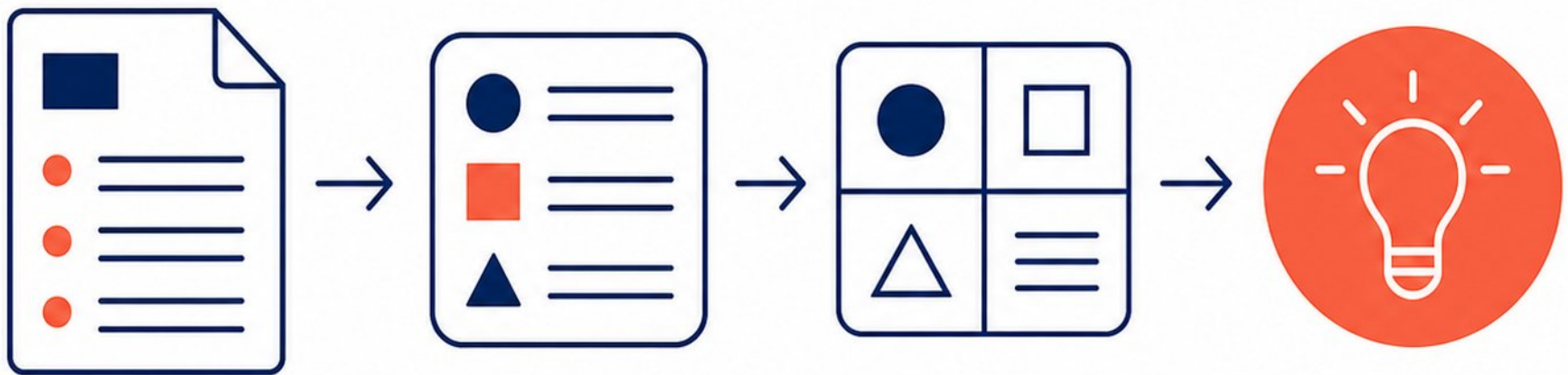


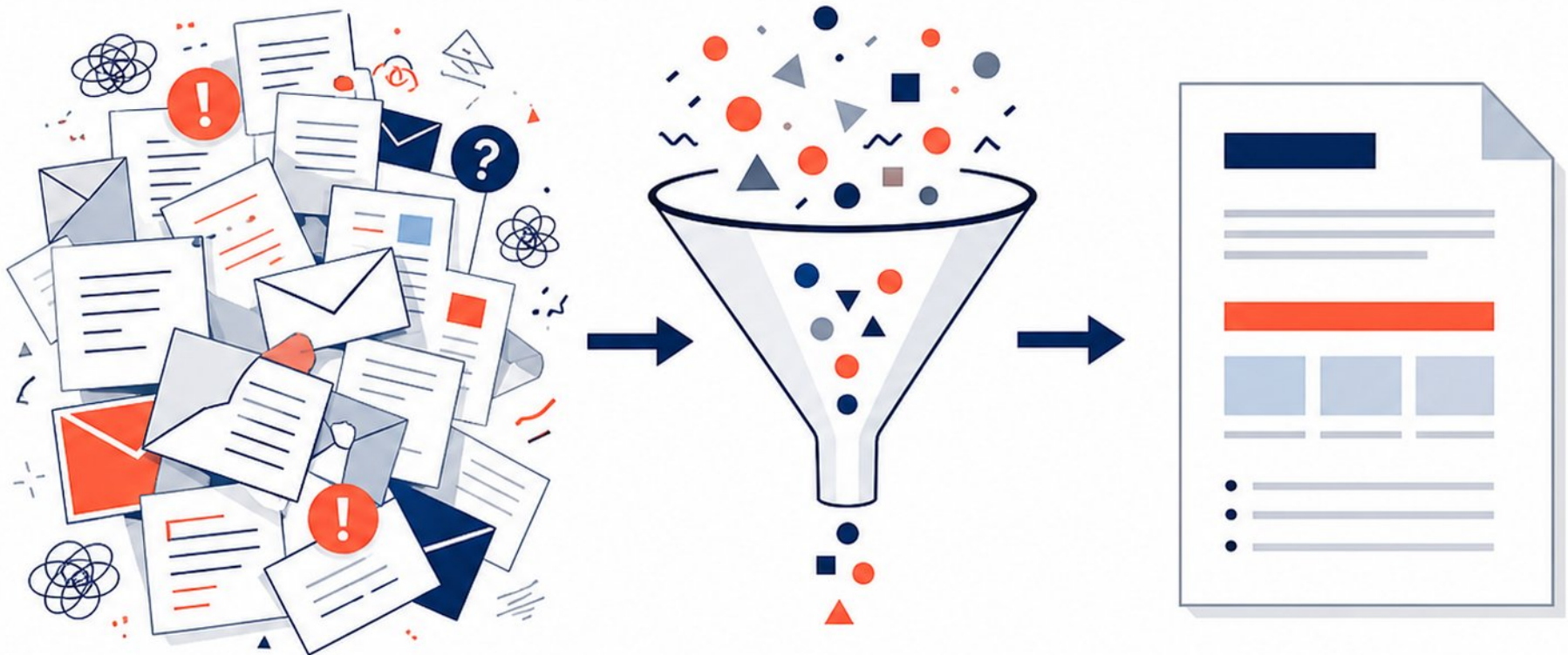
Writing Clear Project Status Updates

- A high-signal update: brief, structured check-in driving decisions.
- Clarity cuts follow-ups, prevents stalls, saves everyone time.
- Used in weekly syncs, stakeholder briefs, async stand-ups.
- Big idea: shift from a narrative journal to a decision-focused dashboard.



Why Most Updates Fail: The Noise Problem

- Missing context, hidden bad news, and buried requests cause confusion
- Vague updates create unnecessary meetings, emails, and delayed decisions
- A data dump lists tasks; a high-signal summary drives action
- Mindset shift: write for the reader's limited time, not as a personal diary



The High-Signal Structure: An Executive-First Framework



- Lead with RAG status: Green, Amber, Red signal project health instantly



- Follow with Progress, Blockers/Risks, then Decisions Needed



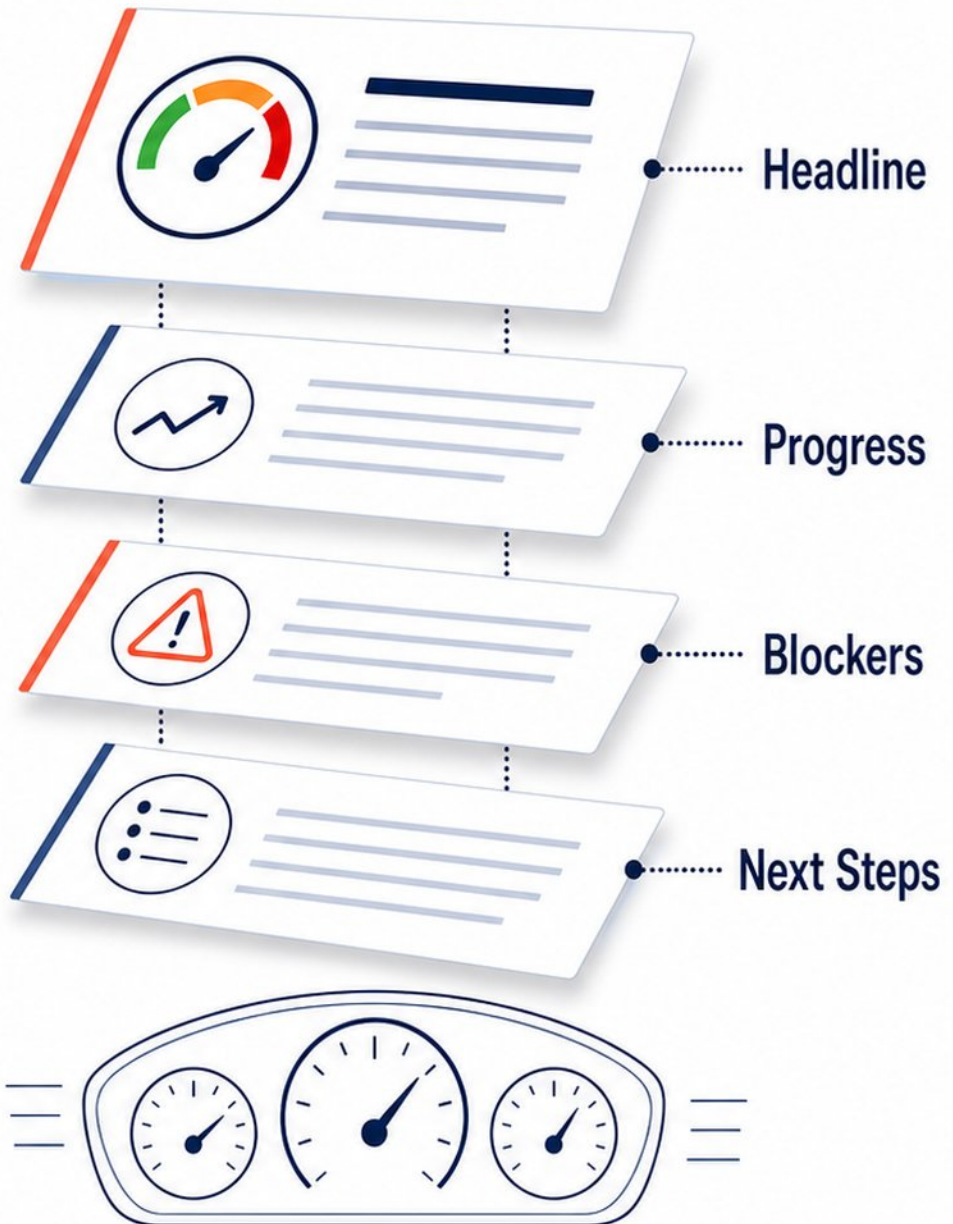
- Start with the conclusion so busy readers grasp health in seconds



- Avoid chronological narratives that bury critical risks



- Think 200-400 word dashboard, not a multi-page report



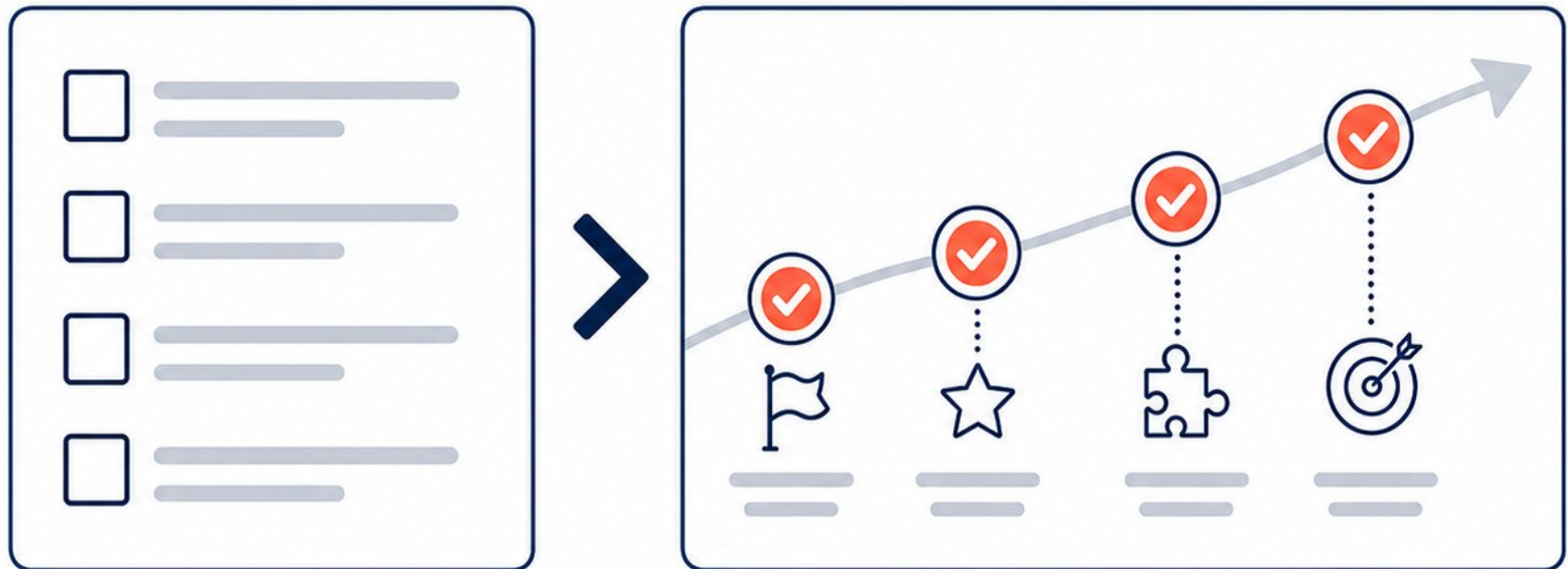
Section 1: Write a Headline That Sets the Health Signal



- Lead with RAG: Green (on track), Amber (at risk), Red (blocked/off track)
- Combine status + one-sentence summary of the most critical information
- Be absolutely honest — false 'Green' destroys credibility and delays help
- Bad example: 'Everything is fine.' Good example: 'On track for launch – one risk: see Blockers'



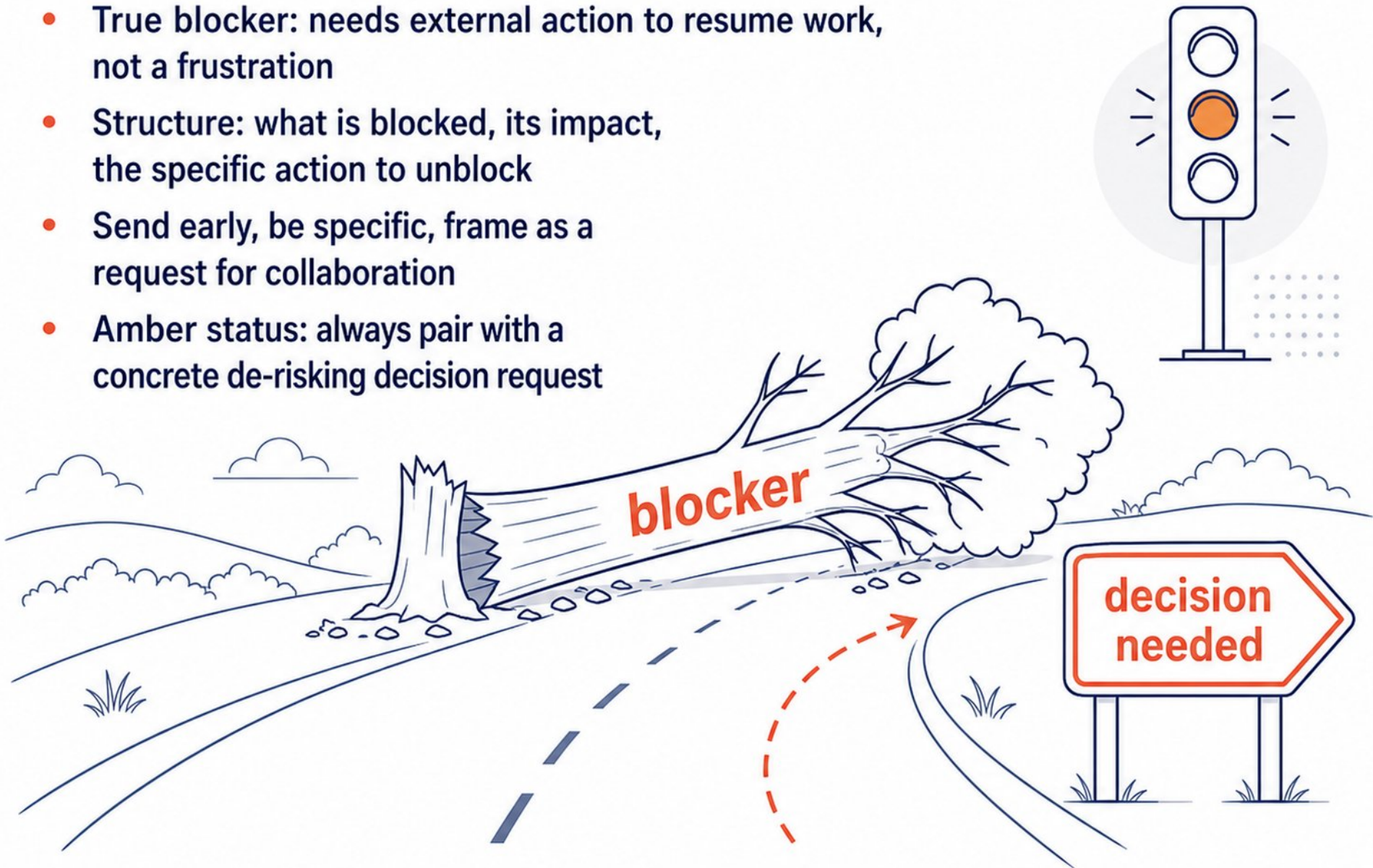
Section 2: Writing Progress That Informs, Not Just Lists



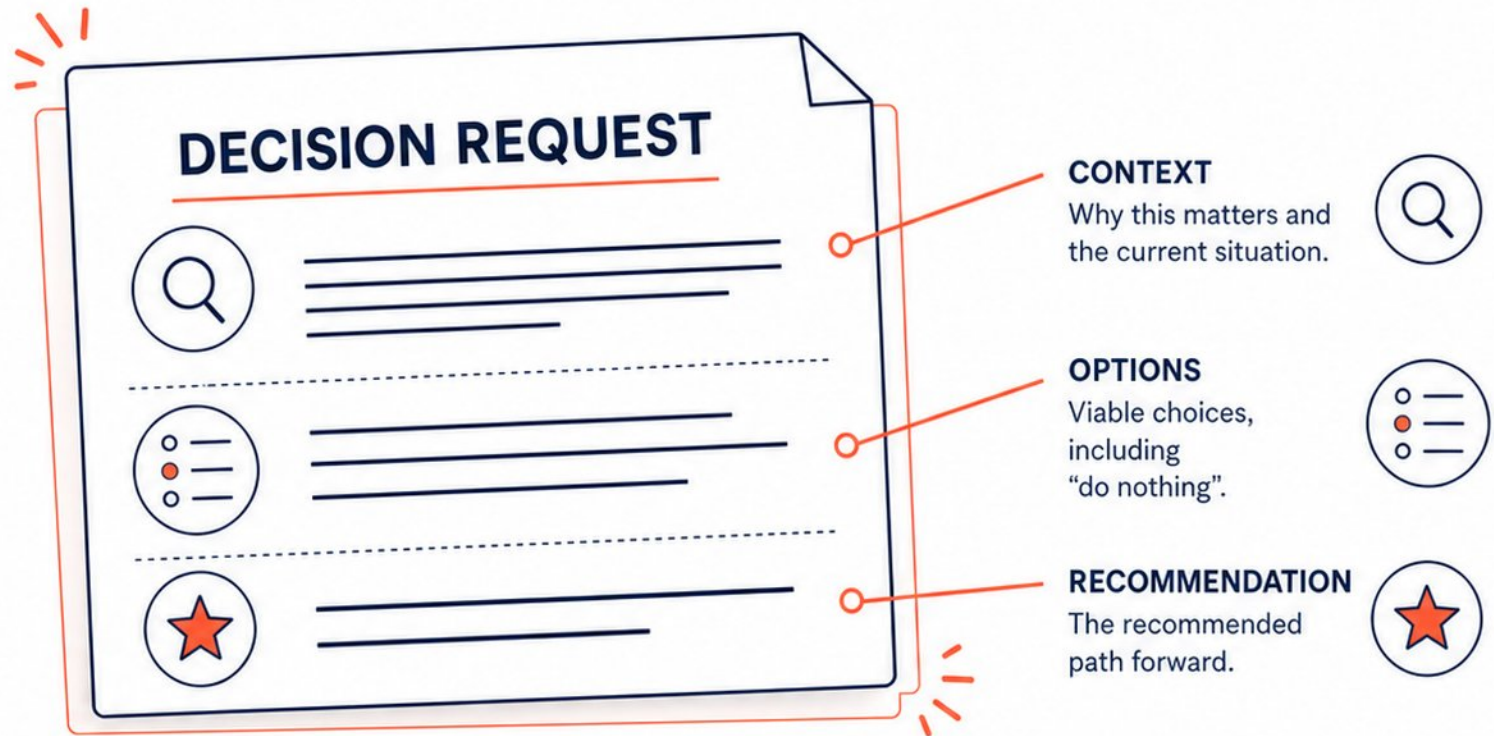
- Focus on completed milestones, not a flat task record
- Show momentum: connect progress to prior commitments
- Abstract partial work — present its significance, not padding
- Limit progress to 3–5 key bullets; link detailed logs for reference

Section 3: Raising Blockers Early and Effectively

- True blocker: needs external action to resume work, not a frustration
- Structure: what is blocked, its impact, the specific action to unblock
- Send early, be specific, frame as a request for collaboration
- Amber status: always pair with a concrete de-risking decision request



Section 4: Requests and Decisions That Drive Action



Make the decision explicit: "Decision Required: Approve X by Date Y to avoid delay Z."



Structure requests with context, viable options (including "do nothing"), and a clear recommendation.



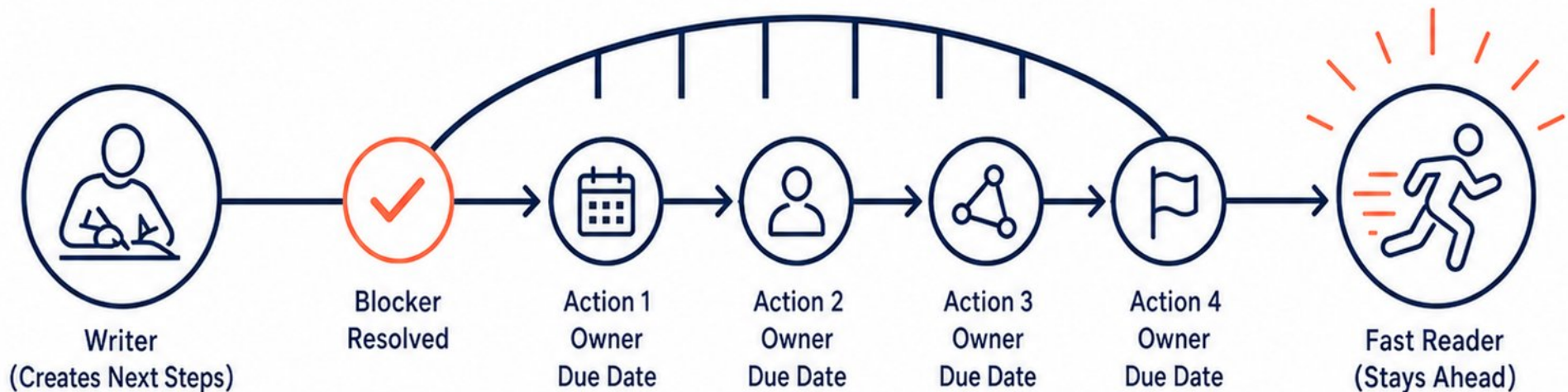
Signal urgency: name the stakeholder and state the deadline.



If no decisions are needed, say: "No executive decisions required this period."

Next Steps That Create Accountability and Momentum

- Write next steps as time-bound actions with owners, e.g., "Dev team to complete API integration by June 10."
- Align next steps directly with the blockers and decisions raised earlier to close the loop.
- Use strong sequencing and signal key dependencies to reduce coordination overhead.
- Transition from "what we did" to "what happens next" to demonstrate a clear path forward.



Adapting Your Tone to the Audience and Channel



- **Executives need viability, budget, and decisions;** internal teams need blockers and dependencies



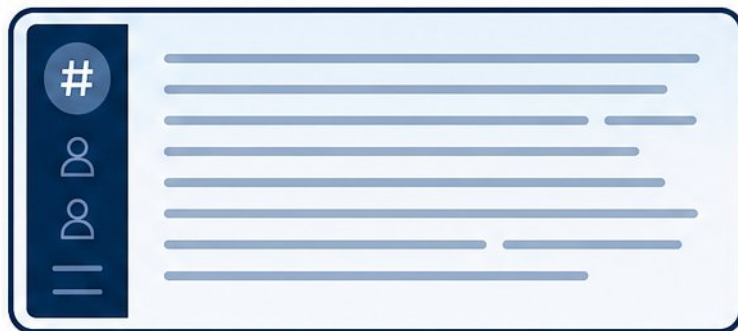
- Convey challenges professionally—focus on impact and recovery, not alarm



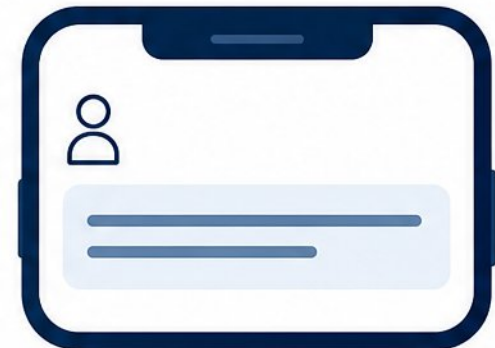
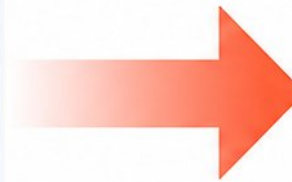
- Use push (email, Slack) for directed decisions; pull (dashboard, wiki) for self-serve access



- **Rewrite:** convert a detailed internal update into a one-sentence, high-level exec summary



Detailed, team-level update



Concise, exec-level summary

> Before You Send: The 60-Second Self-Edit



- Read the entire update from the reader's perspective before sending



- Apply the "So What?" test: cut anything that doesn't inform or drive decisions



- Verify the RAG status is visible and risks include recommended actions



- Confirm next steps have named owners and clear deadlines



- Replace noisy phrases and color commentary with strong, direct language

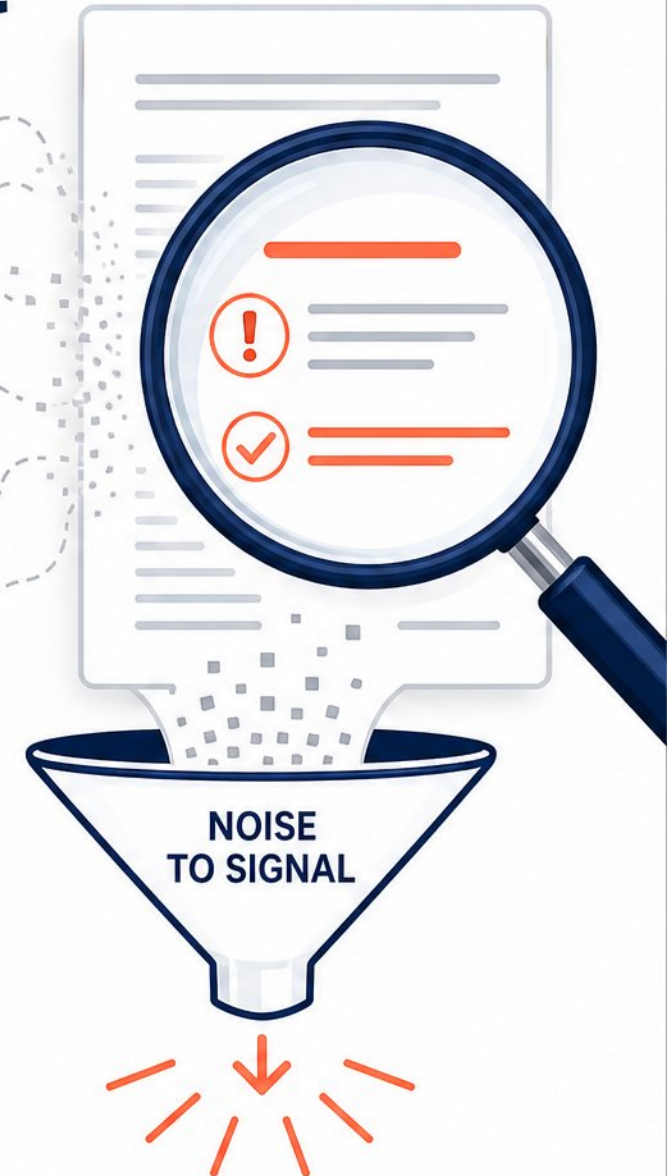
FYI
Just thinking...

Probably

Nice to have

I believe

At the end of the day

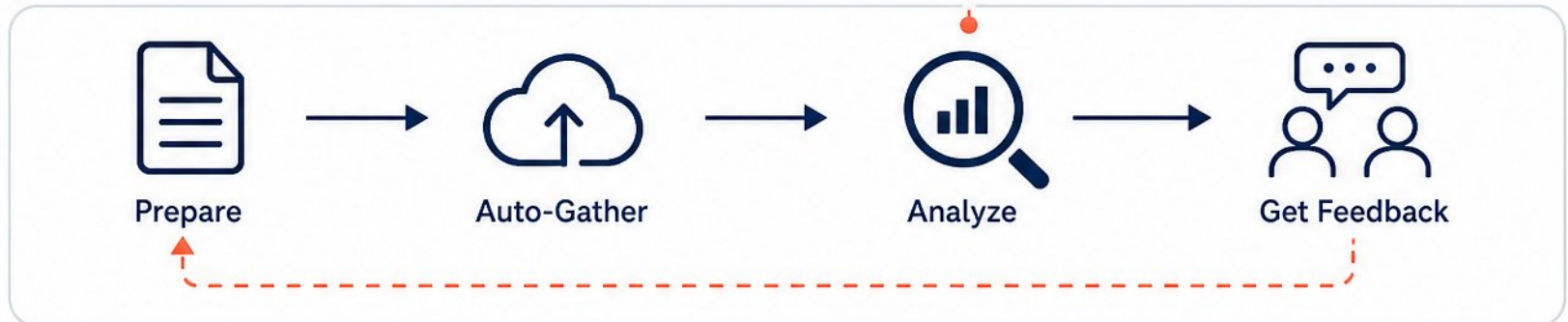


Building a Sustainable Weekly Habit



Weekly Writing Block

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
				10 min Write		



- Block 10 min every Friday morning using a pre-filled template



- Let tools auto-gather data; focus your time on analysis



- Ask stakeholders: "Does this update prompt action?"

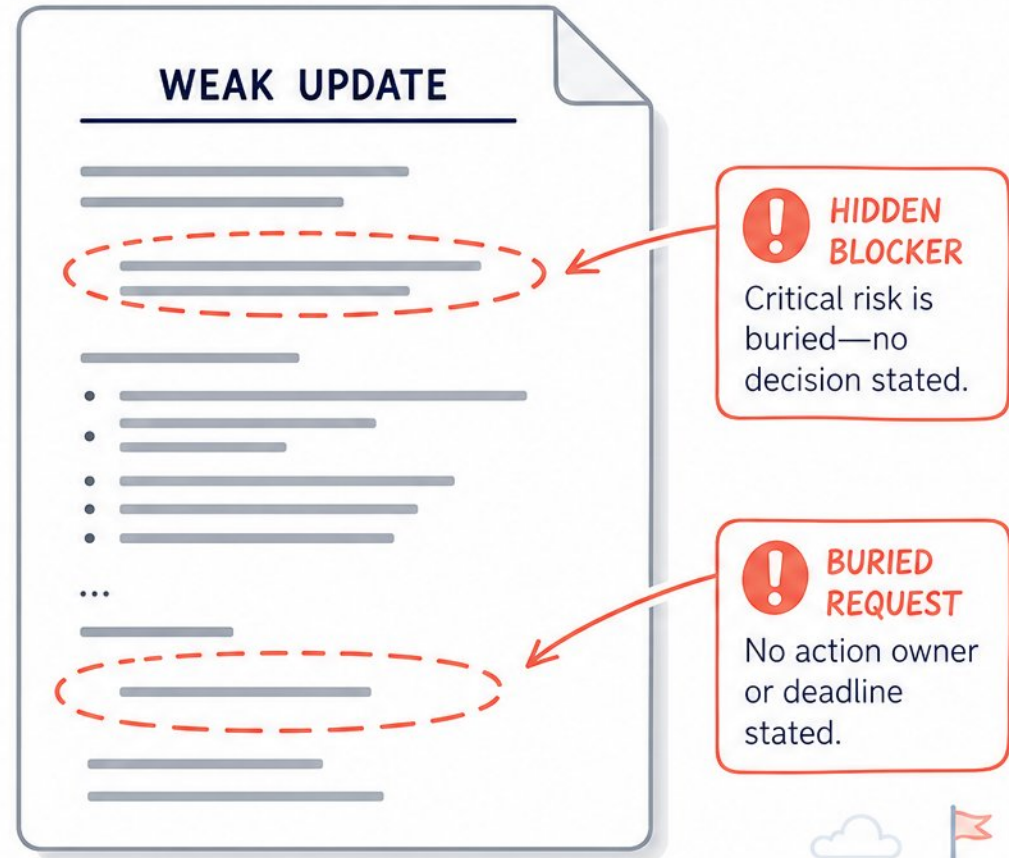


- Send updates Tuesday morning to maximize decision windows

Practice Lab: Analyze and Rewrite a Weak Update



- **Identify hidden blocker:**
missing decision buries a critical risk
- **Spot buried request:**
no action owner or deadline stated
- **Apply 4-section structure:**
Headline, Progress, Blocker, Next Steps
- **Peer comparison:**
which rewrite drives the clearest decision?





Action Plan and Toolkit for Your Next Update



- Checklist: Headline (RAG), Progress delta, Blockers with decisions, Owned next steps



- One micro-commit: Lead with the RAG status in your next real update



- Use audience-specific templates: exec summary, sprint brief, client digest



- Ultimate goal: Guide the team to the next action, not just log what happened

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