

Using checklists to avoid mistakes

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1 Question

How do checklists help to avoid mistakes?

2 Answer

Checklists are designed to ensure that the most important things, either it is an item or a step in a process, are not forgotten.

A process checklist will list all the steps that are critical to the completion of a process. It will make clear what steps need to be done and verified in what order. Checklists are a way to communicate with new team members what the existing team processes are and what is expected of them. As steps are completed, they are checked to indicate that the task was done or verified, which can serve as a progress indicator when a process takes a while to accomplish. What is also great about checklists is that it can be shared between teams as a way to share knowledge about processes.

If you often make mistakes in certain processes you do throughout the day, you can easily create a checklist that lists all the important things that you need to double-check when you do that process. You can then go through that list while completing the process or after completing it to ensure that all the important aspects of the process were correctly done.

One benefit of the checklist is that it also allows you to offload information that you might have to keep in your head at all times. A checklist for a process you do very infrequently can be an amazing time-saving tool since you do not need to refresh your memory on all the important steps of that process.

Anything that you can memorize, you should write down so that you can consult later and improve over time.