

Writing Actionable Meeting Notes



- Actionable notes capture decisions, owners, and deadlines—not just discussion



- Vague notes cost: repeated meetings (\$11K+/team/yr), lost context, delayed execution



- Poor documentation leads to duplicated work, missed commitments, and compliance risk



- A repeatable before-during-after method turns notes into a work-tracking instrument



BEFORE



DURING



AFTER

Part 1 – The Case for Actionable Notes



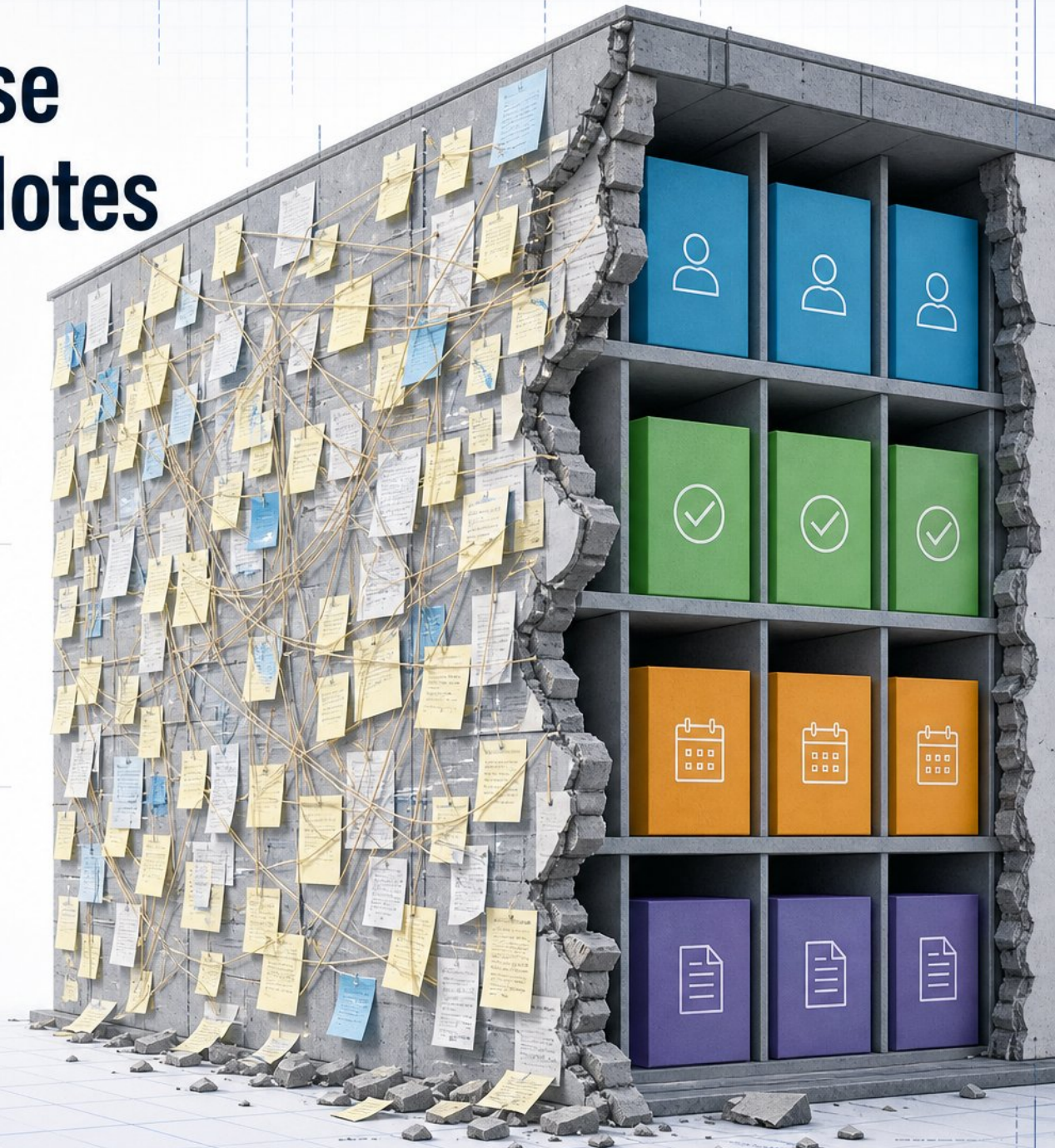
- Shifting from recording talk to documenting outcomes



- Turning discussions into decisions, owners, and deadlines



- Creating a single source of truth for the whole team



The High Cost of Bad Meeting Notes



\$37 billion lost annually in U.S. unproductive meetings



Repeated meetings cost over \$11,000 per team per year



\$50,000+ in lost knowledge when an employee leaves



20-40% of work duplicated due to unclear records



Six hours of personal rework in just four weeks



What 'Actionable' Really Means



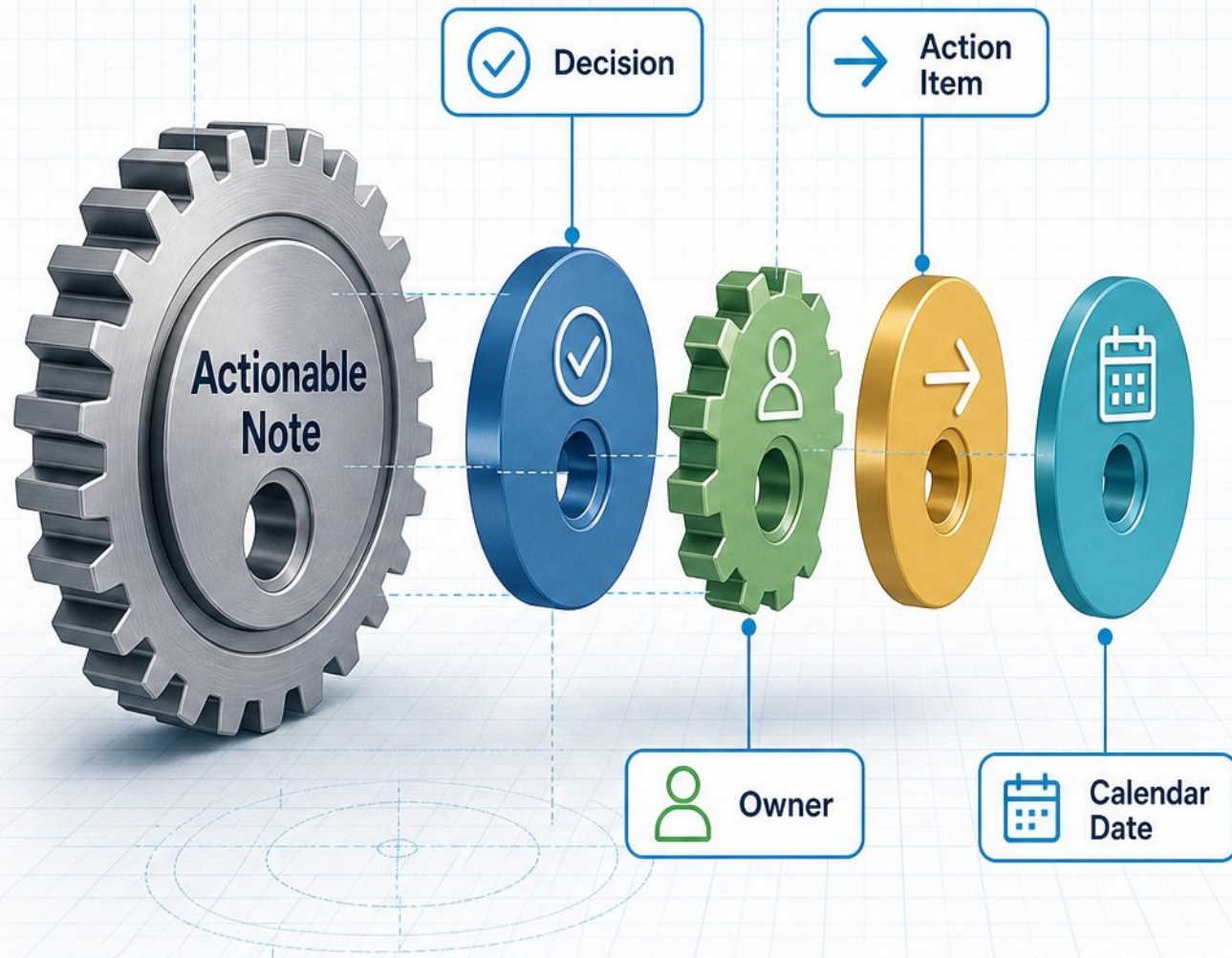
- Four essential pillars: Decision, Action Item, Owner, Deadline



- Narrative minutes are historical records; actionable notes are work-tracking tools



- Reader knows what was decided, who does what, and by when—without asking



Part 2 – The Three-Phase Method



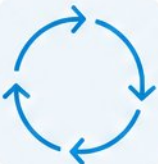
- **Prepare:** structure your notes before the meeting begins



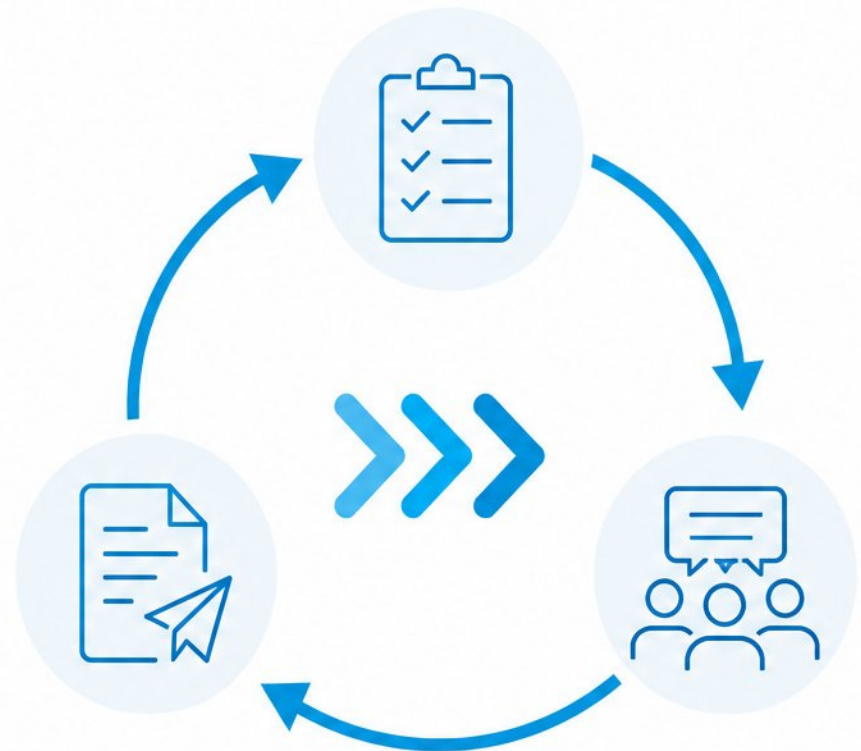
- **Capture:** listen for decisions and commitments in real time



- **Publish:** distribute clear, actionable notes within 30 minutes



- **Before, During, After:** a repeatable workflow for every meeting



Phase 1: Before the Meeting – Prepare Your Framework



- Turn the agenda into your notes skeleton



- Pre-populate decision logs and action tables



- Clarify expected outcomes with the meeting owner



- Identify where key decisions will likely happen



- Set up your tool: template, notepad, or AI assistant



Phase 2: During the Meeting – Capture with Precision



Listen for decision triggers:
"We agreed...", "So the plan is..."



Capture: Verb + Owner +
Deliverable + Due Date
in real time



Move off-topic ideas to a
"parking lot" for later



Write headlines and bullets,
not transcripts



Separate facts from
opinions immediately

The Anatomy of a Decision Record



- State what was decided, by whom, and the rationale



- Record dissenting views and key assumptions made



- Distinguish true decisions from discussion points



- Link decisions to agenda items and business problems



The Anatomy of an Action Item



- Include verb, single owner, deliverable, and hard due date



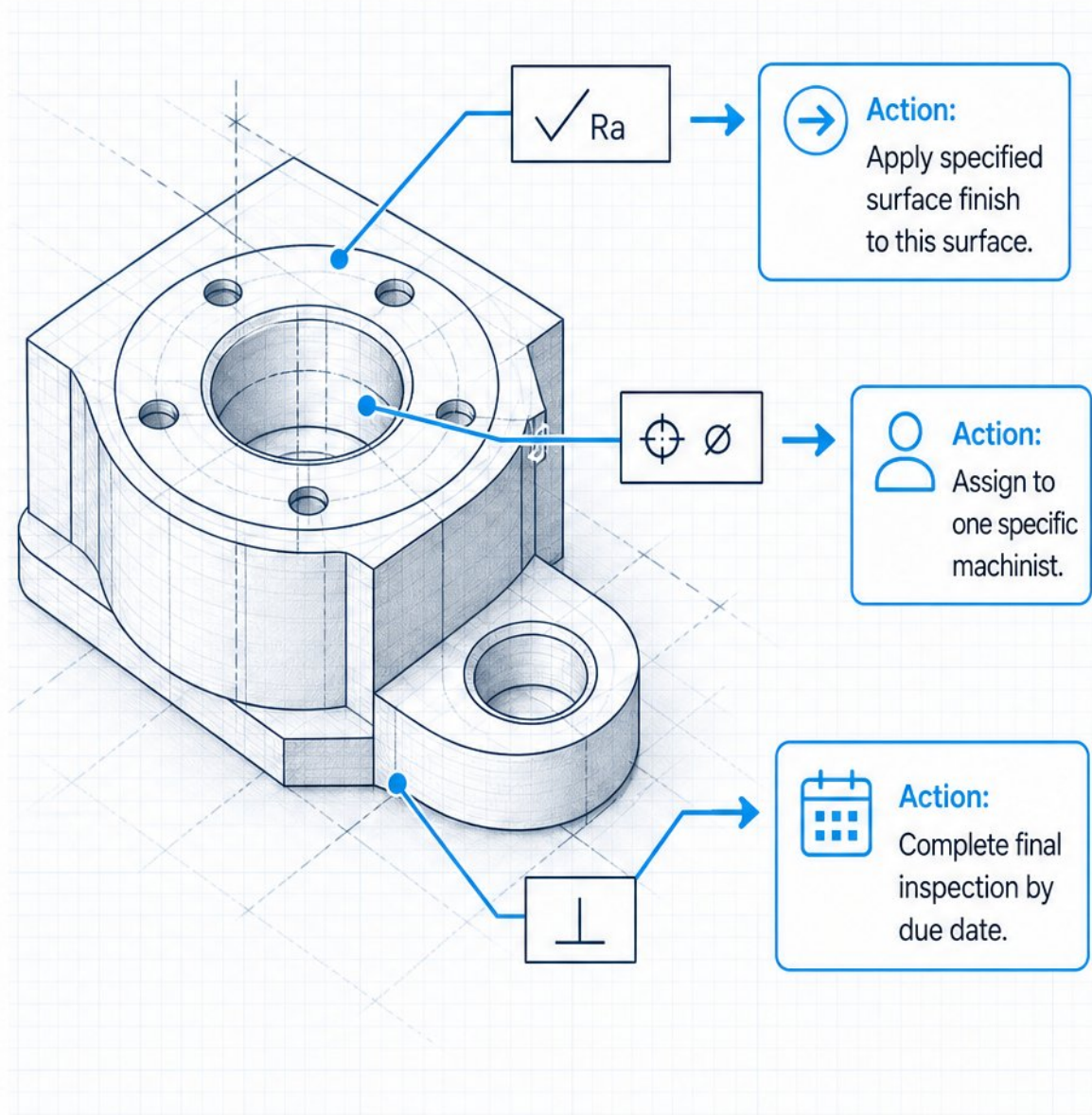
- Never assign to "team"; clarify one accountable person



- Use pattern: [Owner] will [verb] [deliverable] by [date]



- Keep the log active: track status, completion, and rollovers



Phase 3: After the Meeting – Publish for Frictionless Follow-Up



- Apply the 30-minute rule: distribute while memory is fresh



- Structure for different readers: exec summary, action log, context



- Make notes the single source of truth with version control



- Handle ambiguity immediately before meeting momentum fades



Part 3 – Tools, Practice, and Pitfalls



- Selecting the right note-taking tool for your workflow



- Using AI to accelerate capture without abdicating judgment



- Practicing the full Prepare–Capture–Publish cycle



- Avoiding common traps: vague owners, missing deadlines, bloat



- Building your reusable templates and checklists



Using AI Responsibly: Accelerate, Don't Abdicate



- AI tools (Otter.ai, Fireflies, Fathom, Granola, Fellow) can save 4+ hours weekly



- AI transcripts may be discoverable, misattribute speakers, or waive privilege



- AI outputs require human verification, redaction, and final approval



- Set clear governance: when to record, retention, and consent protocols



End-to-End Practice: The Method in Action



- Transform a 10-minute meeting excerpt into one page of clear outputs



- Apply the full Prepare–Capture–Publish workflow end to end



- Spot and fix vague owners, missing deadlines, and narrative bloat



- Ensure every off-topic idea is parked but not lost

Your Actionable Notes Toolkit and Wrap-Up



- Four pillars: Decision, Action, Owner, Deadline



- Three phases: Prepare, Capture, Publish



- Decision-to-action formula for clarity



- Template stack: Agenda, Decision Log, Action Log



- Commit: Apply, audit results, and iterate



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