

# Setup Allocation Map

A one-page diagnostic for finding out who actually absorbs your setup work: the product, the user, or the Support and Sales teams quietly picking up what the product doesn't.

THE GOVERNING PRINCIPLE

The product should absorb every unit of pre-value work that does not require uniquely human context, consent, or judgment.

## Classify every step before first value

APPLY IN THIS ORDER

Every step you don't classify becomes default work for someone. Usually not the person you'd choose.

**Ready State:** the earliest point at which the product is configured enough for a meaningful task and initial result.

|                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>Eliminate01</div> <div>Remove work that does not materially help the user reach Ready State.</div> <div>Does this need to happen at all?</div> | <div>Infer02</div> <div>Use reliable signals the product already has, then make correction easy.</div> <div>Can we determine this safely?</div>     | <div>Default03</div> <div>Provide a sensible, transparent, reversible starting choice.</div> <div>Can we prevent a blank-state decision?</div>       |
| <div>Automate04</div> <div>Let the product complete repeatable work when it has enough context.</div> <div>Can the system do this safely?</div>     | <div>Defer05</div> <div>Move necessary decisions until the user has context and the choice matters.</div> <div>Must this happen before value?</div> | <div>Ask06</div> <div>Keep only decisions requiring human context, consent, accountability, or judgment.</div> <div>Why must the user do this?</div> |

|                                                                                                  |                                                                                           |                                                                                            |                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>Ready-State Rate</div> <div>% reaching a useful configured state in the target window</div> | <div>Time to Ready State</div> <div>Elapsed time from entry to first usable outcome</div> | <div>Product Absorption Rate</div> <div>Weighted setup effort handled by the product</div> | <div>Assistance Dependency</div> <div>% requiring Support, Sales, or implementation help</div> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Time to value measures the distance. **Setup absorption explains who is carrying the weight.**

Can't answer who owns this? That's a **Workshop**.  
Already know where it's breaking? That's the **Diagnostic**. · dangomby.com

## Executive self-diagnostic

Check each statement that is true of your trial or onboarding experience.

- ☐ New users enter an empty product and are told where to begin.
  - ☐ Tours explain features before users have a reason to care.
  - ☐ Setup questions collect data but do not configure the experience.
  - ☐ Users leave the product for credentials, documentation, or approval.
  - ☐ Support, Sales, or implementation repeatedly performs predictable setup work.
  - ☐ Teams disagree on what "activated," "onboarded," or "ready" means.
  - ☐ Progress is measured by steps completed rather than capability created.
  - ☐ Users configure advanced settings before seeing an initial result.
- 0-2

Mostly product-absorbed. Validate that automation preserves control and trust.
- 3-5

Friction is being managed. The experience likely needs journey-level redesign.
- 6-8

Onboarding is compensating for product and organizational complexity.