

PLAYBOOK

The Approval Ownership Playbook

Speed up decision-making by mapping ownership

Approvals Are the Bottleneck

THE PROBLEM

Approvals take too long because no one knows who owns the decision. Work sits in limbo waiting for someone to say yes.

The problem is not that people are slow. The problem is that ownership is unclear.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Most businesses do not have an approval ownership map. They do not know which decisions require manager approval and which decisions the person can make themselves.

So every decision becomes a bottleneck.

Map approval owners to decision types. Speed follows clarity.

The 3 Types of Approval Ownership

1

Self-Approve

The person makes the decision without asking for approval. Use this for low-impact decisions where the cost of an error is small and reversible.

2

Manager-Approve

The manager makes the final decision. Use this for medium-impact decisions where the manager has context the person does not have.

3

Committee-Approve

A group makes the decision together. Use this for high-impact decisions that require multiple perspectives or cross-functional alignment.

The Approval Ownership Framework

LOW IMPACT

Self-Approve

USE WHEN:

- Decision cost is under \$500
- Easy to reverse if wrong
- No client impact
- Repeatable decision

MEDIUM IMPACT

Manager-Approve

USE WHEN:

- Decision cost is \$500-\$5,000
- Moderate effort to reverse
- Client sees the outcome
- Requires business context

HIGH IMPACT

Committee-Approve

USE WHEN:

- Decision cost is over \$5,000
- Difficult or impossible to reverse
- Affects multiple departments
- Strategic or legal risk

Mapping Your Approval Owners

1

List Repeatable Decisions

Write down the 10-15 decisions that happen every week. Client refunds, budget approvals, scope changes, hiring decisions.

2

Assign Impact Tier

For each decision, assign low, medium, or high impact based on cost, client impact, and reversibility.

3

Assign Owner

Low-impact decisions get self-approve. Medium-impact get manager-approve. High-impact get committee-approve.

4

Document Escalation Path

Define when the person should escalate. Use clear criteria like dollar thresholds or client impact.

5

Communicate to Team

Share the ownership map with the team. Make it visible. Update it quarterly as decisions change.

Your 45-Minute Implementation Plan

NEXT STEPS

- 1 List the top 10 recurring decisions your team makes
- 2 Assign an impact tier to each decision (low, medium, high)
- 3 Assign an approval owner to each decision based on the tier
- 4 Share the ownership map with your team and update your SOPs

TIME BREAKDOWN

Total: 45 minutes

Step 1: List decisions (10 min)

Step 2: Assign tiers (10 min)

Step 3: Assign owners (15 min)

Step 4: Share with team (10 min)

Common Mistakes to Avoid

WHAT NOT TO DO

Not Documenting Who Owns What

If ownership is not written down, people will keep asking for approval on decisions they should own.

Making Everything Manager-Approve

If every decision requires manager approval, you become the bottleneck. Push decisions down.

Not Defining Escalation Paths

If the person does not know when to escalate, they will either escalate everything or nothing. Define clear triggers.

Not Communicating Ownership

Mapping ownership is not enough. You need to communicate it to the team so everyone knows who owns what.

Not Reviewing Ownership Quarterly

Ownership changes as the business grows. Review it every 3 months and update as needed.

Skipping the Impact Tier Step

If you do not tier decisions by impact, you will treat all decisions the same. High-impact decisions need more oversight.

Ready to Speed Up Approvals?

Download the Approval Ownership Templates

Get the complete approval ownership framework, decision impact matrix, and ownership mapping worksheet.

[Download templates →](#)

Book a Strategy Call

I will review your workflows, map your top 10 recurring decisions, and show you exactly who should own each approval.

[Check to see if you qualify →](#)

ABOUT REMOTEE

I help Australian businesses reclaim their time by building compliance-ready delegation systems. I do not just place people. I build the systems, train the team, and give you ongoing support.

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