

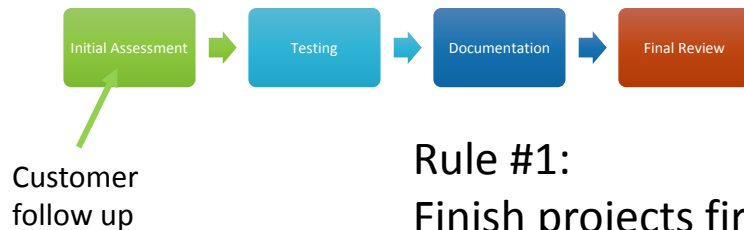
Title: *Staying in contact with Customers*

Problem:

An engineering organization had a goal to contact customers within two days of the receipt of their order. This conversation served to confirm with the customer that the order was received by the appropriate engineering team and to resolve any pending questions or issues from the order process. Actual performance by the team was about 50%.

Analysis:

The team had a directive to focus their attention on the work that was at the end of the production pipeline in order to maximize throughput. An analysis of the data showed that some engineers were very good at contacting customers and others were not. The team investigated the work practices of each of the engineers. The engineers who achieved the 2-day follow up goal started each day contacting customers, and then proceeded with their production work.



Rule #1:
Finish projects first!

Countermeasure:

Given the desire to emphasize achieving throughput and the challenges inherent in switching complex tasks, the team carefully considered what would be a suitable work practice. By rotating the assignment of customer follow up, a balance was achieved between customer follow up and focus on throughput. The manager checked the work queue each day to confirm that follow up had occurred. If it had not, those customers were tagged for attention by the appropriate engineer.

Daily Schedule	
8	Check for Customer follow up
10	Finish open work from yesterday
12	Lunch
1	Pull next job
3	Address work coming from lab
5	

Results:

- Contact was made with customers 87% of the time within 2 days of receipt of order. This improved the customer satisfaction metric as well.*
- Throughput was not impacted.*