

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU BELIEVE A PREVENTION CLAIM

Use these 5 questions to test whether an interruption was truly prevented and whether the proof holds up.

Fewer tickets can look like progress. But a lower count alone doesn't prove that IT prevented an interruption. Demand may have changed, the issue may have gone unreported, or an automated action may have run without fixing anything.

To make a credible prevention claim, you need a clear record of what the system detected, why it acted, what changed, and whether the employee was ever affected.

How to use this checklist

Start with one qualifying question. Did the condition match the known failure signature? Prevention claims only hold for conditions the system already knew how to recognize. If the system hadn't seen it before, what happened was a fast catch. Good outcome, but the wrong label.

Then use the five questions to review an automation, pilot, vendor claim, or internal performance report. If the evidence can't answer all five, the prevention claim needs another look.

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01 **DETECTION:** Did the system catch the condition before it affected the employee?

The signal has to arrive before the employee notices anything. Look for what the system saw and when it saw it. Then check whether the condition matched something it already knew how to recognize.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ☐ A timestamped signal or event
- ☐ The affected device, application, location, or group of users
- ☐ A known failure signature or documented deviation from baseline
- ☐ The expected impact and when it was likely to happen

WARNING SIGN

The evidence trail starts with a ticket or employee report.

02 **DECISION:** What rules governed the decision to act?

Automation needs guardrails. The evidence should show which policy allowed the action, whether the confidence threshold was met, how risk was assessed, and when a person needed to step in.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ☐ The policy or rule authorizing the action
- ☐ The confidence score and threshold for action
- ☐ The risk level and limits on the permitted action
- ☐ Any approval, escalation, or except

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The only explanation is that the AI or automation chose the action.

03 **ACTION:** What action ran, and what changed?

You should be able to retrace exactly what happened. What ran, where it ran, what changed, and how the team could reverse it if the result wasn't right.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ☐ The action, workflow, or automation version
- ☐ The affected users, devices, or systems
- ☐ The state before and after
- ☐ The result, any errors, and the rollback pathen

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The automation job completed, but there's no evidence that anything changed in the environment.



04 **VALIDATION:** Can you show the employee impact never occurred?

This is the point where proactive work can become a credible prevention claim. The telemetry should show that the condition cleared, stayed resolved for a defined period, and never caused the expected employee impact.

Validation has a blind spot. The absence of impact is visible. Its cause is not. That inference rests on the known signature and the historical pattern for the condition, which is why the signature gets established before anything is counted.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ☐ Confirmation that the condition recovered
- ☐ A defined validation period with no recurrence
- ☐ No related incident, ticket, or experience degradation
- ☐ The expected impact for that signature, and confirmation it didn't occur

WARNING SIGN

The action ran, but no one checked whether the condition held.

05 **LEARNING:** What did the team learn from the outcome?

Good prevention gets better with every outcome, including the misses. The result should lead to a stronger rule, threshold, workflow, knowledge asset or model, so the same problem is less likely to come back.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ☐ An updated rule, threshold, workflow, or knowledge asset
- ☐ A clear owner and completion date
- ☐ Ongoing monitoring for recurrence
- ☐ Any exceptions or failure patterns captured for review

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The event was closed, but nothing was updated to stop the same pattern from returning.

CAN YOU STAND BEHIND THE CLAIM?

An interruption counts as avoided only when four things are true. A known or high-confidence condition was detected. An approved action was executed. Telemetry confirmed recovery. The expected employee impact didn't occur inside the defined validation window.

Anything short of all four is an action taken, not an interruption avoided.

A prevention claim should have a connected evidence trail across all five stages:

DETECTION → DECISIONS → VACTION → VALIDATION → LEARNING

If a stage is missing, call the outcome what it is. The work may still be valuable and proactive, but it hasn't yet been proven to be an avoided interruption.

Claims that carry a dollar figure need one more test. Every avoided hour should be traced to a historical baseline, a recurrence pattern, a known signature, or a predicted incident probability. Without one of those, savings are an assertion.



Put prevention on the record

Building a prevention model the business can trust starts with the right evidence, clear guardrails, and a reliable way to validate results. Anyone who can't produce the record shouldn't be reporting the number.

Let's look at where your current approach stands and what it will take to strengthen it.

Discuss your strategy

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