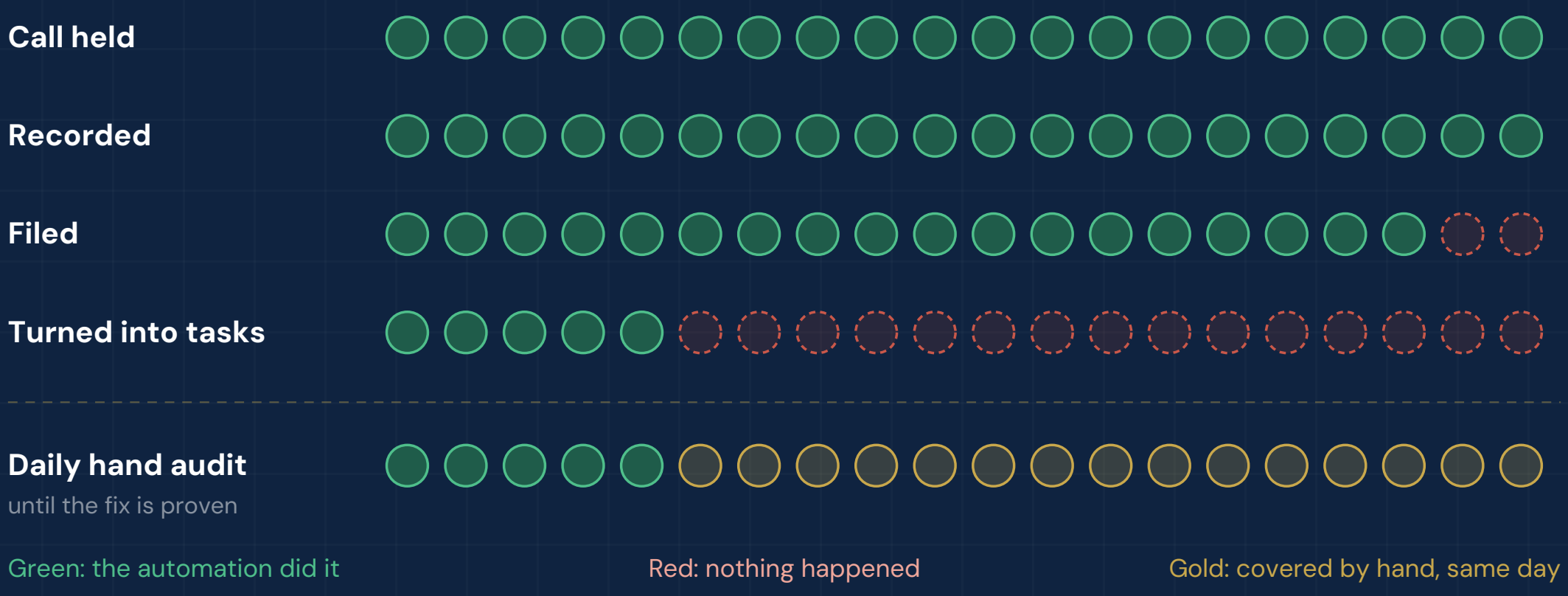
A SHORT BRIEF FOR FOUNDERS AND OPERATIONS LEADS

The Fix Gap

Your automation reports success and quietly misses most of what it should catch. The fix depends on the person who built it, and every day you wait has a cost.

TWENTY CLIENT CALLS, ONE TWO-WEEK WINDOW

Counted from the calendar, not from the automation's own log.



About 3 in 4 client calls produced no tasks, and nothing reported an error.

The fix depended on the person who built it, and every day of waiting lost more work.

Waiting for the fix is a decision too.

It has a daily cost, and the people who pay it are the ones who never see the missing tasks.

From practice, banded; chart is illustrative. Research inside from Gartner, Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management Review and Monte Carlo.

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WHAT THE EVIDENCE IS AND IS NOT

Bad data is expensive. Quiet bad data costs the most.

The research on poor data quality is old, large and consistent: errors are common and they cost real money. None of it was measured on a small team, so I use it for scale and keep my own figures banded and separate.

$12.9m

a year, on average at least, is what poor data quality costs organisations

Gartner research, 2020

47%

of newly created data records had at least one critical error, in 75 executives' own samples

Nagle, Redman, Sammon, HBR, 2017

15 to 25%

of revenue: the estimated cost of bad data for most companies

Thomas C. Redman, MIT SMR, 2017

WHO MEASURED

An analyst firm, and a consultant with two academics

Gartner's figure is an average across the organisations it studies, which are mostly large. Redman is a data quality consultant; his revenue range is an estimate built on work by Experian and two consultancies, not a census.

WHAT IT MEASURES

Errors that exist, not errors that were noticed

In the HBR study each executive pulled 100 recent records from their own department and counted the ones with obvious errors. Only 3 percent of the scores reached even the loosest acceptable standard.

THE FIGURE I WOULD NOT USE

"Bad data costs the US $3.1 trillion a year"

It is IBM's 2016 estimate, quoted in Redman's own HBR piece. It has no published method I could check, and a national total tells an owner of a small team nothing they can act on.

STATED PLAINLY

The studies agree that errors are normal. The expensive ones are the errors nobody counts, because they never raise a flag.

HOW IT LOOKS VS WHAT IS HAPPENING

It said it was working. It was missing 3 calls in 4.

Most owners hear "a few tasks went missing" and treat it as noise. Counted properly, the noise was most of the pipeline, and nothing had ever reported an error.

How it looks

No errors, some tasks appear, and each complaint is about one call. It sounds like an edge case, so it waits behind everything else, and the person who built it hears about it in passing.

What is really happening

Counted from the calendar rather than the automation's own log, about 3 in 4 client calls produced no tasks. The gaps clustered by type of call, which means a rule, not bad luck.

COUNT	**From the source, never from the log** Export every call in a fixed window. An automation's log only lists what it noticed, which is exactly the part that is not missing.
GROUP	**Gap rate per input type** Client, prospect, internal, new account. An overall rate hides the pattern; a per-type rate shows exactly where the rule breaks.
NAME IT	**One rule per gap type** "Only acts when a board already exists." Test it against two gaps and one success before sending it to anyone, so the request survives the first question.

THE COST OF WAITING

Every day without a fix, more follow-ups go unassigned. The owners do not see them, because a task that was never created never shows up as overdue.

WHO NOTICES FIRST

The people downstream find the errors first.

Even teams whose whole job is data rarely catch a failure before the people relying on it do. A small team with no data function is in a weaker position, not a stronger one.

74%

of data professionals say business stakeholders identify data issues first, all or most of the time

Monte Carlo and Wakefield Research, 2023

68%

report an average time of four hours or more just to detect a data incident

Monte Carlo and Wakefield Research, 2023

3%

of executives' data quality scores rated acceptable, on the loosest possible standard

Nagle, Redman, Sammon, HBR, 2017

THE CAVEAT

A vendor survey of 200 data professionals

Fielded by Wakefield Research in March 2023 for Monte Carlo, which sells data monitoring software. The sample is specialists in larger firms, so read it as a ceiling on how well detection goes, not a floor.

THE SMALL-TEAM VERSION

No data team, so the client notices

On a small team the downstream person is an owner preparing for a call, or a client asking why nothing happened. By then the gap is weeks old and the follow-up is already late.

WHY IT STAYS QUIET

Partial success looks like success

A pipeline that produces nothing fails loudly. One that produces some output for some inputs passes every casual glance, which is why counting beats inspecting.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Do not wait for an alert that was never built. Count the output against the source on a schedule, or accept that a client will do the counting for you.

THE OPTIONS I CONSIDERED

Wait, replace, or cover by hand.

All three are reasonable. Each one moves the cost to a different place, and only one keeps the cost visible while the fix is pending.

OPTION 01

Wait for the fix

No extra work for the team, and no awkward conversation. But people lose tasks every day the fix is pending, and the date depends on someone else's calendar.

OPTION 02

Replace the automation

Full control and no dependency on anyone. But it duplicates the builder's work, risks a turf fight, and leaves two systems to maintain while the new one proves itself.

OPTION 03

Cover by hand, send precise rules

A daily audit catches every miss while rule fixes go to the person who built it. Some daily time, but no lost work and a clear specification for the fix.

WHO PAYS, 01

The owners, in tasks they never see

The cheapest option on paper. The most expensive one in missed follow-ups, and the cost never appears on any report.

WHO PAYS, 02

Everyone, in time and goodwill

A rebuild takes longer than a fix, and the working relationship with the builder rarely recovers from being replaced without warning.

WHO PAYS, 03

The operator, in a fixed slot each day

A known, bounded cost carried by the one person who can see the gaps. It ends when the fix is proven, not when it feels better.

THE HIDDEN OPTION

Doing nothing is still a choice. It just moves the cost to the people least able to see it, and gives the fix no deadline at all.

THE CALL I MADE AND WHAT TO WATCH

Cover by hand, with an end date.

Option 3, with one condition written in from the start: the cover ends when the fix is confirmed on a fresh window, not when the complaints stop.

THE CALL

A daily audit at the end of each shift, as one batch

Every call checked: recorded, filed, turned into tasks. Gaps covered the same day, and "none needed" recorded where a call truly needs no task.

WHY

It protects the owners now and turns complaints into rules

No follow-up waits on someone else's calendar. The builder receives a short list: the rule, the evidence rows, and the fix being asked for. Specific requests ship; vague ones wait.

THE GUARD

Check by tag before creating anything by hand

Look for the automation's own marker, not a keyword search. If both exist, keep the automatic item and move your detail into it as a comment.

WATCH 01

Duplicates

When the automation catches up, hand-made and automatic items can both exist for one call. The tag check before every manual task is what prevents it.

WATCH 02

Cover becoming permanent

A daily audit nobody questions quietly becomes part of the job. A dated re-audit task, booked on day one, is the only reliable catch.

WATCH 03

Whether each rule shipped

Track every requested rule as its own line. A gap rate above about 1 in 10 for a type means it stays on the audit until a fresh window proves the fix.

> Cover the gap, send the rule, and put a date on the cover. Without the date, the workaround becomes the system.
>
> From the decision log

EVIDENCE, NOT ADJECTIVES

The gap was found and covered on the same day.

This is the audit I ran on a live calls-to-tasks pipeline for a small team with a few dozen client accounts. It is evidence that a silent failure can be measured, contained and handed back as a specification without rebuilding anything.

COUNTED

One row per call, one column per stage

Recorded, filed, tasks, created by, duplicate check done, gap note. A summary block gave the gap rate by type and by stage, and showed about 3 in 4 client calls producing no tasks.

COVERED

Same day, every day

Gaps covered by hand at the end of each shift while the fix was pending. A few dozen missed tasks from earlier calls were backfilled, each checked by tag first so nothing was duplicated.

HANDED BACK

Rules with evidence, not misses

Each gap type became one rule statement with its evidence rows, so the person who built it could fix a cause rather than chase single calls.

THE HABIT

Count the output against the source before forming an opinion

I build the tracker first, one row per item and one column per stage, and let the gap rate point at the rule. Anecdotes start arguments; a per-type count ends them.

CREDENTIALS

Google Project Management Professional Certificate and Google AI Essentials

Plus Anthropic AI Fluency and Model Context Protocol. 31 certifications in total, every one independently verifiable.

> "He was the most thorough QA Analyst I've had the pleasure of working with. He is an excellent communicator and gets things done on time and efficiently.
>
> Mike Paradiso · Sr. Digital Producer · AbelsonTaylor · Client-side lead on the Foxhole QA work

HOW TO START

Count one window from the source.

Pick any automation your team relies on and nobody counts. Two weeks of inputs, exported from where they start, will tell you whether you are waiting on a fix you did not know you needed.

STEP 01

Export every input

One to two weeks, from the source system, never from the automation's log. Add a column for each stage, ending with the output a person actually uses.

STEP 02

Tag, mark, compute

Tag each input by type, mark each stage yes, no or n/a with evidence, and compute the gap rate per type. The free Pipeline Gap Auditor at me.kabuhayan.app/tool-pipeline-gap-auditor does the sums.

STEP 03

Cover, send, date it

Cover gaps daily by hand, send one rule per gap type to whoever owns the automation, and book the re-audit on a fresh window before you start.

WHAT I WOULD EXPECT YOU TO FIND

One input type the automation never acts on, a stage where most gaps sit, and a rule nobody wrote down. The full method is in The Audit playbook.

Available now for remote work

Chief of Staff · Operations · Senior Executive Assistant · Project Manager
Tell me which automation your team trusts and nobody has counted.

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linkedin.com/in/paulpacardo
me.kabuhayan.app

Sources: Gartner, data quality research cited on gartner.com: "Poor data quality costs organizations at least $12.9 million a year on average", Gartner research from 2020; an average across studied organisations, mostly large. Nagle, Redman and Sammon, "Only 3% of Companies' Data Meets Basic Quality Standards", Harvard Business Review, September 2017; 75 executives each scored 100 recent records from their own departments; used: 47 percent of new records with at least one critical error, 3 percent of scores acceptable. Thomas C. Redman, "Seizing Opportunity in Data Quality", MIT Sloan Management Review, November 2017; an estimate built on work by Experian and two consultancies; used: 15 to 25 percent of revenue. Monte Carlo, State of Data Quality survey, 2023, fielded by Wakefield Research, 200 data professionals, March 2023; Monte Carlo sells data monitoring software; used: 74 percent and 68 percent. Deliberately excluded: IBM's 2016 estimate that bad data costs the US $3.1 trillion a year, as quoted in Redman's HBR article of September 2016, because no method is published and a national total does not apply to a small team. Figures are third-party research, not results I am claiming. Practice figures are banded from real work and describe patterns, not a client.