

Memory & continuity

Ed Schaefer · Version 1.0 · August 2026 · edward-schaefer.com/cards/memory-continuity · Free to share

What agents read, and what survives the session.

Foundation area. This is one of four practice areas the field guide treats as running underneath all three shifts: today it's the only one of the four that's live.

- The term "**Career Delta File**" comes from Manager Tools, not from me. I've kept one for about a decade — a plain running log, month headings, bullets in reverse chronological order, everything that doesn't fit on a resume but ends up building one: the presentations, the workshops, the things I learned, the things I got wrong.
- The discipline is simple: write down what changed, on a cadence, before you have to trust memory to hold it. A few minutes and a place to write is enough to start. No system required.
- Here's the bridge to agent memory, and the reason this is the card's whole point: an agent that finishes a session and forgets everything has the identical failure mode as a person who stopped updating their file. Real work happened. None of it got written down.
- Being honest about the gaps is part of the practice. It's not something I hide. My own file has stretches where I stopped updating — I leave them visibly blank. I don't backfill a falsely clean record.
- I'm running one live experiment on top of this: using AI to parse a decade of entries and help backfill what's missing. It's tooling around the practice. It doesn't replace it, and I don't yet know if it's something I can share.

What's behind this card

A decade of gaps cost me more than I expected, and that full story is at [The Career Delta File: A Decade of Notes I Almost Lost](#).

This is one of six cards today. The field guide maps seventeen practice areas, and I'm growing this set as each one earns its own depth.

This is a fit question, not a recipe. Where your team actually sits against this list, and what that's costing, is what the [Engineering Ways of Working Diagnostic](#) is built to find.