

Illustrative client delivery review

Fictional example Harbor Lane Studio September 2026

This is a completely fictional example showing the format and level of detail of a Client Delivery Review. The agency, people, projects, dates, evidence, and observations are invented. It is not client work or a claim of achieved results.

Recommendation

Introduce one readiness and handoff record before adding another project manager solely to address these delays. In this fictional sample, the strongest evidence points to missing start criteria, unclear approval instructions, and late change authorization. The sample does not establish whether overall staffing is sufficient.

Review boundary

Harbor Lane Studio is an invented 18-person web agency. I reviewed one website delivery workflow across three invented projects, Alder, Birch, and Cedar, using eight fictional artifacts. The assumed kickoff is 45 minutes and the readout is 60 minutes. No systems were changed and no employee performance assessment was conducted.

Priority	Observed constraint	Evidence and next decision
1	Work starts before required inputs are accepted.	All three project exports show this sequence. Operations owner decides what must be ready before a start.
2	Approval responsibility is named inconsistently.	Two project records lack a single final approver or written acceptance criteria. Add the decision to the handoff.
3	Changed work begins before written authorization.	Two projects record work before approval. Require a fee and date decision before the changed work begins.

Thirty day decision

Maya Chen, the fictional operations owner, will use the new readiness record on the next two eligible projects. She will record exceptions and review them with the owner after 30 days. This is a proposed action, not an implemented change or a demonstrated improvement.

What I cannot conclude

Three selected projects cannot establish agency-wide frequency, staffing needs, recovered revenue, or client satisfaction. Missing time detail prevents a reliable estimate of avoidable cost. Client responsiveness, project complexity, and commercial decisions may also explain delays.

Fictional evidence and observations

All records below are invented for demonstration. Dates and counts describe only this illustrative sample.

ID	Invented artifact	Coverage
E1	Delivery board export dated August 24	Dates and workflow states for Alder, Birch, Cedar
E2	Alder signed scope dated July 27	Deliverables, exclusions, and approval language
E3	Birch signed scope dated July 29	Deliverables, exclusions, and approval language
E4	Cedar signed scope dated July 31	Deliverables, exclusions, and approval language
E5	Client input register dated August 24	Due and received dates across all three projects
E6	Kickoff notes compilation dated August 7	Named participants and recorded decisions
E7	Approval and change log dated August 24	Requests, decisions, and authorization dates
E8	Task time export for August 3 to 21	Logged changed-work hours; incomplete rework detail

Project	Input due and accepted	Approval requested and received	Changed work before approval
Alder	Aug 3 / Aug 6	Aug 10 / Aug 14	5 logged hours
Birch	Aug 5 / Aug 10	Aug 12 / Aug 19	3 logged hours
Cedar	Aug 7 / Aug 11	Aug 14 / Aug 18	None recorded

E1 records project starts on August 3, 5, and 7 respectively, before the required inputs were accepted in E5. These dates establish sequence. They do not prove that every day waiting was avoidable or entirely idle.

E7 and E8 show eight logged hours of changed work before authorization across Alder and Birch. I cannot infer that those hours were unbilled, wasted, or representative of the whole agency.

Sample limitations

The fictional owner selected these projects because they were troublesome. That selection could overstate how frequently problems occur. E8 does not consistently separate rework, client-requested changes, and planned work. Approval records may omit verbal decisions. These limits reduce the strength of causal and financial claims.

Fictional findings and operating template

Finding one inputs are not a start condition

Observation: all three projects started before required inputs were accepted (E1, E5). Interpretation: the start date operates as a calendar commitment rather than a readiness decision. Alternative: starting partial work may have been commercially intentional. Confidence is high for the sequence and moderate for the explanation. Ask the owner to record who may authorize an exception and why.

Finding two approval needs a clearer decision

Alder names a client contact but no final approval criterion; Birch lists two reviewers without a final decision owner (E2, E3, E6). Cedar names one approver and explicit page acceptance criteria (E4). The observed gap may contribute to waiting, but the records do not exclude client workload as a cause. Confidence is moderate. Put approver, criteria, and decision date in one place.

Finding three changes need approval before work

E7 and E8 record five hours on Alder and three hours on Birch before written authorization. Verbal approval may be missing from the log. Confidence is high in the recorded sequence and moderate in whether authorization was absent. Require a dated scope, fee, and timing decision before changed work, or an explicit owner exception.

Completed example of the readiness record

Field	Illustrative entry for next project Maple
Owner and scope	Maya Chen / five-page website scope v1.0
Required inputs	Approved copy, images with usage permission, and sitemap. Client owner: Alex Reed. Due September 14.
Approval	Alex Reed is final approver. Check approved sitemap, final copy, and agreed page behavior. Decision due September 18.
Change rule	Maya records scope, fee, and timing impact. Alex approves in writing before changed work starts.
Start decision	Not ready. Copy is missing. Maya confirms a new start date when inputs are accepted.
Exception	None approved. Any exception requires a named owner, reason, and recorded consequence.
Completion	Use agreed page criteria, dated approval, and a list of remaining responsibilities.

Fictional prioritized 30-day action plan and handoff

These are proposed actions within the example. No implementation or results are being claimed.

When	Action	Owner	Completion evidence
Days 1 to 7	Agree required inputs and approval fields; apply the record to Maple.	Maya	Owner approves fields; Maple has a dated ready or exception decision.
Days 8 to 14	Use the record on the next eligible project; record changed-work approvals.	Maya and PM	Second record exists; each change links to a decision before work.
Days 15 to 21	Review missing fields and exceptions in the normal delivery meeting.	Agency owner	One recorded decision about any recurring exception.
Days 22 to 30	Review usage and waiting records; decide whether to keep or adjust the control.	Agency owner	Dated decision with evidence and limits; no automatic headcount conclusion.

What to record

For each eligible project during the 30-day period, Maya records whether the readiness decision exists before work begins and why any exception was made. For each approval request, she records request date, final decision date, and known cause of waiting. For each change, she records whether authorization precedes work.

Baseline in the illustrative sample: three of three starts occurred before input acceptance; two of three projects had incomplete approval instructions; two of three recorded changed work before written authorization. These are sample counts, not agency-wide rates. Future results are unknown.

Readout decisions and completion

Illustrative decision-maker: Maya Chen. Template owner: Maya. First action: use the readiness record on Maple. Open question: how often does the owner knowingly authorize partial starts? Resolve that question before treating every exception as a process failure.

The final package consists of this review, the editable readiness record, and the action plan. The client may submit one consolidated factual correction list within five business days of the readout. Implementation, project management, and additional workshops are outside the review scope.

Optional thirty day reply

Which parts of the readiness record were used? What did the records reveal? What remained difficult? Please share one example and its source. If no usable baseline exists, describe the observation without claiming a measured improvement.