

CORE QUESTION

Does this move us in the right direction?

The purpose of this guide is to evaluate that question more thoroughly by examining value, friction, system impact, tradeoffs, assumptions, and overall net effect.

Consider total system impact, not just intention, cost, or efficiency.

1. VALUE CHECK

Does this improve:

- **More** → output, capacity, throughput
- **Better** → quality, consistency, reliability
- **Faster** → flow, speed, responsiveness
- **Cheaper** → total cost (including hidden cost)
- **Safer** → risk, stability, resilience
- **Happier** → experience of employees, customers, and stakeholders

Which dimensions improve most strongly?

Which are neutral or negative?

2. FRICTION CHECK

Does this increase or reduce:

- **Waste** → non-value work
- **Defects** → errors, rework, inconsistency
- **Delays** → waiting, bottlenecks
- **Cost** → direct, indirect, and long-term cost
- **Risk** → operational, financial, safety exposure
- **Frustration** → confusion, burden, resistance

3. SYSTEM CHECK

What else will change if this is implemented?

- What breaks somewhere else in the system?
- Where does work move, not disappear?
- What becomes more complex?
- What dependencies are introduced?
- Who absorbs the impact?
- Where is friction likely to appear?

4. TRADEOFF CHECK

Every decision creates tradeoffs.

- What are we gaining?
- What are we giving up?
- Are we improving the system or just a part of it?
- Is this a visible improvement or a real one?

5. ASSUMPTION CHECK

What must be true for this to work?

- What evidence supports those assumptions?
- What has changed since they were formed?
- What would cause them to fail?

FINAL TEST

Is this a clear net improvement across the system?

- Yes → Proceed
- No → Reject or redesign
- Unclear → Learn more before deciding