

The Status Update That Doesn't Waste Time

From the COO Seat — The Free Vault · Vault 009 · Version 1.0

Four blocks, five minutes to write, zero minutes wasted reading. The update format for people who run things.

The format

SHIPPED — Done and real this week. Two to three bullets, past tense, with numbers where they exist. “Invoice cycle: 9 days to 4.” What shipped is the only section that earns you a reputation. Everything else is context.

NEXT — What ships next, and when. Two bullets max, with dates. Dates you'll defend, not dates you'll renegotiate on Friday. If “next” is always the same bullet moving down the list, that's the finding — surface the blocker instead of hiding it.

BLOCKED — What's stuck and who unblocks it. The most valuable block on the page. Rule: every blocker has a name after it — the person whose move it is. No name, no blocker; it's just a wish. If nothing's blocked, write “Nothing” and enjoy the rare peace.

NEED — Decisions, money, or attention. Or “nothing.” The block readers actually open the update for. One line asks, each answerable with a “yes.” “Need: approval on the \$600 tool by Wednesday.” If it needs a meeting, say so — but notice how often a well-formed NEED replaces the meeting.

The three rules

1. **Numbers over adjectives.** “Making progress” is banned. Progress has a number, a date, or a named blocker — or it isn't progress.
2. **Same day, same channel, every [WEEKDAY].** The rhythm is the value. Sporadic updates train readers to ignore them; reliable ones train readers to act on them.
3. **Five minutes to write.** When it takes longer, you're using the update to avoid a conversation. Have the conversation.

Why it works

Every reader gets their block: skimmers read SHIPPED, decision-makers read NEED, peers read BLOCKED. One page, four jobs, no meetings harmed.

Free vault item. Provided as-is. Full terms: same rules, no price.