



Mastering your firm's process management

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Meet your host



Ian Vacin

Karbon

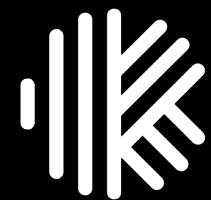
Chief Customer Officer



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- 1. Close down any open apps**
- 2. Ask and we'll answer**

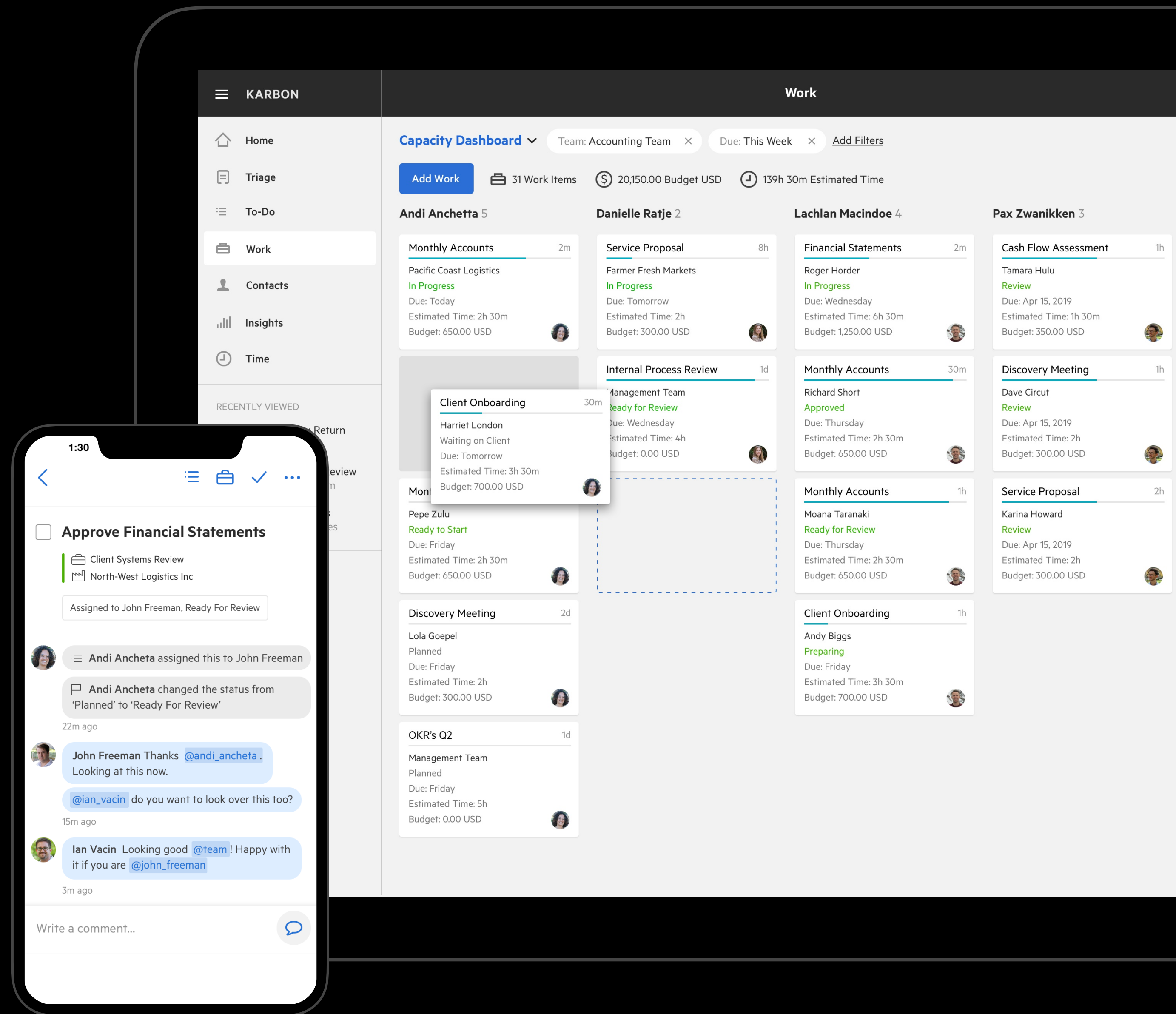




Work Management Software *for* Accounting Firms

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GET STARTED



Overview

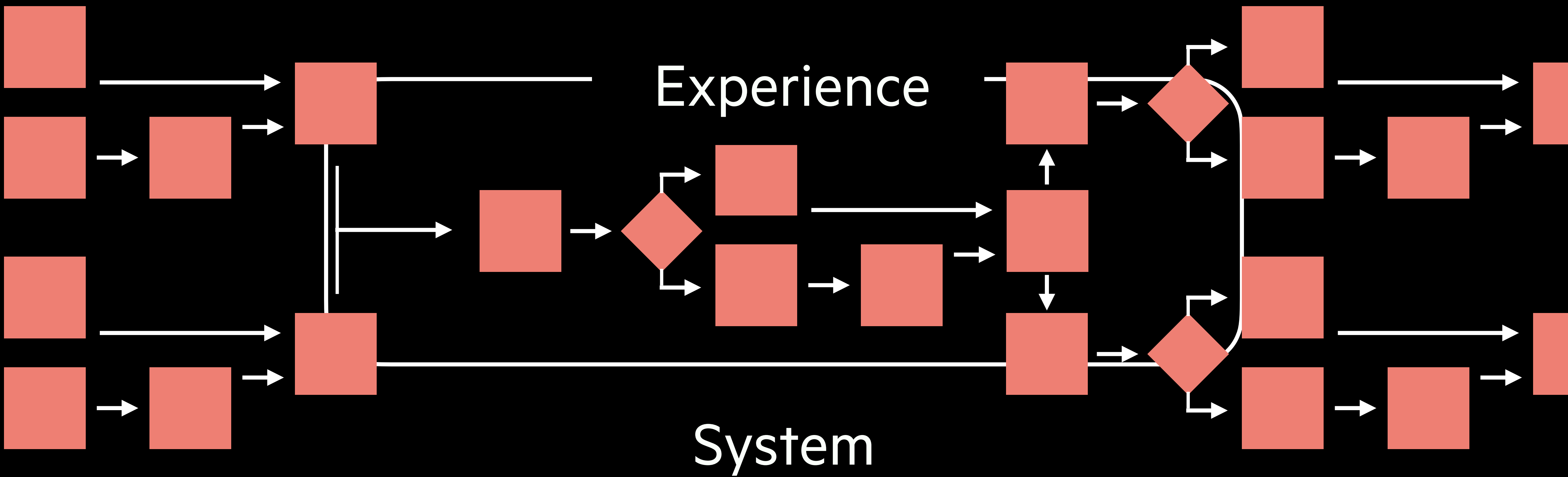
- 1. Discovery**
- 2. Optimization**
- 3. Reinvention**
- 4. Delivery**
- 5. Personalize**

“Knowing and choosing when to be inefficient, becomes your difference.”

— Adrian Simmons, Elements CPA, Chief Creative Designer







*“Think of process like a storyboard:
you're creating a narrative around a
customer experience.”*

— Adrian Simmons, Elements CPA, Chief Creative Designer



Ten steps to process improvement

-
1. Determine the process to optimize
 2. Discuss the existing process as a team
 3. Agree on what is success & the measure
 4. Map out “As-Is” processes (& variants)
 5. Discuss variants and why they exist
 6. Review all steps for inefficiencies
 7. Create a “To-Be” process with a subteam
 8. Test the process (or at least the logic)
 9. Document and implement broadly
 10. Iterate and further optimize
- Discovery
- Optimization
- Reinvention
- Delivery

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“The simple but often tedious task of getting everything out of your head during process discovery, makes recognizing opportunities for improvement 10x easier.”

— Adrian Simmons, Elements CPA, Chief Creative Designer



Be smart about process improvement

- What bothers you (or the team)? What is out of place?
- What process(es) are you trying to improve? Why?
- Are your processes catalogued and documented?
- What is the process today? What is your ideal process?
- How are you measuring success? Is it measured today?
- Who is defining the new process and with what insights?
- How do you ensure the process is adopted?

Category	[Your Firm]
Most efficient	#1: #2: #3:
Most bothersome	#1: #2: #3:
Biggest opportunity	#1: #2: #3:
Most associated revenue	#1: #2: #3:
Top three processes	#1: #2: #3:

Example process list:

- Weekly reconciliation
- Month-end close
- Year-end review
- Payroll
- Advisory
- Tax (business)
- Tax (individual)
- Tax (other)
- Prospect to sale
- Client onboarding
- Staff onboarding
- Staff offboarding
- Client offboarding
- Internal processes

Steps to process discovery

- **Step 1:** Determine project ownership

D
A
C
I

Steps to process discovery

- Step 1: Determine project ownership
- **Step 2: Gather & review what you can**

Welcome to Two Roads

(Partner's First Name),

We are honored to be the place of final destination for your onboarding process but

(Bookkeeper's Name),

(Bookkeeper's Name),

865-212-0066

Two Roads is vital for us to ensure that you have any questions

1. Add

Kickoff Onboarding Meeting

Internal Meeting

Training session

Clean up and Present the

Our first step is necessary in

Which of the following (Time one) (Time two) (Time three)

Included in this information

Two Roads

Onboarding Timeline

Starting a partnership with your organization is something that we take great pride and time with. We invest significant time on the front end knowing your business, completing any projects, and implementing any system efficiencies. This process typically takes our team 30 days from start to finish. Your dedicated bookkeeper will keep you updated during the process.

Phase One - Getting Started

- Initial Meeting
- Bookkeeper Introduction
- Creation of cloud based accounting software
- Acquire the necessary info

2 Internal Set Up

<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm Bookkeeper Assignment Confirm the partner placement with the bookkeeper and notify Zach	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create profile in Bill.com with invoice for on boarding plus first month	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set up a reoccurring ACH Establish the Monthly reoccurring fee that the partner will be charged,	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a Note in the Onboarding timeline of their billing date	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update Partner Organization Chart Place the partner under the correct bookkeeper	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update Wage information Make any adjustments necessary to a team members wage	

Two Roads' "Onboarding" process

Steps to process discovery

- Step 1: Determine project ownership
- Step 2: Gather & review what you can
- **Step 3: Determine your own hypotheses**

Phases

- setup employees
- basics of tools
- check-ins
- familiarity
- training

what is the end point? start point?

what is deliverables?

key moments?

- Paperwork done
- System setup complete
- Proficient in RPA
- Proficient in systems
- 1st client meeting

measurements?

Time Expectations

Timing = 2-3 months (mutual evaluation 90-days)

Start point = Contract signed → 2-day delta period → (Shadowing & learning)

End point =

Key Moments

- Completed paperwork
- Cert (Xero), Training Videos = Proficiency
- System initial setup — close to end (90 days)
- Draft growth letter } Cultivation
- Write reflection on team handbook — first 30 days
- Shadowing of meetings (Tax projects, tax interview, tax review, asset check-up (internal vs. client review))

Steps to process discovery

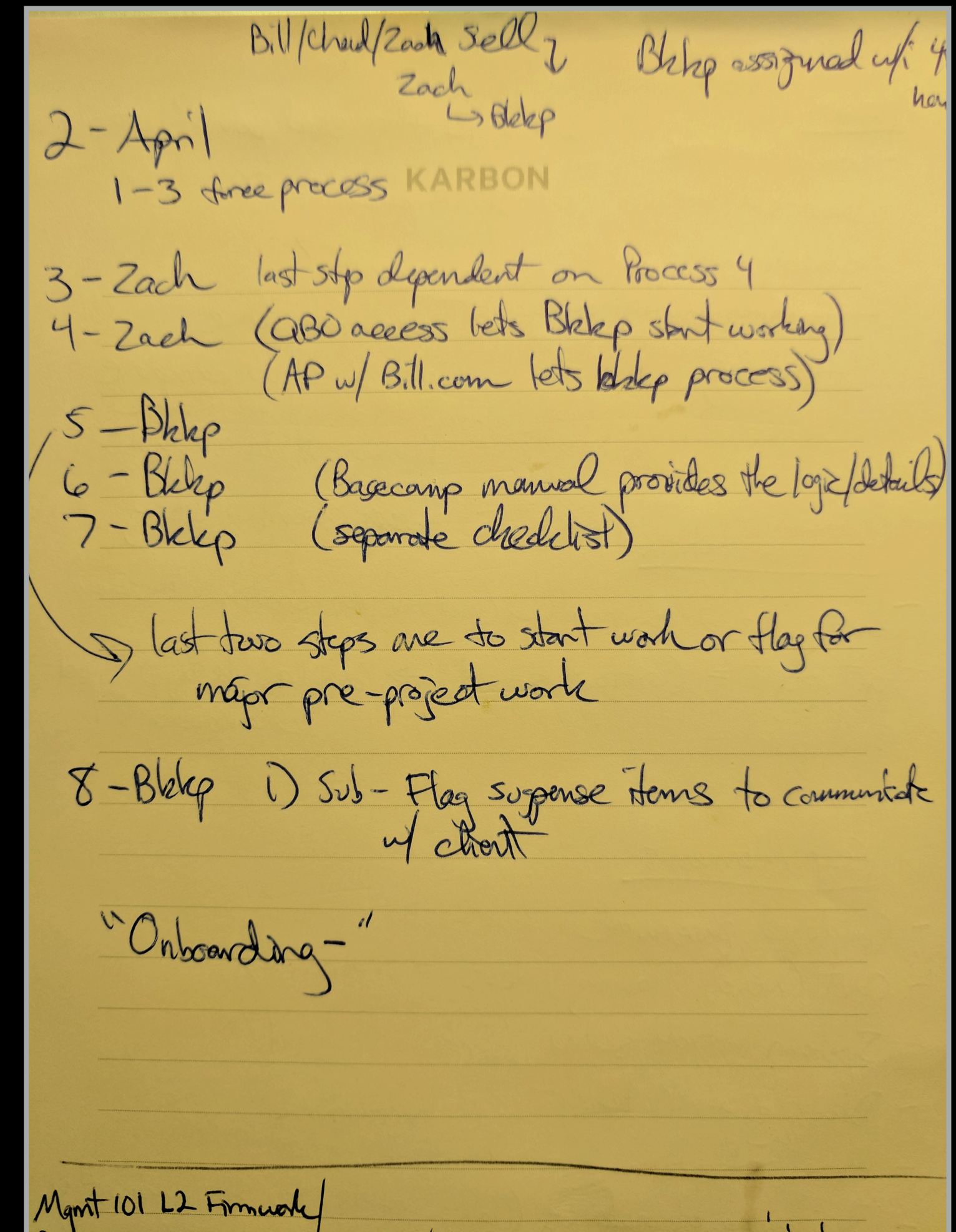
- Step 1: Determine project ownership
- Step 2: Gather & review what you can
- Step 3: Determine your own hypotheses
- **Step 4: Write down the high-level details**

Step 4: Write down the high-level details

Objective	Players	Key Moments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">“ ” ...
Goal		
	Milestones	
Metrics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Baseline:Target:		
Ownership		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Driver:Approver:		

Steps to process discovery

- Step 1: Determine project ownership
- Step 2: Gather & review what you can
- Step 3: Determine your own hypotheses
- Step 4: Write down the high-level details
- **Step 5: Conduct an intake session**



Steps to process discovery

- Step 1: Determine project ownership
- Step 2: Gather & review what you can
- Step 3: Determine your own hypotheses
- Step 4: Write down the high-level details
- Step 5: Conduct an intake session
- **Step 6: Document a raw list of steps**

Step 6: Document a raw list of steps



- Use whatever method works for you
- Don't worry about "doing it right"
- Document as much as you can
- Involve the project team
- Make notes as you go
- Walk back through to fill the gaps

Step #	Category, group or process	Step title	Step description	Step owner	Actual time to complete	Best	Worst	Expected	Dependencies (list step #s or processes)	Inputs	Outputs
1	Contract	Sign contract	Sign employment contract	New Hire					Process: Hiring	Employment contract	Signed employment contract
2	Contract	Receive contract	Receive and archive contract	CCD					Contract signed	Signed employment contract	Contract archived in File Mgmt system?
3	Contract	Kick-off new hire process	With contract receive, communicate to Admin to start the next process								
4	Paperwork	Send out electronic new hire forms	New employee forms are sent via email to new hire for completion	Admin					Completion of Contract process	I-9, W-4, MW507, Direct deposit authorization, Independence, Confidentiality, Non-disclosure / non-compete	
5	Paperwork	Print & prep new hire paperwork									
6		Review									

Source: "New Team Member" process for Elements CPA

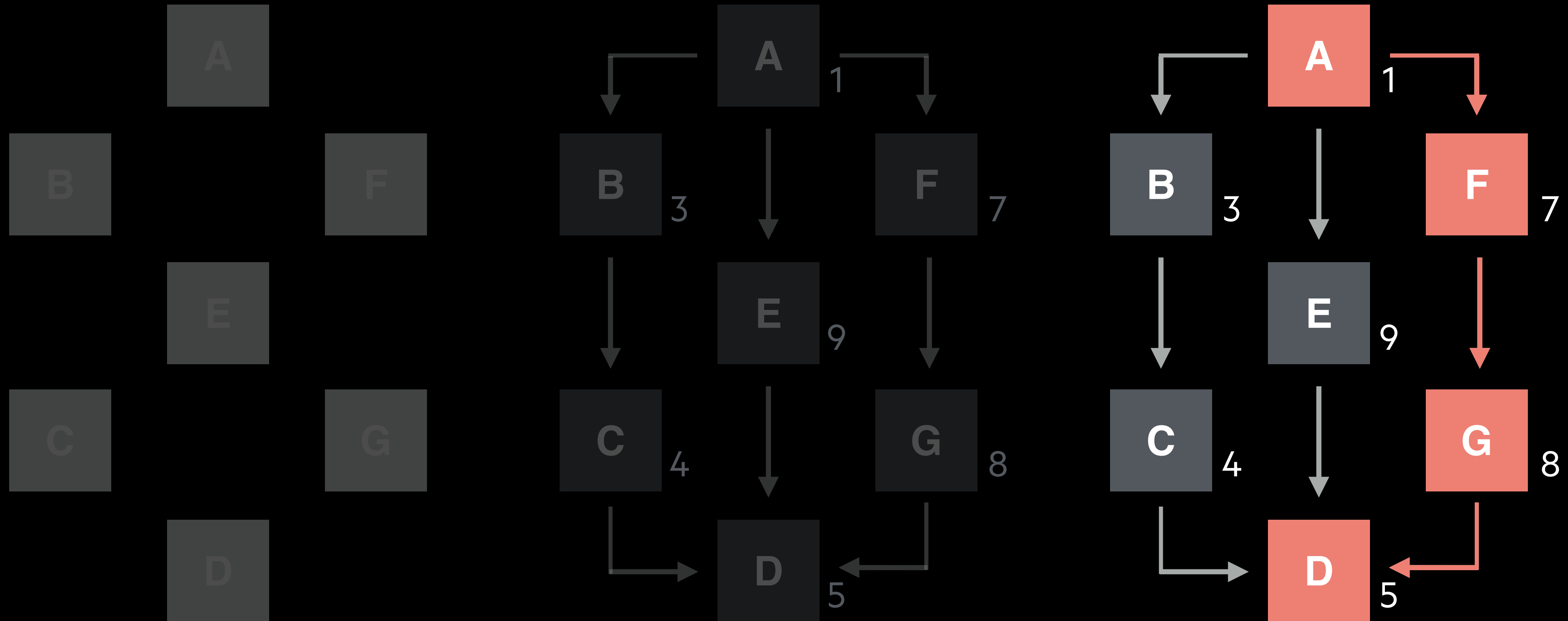
Steps to process discovery

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- Step 5: Conduct an intake session
- Step 6: Document a raw list of steps
- **Step 7: Estimate time per activity**

Steps to process discovery

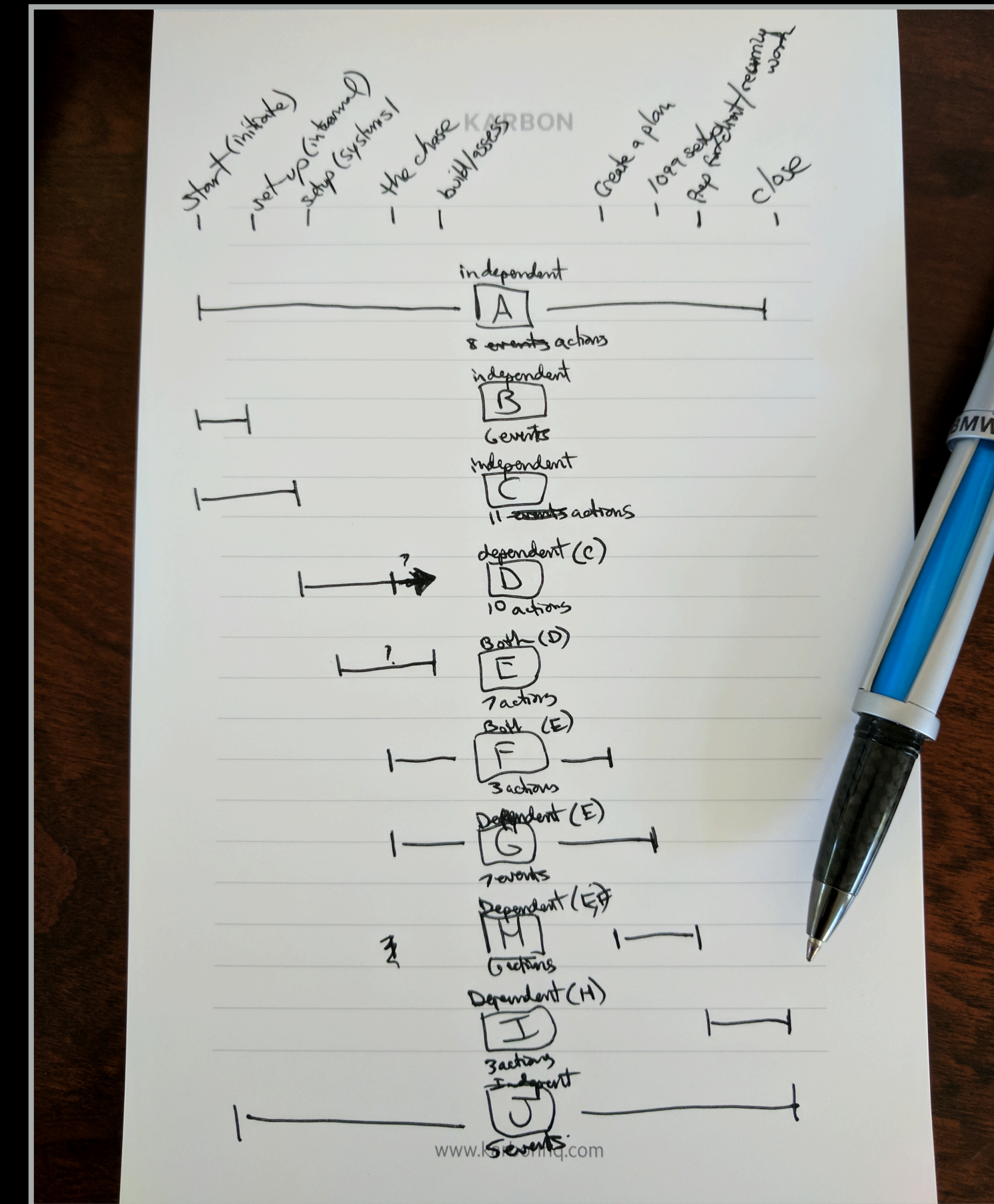
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- Step 6: Document a raw list of steps
- Step 7: Estimate time per activity
- **Step 8: Map out the critical path**

Critical Path method (process planning)



Next steps

- Use critical path to ensure focus
- Review “as-is” process with the team
- Add & remove based on feedback
- Break it down further, if needed
- *Begin mapping & optimization phases*



Source: "Onboarding" process for Two Roads

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“Write your processes, maps and documentation for the most junior person on the team. This ensures nothing is missed and also helps delegate more effectively.”


— Steph Hinds, Growthwise, Head Ninja



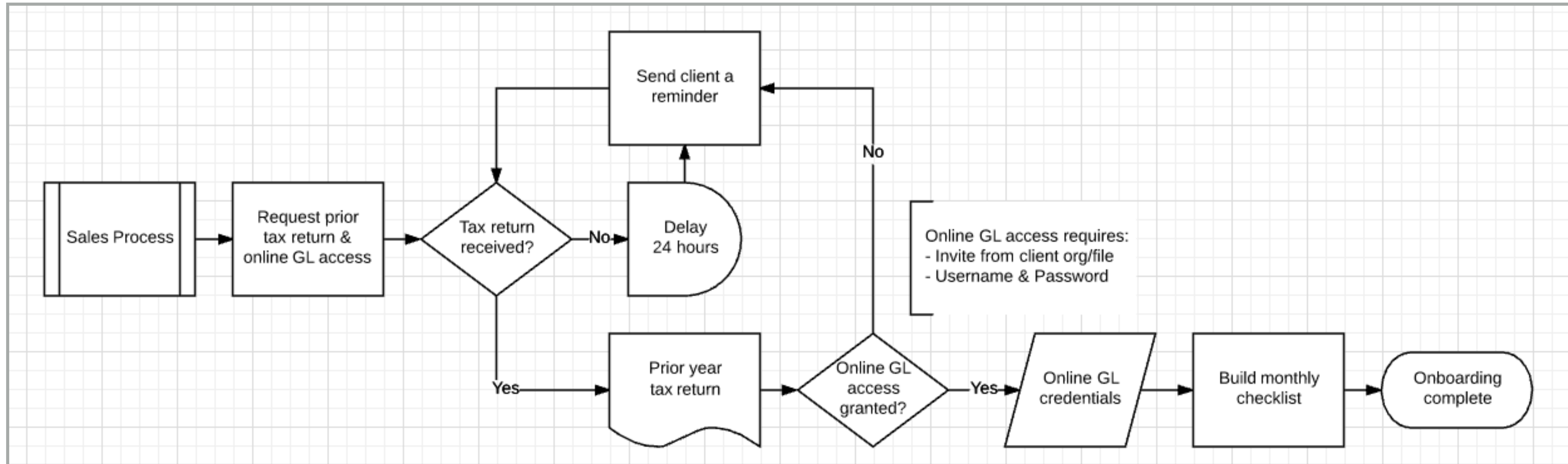
The why of process mapping

- “A picture is worth a thousand words.”
- It’s a team sport.
- Single point of view for all.
- Mind the gap.
- See the big picture — today and tomorrow.
- Decrease errors of procedure.
- No value? Remove the step.
- Make staff onboarding eas(ier).
- Roll-out new processes with ease.
- Easy to compare for overlapping processes.

Symbols that you need to know

- Process
 - Decision
 - Terminator
 - Predefined process
 - Flow line connector
 - Document(s)
 - Data (input/output)
 - Delay
 - Note
- 
- Used in all map types

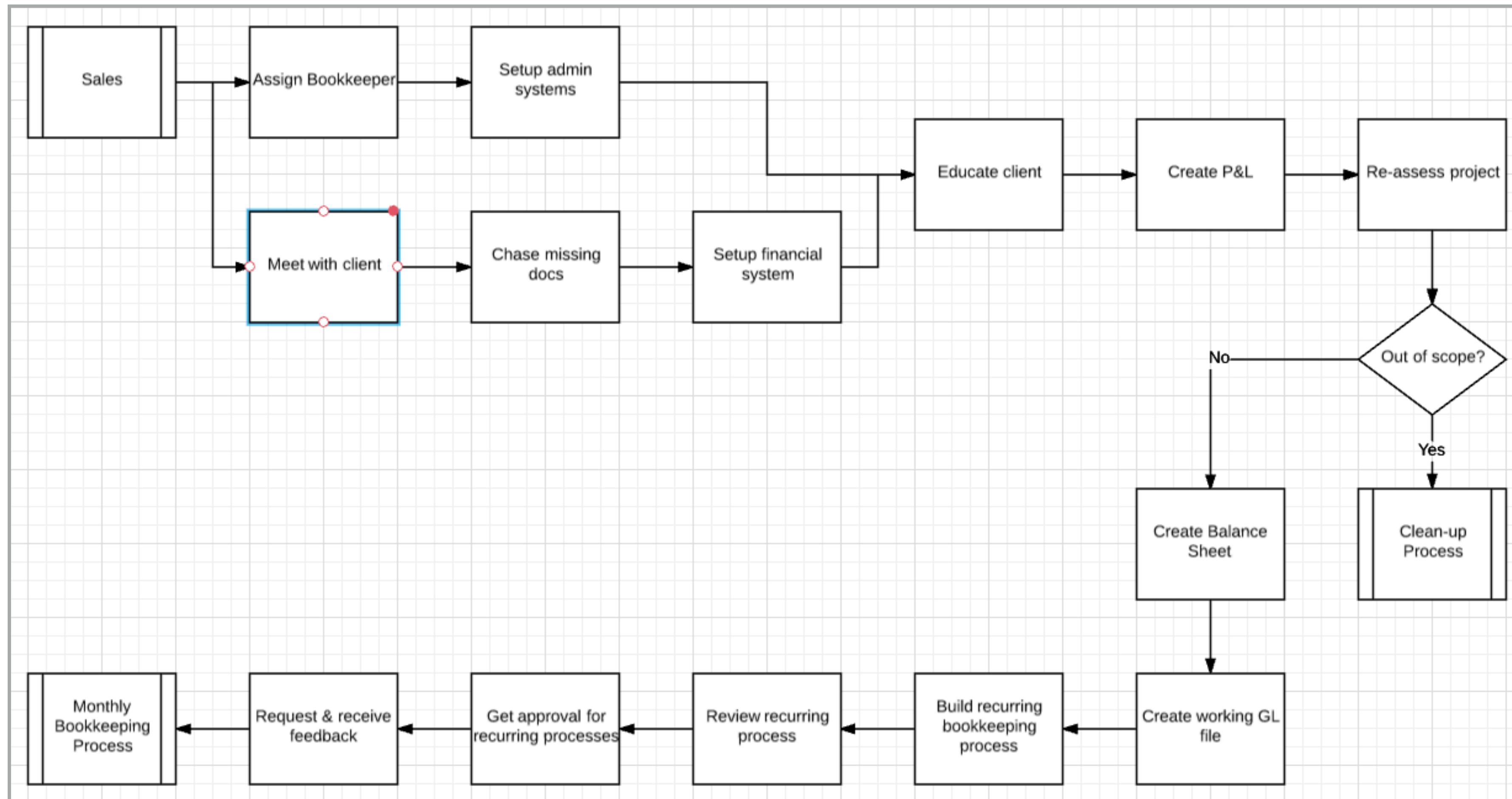
Example using all process symbols



Process map types to consider

- Simple
- Detailed
- **Detailed+**
- Swimlane
- Swimlane + Data

Detailed+ process map



“When someone breaks a process, take notice. Uncovering why they did it and what they did leads to process innovation in a practice.”

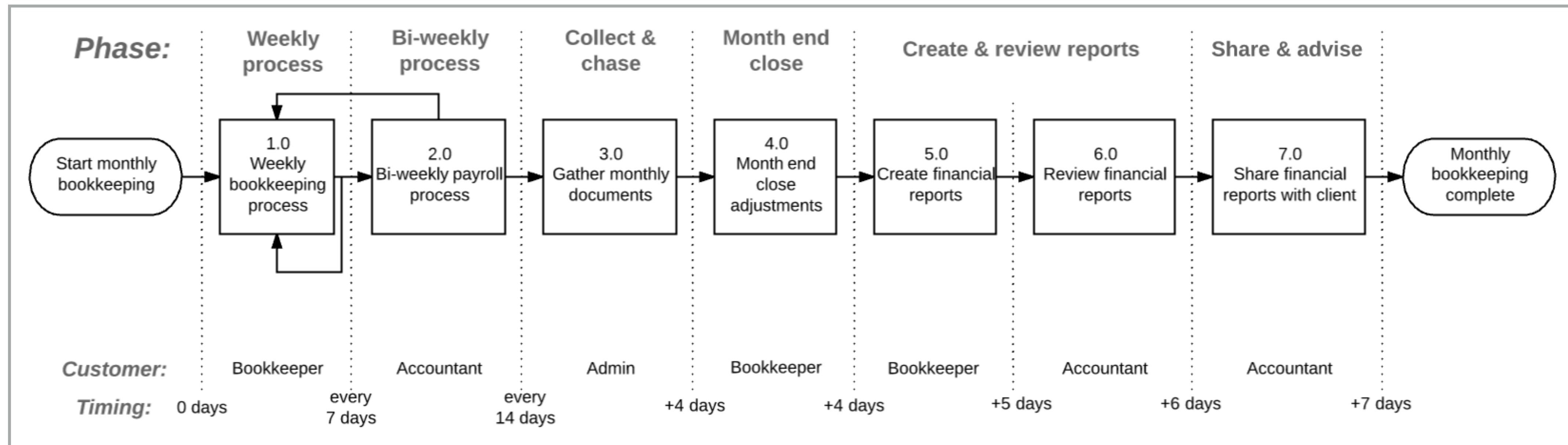
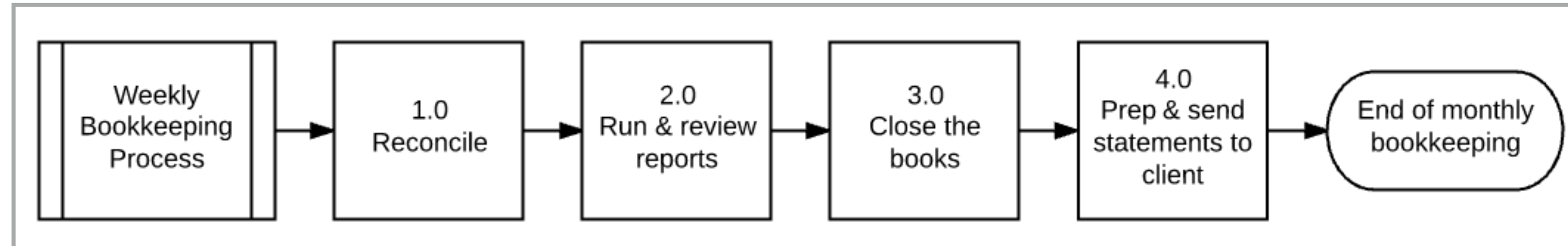
— Ian Vacin, Karbon, Chief Customer Officer



Monthly bookkeeping in detail (example)

Checklist Summary Details					
Checklist Name	Monthly Bookkeeping				
Description	Monthly bookkeeping process for month end close				
Owner	Bookkeeper				
Expected Duration	1 month				
Workflow Status Details				Job Role Details	
Workflow ID#	Workflow status name			Job role ID#	Job role name
1	Weekly bookkeeping process			1	Bookkeeper
2	Bi-weekly payroll process			2	Accountant
3	Collect & chase			3	Admin
4	Month end close adjustments				
5	Create & review reports				
6	Share & advise client				
Section 1	Weekly bookkeeping process (week 1)				
Step #	Step Title	Owner	Duration (hours)	Dependent On Step #	Due Date
1	Review A/P report	Bookkeeper	0.25		start 28 days prior to start date
2	Pay bills that are due	Bookkeeper	0.5	1	start 28 days prior to start date
3	Publish all receipts form receipt app to accounting system	Bookkeeper	0.5	2	start 28 days prior to start date
4	Reconcile daily deposits from the POS system in the accounting system	Bookkeeper	0.75	3	start 28 days prior to start date
5	Reconcile deposits from Stripe in the accounting system	Bookkeeper	0.25	4	start 28 days prior to start date
6	Reconcile open transactions from bank accounts in the accounting system	Bookkeeper	1.25	5	start 28 days prior to start date
7	Reconcile open tranactions from Paypal in the accounting system	Bookkeeper	0.25	6	start 28 days prior to start date
8	Review uncashed checks	Bookkeeper	0.25	7	start 28 days prior to start date
9	Email client with any questions on weekly transactions	Bookkeeper	0.25	8	start 28 days prior to start date

Example of monthly bookkeeping



“Ask a team member who doesn't normally work the process to conduct a walk-through - it can be a great way to uncover the hidden steps normal process owners may be blind to.”

— Adrian Simmons, Elements CPA, Chief Creative Designer



Conduct a process walk

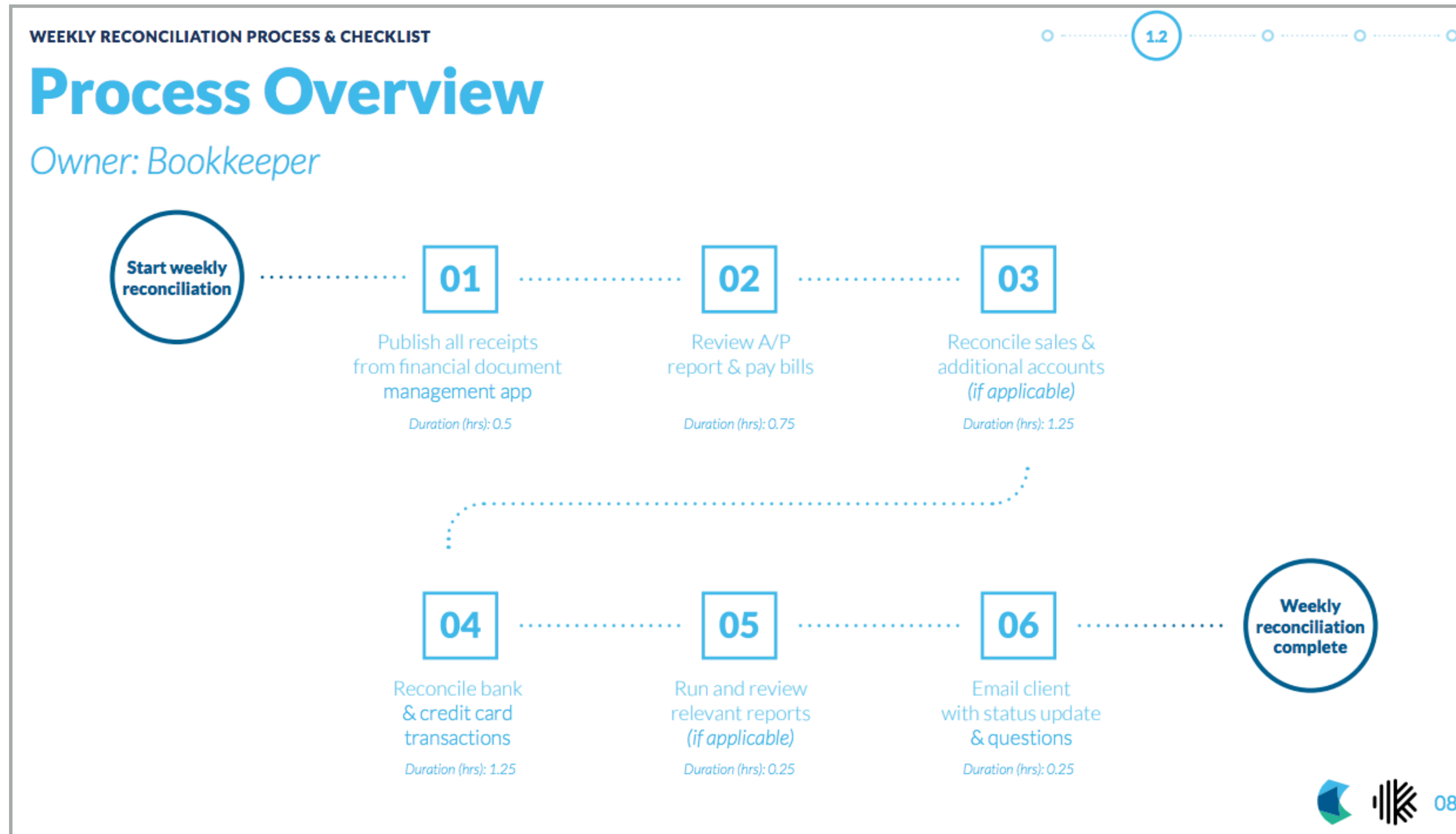
Take the walk:

- Pre-requisites: Documented process
- Perspective: Client and/or paper
- Walk conceptually
- Walk actually

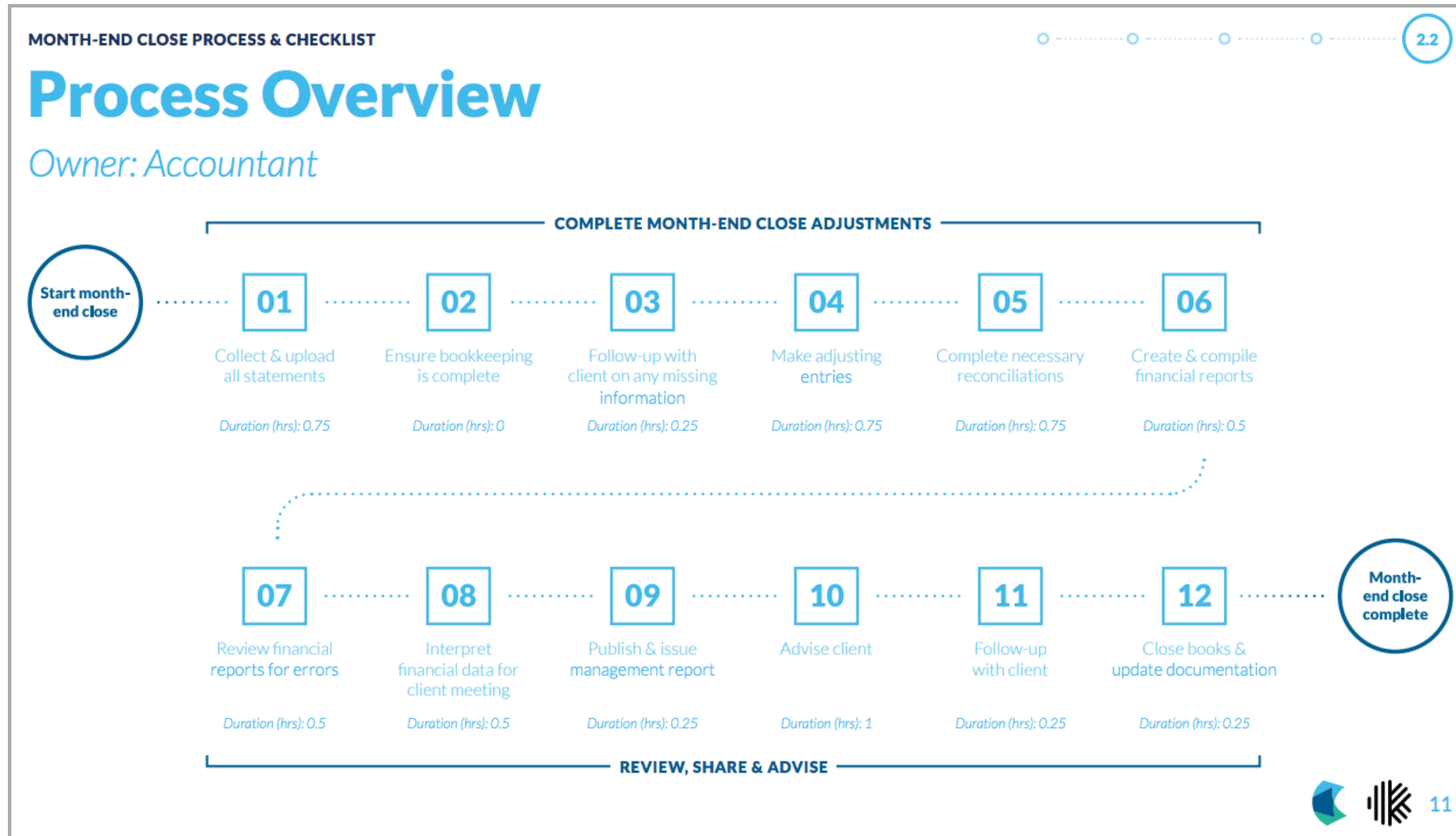
Walking tips:

- Voice your thoughts
- Scrimmage and take notes as you go
- Delete where you can, add where you must

Example: Weekly reconciliation



Example: Month-end close



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“What you intend, and what your customers actually experience, can be two entirely different things. At some point you have to switch shoes and forget what you know, so as to see through another's eyes.”

— Adrian Simmons, Elements CPA, Chief Creative Designer —



The ramen soup experience



Source: @buildtothink

Observe the process



Capture the experience & issues



How to open?

A box of Maruchan Instant Lunch with Shrimp. The box is yellow and red, featuring an image of the prepared dish. Text on the box includes '3 MINUTE', 'Maruchan', 'Instant Lunch', 'With Shrimp', and '0 Trans Fat'.



What to do?

A white pot filled with yellow noodles, with a green vegetable packet being added. A red packet is also visible next to the pot.



How spicy?

A hand holding a silver seasoning packet, pouring its contents into a bowl of yellow noodles.



Enough water?

A white bowl filled with yellow noodles, with water being poured from a white pitcher. A white packet is also visible in the bowl. The text 'DIGJAPAN!' is visible in the bottom right corner.



For how long?

A silver microwave oven with a digital display and buttons.



How to eat?

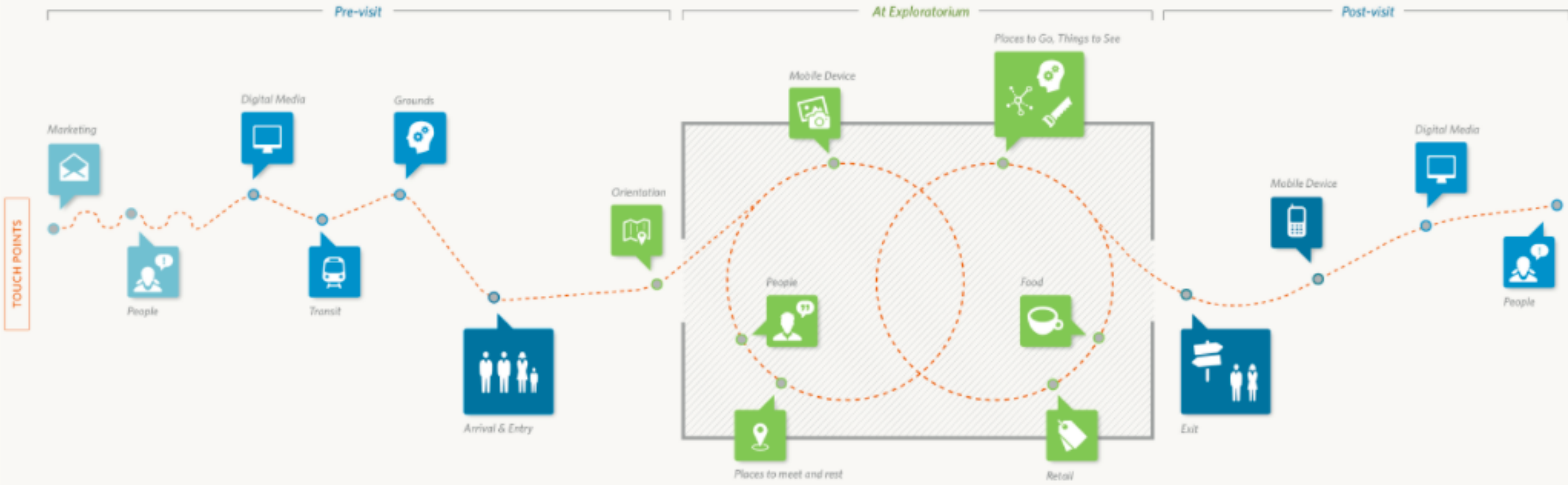
A white bowl filled with yellow noodles and soup, with a white packet being added. A white packet is also visible next to the bowl.

Map out the As-Is process & experience



Exploratorium Visitor Experience Map

Where do you support the paths of different visitors?



	GET THE IDEA	PLAN THE DAY	GET INSIDE	DO THE MUSEUM	WHAT'S NEXT	RETURN TO LIFE
Local Adult		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Rents a Zipcar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Needs to meet friends there	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seeks alcoholBuzzed and wants munchies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wants to continue social activities for the night	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plans another date
Tourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discovers Exploratorium on travel siteDiscusses with hotel concierge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plans day around visiting multiple tourist destinations		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feels pleased at the depth of the content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seeks spot to rest and recharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reviews on Trip AdvisorCrashes in hotel
Hispanic Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Heard about Exploratorium on UnivisionUnsure if it's the right place for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Talks with family about goingLearns about Spanish optionsConsiders cost deeply	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Asks about Spanish support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Needs to keep family together, old and youngPleasantly surprised that translation is free	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gathers the troops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shares photos with family
Member Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is triggered by fond memoriesReceives Exploratorium communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Looks up member benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seeks special member check-in or benefitsWants to skip lineFeels extra frustration with crowds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feels pride and belongingLooks for favorite exhibitFeels frustration if it isn't there	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feels proud of San Francisco	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wants to get more involved

Source: San Francisco Exploratorium and Adaptive Path

Identify the areas to improve



Re-imagine and re-invent



Test, learn... and refine



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The journey to checklists

From processes to mapping to work to checklists

	Processes & mapping	Work & checklists
Raw data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process name• Step title• Step description• Step duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work template name• Checklist item• Checklist item description• Due date, budgeted time
Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phase descriptions• Subprocesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work status• Checklist section
Detailed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ownership & notes• Order• Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Step owner• Checklist step order• Additional checklist steps

Keys to checklists

- **Generic & specific:** Must be flexible yet customizable.
- **Tight & light:** Detailed enough to track but lightweight enough to use.
- **Ownership is king:** Clear ownership with clear hand-offs.
- **Work just flows:** Visibility must be baked in.

Generic & specific

Generic:

- Work template
- Checklist item
- Links

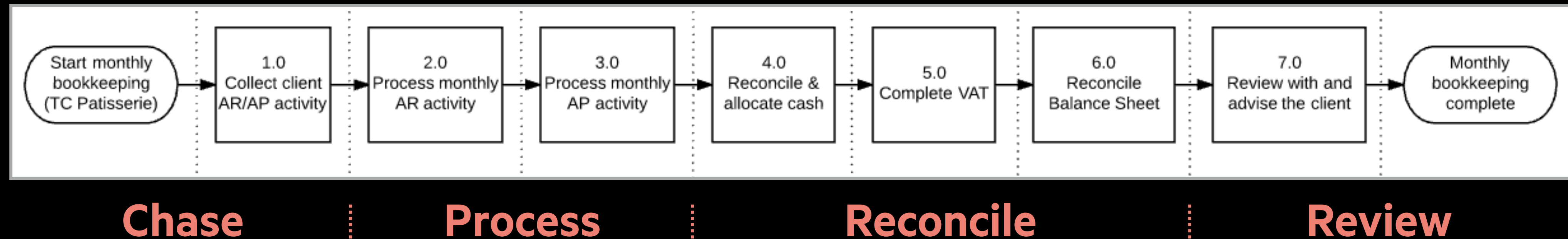
Specific:

- Checklist
- Item description

Tight & light

- Precise, efficient, easy-to-use, and easy to manage
- Keep item names short (like process step titles)
- Use verb + noun + object construction
- Leave the detail to the description
- Use links in the description to point to the step-by-step process
- No more than 5-9 items per list (use sections)
- List only what is important (combine like items into description)

Work just flows



- Process phases = workflow statuses
- No more than 3 to 5 statuses per work type
- Team members must relate to work statuses
- Last checklist item is to track, assign, and communicate

Source: Hemingway Bailey Bookkeeping process

Ownership is king

- One owner per item, work status, checklist, work, and client
- Minimize baton passing — group items where possible
- When the baton is passed, overcommunicate
- Separate checklists into sections — preferably by ownership
- Work statuses should relate to person or team owning

Steps to put checklists into Karbon

1. **Prep data table:** Genericize step owners, convert duration to due date, update description and capture the high-level details.
2. **Setup supporting components:** Specify work types, work statuses, job roles, and create new work template.
3. **Build work template tasks:** Copy & paste step titles; add descriptions, job roles, and due dates per checklist item.
4. ***Publish & get work done.***

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Best practice templates

Choose from Karbon's extensive collection of best practice templates to provide your staff the step-by-step guidance for client service delivery work and internal processes. Pick and choose from the full library of more than 50 processes.

GET THE TEMPLATES

karbonhq.com/template-upload



Best practice templates

Client services:

- Weekly reconciliation
- Month-end close
- Year-end review
- Payroll
- Advisory
- Tax (business)
- Tax (individual)
- Tax (other)

Enablement processes:

- Prospect to sale
- Client onboarding
- Staff onboarding
- Staff offboarding
- Client offboarding

Internal processes:

- Building processes
- Change management
- Corporate name change
- Measuring client satisfaction
- OKR management process
- Picking & choosing tech
- Ratings & reviews

karbonhq.com/template-upload



- 1. Review/build a template**
- 2. Customize**
- 3. Create work**
- 4. Personalize the work**
- 5. Setup a schedule**
- 6. Manage the work**
- 7. Gain insights**

4 key Karbon work training videos

- **Work filters and saved dashboards (4 min):**
<https://karbonhq.wistia.com/medias/13dfsqxgo9>
- **Personalize a work template (6 min):**
<https://karbonhq.wistia.com/medias/sjzdxhhcsu>
- **Creating a work template from scratch (10min):**
<https://karbonhq.wistia.com/medias/h2w6jr1lrm>
- **Best Practices: Automation (9 min):**
<https://karbonhq.wistia.com/medias/m76gpl6w10>



Introducing Karbon

A whole new approach to practice management

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Wrap up

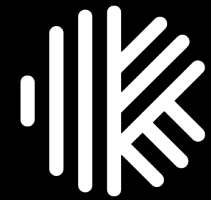
“Efficiency is not set and forget. It is not the responsibility of one person or one team. It's something you and your team have to work on constantly. The more it becomes a daily habit, the more efficient your firm will become.”

— Steph Hinds, Growth, Founder



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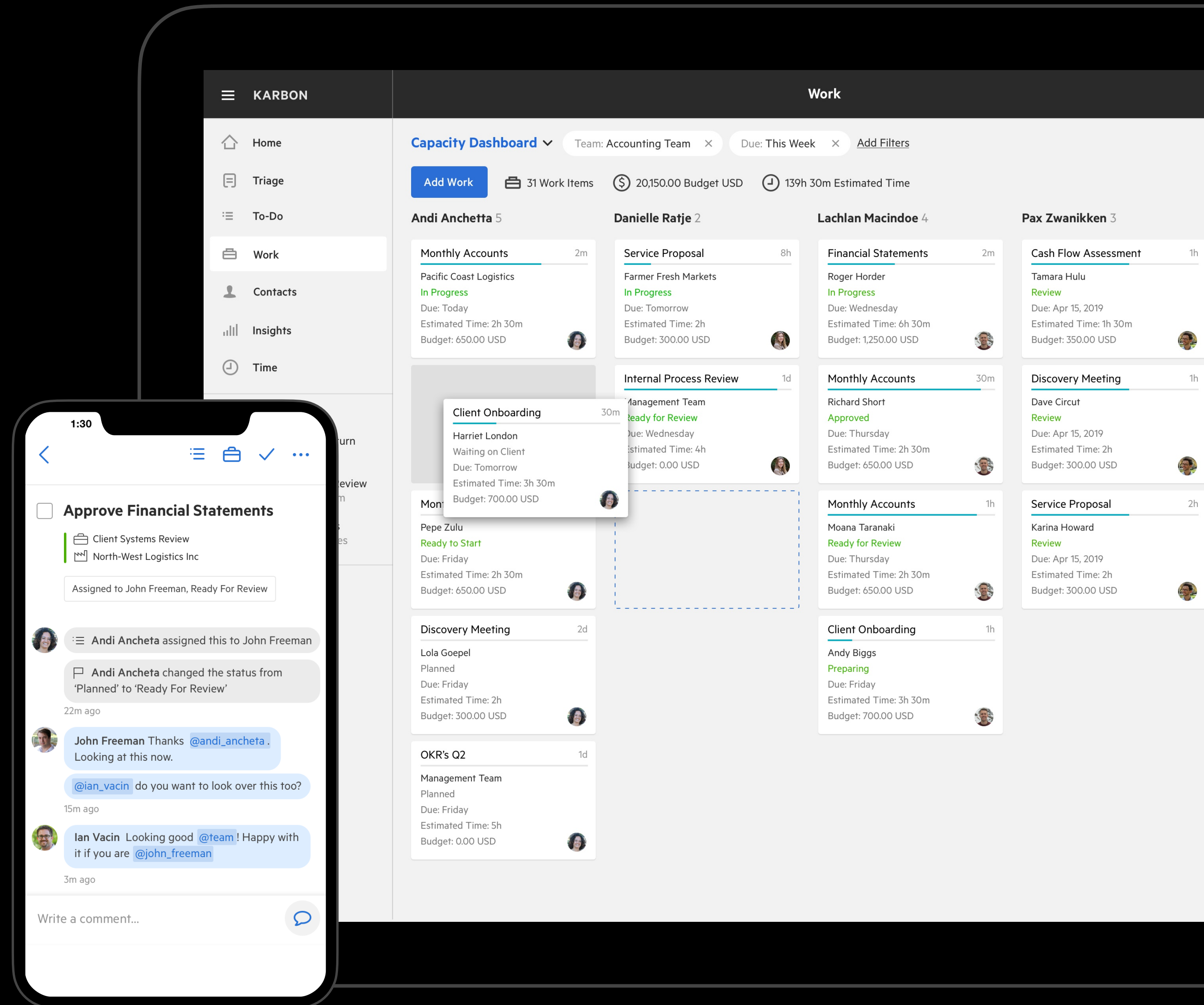
Questions?



Work Management Software *for* Accounting Firms

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GET STARTED



Thank you

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