TOTAL CSR



The Agency Mistake Review Guide

Turn mistakes into specific learning actions

Use this guide after an agency mistake or near miss to establish what happened, understand the conditions behind it, and choose a practical change. Leave the review with one or two actions, an owner, and evidence that will show whether those actions helped.

The review combines a 30-minute facilitated conversation with reusable worksheets. It is designed for service teams, account managers, producers, and operations leaders. Use it for a missed handoff, incomplete request, incorrect entry, delayed follow-up, or similar workflow problem.

Start with the work that needs attention now

Before the meeting, assign an owner to correct the affected work and address any immediate client or deadline impact. If the issue may require the agency's incident, E&O, privacy, or personnel response, notify the designated lead through that process. This learning review does not replace that response or determine coverage or liability.

Use the guide in this order

PAGE	TOOL	PURPOSE
3	**Facilitator script**	Run a focused conversation without hindsight or blame.
4	**Event worksheet**	Separate the expected process, observed events, and unknowns.
5	**Process worksheet**	Find the decision points and conditions that contributed.
6	**Action decision guide**	Choose practice, a process fix, or a combination.
7	**Learning action plan**	Specify the changed behavior and how to demonstrate it.
8	**Follow-up worksheet**	Check real work and decide whether the fix is effective.
9	**Commercial lines example**	See a review translated into observable actions.

Prepare a useful conversation

Invite the people closest to the work, the relevant handoff partner, and someone who can authorize a change. Use a neutral facilitator when possible. Share the scope and evidence in advance; offer a private way to provide context if speaking in a group is difficult.

Use case references instead of unnecessary client details. Keep original records intact, distinguish later corrections from the original event, and store the review in the approved agency location. Explain who can access the review; do not promise absolute confidentiality.

1 Facilitate a 30 minute review

Read the quoted language aloud or adapt it to your voice. Use **pages 4 and 5** to capture facts and contributing conditions. If evidence is missing, assign follow-up instead of forcing a conclusion.

MINUTES 0 TO 3 Open and define the purpose

"We are here to understand how this happened and make the work more reliable. We will describe actions and conditions, check our assumptions, and agree on specific changes. We need everyone's view, including anything in our instructions, tools, workload, or management decisions that contributed."

"First, is the immediate issue being handled? Who owns the correction and any required follow-up? What is still at risk?"

MINUTES 3 TO 10 Reconstruct the event

"What should have happened? Show us the instruction or expectation that applied at the time. Now walk us through what actually happened, in order."

"At that moment, what information was available? What did you believe the status was? What made that next step seem reasonable?" Ask others to add evidence without interrupting the first account. Mark disputed or missing facts as unresolved.

MINUTES 10 TO 18 Examine the process

"Where did the actual path first differ from the expected path? What was supposed to prevent or detect this? Was that check available, understood, usable, and assigned to someone?"

"What role did inputs, access, workload, interruptions, handoffs, or conflicting direction play? Could someone else working under those conditions encounter the same problem? What worked well enough to detect or limit the mistake?"

MINUTES 18 TO 25 Choose a specific response

"What evidence supports each contributing factor? Can the employee demonstrate the required step with clear instructions, correct inputs, access, and reasonable time?"

"What change would address the factor we identified? What practice would build the missing skill, if there is one? What old step or duplicate work should stop? Let's choose no more than two initial actions and name an owner for each."

MINUTES 25 TO 30 Confirm and close

"What will be different next time? Who will do it, by when, and what evidence will we review? What could the proposed fix make harder? What remains uncertain?"

Read back the actions and review date. Ask: "What did we miss or get wrong?" Confirm who will communicate the changes and update the procedure.

Redirect unhelpful language

If someone says "careless" or "should have known," ask: *"Which observable action are we describing, and what was available at that time?"* If the conversation becomes personal, pause and restate the scope. Route conduct concerns separately through the appropriate agency process.

2 Reconstruct what happened

Complete one copy per event. Write observable facts and record references. Keep an explanation or assumption separate until evidence supports it.

CASE ID

REVIEW DATE

FACILITATOR

PARTICIPANTS AND ROLES

THE EVENT IN ONE FACTUAL SENTENCE

EXPECTED RESULT AND THE PROCEDURE OR INSTRUCTION IN EFFECT

ACTUAL RESULT AND KNOWN IMPACT INCLUDING ANY NEAR MISS

CORRECTION OWNER

CURRENT STATUS

NEXT CHECK

BUILD THE TIMELINE

Time or sequence	Observed action and information available	Evidence or source

Add rows as needed for the request, decision, handoff, detection, and correction. If a time is unknown, use the sequence. Do not treat a missing note as proof that an action did or did not occur.

FIRST POINT WHERE ACTUAL WORK DIFFERED FROM THE EXPECTED PROCESS

HOW THE ISSUE WAS DETECTED AND WHAT LIMITED THE IMPACT

UNKNOWN OR DISPUTED FACT AND HOW IT WILL BE CHECKED

EVIDENCE OWNER

DUE

REVIEW ACCESS

3 Find the contributing conditions

Use the questions below as prompts. Record only factors supported by this event. More than one factor may have contributed; do not force a single root cause.

	Factor	Questions to test
☐	**Inputs**	Were required facts complete, current, and easy to identify? Were conflicting versions present?
☐	**Instructions**	Was the expected action clear, findable, current, and consistent with what managers said?
☐	**Knowledge or skill**	Could the employee recognize the issue and perform the step using the approved resources?
☐	**Tools and access**	Did permissions, system design, defaults, or duplicate entry make the correct action difficult?
☐	**Ownership and handoffs**	Who owned the next step? What showed that the receiver accepted it? What did each person assume?
☐	**Workload and priorities**	Were deadlines, interruptions, or competing instructions making the expected process hard to follow?
☐	**Checks and escalation**	What should have caught the issue? Was the check specific, assigned, and performed at a useful point?

RECORD THE STRONGEST SUPPORTED EXPLANATION

CONTRIBUTING CONDITION AND THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING IT

HOW THAT CONDITION MADE THIS SPECIFIC EVENT MORE LIKELY

WHAT ELSE COULD EXPLAIN THE EVENT AND WHAT REMAINS UNVERIFIED

TEST THE EXPLANATION

Ask: *"If this condition had been different, what action would likely have changed?"* Record the answer as a reasoned explanation, not a proven fact. Check whether the proposed fix addresses that condition and whether it would work during a busy day.

CONDITION OWNER

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE NEEDED

> Duplicate this page if a second condition needs a separate action. Preserve checks that worked; a mistake does not mean the entire process failed.

4 Choose the response that fits

A reminder to "be more careful" is not an action plan. Match the response to the observed gap, then check both the employee's ability and the conditions of the work.

Evidence from the review	Response	What would demonstrate improvement
Cannot recognize the issue or perform the required step with usable resources.	Demonstrate the decision, practice a fresh example, and give specific feedback.	Employee completes a normal case and an exception using the job aid.
Can perform the step but the instruction is ambiguous or hard to find.	Rewrite the step, add an example, and publish one current version.	Employees interpret it consistently and complete the step in real work.
Required information arrives incomplete or in conflicting versions.	Define minimum inputs, source of truth, missing-information owner, and follow-up.	Next requests identify missing inputs and have an owner before handoff.
Work disappears between people or is closed on an assumed handoff.	Define ownership transfer, acceptance evidence, and overdue escalation.	Every sampled handoff has an accepted owner and a recorded next action.
Access, system defaults, or duplicate entry contributes.	Fix access or the tool; assign an approved interim method and end date.	Correct work is possible without the workaround or repeated correction.
The expected step is skipped under competing demands.	Clarify priority rules, remove duplicate work, or adjust assignments.	The step is completed under comparable workload without new delays.

When both practice and a process fix are needed

Make the procedure usable first, then practice the revised behavior. For example, clarify when a handoff can close and then rehearse a case where the receiving person has not accepted it. Training on an unresolved process gap can reinforce inconsistent work.

Keep the change proportionate

Add a check at the point where it can catch the specific issue. Name who performs it and what evidence they use. Avoid adding a second review to every task unless the evidence supports that burden. If an issue repeats, revisit the explanation and conditions before repeating the same training.

Chosen response: ○ Practice ○ Process change ○ Both ○ More evidence needed

5 Turn the finding into an action

Complete one page per action. Choose one or two initial actions. Correction repairs the affected item; this action should reduce the chance of the same failure on future work.

SUPPORTED CONTRIBUTING FACTOR AND CASE REFERENCE

SPECIFIC CHANGE AND THE POINT IN THE WORKFLOW WHERE IT APPLIES

ACTION OWNER

APPROVER

DUE

WHO WILL ACT DIFFERENTLY AND WHAT OLD STEP OR DUPLICATE WORK STOPS

DEFINE PRACTICE WHEN A SKILL NEEDS TO CHANGE

If practice is not needed, record why and complete the implementation and review fields below.

PRACTICE SCENARIO AND THE CHANGED FACT THAT CREATES AN EXCEPTION

OBSERVABLE ACTIONS THE EMPLOYEE MUST PERFORM AND EVIDENCE TO SAVE

APPROVED JOB AID

REVIEWER

PRACTICE DATE

Pass criteria: [state required steps and any critical error that requires a retry].

Result: ◯ Demonstrated ◯ Retry needed ◯ N/A

RETRY TASK AND DATE

PUT THE CHANGE INTO USE

CURRENT PROCEDURE LOCATION AND VERSION

EMPLOYEES TO NOTIFY OR TRAIN

COMMUNICATION OWNER

ACCESS TIME OR WORKLOAD SUPPORT REQUIRED BEFORE USE

FIRST LIVE WORK REVIEW

LATER REVIEW

REVIEW OWNER

EXPECTED MEASURE

BASELINE

TARGET AND REVIEW PERIOD

SERVICE MEASURE TO PROTECT

IF THE CHANGE FAILS CONTACT

6 Check whether the action helped

Review actual eligible work after implementation. Record how the sample was selected and include relevant exceptions. Passing practice shows readiness; it does not establish consistent use in live work.

ACTION | OWNER | REVIEW DATE

WORK PERIOD | PROCEDURE VERSION | ELIGIBLE TASK DEFINITION

ELIGIBLE TASKS | REVIEWED TASKS | SELECTION METHOD

Measure	Before the change	After the change
Reviewed tasks with the required step correctly completed	____ of ____	____ of ____
Reviewed tasks with the same error or near miss	____ of ____	____ of ____
Reviewed tasks meeting the agreed service deadline	____ of ____	____ of ____

Use the same definitions before and after. Mark unavailable baseline data or zero eligible observations N/A. Keep counts visible; percentages from a small sample can be misleading. Record practice results separately from work results.

EVIDENCE REFERENCES AND WHAT THE EMPLOYEES SAY CHANGED

NEW BURDEN DELAYS OR UNINTENDED EFFECTS

DIFFERENCES IN WORKLOAD TASK COMPLEXITY OR STAFFING THAT AFFECT THE COMPARISON

MAKE A REVIEW DECISION

- ○ Continue and monitor
- ○ Adjust the change
- ○ Repeat targeted practice
- ○ Gather more evidence
- ○ Escalate an unresolved barrier

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND THE NEXT ACTION

OWNER | DUE | NEXT REVIEW

Close only when the agreed evidence supports the change over the chosen review period and immediate corrections are resolved. If no eligible work occurred, keep the review open and schedule a later check. One error-free week is not proof the issue cannot recur.

7 A completed commercial lines example

Fictional example: an internal renewal handoff was missed. The example concerns workflow ownership and learning, not a coverage determination.

WHAT HAPPENED

An account manager emailed a completed renewal package to marketing and closed the handoff task. The assigned marketer was absent. The backup could not see the email, and no acceptance was recorded. A producer's status request revealed the gap two business days after the agency's internal handoff target. The eventual renewal outcome was not yet known at the review.

The manager assigned a marketer to the affected file, confirmed the next deadline, and gave the account manager responsibility for tracking progress. The team then reviewed the task history, email, absence schedule, and instruction that applied that week.

WHERE THE PROCESS FAILED

The instruction said "send to marketing and close." It did not require acceptance or identify a backup when the recipient was absent. The account manager understood sent email to mean ownership had transferred. The team found no shared record the backup could monitor.

The supported conditions were an ambiguous completion rule and an invisible handoff. The review did not establish a broad insurance knowledge gap. Employees could explain the new acceptance rule after it was clarified, but needed practice applying it to an absent-recipient scenario.

WHAT CHANGED

Process action: the service manager will put a shared handoff queue in place by the following Monday. The account manager keeps responsibility for tracking the handoff until marketing records acceptance and a next action. The team lead assigns backup coverage and an internal acceptance target. An urgent deadline goes directly to that lead for a decision; it does not wait for a routine queue check.

Practice action: before independent use, the team lead observes each affected employee complete one normal handoff and one case where the recipient is absent. The employee must use the queue, identify the backup or escalation owner, preserve the follow-up task, and show acceptance before closing the handoff. Closing without acceptance requires feedback and a fresh retry case.

HOW THE MANAGER CHECKED THE RESULT

Illustrative baseline: 4 of 10 reviewed handoffs had recorded acceptance before closure. Two weeks after the change, 9 of 10 did; one had closed early. One employee reported checking both email and the queue because the old instruction remained accessible. The manager retired that instruction and assigned practice on the closure step.

The next review covers 10 more eligible handoffs, including an absence case if one occurs. The local target is 10 of 10 with acceptance before closure and no missed internal handoff target. If no absence case occurs, use a simulation for practice and keep live absence handling unverified.

Use the gaps identified in your review to focus the next training assignment. Learn more about Total CSR at totalcsr.com.

TOTAL CSR