WORKSHOPSKILL · FACILITATION KIT

The Not-Anymore List — Facilitator Run Sheet

Folder: `the-not-anymore-list` · Category: reviews · 4–12 people · 25 min · offline + online · print props · tool pack

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The Not-Anymore List — Facilitator Guide

A 25-minute, 4–12 person review pointed at subtraction. Teams accumulate work that stopped earning its keep — the meeting nobody needs, the report nobody reads, the process that's now just ceremony. This review names what to stop and actually stops one thing, with a trigger for bringing it back so stopping is safe.

Objectives

By the end of the activity, participants will have:

1. Laid every piece of recurring work on the table and run each through one brutal test: "if we weren't already doing this, would we start it today?"
2. Actually stopped one thing this week — or trial-stopped it — with a bring-back trigger, a named owner and a review date.
3. Named what the freed capacity is for, so the stop doesn't quietly reverse itself.

When to use this activity

- The team is always short of time, yet nobody reviews whether the standing work still earns its keep.
- A process grew up around some launch or crisis that has long since passed.
- You have 4–12 people who run recurring work together and 25 minutes — and you want the meeting to end with something actually gone.

Why subtraction beats addition

Most retrospectives add. Adding costs attention nobody can spare; stopping is cheaper to decide and it's the fastest capacity a team can free. One genuinely stopped thing beats ten improvement ideas posted and kept — and the "would we start it today?" test is fair enough that nobody can hide behind "we've always done it".

Setup

Space: one shared board with two columns — **On the list · What we'll stop**. Online, the same two columns live on a shared board.

Materials per person: sticky notes and a pen — one recurring thing per note.

Materials for the room: the card faces from `the-not-anymore-list-prop-cards.pdf` — an "it costs us" card, a "nobody needs it because" card, a "kill it / trial-stop" card, a "we'll bring it back if" card, an owner-and-date card, a blank.

Grouping: 4–12 people who run the recurring work together — meetings, reports, rituals, approvals. It also works solo on one calendar.

Roles: everyone writes and tests; you hold the subtraction-only rule, push every trigger toward something observable, and keep the decision to one thing.

Optional: put `the-not-anymore-list-activity-poster.pdf` on the wall so the two rules — "subtraction only" and "every stop needs a bring-back trigger" — stay visible. No projector, no account, no online form.

How to run it

Time	Phase	What you do
0–5	List it	Write every recurring thing the team does — meetings, reports, reviews, approvals, rituals. One per note. No filtering yet.
5–11	The test	For each, ask “if we weren’t already doing this, would we start it today?” Mark the ones that fail. That’s the not-anymore list.
11–17	Pick one	Choose ONE thing to stop this week — or to trial-stop for a set period if the room is nervous. Not five. One.
17–25	Make it safe	Agree the “we’ll bring it back if…” trigger, an owner, and a review date. Say what you’ll do with the freed time — or it silently comes back.

The card

The stopped item lives on the “kill it / trial-stop” card; under it, the “we’ll bring it back if” card carries the observable trigger, and the owner-and-date card makes the stop real. The “it costs us” and “nobody needs it because” cards are what you write during the test — a stop with neither is just a mood.

Failure modes

- **Nobody wants to let go.** Make it a trial-stop with a date. Pausing something is far easier than killing it, and the pause usually reveals it was never needed.
- **The list is all other teams’ processes.** You can only stop what you own. Reframe to what this team can unilaterally drop, and hand the rest over as a named request.
- **The bring-back trigger is vague.** Push until it’s observable — a count, a signal, a date. A fuzzy trigger means the thing comes back by default.

Variations

- **Zombie-meeting audit:** run it only on recurring meetings; cancel each one that fails the test for a month and see who notices.
- **Post-launch:** point it at the process that got you across the line — most of it shouldn’t survive the launch.
- **Personal:** one person runs it on their own calendar; the same test is just as brutal.

Facilitation notes

- Name the freed capacity out loud before you close — unclaimed time fills itself straight back in.
- If the room hesitates between two candidates, pick the one whose absence nobody can point to in the last month.

Put it on the wall

Print `the-not-anymore-list-activity-poster.pdf` (A3) to hold the test question, the stopped item and the bring-back trigger on one wall while you run it.

Props in this folder

- `the-not-anymore-list-prop-cards.pdf` — poker-spec print sheet (63.5 × 88.9 mm, bleed and cut guides): “it costs us”, “nobody needs it because”, “kill it / trial-stop”, “we’ll bring it back if”, owner-and-date cards, blanks, branded backs
- `the-not-anymore-list-run-sheet.pdf` — the print edition: this run sheet + the debrief, bound as one A4 document with bookmarks (`-Letter.pdf` is US Letter)
- `the-not-anymore-list-activity-poster.pdf` — the whole review on one A3 wall sheet
- `the-not-anymore-list-guide.md` · `-debrief.md` · `-start-here.md` — the facilitator guide, the debrief, the one-page start here
- `the-not-anymore-list-license.md` — what you may do, how to rebrand, what shipped when
- `SKILL.md` · `the-not-anymore-list.zip` — the machine-readable manifest, and the whole folder in one download

Agent version

Every file in this folder has a stable public URL — an AI agent can fetch the cards, the debrief and this run sheet with three curl commands (see `SKILL.md`). The paper version needs nothing but sticky notes, two columns and a pen each.

The Not-Anymore List — Debrief

> The review isn’t over when something is crossed off — it’s over when the stop has held, the trigger is real, and the freed time has a named purpose.
>
> Use with `the-not-anymore-list-guide.md`. The make-it-safe round at minute 17 is the compressed version; this sheet is the full one.

How to run this debrief

- Keep the not-anymore list and the one stopped item **visible** while you talk — you are testing a decision, not reopening the argument.
- Push every answer toward the observable: a count, a signal, a date. Feelings don’t protect stops.
- Close on the capacity — the stop only pays when the freed time goes somewhere the team chose on purpose.

Read the list

1. **What failed the test.** Anything marked “wouldn’t start today” was standing on habit alone. Look at how much of your week that is.
2. **What was uncomfortable to stop.** Discomfort is usually one person’s preference wearing the team’s need. Name whose it was.
3. **How big a cut you actually took.** The item you stopped — was it the biggest cost, or the safest one to cut? The safe one is a warm-up.

The four debrief questions

- Is the bring-back trigger real and observable — “if two people ask for it” — or a feeling — “if it feels needed”?

- What's the trial period, and who owns the call at the end — to make it permanent or bring it back?
- Are you stopping it for everyone, or only for the people in this room?
- What exactly will you do with the time and attention you just freed, and when do you check that it's really gone — and really not missed?

Failure modes of the debrief

Failure mode	Why it happens	The rescue
Nobody wants to let go	Killing feels permanent	Make it a dated trial-stop; the pause usually reveals it was never needed.
The list is all other teams' processes	You can only stop what you own	Reframe to what this team can drop alone; hand the rest over as a named request.
The trigger is vague	"If it feels needed" is unfalsifiable	Push to a count, a signal, a date — a fuzzy trigger means it comes back by default.
The freed time refills itself	Nobody claimed it	Name what the capacity is for before closing, or the stop quietly reverses.