

Simple Signals Beat Thorough Dashboards

Paying attention to and acting on to a few simple signals is more valuable than ignoring complex dashboards with bigger potential.

Use this guide to keep signals visible, usable, and tied to real decisions.

What signal tells us this work is helping?

- What changed because this existed?
- What should look different if this worked?
- What would concern us if it didn't move?

A signal shows direction, not perfection.

One meaningful signal beats many weak ones.

What counts as a signal?

Good signals are:

- Close to the work
- Influenced by our choices
- Comparable over time

Examples:

- Engagement improving or declining across campaigns
- Fewer revision rounds after clearer intake
- Faster approvals or decisions
- Behavior changing after a content or design update

If a number doesn't change what we do next, it's noise.

How should we read the signal?

Use the 3 Looks:

- Now – What does it look like today?
- Before – What did it look like last time?
- Pattern – Improving, flat, or slipping?

Snapshot data explains. Patterns teach.

What should this signal influence?

Ask:

- If this improves, what should we keep doing?
- If it stalls or slips, what might we change?
- Is this within our control to adjust?
- What would we try next, even in a small way?

Simple > Complex Act > Ignore

Keep it lightweight

Tracking doesn't require dashboards.

Signals can live as:

- A note
- A short list
- A screenshot
- A quick post-project comment

Consistency beats precision.

Effort vs Insight Gut Check

Before tracking, pause and ask:

- Is this signal worth the effort to maintain?
- Does it help us make better decisions?
- Is there a simpler version that gets most of the insight?

High effort with low insight is a signal to simplify.

Language you can use

These phrases help keep signals practical, not performative:

- "What signal are we watching here?"
- "What changed compared to last time?"
- "Is that a trend or a one-off?"
- "What would we adjust next time based on this?"

How to use this tool

- Use it after work ships, not during reporting
- Use it during existing check-ins, not new meetings
- Revisit when work repeats or patterns emerge

This should take minutes, not meetings.

Why this matters

- Signals help us learn from the work
- Trends help us improve faster
- Fewer signals help us focus better
- Thoughtful learning builds trust and credibility

Bring your expertise. Think. Improve. Ship.