

Step 2: Apply Appropriate Mistake-Proofing Techniques



KEY LEARNINGS: STEP 2: APPLY APPROPRIATE MISTAKE-PROOFING TECHNIQUES

Why Choosing the Right Technique Matters

- Not all service mistakes are the same.
- Some errors can be blocked completely, others detected early, and some need backup plans to mitigate damage.
- The right technique depends on whether a mistake is preventable, unavoidable, or already unfolding.

Prevention Techniques: Eliminate Errors Before They Happen

✓ When to Use Prevention Techniques

- When mistakes are:
 - Repetitive
 - Predictable
 - Easy to block
- Use design, automation, or physical barriers.

🔧 Key Prevention Techniques

1. Physical or Mechanical Barriers

- Purpose: Prevent the wrong action through physical design.
- Examples:
 - Postal drop boxes only accept correctly sized packages.
 - Water valve handles are shaped and color-coded to avoid misoperation.
 - Digital projectors won't run unless correct format is loaded.

2. Sequence Control

- Purpose: Enforce the correct order of operations.
- Examples:
 - Event software requires venue size selection before seating arrangements.
 - Healthcare apps force vitals entry before submitting visit reports.
 - Utility crews must log out of live panels before closing a job.

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Automation & Error Prevention Software

- Purpose: Remove manual steps and prevent entry of invalid data.
- Examples:
 - Ad platforms auto-enforce word count limits.
 - School portals autofill student IDs to prevent typos.
 - HR tools restrict access to sensitive payroll settings via role-based permissions.

Detection Techniques: Catch Errors Before They Cause Damage

! When to Use Detection Techniques

- When errors are:
 - Unavoidable
 - Need to be caught early
 - Must be stopped before reaching the customer

Key Detection Techniques

1. Alarms & Warnings

- Purpose: Alert teams the moment an anomaly occurs.
- Examples:
 - Utility alarms trigger if pressure readings exceed safe levels.
 - Cruise scanners vibrate on invalid boarding passes.
 - Theater crew headsets beep if cues are missed.

2. Checklists & Validation Steps

- Purpose: Ensure critical steps aren't missed.
- Examples:
 - Financial consultants use compliance checklists before sending reports.
 - Tutoring centers use checklists that won't save unless all goals are marked.
 - Game support agents follow reset steps before closing tickets.

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3. Go/No-Go Controls (Pass/Fail Conditions)

- Purpose: Block further action unless criteria are met.
- Examples:
 - Garbage trucks won't compact loads exceeding weight limits.
 - Film software blocks export if resolution specs don't match.
 - Insurance apps block submission unless travel dates match coverage.

Key Takeaways

- Use prevention when errors can be eliminated completely through smart design.
- Use detection when errors can't be stopped, but must be caught quickly.
- A great mistake-proofing system combines both to create resilient, reliable service processes.