

Event Storming a Process

Build one precise shared model of a specific process with everyone who touches it in the room, so the team operates from one mental model instead of five.

DURATION

2h 40m

GROUP SIZE

4–8

people

WHAT YOU BRING

A scoped flow (pipeline, cycle, incident, or feature area), a wall or large surface, and sticky notes in the Process Modelling palette.

WHAT YOU LEAVE WITH

- A wall of events in time order with commands and actors
- A prioritised list of named hotspots with owners and next steps
- Agreed vocabulary and contested rules resolved as policies
- Photographs and a transcribed event, command, and hotspot list

WHO TO INVITE

- **Facilitator.** Runs the session without contributing content; manages time, silence, and flow between phases.
- **Domain expert(s).** One or two people who know how the process actually works -- finance lead, SRE, incident responder.
- **Developers.** At least one, ideally including a junior; they ask the questions seniors have stopped asking.
- **Product or design.** The person who will turn the event wall and hotspot list into stories and follow-up work.
- **Operations, support, frontline.** For incident, deployment, or support-heavy flows they are the domain experts, not afterthoughts.

USE WHEN

- A specific flow is about to be built and mental models quietly differ
- Inheriting a process nobody documented
- Investigating an incident that crossed two or three services
- Digging into a named hotspot surfaced by a Big Picture session

AVOID WHEN

- × Scope is a whole business or product line -- run Big Picture first
- × The team is ready to design code -- run Architecture
- × One team with a strong shared mental model already
- × Scope is one screen, function, or isolated job

How the session runs

- **Phase 1 -- Chaotic exploration (20 min)**

Set safety and granularity, then everyone writes orange events silently for twenty minutes. The goal is 40-80 notes on the wall, duplicates and contradictions included, with no talking until the timer stops.

- **Phase 2 -- Timeline (30 min)**

The room arranges orange notes left-to-right in chronological order, talking through disagreements and pink-noting contested spots. Expect mess at the midpoint; tidiness means the scope was too small or one person did all the work.

- **Phase 3 -- Commands and actors (20 min)**

Add blue commands beneath each event, then small yellow actor squares above, deduplicated per band. Capture agreed rules as purple policies with pale-green read models; leave contested rules as pink hotspots.

- **Phase 4 -- Hotspots (30 min)**

Read the pinks aloud, cluster them into 3-7 themed piles, name each pile, and assign an owner and next step per pile. Identify, name, assign, and move on -- solving is not this phase's job.