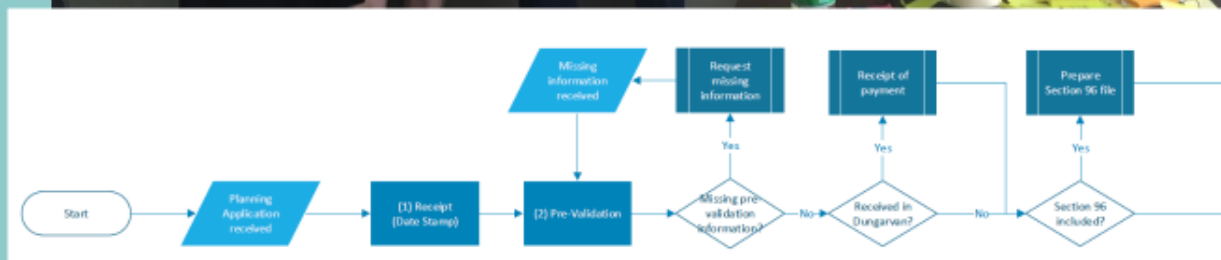
# THE AIM: TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY

- 1) *Understand the whole process*
- 2) *Understand how long it is taking to create the documentation and carry out the analysis*
- 3) *Understand how staff are using the existing systems to do this*
- 4) *Improve / standardise the process, and reduce the amount of time being spent on these steps*
- 5) *Improve the metrics to reflect the work that is actually being done*

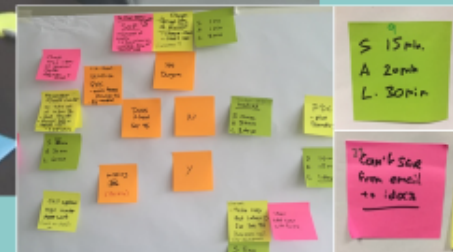




# DATA COLLECTION







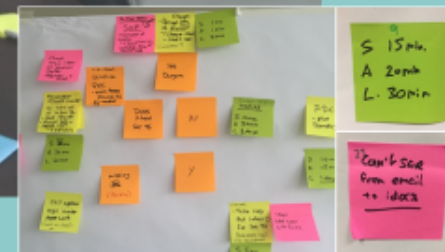


"I didn't know  
you did so much"

"I didn't realise  
there were so  
many steps"



"It's not until you see it all laid out do you  
understand there is so much involved"





## DETAILED STEP STUDY (Lean Time and Motion)



### Detailed Step Study

**Study: Assessment - Planners Report**

31.08.17  
17/5/17

Planning Application Number  
Planning Name  
Owner

Ken Hawkins

Item	Analysis	OK	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
1. Computer is turned on and user is logged into Plan via the Internet. Check this is normal	1.5				
2. User checks the website for the plan	1.5				
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## Three ways of working

## Three report templates





## TECHNICAL SOLUTION

*Designed and developed over a five week period, using the empathy and tacit knowledge gained during the process mapping exercises, and the Time and Motion studies.*

**One Best  
Way**

**Before  
v  
After**

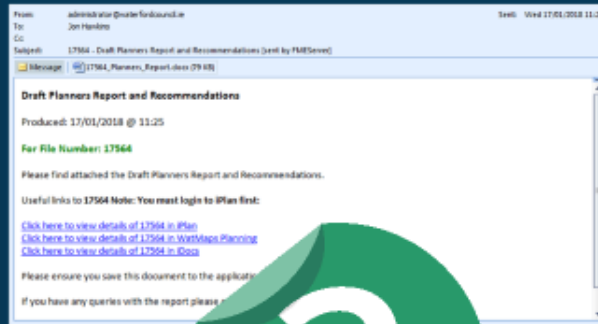
**Benefits**



After 8 clicks of the mouse, and a wait of 60 seconds, a draft report is ready for the planner to view and add value

This screenshot shows a web form titled 'Published Parameters'. It contains several input fields and dropdown menus for configuring a planning application. The fields include 'Planning Application File Number' (with value 17564), 'Planners Name' (with value Jon Hendrie), 'Site Analysis Buffer' (with value 5m), 'Recommendation Type' (with value Provision), 'Type of Application' (with value Other), and 'Senior Executive Planners Name' (with value Head Office). A green 'Save' button is at the bottom.

1



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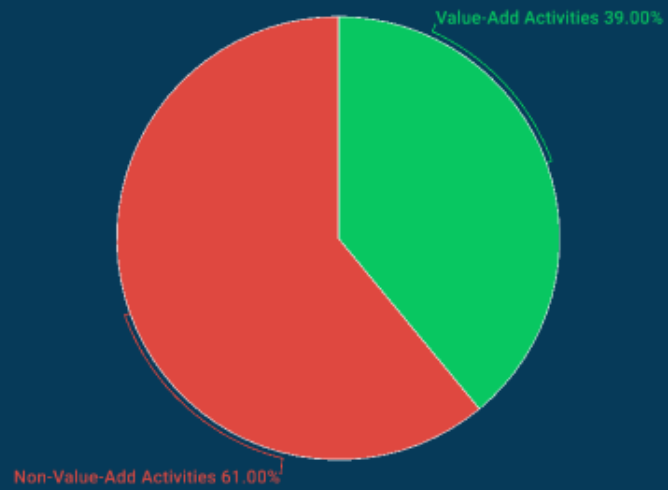


3

On demand, standard, systematic, and without waste

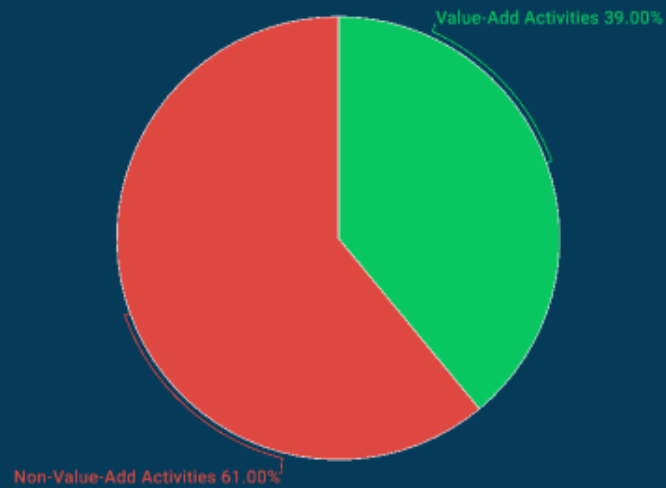


# Before

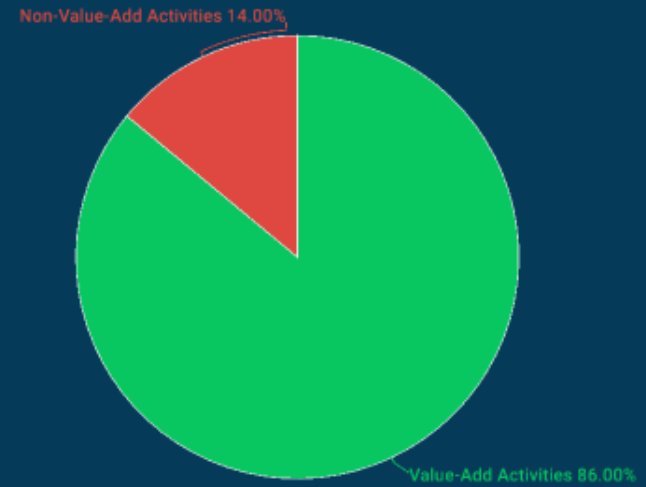




# Before

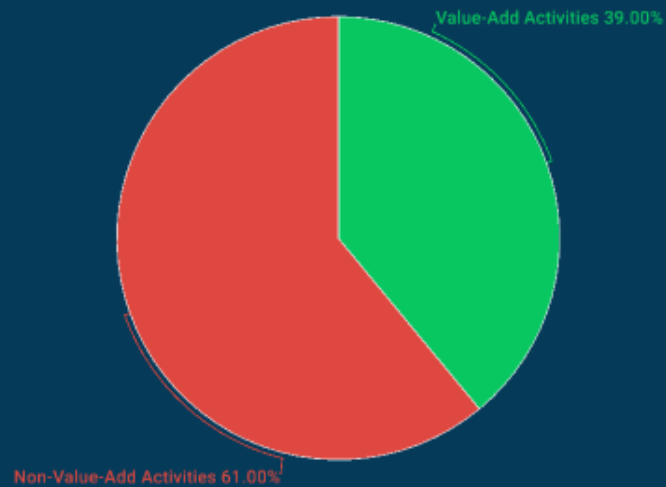


# After

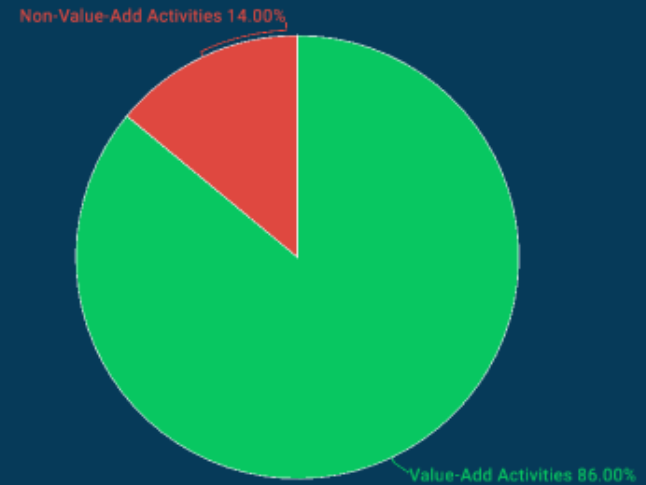




# Before



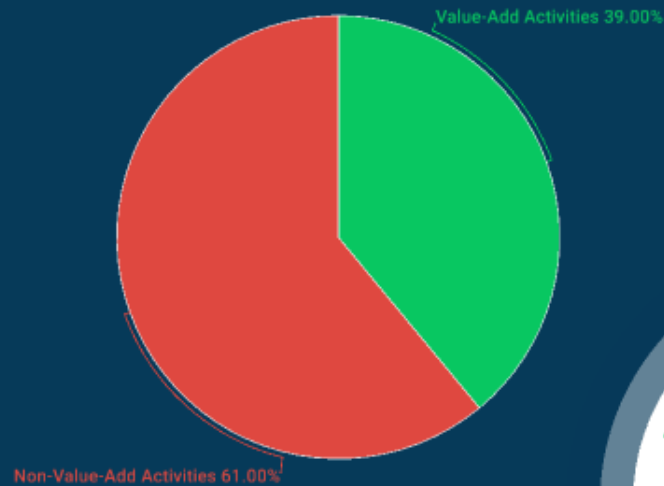
# After



**Planners now spend 45% more of their time on value adding activities**



# Before



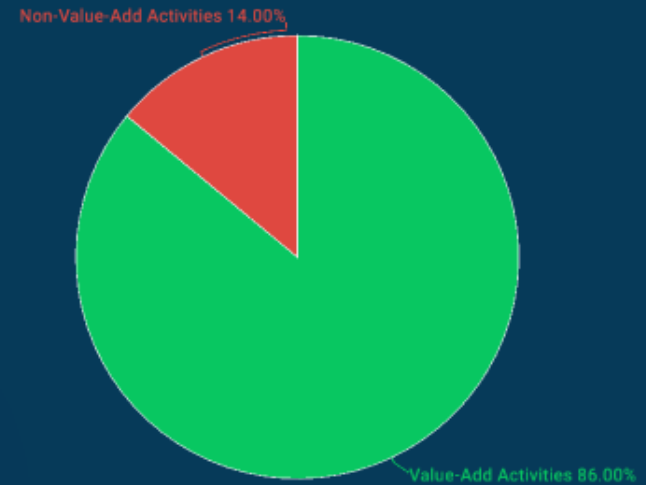
## What the planners say

*"It's removing all the donkey work."*

*"It's putting all the information into one place, and helping me ensure I don't miss anything, as we have to deal with so much data."*

*"It's removing all the repetition."*

# After



**Planners now spend 45% more of their time on value adding activities**



# **SOLUTION BENEFITS**

**Standard  
template**

**Systematic analysis  
of constraint  
information**

**Standard way  
of working**

**Removal of many  
Non-Value-Add  
activities**

**Time savings**





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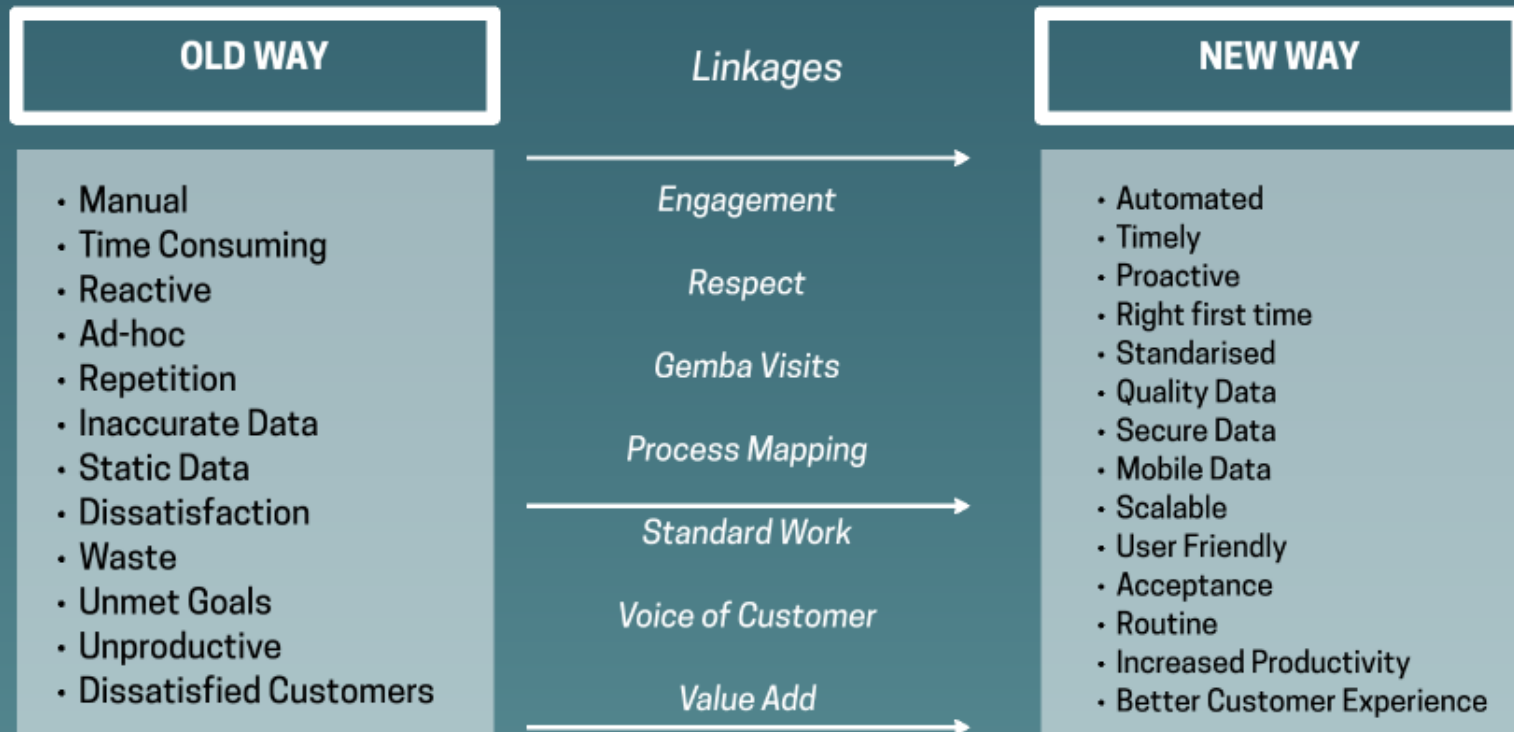
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# Reflections











*Aiming for excellence  
across the organisation*

*By developing a culture of  
continuous improvement*



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