PRACTICAL TOOL · KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

Trace one quarterly update

FAILSAFE SOLUTIONS

Pick one MTD client. Start when the quarter ends and stop when the update is submitted. Add a row each time the work moves.

Client (initials or reference) _____ **Quarter** _____ **Traced by** _____

Step	Who	System or channel	Date in	Date out	Reason for delay	Rework? What?	Hands-on minutes (optional)
Request sent							
Records received							
Chase 1							
Chase 2							
Records complete							
Entered							
Entered again (if any)							
Query to client							
Review							
Submitted							
Year-end items noted (where?)							

Reason for delay codes: C = waiting for the client · Q = waiting in an internal queue · R = waiting for review · S = system or software issue · O = other (note it).

When you've finished, ask

1. Which delays were the client's, and which were ours?
2. Was any information typed or handled more than once? Could an existing system have moved it?
3. How much of the review was judgement, and how much was correcting avoidable errors?
4. Who decided when this work started, and how?
5. Is anything needed later recorded only in someone's head?

> **Remember:** elapsed time is not working time, and one client is not your practice. Use the trace to decide what to look at next, not to set targets or staffing.

What would you investigate first?

What you noticed	A next question to ask
The same clients chased every quarter	Are our requests clear and consistent?
Information entered twice	Is the second entry needed, and are we missing an existing integration?
Work waiting for review	Is this necessary control, or avoidable rework?

Choose one issue to investigate further. Don't put a solution in place until you've confirmed the cause.