



THE SMALL PROBLEM YOU IGNORE TODAY IS THE EXPENSIVE ONE YOU PAY FOR NEXT YEAR.

HERE ARE 5 SIGNS IT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN.

Most expensive problems do not start expensive. Watch the first signals.

● IN DESIGN

×1

Found while design is open.
A small fix, and no one after you ever notices. This is the good place to be.

● IN VALIDATION

×10

Found in testing. Now it means rework, more tests and much less time.

● IN THE FIELD

×100

Found after shipment.
Warranty claims, urgent calls, and a customer who trusts you a little less.

*The question is not only what the problem is. It is **when you find it.***

5 signals a small issue is about to get expensive

01 Each team describes the requirement a little differently

When people do not share the same understanding, the gap does not go away by itself. It waits quietly, and it shows up later — when it is harder to fix.

03 Testing has already started

Once validation is running, even a small change is not small anymore. It means new tests, new reports and new dates — and you know how that feels.

05 The fix now affects the schedule

The moment it touches schedules, deliveries or a customer, it is not only a technical issue anymore. It has become a business one — and now it is your problem in a much bigger way.

02 The same issue keeps coming back

If it returns after you fixed it, it is not bad luck. You probably fixed what you could see and missed the real cause underneath.

04 More people are getting involved

When engineering, quality, production and purchasing are all in the room, the problem has already stopped being small. You can feel it in the meeting.

Before accepting a “small issue”, ask:

Can this still be corrected quietly?

Will it trigger retesting?

What happens if the customer sees it first?

The goal is **not more paperwork**. It is **finding the issue before** it becomes an **external crisis**.

Most **expensive problems** do not start as expensive problems. They become expensive when **nobody acts on the first warning signs**.

APQP moves these questions earlier.

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