

Side Door Audit

Continue logging through sprint 2. Twenty entries is usually enough to see a pattern.

DATE	REQUESTER	CHANNEL	EFFORT	DISPLACED?

After two sprints

Look for patterns rather than counting entries. Five questions, in this order. The first two are about volume; the last three are about what the volume is for.

01. WHO USES THE SIDE DOOR MOST

Which two or three requesters account for most of the entries? Are they the same people who hold most of the formal authority over your team's roadmap, or different ones?

02. WHICH TEAM MEMBERS PICK IT UP

Is the side-door work distributed evenly, or does it concentrate on one or two people? If it concentrates, are those the people most senior, most agreeable, or most isolated?

03. WHAT IT IS DISPLACING

Stack the displaced work in your head. If you put all of it back into the sprint plans, what would the team's commitment have looked like? What conversations would have happened earlier with stakeholders?

04. WHAT IT TELLS YOU ABOUT THE OFFICIAL DOOR

A bypass rate above roughly 25 per cent says the official process isn't meeting stakeholder needs. Where, specifically, is it failing them? Speed? Predictability? Visibility? Trust in priorities?

05. THE CONVERSATION YOU CAN NOW HAVE

Pick the one stakeholder whose pattern of side-door requests tells the clearest story. What is the conversation you can now have with them, that you couldn't have had before, because you have data?

From Chapter 2, The Side Door System. Closing the side door without fixing the official one usually makes things worse. Show the pattern to the people who maintain it, and let them decide what to do with their own behaviour.