

fast **informed** **impactful.**

How to Master Decision-Making

**Inefficient decisions
means missed
opportunities,
frustrated teams, and
lost momentum.**



Katrin Freihofner

Co-Founder of Straion

Product Management,
UX Design/UX Management



Straion



elastic



dynatrace

Outline.

We, as Engineering leaders face daily choices that can make or break projects.

- Findings and insights from 75+ interviews
 - Tech companies, 150+ engineers, distributed, b2b saas, banking, data heavy products
- Takeaways and toolkit you can use tomorrow

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Disclaimer!

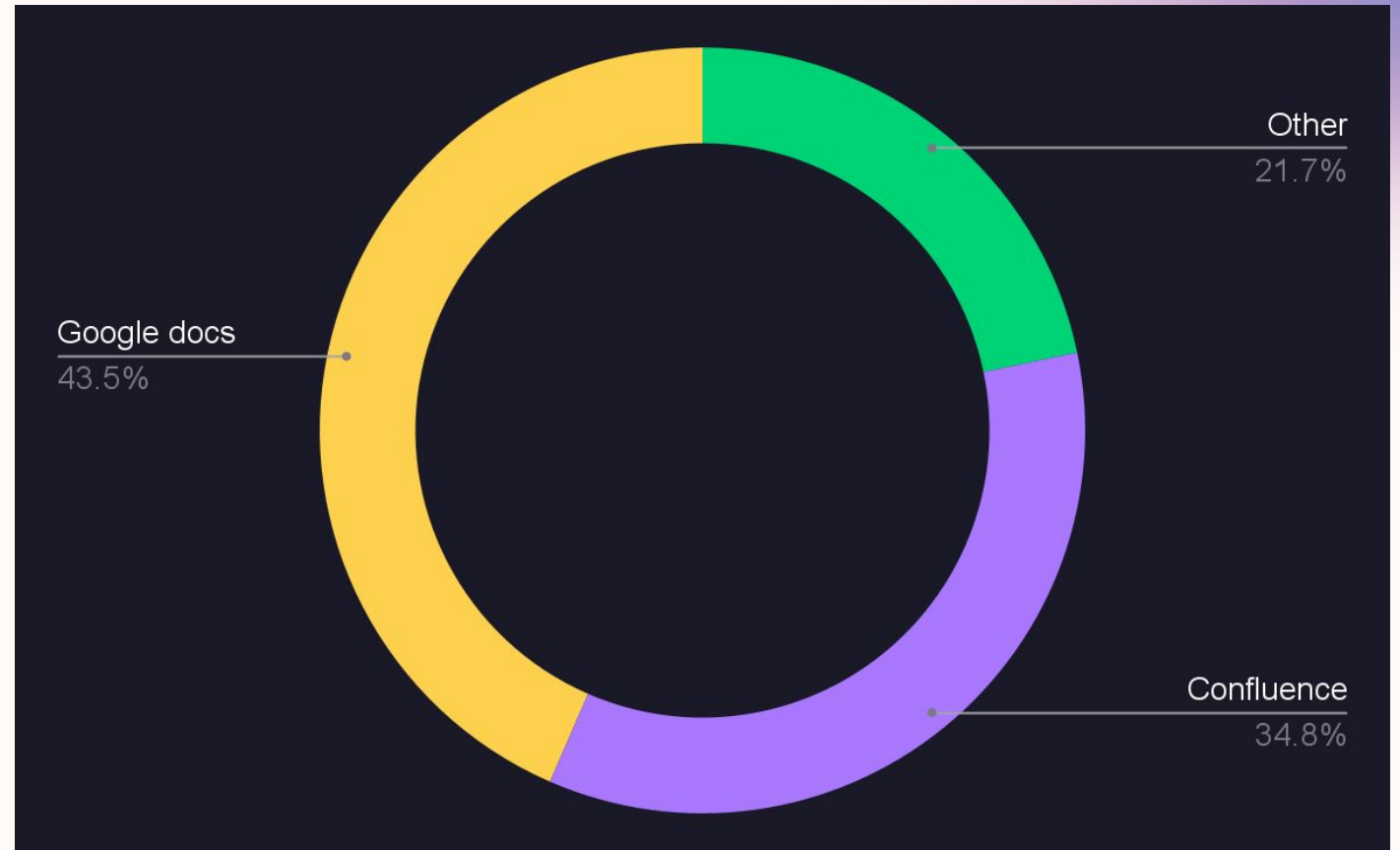
Software specs.

All interviewed companies use RFC-like processes for structured proposals and feedback.



Software specs.

Requests for comments (RFC),
Software Designs, Software Specs,
Architectural decision records (ADR),
DACI records



“Utilizing decision records has significantly strengthened our development by meticulously tracking every decision made.

- Principal Software Engineer

Benefits.

- transparency, knowledge sharing, consensus-building, and onboarding.
- Confidence in decision-making
- Avoiding redundant conversations
- Cross-functional collaboration

“ Once we had an RFC running for about 10 months. Looking back, we realised – there has been **no clarity on decision making process & roles** of participants in it. Once addressed, the decision has been nurtured almost instantly.

- Engineering Manager

“

...What's difficult is to help engineers find out who should be the decision makers involved...

- Tech lead

The drawbacks.

- unclear ownership and roles
- bureaucratic bottlenecks
- poor tooling
- endless reviews, and repeated debates

Teams work around the process as they see them as additional work and prefer prototyping



5 steps to fast informed impactful decisions

1. Template.

Title

Implement ✨

Executive summary

Motivation

Why is this important? Why should others consider this proposal right now?

Goals

What are the goals of your proposal.

Out of scope

Define what is out of scope for this RFC.

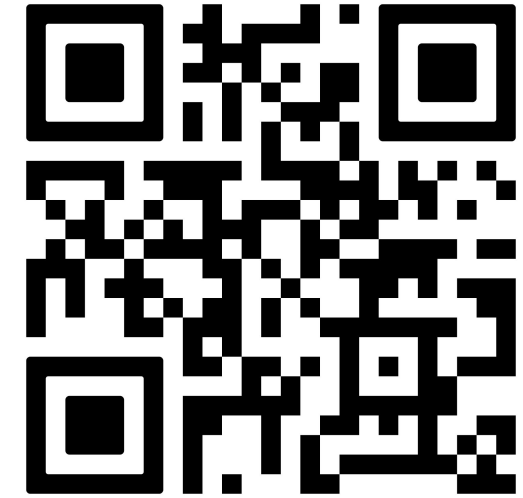
Design proposal

User impact

Does this have any user impact? If so, what is the predicted impact and how do you propose to measure it?

Alternatives

Which alternatives have you considered?



[https://github.com/
katrin-freihofner/
leadDev](https://github.com/katrin-freihofner/leadDev)

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Risks

Think about

- * Dependencies

- * Security, Privacy and Compliance risks

- * Performance

- :: * Metrics and Monitoring

- * Timeline and Roll-out

Open questions



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katrin-freihofner/
leadDev](https://github.com/katrin-freihofner/leadDev)

1. Template.

Review the following content of a [insert document type] according to "on writing well" by William Zinsser. Do not change the overall structure of the content.



[https://github.com/
katrin-freihofner/
leadDev](https://github.com/katrin-freihofner/leadDev)

“

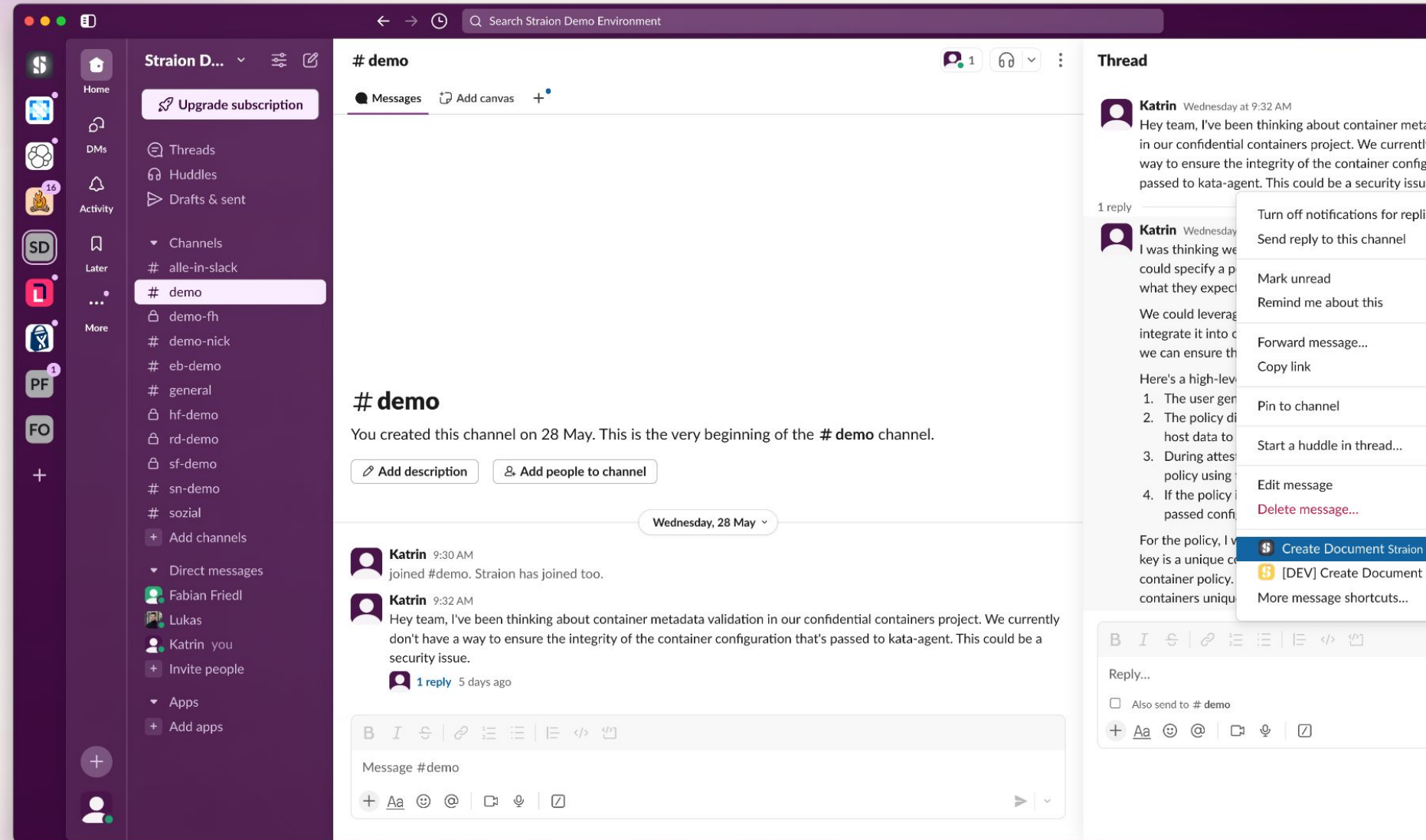
**...engineers not knowing
how to write or how to start
a document. I've seen that a
lot...**

- Software Engineer

2. Automate creation.

Use AI tools to summarize discussions and transcripts

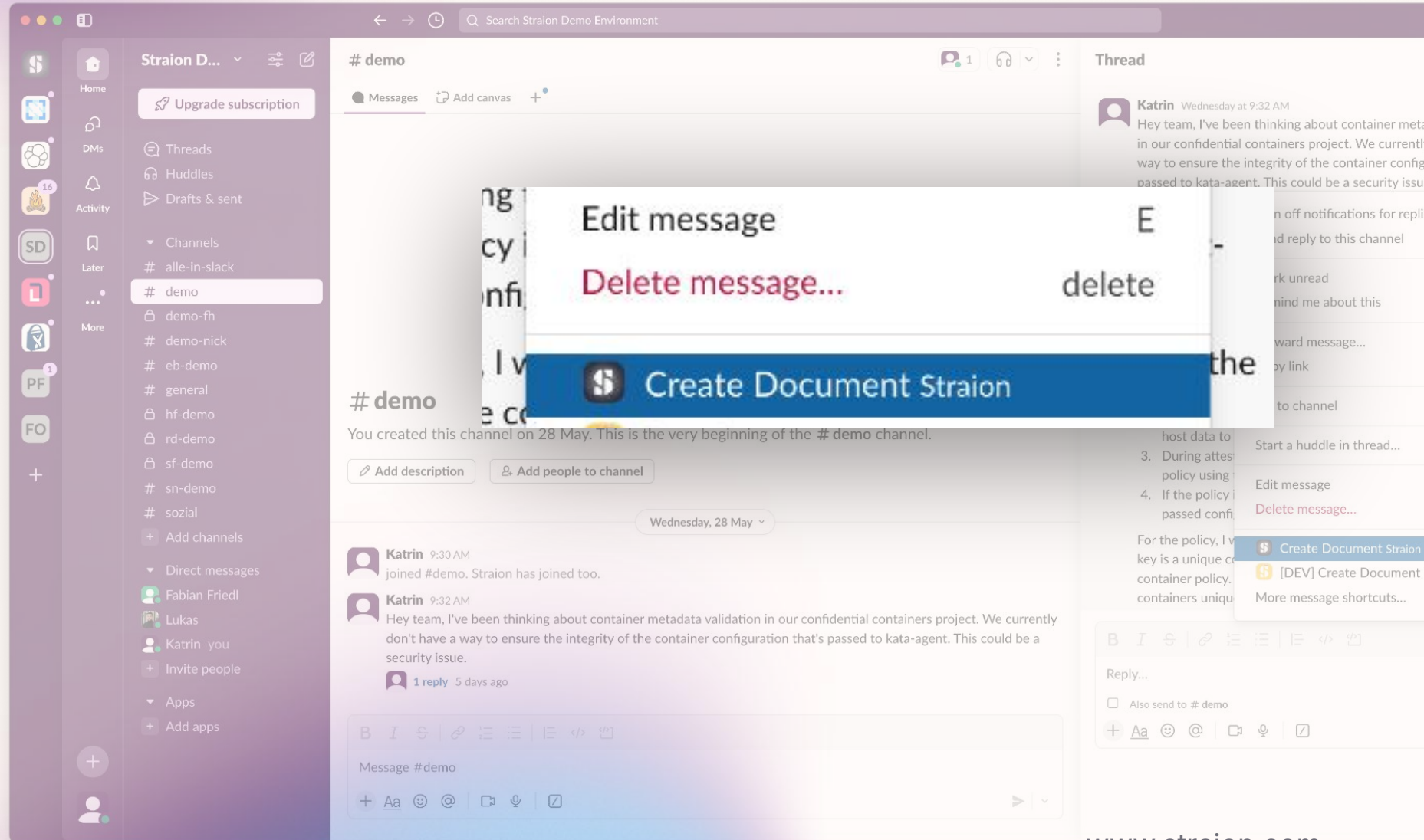
Feed the summaries and your template into your preferred AI tool to get the first draft ready



2. Automate creation.

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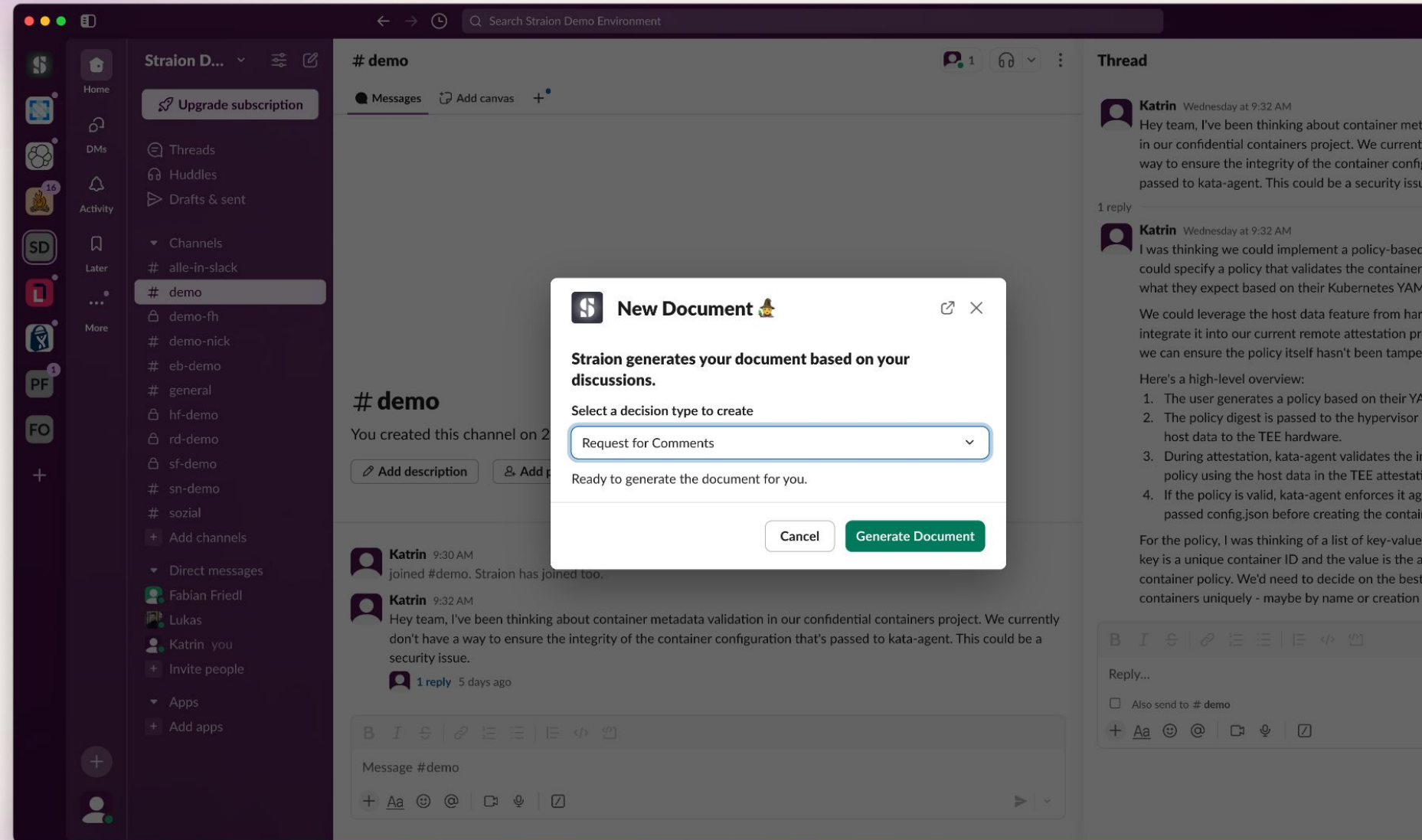
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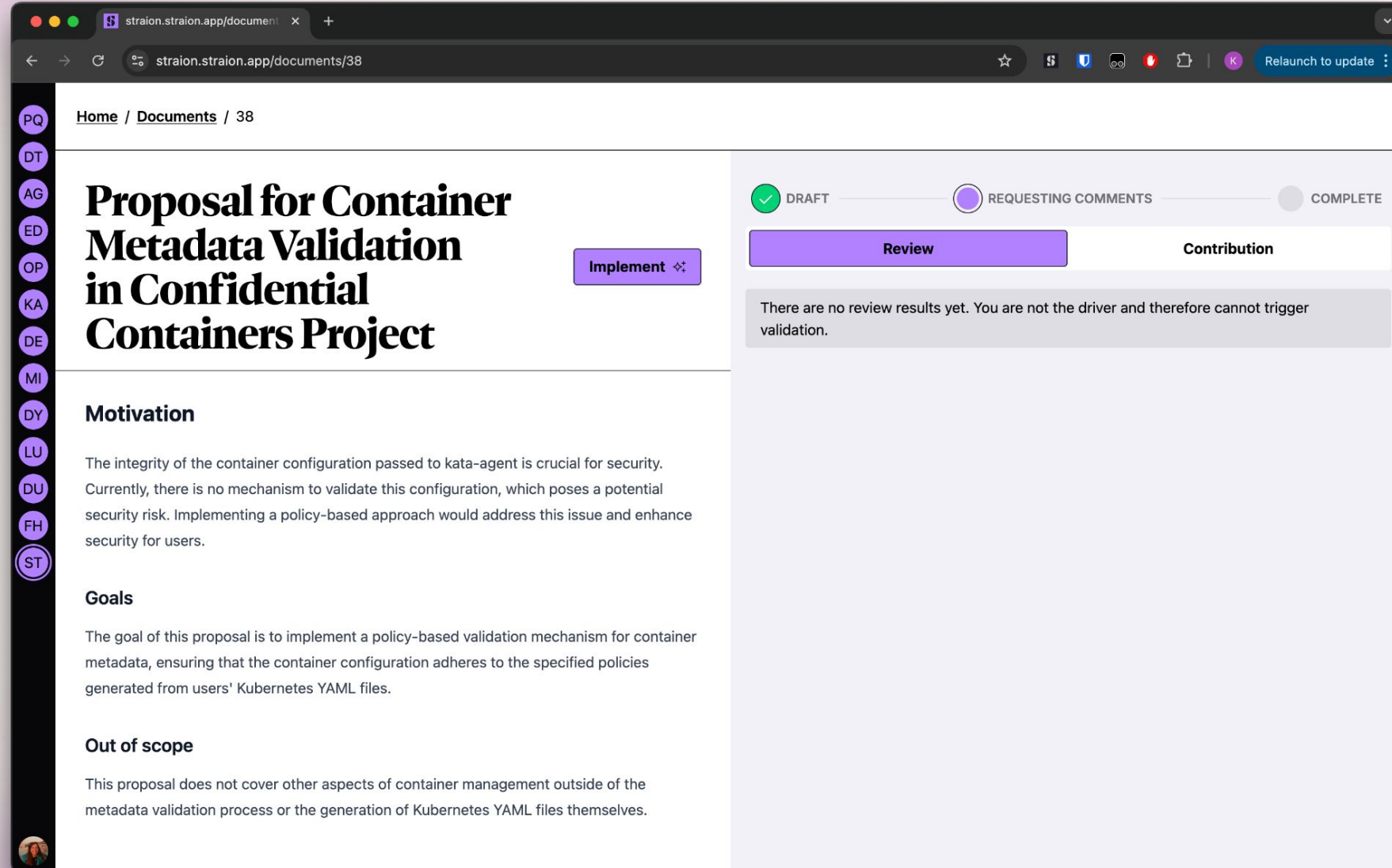
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The screenshot displays the Straion web application interface. The browser address bar shows the URL `straion.straion.app/documents/38`. The page header includes a navigation bar with a sidebar on the left containing circular icons labeled with initials (PQ, DT, AG, ED, OP, KA, DE, MI, DY, LU, DU, FH, ST). The main content area is titled "Home / Documents / 38" and features a document titled "Proposal for Container Metadata Validation in Confidential Containers Project". A purple "Implement" button is visible next to the title. The document content is organized into sections: "Motivation", "Goals", and "Out of scope". The "Motivation" section states that the integrity of the container configuration passed to kata-agent is crucial for security, and currently, there is no mechanism to validate this configuration, which poses a potential security risk. Implementing a policy-based approach would address this issue and enhance security for users. The "Goals" section states that the goal of this proposal is to implement a policy-based validation mechanism for container metadata, ensuring that the container configuration adheres to the specified policies generated from users' Kubernetes YAML files. The "Out of scope" section states that this proposal does not cover other aspects of container management outside of the metadata validation process or the generation of Kubernetes YAML files themselves. On the right side of the document, there is a status bar with a progress indicator showing three stages: "DRAFT" (checked), "REQUESTING COMMENTS", and "COMPLETE". Below the progress bar, there are two buttons: "Review" and "Contribution". A message below these buttons states: "There are no review results yet. You are not the driver and therefore cannot trigger validation."

2. Automate creation.

Review the provided context and use it to fill the document. If the context does not explicitly provide the information, leave the section empty...



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3. Clear roles.

DACI Model



Accountability, clear responsibilities, faster decisions.

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DACI Model



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3. Clear roles.

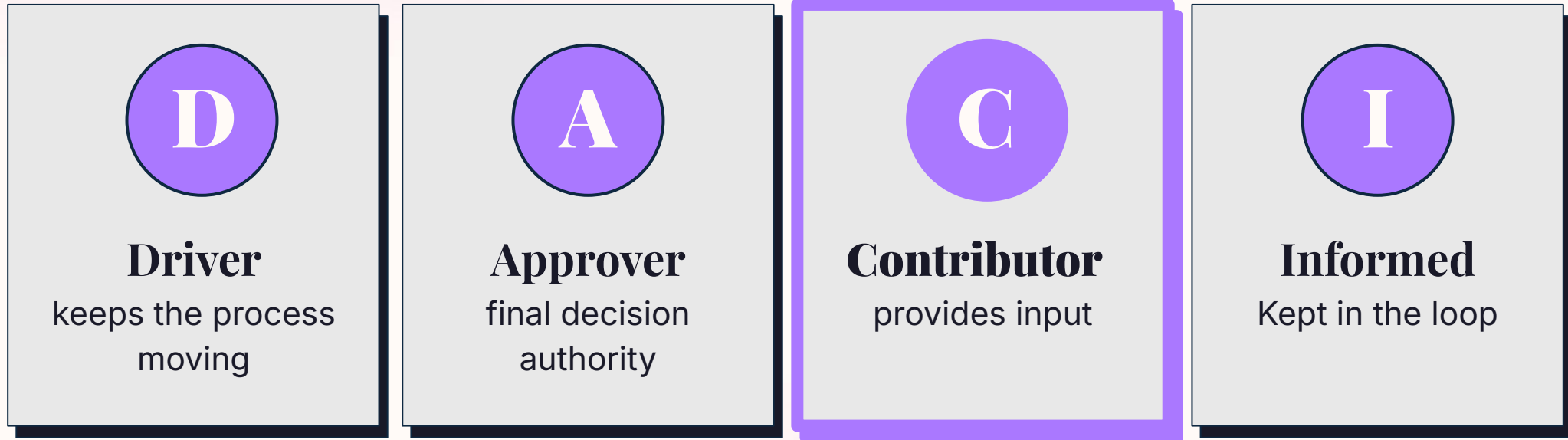
DACI Model



Accountability, clear responsibilities, faster decisions.

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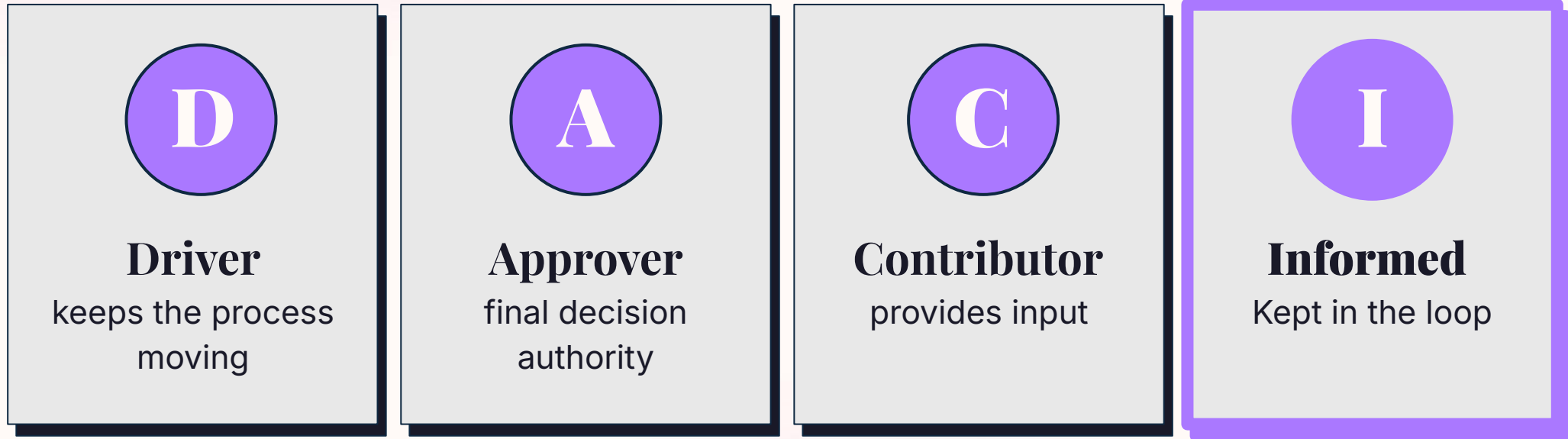
DACI Model



Accountability, clear responsibilities, faster decisions.

3. Clear roles.

DACI Model



Accountability, clear responsibilities, faster decisions.

“

...DACI brings much-needed accountability, clarity, and a single point of reference to decision-making, which I love....

- Principal Software Engineer

4. Scope.

For Drivers: be aware of comments derailing the conversation.

[< Back](#)



Michael Scott · 4 yr. ago

Are we considering an office goat?



4 Replies Last reply 4 yr. ago

Replies



Dwight Schrute · 4 yr. ago

whatever



Jim Halpert · 4 yr. ago

yes, please



Pam Beesly · 4 yr. ago

wtf - I did not know that.



4. Scope.



Michael Scott • 4 yr. ago

Are we considering an office goat?

Clarify the scope

Thank you for the suggestion! While it's a great point, it's outside the scope of this software specification document.

< Back



Michael Scott • 4 yr. ago

Are we considering an office goat?

ies Last reply 4 yr. ago



Schrute • 4 yr. ago

whatever



1



1



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5. Automatic updates.

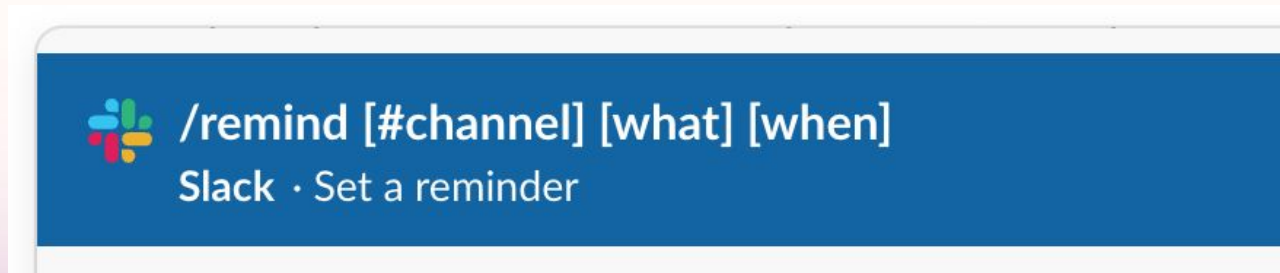
- Set explicit timelines for review and approval to avoid endless discussions. (50% of participants)
- Use automation (Slack notifications, scheduled messages/emails,...) to gather feedback, notify stakeholders, and track status changes.
- Communicate outcomes

Due Date

 Pick a date

< June 2025 >

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5



Summary.

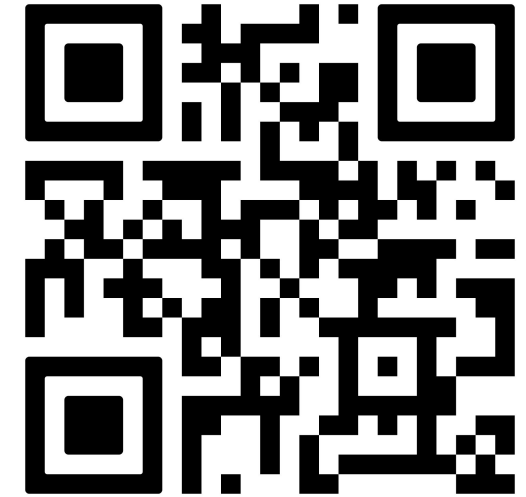
1. Get a template
2. Automatic creation
3. Define roles
4. Get out-of-scope message ready
5. Automate updates



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