If someone has sent you this: they'd like to hand some work over to you, and they'd like it to stay yours. Tick what you've done, and talk about the rest.

Handing work over so it stays handed over

Tick it on your own, or each of you separately and then compare.

Before it's handed over

- [ ] **You've written down what "done" looks like.**
  Including the deadline and the standard, so nobody has to guess what would be accepted.
- [ ] **You've listed what's needed to do it.**
  Access, contacts, budget and any information that's currently only in one person's head.
- [ ] **You've agreed which parts have to stay the same.**
  Usually only a few; everything else can be done the new person's way.

While it's being done

- [ ] **You've agreed how often you'll check in.**
  Fixed times, so checking in doesn't turn into watching.
- [ ] **You've agreed what happens if it's running late.**
  Something other than taking it back, such as moving the deadline or getting help.
- [ ] **Customers and colleagues know who has it now.**
  Otherwise they keep going to the person who used to have it, and the work goes back with them.
- [ ] **You've agreed what the new person decides alone.**
  Work handed over without the decisions that go with it is still the old owner's work.

Making it stick

- [ ] **You've talked about what happens when it's done differently.**
  Said once at the start, it saves an argument later.
- [ ] **You've noted which work came back in the last three months, and what happened just before.**
  The pattern usually shows what to agree this time.
- [ ] **There's a date to look at how it's gone.**
  A month is usually enough to see whether it has stayed handed over.

Why these points are important

Most work that goes back to the person who handed it over goes back for one of two reasons: it was late, or it wasn't done their way. In my experience both are settled, or not, before the work changes hands.

Work that most often comes back

- Work with a key customer.
- Quotes and pricing.
- Work the person handing it over did for years.
- Work with no written standard.
- Work where a mistake is visible to customers.

These are also the pieces of work that most need someone else able to do them.

Agree "done" before you start

If "done" isn't written down, the only test left is whether it looks like the old version, and nobody else can pass that test.

Decide what happens when it's late

Taking the work back is the quickest fix and the most expensive one, because it tells the person, and everyone watching, that the handover wasn't real. I'd agree something else in advance: a new deadline, help from someone, a conversation.

Tell everyone else

Work often comes back through other people: a customer who still emails the person who used to do it, a colleague who asks them out of habit. Telling those people who has it now closes that route.

If you're the one taking it on

It helps to ask what "done" looks like before you start, and to say early when something is running late. The handovers that last are usually the ones where the person taking the work on raised problems first.



WHERE COACHING FITS

People at this point often use coaching to work out why particular work keeps coming back to them, and what they'd do with the time if it didn't. I won't tell you what to hand over. I'll ask the questions that show what has kept you holding on to it.

What to look for in any coach
simonbowen.com/guides/choosing-a-coach

A free first conversation
simonbowen.com/enquire/?moment=scaling