

FRICTION

SYSTEMIC

One Less Click, One More Human Signal

The Experiment: Finding Clicks and Signals

Duration: One week

Time required: 30 minutes upfront, 10 minutes per touchpoint during the experiment

Goal: Find one place in a team process where a step can be removed and one place where a human moment can be added back in.

Step One: Pick Your Process (10 Minutes)

Choose one recurring employee experience touchpoint you are responsible for or have influence over. It could be performance reviews, onboarding, one-on-ones, project retrospectives, or any process that involves both a system and a person. Write down:

- What does this process ask of the manager or team member at each step?

- Which steps exist for the system's benefit rather than the employee's?

- When was the last time someone said this process felt meaningful rather than just completed it?

Step Two: Find The One Less Click (10 Minutes)

Look at the process and identify one step that could be removed, simplified, or made optional without losing anything that genuinely matters. It does not need to be dramatic. Examples:

- A rating field that generates data no one looks at
- A required comment box that everyone fills with a sentence copied from the one above it
- An approval step that adds a week to the timeline and changes nothing about the outcome

Write down what you would remove and what, honestly, would be lost. If the answer is nothing, remove it.

Step Three: Find the One More Human Signal (10 Minutes)

Now identify one moment in the same process where a direct human exchange could be added or restored. Keep it small and specific. Examples:

- A norm that the manager shares one specific observation before the written review is submitted
- A standing opening question in the review conversation: “What do you want me to know about this period that the form won’t capture?”
- A handwritten or untemplated note sent after a significant milestone
- A five-minute check-in the day after a hard review conversation

Write down exactly what you will add, when it will happen, and what would prevent you from doing it.

Step Four: Run it Once and Notice

Apply both changes to the next instance of the process. Afterward, note:

- What did removing the step cost, if anything?
- What did adding the human signal produce, if anything?
- How did the person on the receiving end respond?

Reflection prompt: Think about the last time a process you manage produced a completed form but not a real conversation. What was the system optimizing for, and what did it cost the person on the other end? What is one signal you could add this week that would tell someone on your team that you noticed them?