

CL 17

COACHING LAYER

Coaching an Embedded Practice in real work.



Problem-Solving &
Critical Thinking



PRACTICE: The Second Option

Generate one credible alternative before you commit — and make your first idea earn its place.

THE HOOK

The first workable answer has an advantage: it arrived first. One credible alternative is often enough to reveal whether you found the best path — or simply stopped searching.

DEFAULT

BEHAVIOR SPECTRUM

EMBEDDED

01

SIGNAL

Are they catching it in time?

They're about to commit to a solution. Note whether you're reviewing it before it ships, or hearing about it after.

You see their plan doc — one option, no comparison yet. A signal, not yet confirmed.

02

REDIRECT

Is the new or default action running?

Did they generate a real second option and compare, or commit to the first idea? Can't tell, ask. Can tell, reinforce it.

They mention weighing a second approach before choosing. You reinforce it: "Do that again."

03

SHIFT

Is this a pattern, or one good moment?

The second-option check shows up on smaller decisions too, not just the big ones.

Third recommendation this month with a real alternative named — not a one-off, a pattern.

04

EMBEDDED

Is it showing up unprompted?

No prompting needed. They compare by default, and can always answer what else they considered.

A stakeholder says, "She always knows why she didn't go the other way." You name it: "Keep that."



REPEAT UNTIL EMBEDDED

BEFORE (Old Pattern)

- The Practitioner commits to the first workable answer.
- No one finds out if it was the best one.

AFTER (Embedded)

- The Practitioner generates one credible alternative and compares.
- Their first idea earns its place, or loses to a better one.

THE GOAL

Consistent evidence a real second option gets weighed before committing — without a reminder.