AN EXAMPLE TRAIL MAP

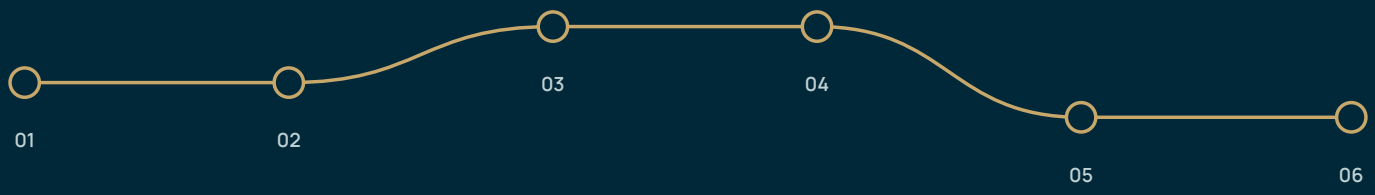
# An order ready for the next handoff.

A Trail Map (the reviewed report format) of the order-to-invoice portion of order to cash.

## Northwind Supply Co.

A fictional 80-person US distributor of stocked business supplies.

THE SIX-STEP TRAIL




Customer purchase order received TO Invoice issued with a recorded timestamp

This fictional sample shows the format and reasoning. Every record and operational figure is authored; pilot targets are proposals to test. In a paid assessment, a named analyst reviews and signs off every finding before delivery.

Explore the interactive report

01 / DECISION AND BASELINE

# Start with a decision.

The example order crosses familiar tools, but completeness and ownership are decided again at each handoff. Start by making the intake complete and the invoice-ready queue owned. Then test whether approved order information can safely populate a draft invoice.

RECOMMENDED FIRST MOVE

**Authorize a bounded pilot of intake completeness and invoice-ready ownership. Keep credit release and invoice issuance under the existing human approvals.**

ILLUSTRATIVE BASELINE / AUTHORED DATA, NOT MEASURED CUSTOMER RESULTS

## 16.4

business hours / order

### Mean order-to-invoice time

Elapsed business-clock time from receipt to issuance, including work and waiting.

**1,640 business hours / 100 completed orders = 16.4 hours.**

Elapsed time is not labor time; completed orders do not describe backlog.

Source E01

## 25%

of example orders

### Clarification needed

Orders with at least one missing required intake field; counted once per order.

**25 affected orders / 100 orders = 25%.**

This is an intake-completeness measure, not a total business error rate.

Source E02

## 6.5

manual touches / order

### Hands-on interventions

Six planned interventions plus two extra touches for each clarification loop.

**(100 x 6 + 25 x 2) / 100 = 6.5 touches.**

A touch is an intervention, not a person, a role handoff or a timed task.

Source E01

## 12

minutes / walkthrough

### Order and invoice entry

Mean entry time in five authored walkthroughs: eight minutes at order entry and four at invoice entry.

**(12 + 12 + 12 + 12 + 12) / 5 = 12 minutes.**

A small illustrative timing set; approval time is separate and unchanged.

Source E03

02 / FOLLOW THE HANDOFFS

# The work, before and after.

In scope: One fictional legal entity and distribution unit. Standard stocked B2B orders, from receipt to invoice issuance. Completeness, credit release, dispatch matching and invoice preparation.

## CURRENT TRAIL

### Receive order

Customer service / Shared mailbox

Read the purchase order and record arrival. Required fields have no consistent gate.

### Validate and enter

Customer service / ERP + price sheet

Enter the order and chase missing account, ship-to, item, quantity or price details.

### Approve release

Credit controller / ERP credit queue

Apply existing credit policy and retain the release or hold decision.

### Pick and dispatch

Warehouse team / Warehouse system

Pick stocked items and record the shipment reference.

### Match dispatch

Accounts receivable / Dispatch sheet + ERP

Reconcile order and shipment. An unmatched item may lack a named resolver.

### Prepare and issue

Accounts receivable / ERP invoice screen

Enter repeated fields, check the invoice and approve issuance.

## PROPOSED TRAIL / PILOT DESIGN

### Check completeness

Customer service / Intake checklist

Use one ready / waiting / approved-exception decision; retain the customer request.

### Resolve and enter

Customer service / ERP order record

Assign incomplete requests and carry the approved values into the order.

### Keep credit control

Credit controller / ERP credit queue

Preserve approval authority, holds and the audit trail.

### Confirm dispatch

Warehouse team / Warehouse system

Attach a unique shipment reference and flag partial shipments explicitly.

### Own invoice readiness

Accounts receivable / Owned exception queue

Record status, reason, resolver and next review time for every unmatched item.

### Review a draft

Invoice reviewer / Supported draft mapping

Reconcile a draft with the approved order and dispatch before a person issues it.

Outside scope: Cash receipt, collection, returns and bad debt. Non-stock orders, purchasing, demand planning and tax-policy advice.

03 / INSPECT THE AUTHORED EVIDENCE

# Evidence before interpretation.

Four example working weeks; 100 completed orders. Open, canceled and returned orders are excluded. An eight-hour business day is used to construct elapsed durations.

## E01 Completed-order trail

Synthetic record register / 100 completed orders; four example working weeks.

Six stage intervals sum to 1,640 business hours. The authored touch model contains 650 interventions. The same order identifier connects the stages.

Interpretation: Constructed for explanation; excludes open, canceled and returned work. Timing and touch count have different units.

## E02 Intake completeness audit

Synthetic field checklist / The same 100 orders, one order-level clarification flag.

25 orders contain a missing required field that prompts a clarification loop. Multiple missing fields still count as one affected order.

Interpretation: Shows the authored gap, not whether a checklist would prevent it or how long a real loop would take.

## E03 Entry walkthroughs

Authored walkthrough capture / Five illustrative walkthroughs; identical twelve-minute entry totals.

Order entry takes eight minutes and invoice entry four in each example. Order ID, item, quantity and price appear in both screens.

Interpretation: Five authored observations cannot establish representative timing, interface feasibility or a dependable business case.

## E04 Invoice-ready queue review

Synthetic dispatch queue / The same 100 completed orders, linked to dispatch references.

35 records lack a named match owner and have a six-hour S05 interval; the other 65 have a two-hour interval. The stage mean is 3.4 hours.

Interpretation: Ownership and timing are associated by construction. Batching, staffing or shipment complexity could explain the pattern.

## E05 Release and issue procedure

Authored procedure excerpt / Current credit release and invoice-issue controls.

Credit approval and invoice review are explicit. Intake readiness and the resolver for an unmatched shipment are not consistently defined.

Interpretation: This is a fictional procedure, not an assurance review or evidence that a control operates in production.

04 / OPPORTUNITY 01 / START HERE

# Make the order complete at the start.

**PROPOSED OWNER**

Customer service lead

**EFFORT**

Low; checklist and pilot setup

**WHAT THE EXAMPLE SHOWS**

E01 E02 E05

25 of 100 example orders need clarification. The field checklist names what is absent; the procedure does not define a consistent intake-ready decision.

**WHAT CHANGES**

Add a short checklist for customer reference, account, ship-to, item, quantity and agreed price. Give incomplete orders a named resolver and explicit waiting status. Keep the original request attached so a downstream reviewer can see what changed.

**ILLUSTRATIVE PILOT TARGET / UNMEASURED**

% clarification




Illustrative target: 100 comparable orders x (25% - 10%) = 15 fewer clarification loops. This counts affected orders only. It does not establish task hours or a cash saving.

**CONTROL THAT STAYS**

Credit checks stay intact. An authorized exception requires a reason, owner and approval record; the checklist must not manufacture missing customer values.

**MEASUREMENT AND DECISION GATE**

Pilot on 50 eligible orders. Consider retention at no more than 10% clarification, with every override owned and no unacceptable increase in intake effort. Record the result and revise or stop if the burden moves downstream.

Competing explanation: Customer input quality, workload peaks or price ambiguity may dominate. Compare order mix and record intake time before attributing a change to the checklist.

04 / OPPORTUNITY 02 / PILOT THE HANDOFF

# Give invoice readiness an owner.

**PROPOSED OWNER**

Accounts receivable lead

**EFFORT**

Low; queue and operating cadence

**WHAT THE EXAMPLE SHOWS**

E01 E04 E05

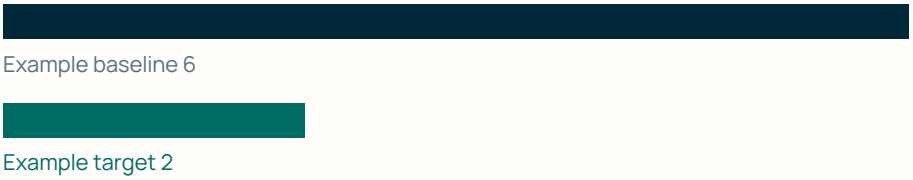
35 of the 100 example dispatch records lack a named match owner. Their six-hour S05 interval is longer than the two-hour interval of the other 65 records.

**WHAT CHANGES**

Create one queue with order ID, dispatch reference, readiness status, exception reason, owner and next review. Name a backup and escalation route. Reconcile the queue to the ERP so it never becomes a competing invoice ledger.

**ILLUSTRATIVE PILOT TARGET / UNMEASURED**

hours at S05




Illustrative scenario: 35 records x (6 - 2) hours / 100 orders = 1.4 business hours less per order. The overall mean would be 15.0 rather than 16.4 hours if every other stage stayed unchanged. This is elapsed time, not released labor or earlier cash.

**CONTROL THAT STAYS**

A queue status cannot authorize invoice issuance. Partial shipments, unresolved price differences and missing dispatch evidence stay visible until the existing reviewer resolves them.

**MEASUREMENT AND DECISION GATE**

Use a comparable 100-order cohort and inspect the eligible unmatched subgroup separately. Test a two-hour mean S05 interval without more invoice corrections or hidden unresolved items. Stop if the queue no longer reconciles to source records.

Competing explanation: Batch release, staffing coverage or shipment complexity could explain the interval. Segment the comparison and inspect those factors before concluding ownership caused a change.

04 / OPPORTUNITY 03 / PROVE FEASIBILITY FIRST

# Carry approved information forward.

**PROPOSED OWNER**

ERP owner + finance lead

**EFFORT**

Medium; supported mapping and validation

**WHAT THE EXAMPLE SHOWS**

E03 E05

The five authored walkthroughs repeat order information in the invoice screen. Each contains eight minutes of order entry and four minutes of invoice entry.

**WHAT CHANGES**

After readiness is stable, test a supported mapping from approved order values into a draft invoice. Show discrepancies for review, retain source values and prevent duplicate drafts. Begin with a dry run and a documented manual fallback.

**ILLUSTRATIVE PILOT TARGET / UNMEASURED**

entry minutes




Illustrative scenario: 100 orders x (12 - 9) minutes / 60 = 5 task hours. It assumes order entry stays at eight minutes, invoice entry moves from four to one, and approval effort stays unchanged. Setup, support, exceptions and adoption are excluded. Do not add this estimate to the other opportunities.

**CONTROL THAT STAYS**

A person still approves issuance. Finance owns tax and price rules. Stop on an unexplained field mismatch, duplicate draft or reconciliation difference; never silently overwrite source data.

**MEASUREMENT AND DECISION GATE**

Confirm supported interfaces first. Then reconcile 50 draft invoices to approved orders and dispatches with no material mismatches or duplicates. Consider expansion only if the nine-minute combined-entry target and unchanged review controls both hold.

Competing explanation: The timing set is deliberately small. A supported interface, reliable identifiers and manageable exception frequency remain unverified; a manual checklist may be the better option.

05 / TURN THE REPORT INTO DECISIONS

# The next 90 days.

An illustrative sequence. Replace the synthetic baseline with authorized evidence, then scale only what passes its gate. A failed pilot is a reason to revise or stop.

DAYS 1-30

## Agree readiness and baseline.

Process owner + customer service lead

Replace example figures with authorized evidence and freeze event definitions. Pilot the intake checklist; log overrides, effort and open items separately.

Decision gate: Keep or revise O01 after the comparable-cohort review; accept no hidden downstream rework.

DAYS 31-60

## Make the handoff dependable.

Accounts receivable + warehouse lead

Pilot the owned invoice-ready queue and reconcile it daily. Inspect batching and shipment mix; test mapping feasibility without live issuance.

Decision gate: Retain O02 only with sound reconciliation and no increase in corrections.

DAYS 61-90

## Test reuse, then decide.

ERP owner + finance lead

Dry-run draft mapping, then pilot only if earlier gates pass. Record a scale, revise or stop decision and name the maintenance owner.

Decision gate: All pilot drafts reconcile; controls hold; finance validates any proposed benefit.

### ASSUMPTIONS TO KEEP VISIBLE

- All data is authored, not sampled from a business.
- Opportunity cohorts overlap; effects must not be added.
- Elapsed time, task capacity and cash remain separate measures.

### OPEN QUESTIONS AND OWNERS

- Process owner: test whether completed stocked orders represent the proposed pilot.
- ERP owner: confirm supported interfaces, identity keys and rollback.
- Finance lead: establish whether any released time becomes useful capacity.

06 / YOUR NEXT STEP

# Make this your workflow.

Edge is ProcessScout's guided assessment service for one recurring workflow.

## $1,500 USD

PAID UPFRONT

One legal entity, one business unit and one workflow.

### WHAT YOU RECEIVE

A Trail Map (the reviewed report you receive), three prioritized opportunities, a baseline and a sequenced 90-day plan.

One supported starter asset: an SOP, control checklist, requirements specification or automation blueprint. Production implementation is a separate engagement.

### WHEN YOU RECEIVE IT

Five business days after your evidence checklist is complete.

The clock starts when sources, recordings, documents, interview and blocking questions are complete. Payment alone does not start it.



**David Bell** ProcessScout review lead

25 years in operations and finance, including Shell and Deutsche Bank; founder and CEO of JustPayroll through its 2024 acquisition.

David Bell leads the review approach. The analyst assigned to your assessment owns its recommendations and sign-off.

### THREE OPPORTUNITIES, OR YOUR FEE BACK

If ProcessScout cannot identify at least three evidence-backed opportunities from a good-faith intake, the assessment fee is refunded under the assessment terms. This is a deliverable guarantee, not a promise of realized savings.

Read assessment terms

### CANCELLATION AND SCOPE PROTECTION

Cancel before analyst review starts for a full refund. If the report materially misses the agreed brief, tell us within 14 days of full access and choose an in-scope correction or a refund after review.

Read the full protection policy

Book a 15-minute fit call

Discuss fit, scope and your decision. The call is not the assessment itself.

Open this interactive sample