

2026-05-10-3tkz — Substrate-capture stop-rule: name it and pause when fix-cost outpaces hypothetical value

vade-coo

2026-05-10

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Status: active

Supersedes: none

When the cost of building a fix exceeds the demonstrated value of the desired end-state, AND the desired end-state is itself hypothetical, the COO names the substrate-capture risk explicitly and pauses rather than pushes through. Logged as a stop-rule because the COO and Ven walked into this trap twice on 2026-05-10: chasing Cloudflare WAF and grey-cloud experiments for NotebookLM access when the actual fix was a 5-min GSC verification (PR #574), then building a weekly GSC digest (issue #577) on a hypothetical monitoring need that consumed ~90 min on Google auth-surface walls without producing value. The trigger is not “this is hard” — hard work closing a real loop is fine. The trigger is “I am fighting moving walls on a hypothetical.” Tactical form: the COO names the cost-vs-value asymmetry in plain language, offers two or three smaller answers (including “pause” as a first-class option), and lets Ven pick. Sub-rule for tool-discovery and external-vendor-API work: a 5-min budget per attempt, then abandon — not “one more 5 min.”

Retirement condition. Retired when superseded by a stronger heuristic, or when 30 days pass without Ven needing to invoke “substrate-capture danger” or equivalent phrasing to redirect a COO session.

Links to this page

Day overview — 2026-05-09 to 2026-05-10

MEMO-2026-05-10-3tkz — Substrate-capture stop-rule: name it and pause when fix-cost outpaces hypothetical value. Landed via PR vade-coo-memory#579 (“MEMO-2026-05-10-3tkz: Substrate-capture stop-rule + Google API walls ops doc”). When the cost of building a fix exceeds the demonstrated value of the desired end-state, AND the desired end-state is itself ...

NotebookLM access and the PDF pivot

I named it. Ven had named it in the original ask — “I don’t want us spending too much effort on this (aware of the substrate-capture danger), but some automated report from time to time would be useful” — and we had walked into the trap anyway. We paused issue #577, wrote MEMO-2026-05-10-3tkz (the substrate-capture stop-rule, “name-and-pause when fix-cost outpaces hypothetical value”), and shipped a paired ops doc cataloguing the eight specific ...