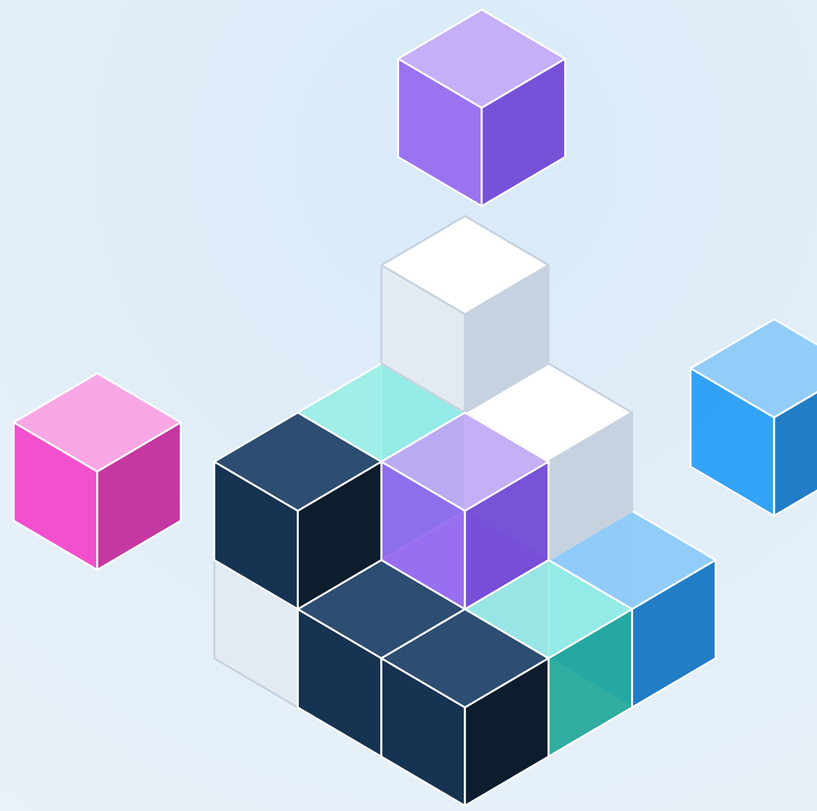
OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

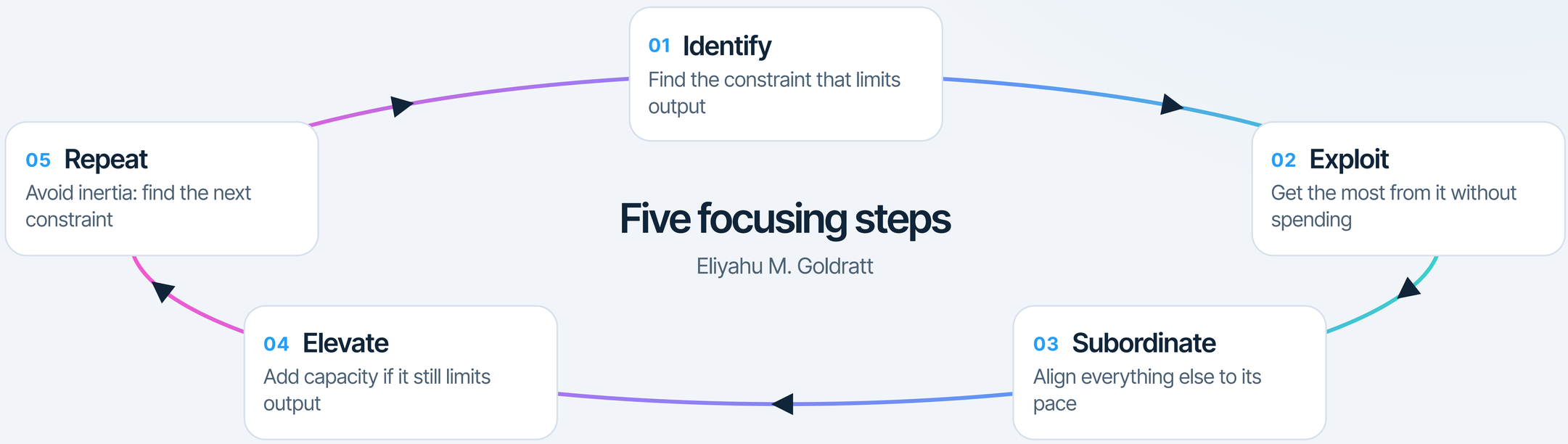
Theory of Constraints Five Focusing Steps

The Theory of Constraints says every system has one constraint that limits its output. Five focusing steps make that constraint the center of all improvement.



01 THE CORE MODEL

FIVE FOCUSING STEPS · ONE CONSTRAINT AT A TIME



Constraint

The resource that limits the throughput of the whole system.

Throughput

The rate at which the system generates money through sales.

Drum-buffer-rope

The constraint sets the pace, a buffer protects it, release is tied to it.

02 WHERE TO INVEST

An hour lost at the constraint is an hour lost for the whole system.

LOCAL OPTIMA — SYSTEM FLOW

OPTIMIZING EVERYWHERE

- Non-constraints run flat out and build WIP
- Efficiency targets for every machine
- Investments that do not raise output

FOCUSING ON THE CONSTRAINT

+ A buffer protects it from starving
+ Quality checks in front of the constraint
+ Work is released at its pace only

03 WORKED EXAMPLE

FORGE SHOP · HEAT-TREATMENT FURNACE LIMITS OUTPUT

IDENTIFY
Furnace
queue always in front

→

EXPLOIT
Load during breaks
no idle furnace time

→

SUBORDINATE
Release at its pace
upstream WIP capped

→

ELEVATE
Second shift
only after steps 2 and 3

04 MANAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

01
Find it at the gemba
The constraint is where work piles up, not where people are busiest.

02
Exploit before you buy
Breaks, setups and defects at the constraint are cheap capacity.

03
Expect it to move
After elevating, a new constraint appears; restart the loop.

05 COMMON MISTAKE

LIMITATION

Running every machine at full load

Keeping non-constraints busy only builds inventory and lengthens lead time.