

Companion tool to *The Silent Handshake* by Pradeep Billa. Use at every consequential configuration decision, workaround, or scope deferral. For full Rationale Gap mechanics, see Chapter 5 of the complete book at silenthandshake.com.

Appendix D: Decision Rationale Checklist

Purpose

Use this checklist whenever a consequential ERP decision is made: a configuration choice, workaround, data-mapping rule, scoped deferral, exception rule, security change, or accepted limitation.

Its job is simple: close the Rationale Gap before the next team has to reverse-engineer the decision.

The Five Required Fields

Every consequential decision should preserve these five fields:

1. **Decision:** What was chosen?
2. **Rationale:** Why was it chosen?
3. **Rejected alternative:** What viable option was not chosen, and why?
4. **Known limitation or dependency:** What fragility comes with this choice?
5. **Revisit trigger:** Under what future condition should the decision be reopened?

If one of these fields is missing, the rationale record is incomplete.

Checklist

- The decision is described specifically enough that another analyst can identify the exact object, rule, or behavior affected.
- The rationale explains the business, technical, or compliance reason for the choice.
- At least one real alternative is named, with the reason it was rejected.
- Any known limitation, dependency, exception, or downstream fragility is stated explicitly.
- A clear revisit trigger is recorded.

- The related artifact is linked: ticket, config object, design note, migration workbook tab, or change record.
 - The record was created at decision time or closure time, not reconstructed later from memory.
 - The owner of the decision is named.
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Quick Template

Decision / Reference

[What was chosen?]

Why it was chosen

[Why was this option selected?]

Rejected alternative

[What was considered and not chosen? Why?]

Known limitation / dependency

[What does this choice depend on, or what risk does it carry?]

Revisit trigger

[What future condition should cause the team to reopen this decision?]

Linked artifacts

[Ticket, object, workbook tab, design note, or test evidence]

Red Flags

- "That's just how we set it up."

- "We can figure out why later."
- "The ticket shows the change, so that's enough."
- "Everyone in the room understood it."
- "We did not write down the exception because it was temporary."

Each of these signals that the decision survived but the reasoning did not.

Fast Audit

Ask these three questions:

1. Can a new analyst explain why this exists?
2. Can they name the trade-off that produced it?
3. Can they tell when it should be revisited?

If the answer to any question is no, the Rationale Gap is still open.

For the Rationale Gap in full, see Chapter 5. For per-change use inside CVR, see Appendix E. For seam-level governance, see Appendix C.