



Washington State
DEPARTMENT OF
ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Mistake Proofing: Is it possible? Heidi Loveall Strategy & Performance

OCTOBER 2023

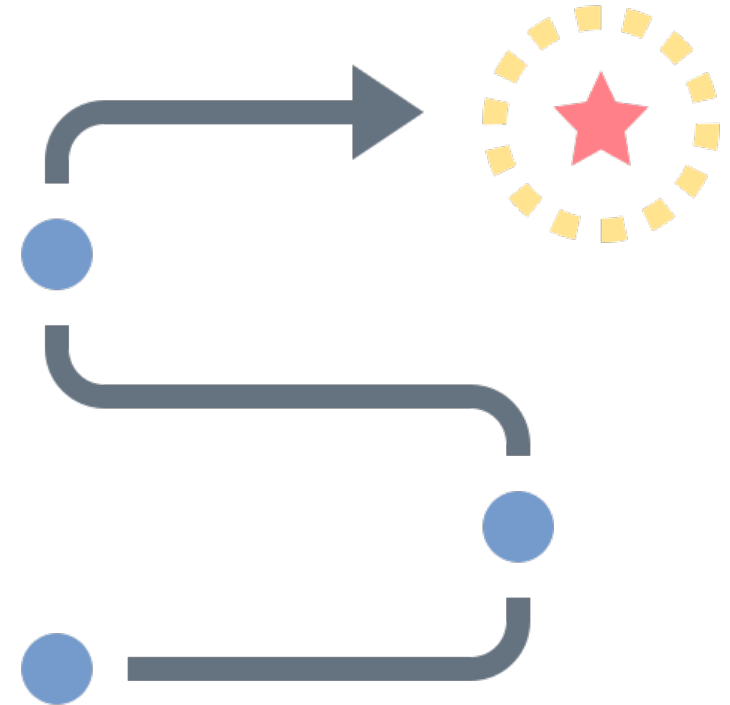
AGENDA

- Mistake proofing introduction
- Levels and examples
- How to mistake proof
- Resources
- Questions

a little bit
TECHNICAL

a lot bit
HUMAN

all
PRACTICAL



POLL

When it comes to mistake proofing, I would say:

- I'm here to learn what it is.
- I know about it but don't have experience applying it.
- I have a little bit of experience applying it.
- I have a lot of experience applying it.

INTRODUCTION & EXAMPLES

MISTAKE PROOFING INTRODUCTION

- Mistake proofing is a tool or method for reducing or eliminating errors.
- Make it easy to do the right thing and hard or impossible to do the wrong thing.
- Strive for quality at the source rather than quality by inspection.

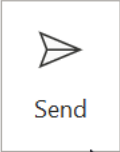
MISTAKE PROOFING BENEFITS

- Increases quality for our customers
- Reduces risk
- Relieve people's burden
- Widely applicable and scalable

EXAMPLES: PHYSICAL



EXAMPLES: VIRTUAL

Send

To

Loveall, Heidi (DES);

Cc

Subject

That file you asked for

Here's the attachment.


Heidi Loveall (she/her)

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Exceptions...

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
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1,2,3 1,2,3 1,2,3

No Staples

Grayscale

EXAMPLES: METHODS

- Bias interrupters
- Opt out vs opt in
- Facilitation techniques

LS Menu 	Wicked questions 	What' debrief 	Min specs 	Hes 
Design elements 	Appreciative interviews 	Discovery and action dialog 	Improv prototyping 	Dr 
1-2-4-All 	TRIZ 	Shift & share 	Helping heuristics 	st 
Impromptu networking 	15% solutions 	25 : 10 crowdsourcing 	Conversation café 	Ce 

– Office Housework

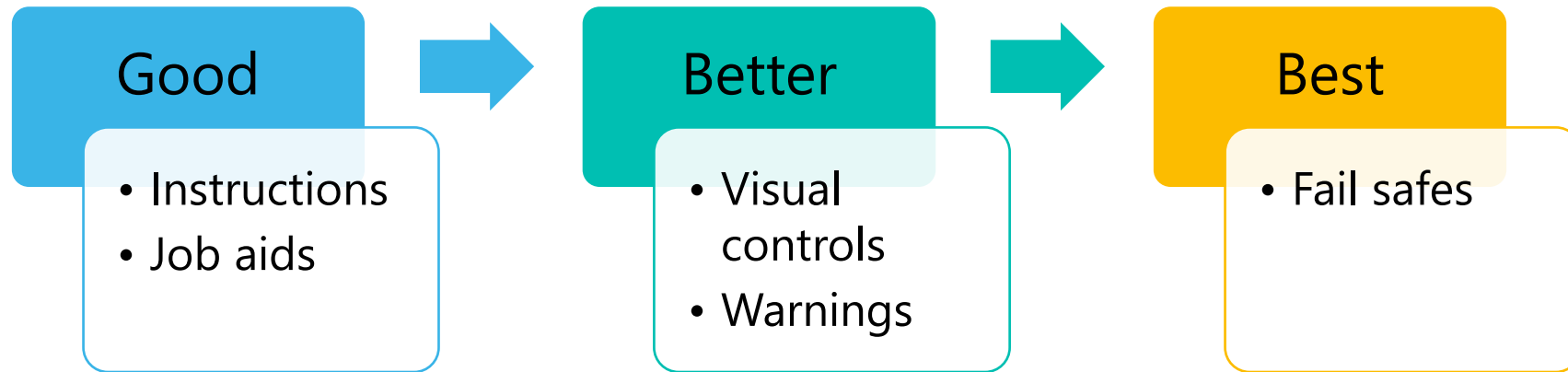
- **Don't ask for volunteers.** Women and people of color are more likely to volunteer because they are under subtle but powerful pressures to do so.
- **Establish a rotation.** A rotation is also helpful for many administrative tasks (e.g. taking notes, scheduling meetings, sending Zoom links). Rotating housework tasks like ordering lunch and planning parties is also an option if admins are unavailable.

STOP & THINK

What are other examples of mistake proofing you have seen or experienced?

MISTAKE PROOFING SCALE

Levels of mistake proofing exist on a good to best scale based on their effectiveness at preventing mistakes.



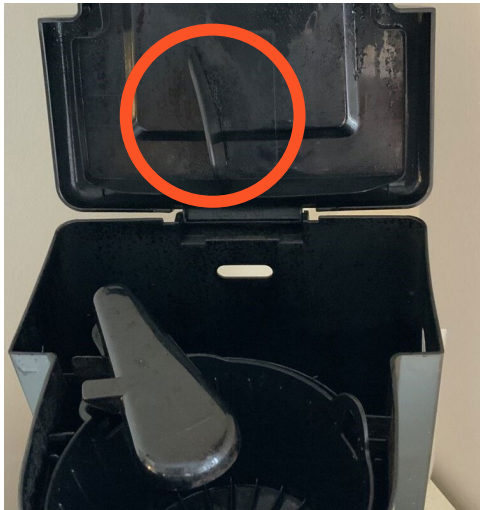
PHYSICAL EXAMPLE

This water fountain demonstrates several attempts at mistake proofing at varying levels on the scale.



SEARCH & FIND

What examples of mistake proofing can you find on this coffee pot?



PROCESS

HOW TO MISTAKE PROOF



Notice mistakes.

What mistakes are happening around you?

- What are you having to fix or rework repeatedly?
- What are the pebbles in your metaphorical shoe?
- What are you chalking up to human error or considering unfixable?

STOP & THINK

What problems in your work or life could use some mistake proofing attention?




- What are you having to fix or rework repeatedly?
- What do you often double check, follow up on, or send reminders about?
- What do you get customer complaints about?
- Where are you not getting what you need to move on to the next step?
- Which mistakes are costing you time, effort, or money?

HOW TO MISTAKE PROOF



Observe to learn why the mistake is happening.

- Go and see.
- Go and listen.
- Be creative, but keep it simple.

Packed Lunch	Ran Out of Time	Had Time, Didn't Pack
		

STOP & THINK

How can you learn more about what is causing the problem

- What is the quickest and easiest way to get accurate, firsthand information?

HOW TO MISTAKE PROOF



Ask yourself:

- How can I make it harder to make this mistake?
- How can I make it impossible?

“Creativity is combining previous knowledge and experiences in new ways to generate ideas about how to do things differently.” – Karyn Ross

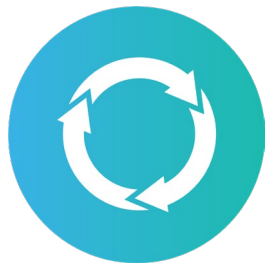
HOW TO MISTAKE PROOF



Watch to see if the mistake happens less often.

- Don't assume. **Confirm.**
- Humans are experts at making mistakes!

HOW TO MISTAKE PROOF



If the mistake is not eliminated, try again!

- Celebrate what you learned.
- Believe that mistake proofing is possible.
- If needed, look at all the astonishing things that have been mistake proofed already.

HOW TO MISTAKE PROOF

1. Notice mistakes.
2. Observe to learn why the mistake is happening.
3. Ask yourself:
 - How can I make it harder to make this mistake?
 - How can I make it impossible?
4. Watch to see if the mistake happens less often.
5. If the mistake is not eliminated, try again!

RESOURCES & QUESTIONS

RESOURCES

Check the conference website for a handout to help you with your mistake proofing efforts.

- [Bias Interrupters](#)
- [Nudge Presentation](#)
- [HBR Article](#)
- [Fast Food Example](#)
- [Creativity Techniques Presentation](#)

Mistake Proofing Guidance

Process

Use the steps below to guide your mistake proofing efforts.

1. Notice mistakes.
2. Observe to learn why the mistake is happening.
3. Ask yourself:
 - How can I make it harder to make this mistake?
 - How can I make it impossible?
4. Watch to see if the mistake happens less often.
5. If the mistake is not eliminated, try again!

Points to Ponder

Use the questions below to prompt your mistake proofing efforts.

- ☐ What mistakes are occurring around you? What is your responsibility?
- ☐ Have you gone to see the mistake occurring and/or gathered as much firsthand information as possible?
- ☐ Have you investigated enough to discover the cause or causes of the mistake?
- ☐ Are you making sure people aren't getting blamed for process issues? Are you rewarding courage and openness in discussing the real situation?
- ☐ Does your improvement make it easy to do the right thing and hard or, better yet, impossible to do the wrong thing?
- ☐ Have you followed up to see if mistakes are reduced or eliminated after implementing your improvement?
- ☐ If the mistake is not eliminated, are you continuing to pursue other causes or ideas for mistake proofing?

QUESTIONS



THANK YOU



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