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SMART

SMART BUSINESS RANGE

Continuous Improvement

Make it continuous, not occasional.

THE METHOD

Improvement is a cycle

Plan · Do · Check · Act

The engine under this whole workbook is the Deming cycle — PDCA. Every goal, rhythm and walk is one turn of it. Learn the four moves once and you'll see them throughout.

PLAN: decide what 'better' means and the measure that proves it. DO: run the daily rhythms and go and see the work. CHECK: look honestly at whether the number moved. ACT: standardise what worked, adjust what didn't — then go again. That repetition is what makes it continuous rather than a one-off campaign.

WORKED EXAMPLE · AFTERSALES

Plan: comebacks at 6%, hurting CSI. Target under 3% in 90 days; measure = weekly comebacks.

Do: daily huddle at the board, weekly Gemba walk, comebacks logged same day.

Check: week 4 — brake jobs are a third of comebacks and not moving.

Act: add a disc check to the brake job card, standardise it, move to the next cause.

Three principles hold it together: make it **VISIBLE** (improvement dies in private), **OWNED** (one name per goal), and **SMALL** (a 1% gain you hold beats a 20% gain you lose).

OVERVIEW

Your improvement charter

Set your system once, then return to it. Fill it by hand, or alongside the interactive planner.

AREA / TEAM THIS COVERS**THE CASE FOR IMPROVING NOW**

What's the cost of standing still? The opportunity if you move?

WHAT 'BETTER' LOOKS LIKE IN 90 DAYS**HOW YOU'LL KNOW — THE MEASURE****WHO OWNS THIS RHYTHM****REVIEW CADENCE**

e.g. Weekly Friday 08:30, monthly deep-dive

BIGS

Big Important Goals

What makes a goal big and important?

A BIG isn't a task or a wish — it's an outcome worth organising a rhythm around. The test: can you put a single number against it, and a single name? No measure, and you can't tell if you're improving. No owner, and everyone assumes someone else has it.

Why three? Focus is the point. A team can genuinely drive two or three improvements at once — beyond that, attention thins and nothing moves.

WORKED EXAMPLE · A WELL-FORMED BIG

Name: cut the service comeback rate to under 3%.

Owner: Service Manager — one name, not 'the team'.

Measure: weekly comebacks as a % of repair orders.

Targets: root-cause top 3 causes · daily first-time-fix on the board · tech-led fixes logged.

BIG 1 — NAME & OWNER

SUCCESS MEASURE · STATUS (ON TRACK / AT RISK / OFF TRACK)

IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

BIG 2 — NAME & OWNER

SUCCESS MEASURE · STATUS (ON TRACK / AT RISK / OFF TRACK)

IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

BIG 3 — NAME & OWNER

SUCCESS MEASURE · STATUS (ON TRACK / AT RISK / OFF TRACK)

IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

RHYTHMS

Meeting & review rhythms

Define each rhythm once; run it relentlessly. A rhythm without a visible board drifts — note the board each meeting is married to.

RHYTHM	FREQUENCY	WHO	PURPOSE / BOARD

GEMBA

Go-and-see log

'Gemba' means the real place

From lean manufacturing — the actual place where work happens. You cannot improve a process from a meeting room; you have to stand where it runs and watch it as it really is.

Carry three questions: What actually happens here (versus what's supposed to)? What makes this hard (the friction people have stopped noticing)? What would help (asked of the person doing the work)? Go with curiosity, not a clipboard — the moment it feels like inspection, people perform instead of showing you the truth.

Every row ends in an action — an observation with no action is just a visit.

DATE	WHERE / WHAT	WHAT YOU SAW	ACTION IT TRIGGERS

CHECK-INS

Accountability loop

Close the loop: review the last commitment before setting a new one, so nothing quietly slips.

PERSON	LAST COMMITMENT	STATUS	NEXT COMMITMENT

IDEAS

Ideas & the 5 Whys

PROBLEM STATEMENT

WHY? (1)

WHY? (2)

WHY? (3)

WHY? (4)

WHY? (5) — THE ROOT

COUNTERMEASURE — WHAT YOU'LL CHANGE

Address the root, not the symptom.

READINESS

Before you call it live

Every unchecked box is where improvement usually stalls. The final test: would this rhythm survive you being away?

- ☐ Charter names a real measure, not a vague aspiration.
- ☐ Three BIGs or fewer, each with a named owner.
- ☐ Every BIG has a visible status anyone can read.
- ☐ Each rhythm has a fixed time, attendees and a board.
- ☐ Gemba walks are scheduled, not left to spare time.
- ☐ Every observation ends in an action.
- ☐ Check-ins close the loop before setting new commitments.
- ☐ Frontline ideas have a route in — and people see the outcome.
- ☐ At least one problem has had a real root-cause pass.
- ☐ The rhythm would survive two weeks of your absence.

Improve continuously. Not occasionally.