

Worksheet 09 — Read the brief

From Chapter 11 — Constraint is a brief.

Time: twenty minutes, and it should be an uncomfortable twenty.

A hard constraint isn't a crisis, it's a specification. This sheet turns it back into a brief — before you reach for relief, and before you pick a move.

Step 1 — Name the currency you're short of

Money is the loudest one, not the only one. Tick what's actually binding — and if it's more than one, the tightest one is your brief.

- ☐ **Money.** Deletes anything needing capital, inventory, a build, or a thirty-day cycle.
- ☐ **Time.** Deletes anything needing sequence — iteration, testing, sleeping on it.
- ☐ **Hands.** Deletes anything needing coordination you can't run. Borrow hands as a trade, never as a favour.
- ☐ **Attention.** Deletes anything needing sustained judgment. A decision made this depleted is one you'll pay to redo.

Step 2 — Write the actual numbers

Vague pressure produces vague moves. No ranges, no “soon.” Whatever the currency, write it as literally as you'd write dollars.

I need _____ by _____ (date).

What's in the account right now: \$ _____

What's certain to land before that date (already invoiced, already sold, not “probably”):
\$ _____

The real gap: \$ _____

Step 3 — Read the brief

What does the constraint **delete**? Anything needing a build, a new audience, a warm-up, a thirty-day invoice cycle, or someone to like you first.

What’s left after the deletions — the short list:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Step 4 — If the clock is what’s short: rank by reversibility

Skip this if money is your only constraint. When *time* is the binding one, the instinct is to sort the work by importance and start at the top — which gives you no cuts, because everything on the list is important.

Sort by **what’s expensive to undo** instead. Spend the hours on the top rows; deliberately placeholder the bottom ones, and write down that they’re placeholders so nobody later mistakes them for decisions.

The decision	If it’s wrong, cost to change in 6 months	Do now / placeholder

My placeholders, and when I’ll decide them for real:

- _____ by _____
- _____ by _____
- _____ by _____

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Kill-or-keep date: _____

On that date, check whether the thing that created the gap is still there. Solving the days without touching the cause just buys a rerun.

Next: 10-the-four-moves.md.