

The Black Sheep Workbook

*See what is operating. Test whether action is owned.
Shape the work where authority exists.*

Practical companion to

What The Branch Allows Under Pressure

Rules That Hold

Deliberate Design

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WORKBOOK POSITION

A companion, not a fourth stream

The Black Sheep Workbook sits beside the three publications. It does not replace them, summarise them into a method, or create a fourth theory stream.

What The Branch Allows Under Pressure asks what is operating before intervention. Rules That Hold asks whether one exact action is owned, bounded and contained. Deliberate Design asks how stability can be shaped where that authority exists.

The workbook gives those questions somewhere to be worked through on paper.

The sequence

STAGE	QUESTION
SEE WHAT IS OPERATING	Record what actually happened. Separate evidence from explanation. Stop at recognition.
TEST WHETHER ACTION IS OWNED	Test one exact action. Place outcome, boundary, consequence, decision, exception and containment.
SHAPE THE WORK WHERE AUTHORITY EXISTS	Only after the Rules decision, shape one contained movement, state, hand-off or boundary and watch what pressure does to it.
THE SEQUENCE MAY STOP Observation may remain observation. A Rules test may end as not ready, not owned, exposed, not contained or non-use. Design may remain unused.	

Canonical source

The finished three books are the source of the Black Sheep sequence. Where an earlier essay, draft or worksheet differs, the finished publications govern this workbook.

USE / NON-USE

How to use the workbook

1. Start with one real event, repeated pattern or defined observation period.
2. Use only the pages relevant to the question. Do not complete the workbook from cover to cover.
3. Record dates, times, places, exact words, documents, physical items, work states and hand-offs where they matter.
4. Keep a reference to the real work: pick note, invoice, stock line, return, route, cage, core, surcharge line, warranty item, supplier delivery, call or observation period.
5. In SEE, record before categorising. Do not make the evidence fit a Black Sheep label.
6. In TEST, use one exact action. 'Sort dispatch' or 'fix stock' is too broad.
7. In SHAPE, stay inside the Rules decision. If the scope or consequence moves, return to TEST.
8. Stop when a required condition is absent or unclear. Leaving a page unused can be the correct result.

What this workbook does not grant

Completing a page does not grant authority, transfer consequence, turn permission into ownership, make agreement binding, or make intervention safe. It does not make a cut-off, route shelf, checking point, stock location, return state or dispatch closure real where it can still be reopened informally.

DO NOT PROVE DEPENDENCY BY CREATING FAILURE

Do not remove a compensating person or workaround merely to see what breaks. Observe normal pressure. Do not manufacture it.

SEE

Branch-floor prompts

Use these prompts to choose where to look. They are not a checklist to complete and they are not findings by themselves.

LOOK HERE	ASK
COUNTER / PHONES	Was a promise made before stock, timing, route capacity or work state was trusted? Did somebody leave the counter to verify stock? What happened to 'should be there' under pressure?
PICK NOTE / CATALOGUE	Did the instruction change after picking started? Did the picker return for clarification? Was a wrong side, variant, quantity, kit or surcharge state found later?
STOCK / GOODS-IN	Was the stated location trusted first? Where did the search go next? Was stock booked but not locatable? Did incoming, overflow, return or live stock share an unclear state?
DISPATCH / VANS	Was ready work touched again? Did late work enter after preparation was called complete? What was the driver waiting for? Did the load keep changing at the shutter?
RETURNS / VALUE	Did the recorded reason match what happened? Did value change before the physical item or cause was clear? Did different causes disappear under one broad reason?
PEOPLE / ROLES	Who repeatedly knew where, why, which or what happened? What waited when they were absent? What primary work was left open while somebody rescued another area?

Evidence separation

Observed fact *What could another person verify?*

Reason given at the time

Inference *What you think it may mean*

Unknown *What the observation does not establish*

SEE / WORKING PAGE 1

Branch Observation

USE WHEN

Use for one real event or a defined period when normal pressure reduces spare attention. Do not create pressure for the observation.

Date / time / area

Real work being followed *Order, pick, stock line, route, return, delivery, call or observation period*

What was already open when pressure rose?

What changed first? *Behaviour, sequence, movement or work state*

What had been called ready, picked, staged, closed or done?

Pressure present ☐ queue ☐ phones ☐ open picks ☐ stock search ☐ goods-in ☐ driver ☐ returns ☐
absence ☐ other

Evidence reference

STAY WITH THE EVENT

Do not decide the cause or solution on this page. Record the work before interpreting it.

SEE / WORKING PAGE 1B

What the pressure changed

Work interrupted, resequenced or reopened

Waiting, searching or repeated handling created

Where memory, judgement or personal knowledge replaced recorded information

Customer or delivery promise made, changed or carried forward

What continued only because somebody absorbed a gap

Did the same pattern appear again? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ unclear

What remains unknown?

SEE / WORKING PAGE 2

Operating Pattern Trace

USE WHEN

Use when the branch says one condition is true but repeated work appears to operate differently, or when completed work becomes active again.

Declared rule, condition or state *What is written, stated, labelled, shown or assumed?*

Where that condition is visible

Pressure event that tested it

What actually happened instead

Exact words worth retaining

Immediate benefit of the departure

Later waiting, search, rehandling, delay, value loss or changed promise

SEE / WORKING PAGE 2B

Reopening, repetition and stability

Work treated as complete

What reopened it?

What moved backwards or had to be done again?

What could the next step no longer trust?

How often has the same departure been seen?

Current observation ☐ isolated ☐ repeated ☐ planned around ☐ unclear

What completed and stayed complete despite pressure?

What active chasing, guarding or rescue was no longer needed there?

RECOGNITION ONLY

A repeated departure may show the tolerated condition. It does not by itself establish who owns an intervention.

SEE / WORKING PAGE 3

Dependency and Authority-Gap Observation

USE WHEN

Use where the same person repeatedly remembers, chases, guards, checks, interprets or rescues work, or where one role answers for an outcome another point can alter.

Visible outcome or promise

Role receiving the complaint, delay, question or criticism

Condition most directly shaping that outcome

Person or mechanism able to cross, reopen, waive, delay, bypass or interrupt it

Repeated rescue or compensation

Private memory, judgement, relationship or experience being used

Primary work interrupted by the rescue

What happened when the person or rescue was unavailable?

SEE / WORKING PAGE 3B

Pressure around the gap

Exact permission, backing, agreement or redirection language heard

First pressure event after those words

What actually happened when that pressure arrived

Where the immediate benefit appeared

Where the later consequence appeared

Who carried that later consequence

Observed condition ☐ responsibility separated from control ☐ consequence moved elsewhere ☐ local effort carried the gap ☐ unclear

What remains unproven about authority?

SEE / WORKING PAGE 4

Diagnostic Summary

Observation references used

Observed facts *Keep these separate from explanations*

Repeated operating patterns

Work that repeatedly reopened or remained provisional

Work that stayed complete and could be relied on

Dependency or authority gap observed

Unknowns that still matter

Current position ☐ observation only ☐ more observation needed ☐ one exact action is ready to be tested in Rules

DIAGNOSTIC EXIT

Recognition does not grant authority. If no exact action needs testing, stop here.

TEST

Test one exact action

Rules does not ask whether the idea is sensible. It asks whether the action has somewhere real to sit when the first inconvenience, complaint, delay or internal challenge arrives.

Keep these distinctions visible

DO NOT CONFUSE	WITH OWNERSHIP
PERMISSION	May allow action without moving consequence, protection or the right to refuse.
AGREEMENT	May express preference without making a boundary consequential when it becomes inconvenient.
LOCAL EFFORT	May rescue an outcome without controlling the rule producing it.
SIGNAL	Makes a state visible. It does not necessarily stop continuation.
STOP	Makes quiet continuation difficult or impossible inside an owned boundary; override still needs an owner.
NON-USE	A valid result where ownership, exposure or containment does not support action.
ONE ACTION Use Rules for one exact action: hold one route closure, separate one return state, protect one location condition. Do not test a broad intention such as 'improve dispatch'.	

TEST / WORKING PAGE 1

Quick Authority Gate

USE WHEN

Use this first. If an answer is NO or materially UNCLEAR, do not fill the gap with confidence, seniority, goodwill or persistence.

Exact action being considered

Diagnostic evidence reference

GATE	YES / NO / UNCLEAR	PLACED WHERE?
Who owns the outcome?		
Who owns the boundary?		
Who owns the consequence?		
Is the decision placed?		
Does the exception expire?		
Is the change contained?		
Can the system survive the disruption?		

Gate result ☐ continue ☐ not ready ☐ not owned ☐ exposed ☐ not contained ☐ non-use

Reason

GATE

If these answers are not placed, the rule is not ready to be touched. Non-use remains valid.

TEST / WORKING PAGE 2

Owned Action Sheet

USE WHEN

Use after the Quick Authority Gate where the action still appears available for testing.

Exact action

Outcome being claimed

Named outcome owner

Exact boundary that must hold

What marks the boundary physically or in the system

Who can hold it without seeking goodwill each time?

Who can cross, reopen, override, waive, bypass or delay it?

What happened the last time the boundary was held?

What happened the last time it was crossed?

TEST / WORKING PAGE 2B

Consequence, decision and exception

Consequence of holding the boundary

Who owns that consequence?

Consequence of crossing the boundary

Who currently carries it?

Decision owner

What evidence closes the decision?

If an exception is required

Reason and scope

Owner and consequence

Expiry / review point

Return point to the base condition

Exposure check ☐ acting role remains protected ☐ consequence moves to an unprotected role ☐ unclear

TEST / WORKING PAGE 3

Containment, Stop and Reversal

USE WHEN

Use before an owned action is treated as available across a broader area.

Exact action

Contained scope *One route, shift, account condition, work area, shelf/bay, rule/state, task or time window*

What remains outside
Interfaces with unchanged work

Expected immediate disruption *Waiting, refusal, delay, rehandling, search, customer pushback or lost flexibility*

Where displaced or unresolved work will sit
Who owns that displaced pressure?

Can the branch survive the immediate effect without quietly restoring the old condition? ☐ yes ☐
no ☐ unclear

TEST / WORKING PAGE 3B

Control points

Start condition

Review point

Evidence to inspect at review

Stop condition

Reversal condition

Person able to stop or reverse

What condition will be restored if stopped?

Can this spread by habit before review? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ unclear

Containment result ☐ contained ☐ not contained ☐ unclear ☐ non-use

Reason

TEST / WORKING PAGE 4

Final Rules Decision

Action under consideration

Diagnostic evidence reference

PLACEMENT	RECORDED POSITION
BOUNDARY OWNER	
CONSEQUENCE OWNER	
DECISION OWNER	
CONTAINED SCOPE	
REVIEW POINT	
STOP / REVERSAL	
EXCEPTION EXPIRY / RETURN	

Decision ☐ ready for Design consideration ☐ not ready ☐ not owned ☐ exposed ☐ not contained ☐ non-use

Reason

What remains unchanged

Condition for a future re-test, if any

READY FOR DESIGN CONSIDERATION

This means the exact action has a named and contained place to sit. It does not decide the future structure and it does not make intervention safe by itself.

SHAPE

Design prompts

Use Design only after the relevant Rules decision. These prompts help locate a contained design question; they are not separate tools or universal prescriptions.

DESIGN AREA	PROMPTS
MOVEMENT / GOODS-IN	Where does work cross, backtrack, wait or get handled twice? Which physical states are sharing space? Is stock booked before it is locatable?
PICK PATH / PLACEMENT	What movement is repeated often enough to matter? Would a placement change reduce travel without creating a second unofficial location or new verification risk?
STOCK TRUTH	Can the next person trust the location and the stock state without local memory? Are saleable, committed, incoming, returned, held and overflow states distinct?
PICKING / CHECKING	Is the instruction stable before movement starts? Where is the first effective verification? What happens to missing, held, disputed, late or amended work?
DISPATCH / DELIVERY	When does ready become closed? Where does late work sit? Is the driver collecting closed work or buffering unfinished branch decisions?
RETURNS / CORES / VALUE	Does the physical item remain linked to cause, transaction and value state? Can value close without destroying useful cause information?
ROLES / SURGE	What primary work must remain visible when people flex? What triggers temporary help and what sends the person back?
CAPABILITY	Where does judgement depend on one person? Where would wrong judgement first create live consequence? What capability needs to exist without permanent rescue?
CAPABILITY BOUNDARY	
This workbook does not create a training curriculum or rank people. Capability prompts are used only to expose dependency and live-risk points inside the recorded Design scope.	

Movement and Work-State Map

USE WHEN

Use one real order, promise, stock movement, return or route to see where physical movement and information stop travelling together.

Final Rules Decision reference

Named contained scope

Real work reference

STAGE	STATE / SIGNAL	WHAT MOVED?	WHAT WAS LOST OR RECREATED?
Promise / instruction			
Stock / goods-in			
Pick			
Check			
Ready / route			
Dispatch / van			
Return / value			

First hand-off the next step could not trust

Where missing truth was recreated later

SHAPE / WORKING PAGE 1B

State and movement question

Where did work cross, backtrack, search, wait or get handled again?

Which states were physically or digitally mixed?

Who supplied memory or rescue, and what did they interrupt?

Which state needs to become readable without reconstructing the story?

Smallest upstream condition that could make the next hand-off easier to trust

What must remain unchanged?

STAY INSIDE RULES

If the shaping question needs authority, consequence or scope that is not in the recorded Rules decision, return to TEST.

SHAPE / WORKING PAGE 2

Contained Design Sheet

USE WHEN

Use for one contained movement, state, location, hand-off, verification point, separation, role protection or dispatch condition.

Final Rules Decision reference

Condition being shaped

What should become easier to read, move or rely on?

Physical / system start point

Physical / system finish point

States that must remain separate

Temporary / late / missing / held / disputed work will sit here

Information that must stay with the work

What the next person should be able to trust

SHAPE / WORKING PAGE 2B

Pressure, evidence and protection

Normal pressure that will test the design

What would show that the condition held

What would show that pressure merely moved elsewhere

Review point

Stop condition

Reversal condition and condition to restore

Who can stop or reverse

What remains outside this design

Current position ☐ use inside scope ☐ needs Rules re-test ☐ not ready ☐ non-use

DESIGN DOES NOT GRANT AUTHORITY

A technically sound design still fails this workbook if the boundary cannot remain held under normal pressure.

SHAPE / WORKING PAGE 3

Pressure and Drift Review

USE WHEN

Use after a contained design has met normal branch pressure. Do not wait for a formal review if useful evidence is already visible in the work.

Design reference and named scope

Base condition that should remain true

What must stay separate

Pressure seen ☐ phones/queue ☐ late work ☐ missing line ☐ goods-in ☐ driver ☐ return/value ☐
 absence ☐ customer challenge ☐ other

What actually happened under that pressure

Old movement or workaround that returned

Where pressure moved

Signal that returned while useful detail was still available

SHAPE / WORKING PAGE 3B

Current design decision

DRIFT QUESTION	OBSERVED POSITION
Did a legacy location or unofficial second location return?	
Was verification skipped or moved downstream under pace?	
Did picked / checked / held / missing / late / ready states blur?	
Did late work touch closed or ready work?	
Did return cause or value state become unclear?	
Did temporary role support become permanent blending?	
Did work again wait for one person's memory or rescue?	
Did the scope or consequence move outside the Rules decision?	

Decision ☐ continue ☐ adjust inside same boundary ☐ end and restore ☐ return to TEST ☐ non-use

Reason and evidence

Next review point, if continuing

RETURN TO TEST

A design question becomes a Rules question again when scope spreads, consequence moves, the acting role becomes exposed, or the decision no longer sits inside the recorded authority.

WORKBOOK CLOSE

Current position

The workbook does not require a successful intervention. It requires an honest current position.

STAGE	REFERENCE	CURRENT POSITION
SEE		Observation / More evidence / Exact action identified
TEST		Ready / Not ready / Not owned / Exposed / Not contained / Non-use
SHAPE		Continue / Adjust / End and restore / Return to TEST / Non-use

What is operating now?

What is owned now?

What, if anything, is being shaped now?

What has deliberately been left unused?

A VALID FINISH

The work can finish with a visible constraint and no action. Seeing clearly is not the same as being authorised to change what has been seen.

REFERENCE

Small vocabulary

The publications carry the full argument. These short meanings are included only so the working pages remain readable.

TERM	WORKING MEANING
DECLARED RULE	The stated, written, assumed or intended rule.
TOLERATED RULE	The condition the branch repeatedly allows to operate under pressure.
REOPENED WORK	Work treated as complete that returns to active flow.
HIDDEN COMPENSATION	Memory, judgement, effort, goodwill or informal correction carrying a gap the structure does not carry.
AUTHORITY	The ability to hold a boundary and carry the consequence when pressure pushes against it.
BOUNDARY	The line that separates what may continue from what must stop, wait, remain separate or return for decision.
CONSEQUENCE	The delay, cost, pressure, loss, refusal, exposure or other effect created when a boundary is held or crossed.
CONTAINMENT	Keeping an action and its disruption inside a named scope with a review, stop and reversal point.
NON-USE	A deliberate decision to leave an action unused where required conditions are absent or unclear.
WORK STATE	A visible condition that tells the next person what the work is and what movement is allowed next.

FINAL BOUNDARY NOTE

The page is not the authority

A completed workbook page does not make an operating boundary real. The branch still decides what can be held, who owns the consequence, and whether the work may be shaped at all.

Use the workbook to make the current position easier to see. Do not use it to manufacture permission, transfer risk, or turn observation into obligation.

The Black Sheep sequence remains:

What The Branch Allows Under Pressure — see what is operating.

Rules That Hold — test whether action is owned.

Deliberate Design — shape the work where authority exists.

THE PRACTICAL COMPANION

The Black Sheep Workbook sits beside those three publications. It does not create a fourth stream.

Published by Black Sheep Solutions

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