The Upgrade Method.

From the request to a change in the work.

The craft is finding out what the request was guessing about. Five stages to diagnose performance and design a proportionate response, worked as a loop.

BEFORE THE METHOD · START WITH THE WORK

Four questions to open the conversation

01 What's happening that's prompted this conversation?

02 Why does this matter now?

03 What do people need to be doing differently?

04 What would tell us things have improved?

You need enough shared understanding to know what to explore next.

01 Reframe

Turn the request into a hypothesis worth testing.

THE BRIEF, AS A HYPOTHESIS

We believe **the problem** is happening because **the cause**. If we **the intervention**, we'll see **the change**.

MARK EVERY PART

- **Known** backed by evidence
- **Assumed** believed, unchecked
- **Unknown** nobody has looked

AI MOVE

List this brief's assumptions. Mark each known, assumed or unknown.

YOU LEAVE WITH

A testable hypothesis

02 Investigate

Find the likely causes and check the evidence for each.

THE PERFORMANCE ECOSYSTEM

THE PERSON
Knowledge · skill · confidence

THE WORK
Workflow · tools · information

THE ENVIRONMENT
Expectations · managers · incentives

Look for contributing causes. Check them against evidence from the work.

AI MOVE

Sort my notes into person, work and environment. Flag what's assumed.

YOU LEAVE WITH

An evidence-informed diagnosis

03 Proportion

Decide how big the response should be, group by group.

FOUR DIALS, EACH SCORED 1-3

Magnitude	How far from good?
Frequency	How often?
Consequence	What does it cost?
Reach	How many people?

4-6	**Light touch** · a fix or prompt
7-9	**Targeted** · a few pieces
10-12	**Full response** · connected interventions and a pilot

A guide to judgement, not a formula for the answer. Weigh a serious consequence above the total.

AI MOVE

Estimate how often this happens, what it costs and who it affects.

YOU LEAVE WITH

A proportionate response

04 Architect

Match interventions to causes, placed where people perform.

THE CAUSE PICKS THE RESPONSE

Knowledge	INFORM
Workflow and tools	ENABLE
Expectations, managers	ALIGN
Skill or confidence	PRACTISE

Place it before, at, after or around the work.

> **"What will someone say, do, decide or produce differently because of this?" If it's vague, cut it.**

AI MOVE

Suggest the smallest set of interventions that reaches these causes.

YOU LEAVE WITH

An intervention architecture

05 Prove

Test whether what people do has changed, then decide what's next.

THE PILOT CARD

- **HYPOTHESIS** What will change?
- **GROUP** Who's the best test?
- **SMALLEST** The least we can build
- **EVIDENCE** What we'll see in the work

SCALE · ADAPT · STOP

Look for change in the work. Completion and satisfaction only show it happened.

AI MOVE

Draft a pilot: hypothesis, group, evidence and decision rule.

YOU LEAVE WITH

Evidence and a decision

New evidence can send you back to any stage. Each loop upgrades the practice.

PRACTICE-UPGRADE

Upgrade your practice.

The future of practice isn't waiting for permission.

practiceupgrade.studio

© 2026 Danny Batts · Builds on established performance consulting practice

Inside the method.

Start where the work is.
Pick up the stage the situation needs. New evidence can send you back to any of them.

What to ask, what to do and what to say at each stage.

	01 Reframe	02 Investigate	03 Proportion	04 Architect	05 Prove
THE JOB When to use it	The request names a solution. **Make it a hypothesis worth testing.**	The cause is unclear. **Find the causes and check the evidence.**	The causes are known. **Decide how much response each group needs.**	The size is agreed. **Choose what to build, and where it sits.**	Something's ready to try. **Test whether it changes what people do.**
CONSULTING QUESTIONS Ask these in the room	– What are people doing now that worries you? – When did you last see it happen? – Who already does this well?	– Where does the work break down? – What do strong performers do differently? – What gets in the way, even when people know how?	– How far is performance from good? – What does it cost when it goes wrong? – Is the gap the same for everyone?	– Which cause does this address? – Could we change the workflow instead? – Have people practised the real moment?	– What will people do differently if it works? – Who gives us the most useful test? – What would count as proof?
APPLY IT The moves, in order	1 Rewrite the brief as a hypothesis. 2 Mark each part known, assumed or unknown. 3 Test the riskiest assumption first.	1 Pull the data you already have. 2 Watch the work. Talk to five people doing it. 3 Record each cause with its evidence.	1 Score the four dials, 1 to 3. 2 Score each group separately. 3 Agree the size before designing.	1 Match each cause to inform, enable, align or practise. 2 Place it before, at, after or around the work. 3 Name what you're leaving out.	1 Pilot the smallest credible version. 2 Agree the evidence before you start. 3 Run it 4–6 weeks, then decide.
AI MOVE Copy into your assistant	Here's a brief: `[paste]`. List its assumptions about the problem, cause and fix. Mark each known, assumed or unknown.	Here are my discovery notes: `[paste]`. Sort the evidence into person, work and environment. What's still assumed?	Using this data `[paste]`, estimate how often the gap occurs, what it costs and who it affects. Show your workings.	The causes are `[paste]`. Suggest options before, at, after and around the work, then the smallest set that reaches them.	Draft a pilot for `[paste]`: hypothesis, smallest useful group, evidence from the work, and when to scale, adapt or stop.
PLAY IT BACK Say it to your stakeholder	**"Here's what we know, what we're assuming, and what we'll check by Friday."**	**"Here's what the evidence says is driving it, and what's still a hunch."**	**"This group needs a full response. That group needs a light touch."**	**"[Option] won't reach this cause. Instead, we'll..."**	**"Here's what changed in the work, and what we'll do next."**
WATCH FOR The hard edge	Treat the fix as assumed until the cause is clear.	Don't assume the cause sits inside the person.	A serious consequence can justify more, whatever the total.	Sometimes the whole answer is one change to the workflow.	Completion and satisfaction aren't evidence of changed performance.

© 2026 Danny Batts · Builds on established performance consulting practice