

Solving Architectural Entropy With

Runnable Diagrams

Mourjo Sen | 9 July 2026

<https://mourjo.me>

Namaste!

Namaste!

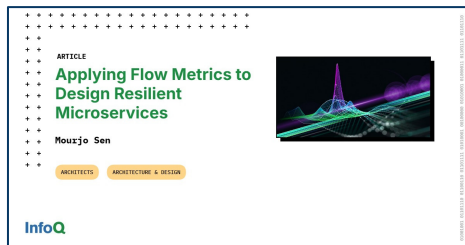
- Born and brought up in India
- Living in the Netherlands since 2023

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- 10 years as a software engineer
- Staff Engineer @ Booking.com

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- Living in the Netherlands since 2023
- 10 years as a software engineer
- Staff Engineer @ Booking.com
- Writing and speaking for 5 years



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13.6K

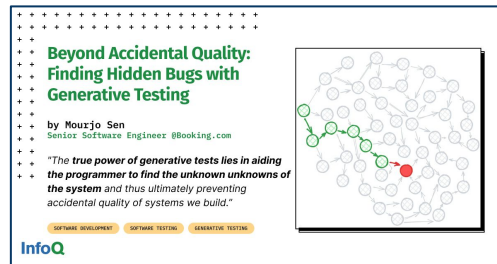
Views

Load Shedding in Web Services

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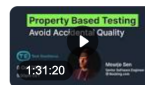
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Views



www.youtube.com · watch

Property Based Testing: Avoid Accidental Quality (Mourjo Sen)

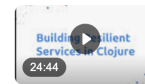


Example vs property based tests: Verifying predetermined scenarios vs finding bugs · Thinking about fundamental properties of systems · Why the ...

YouTube · Tech Excellence · 5 dagen geleden

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Building Resilient Services in Clojure



Abstract Building resilient web services in Clojure. By employing strategies like circuit breakers, load shedding, graceful restarts among ...

YouTube · reclojure · 21 déc. 2020



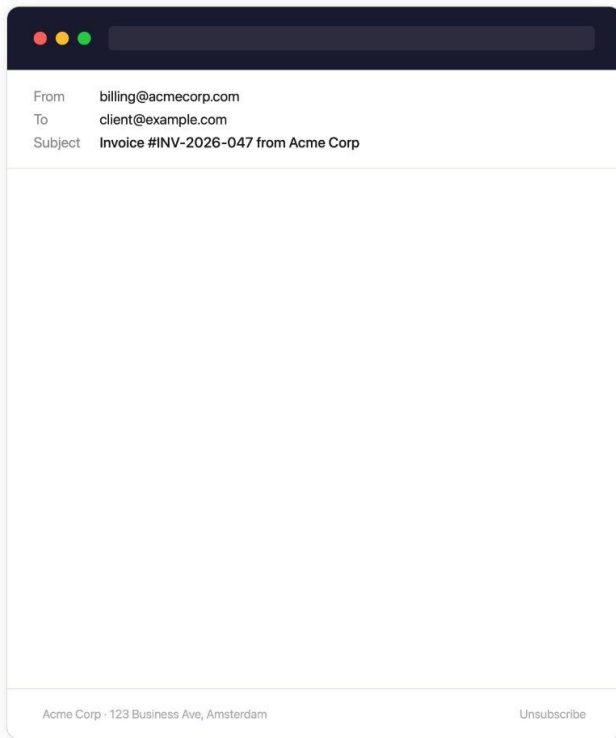
Writing a fair task execution framework — Mourjo Sen

YouTube · IN/Clojure

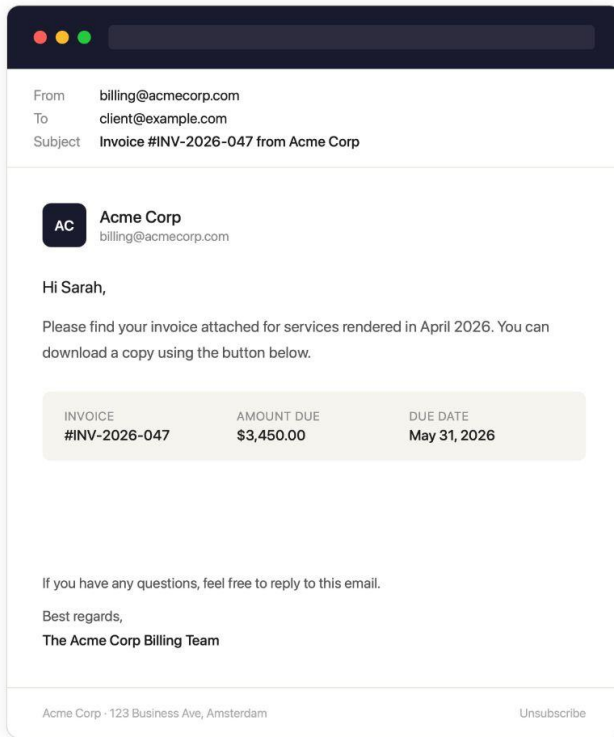
4 févr. 2019

Debugging Systems

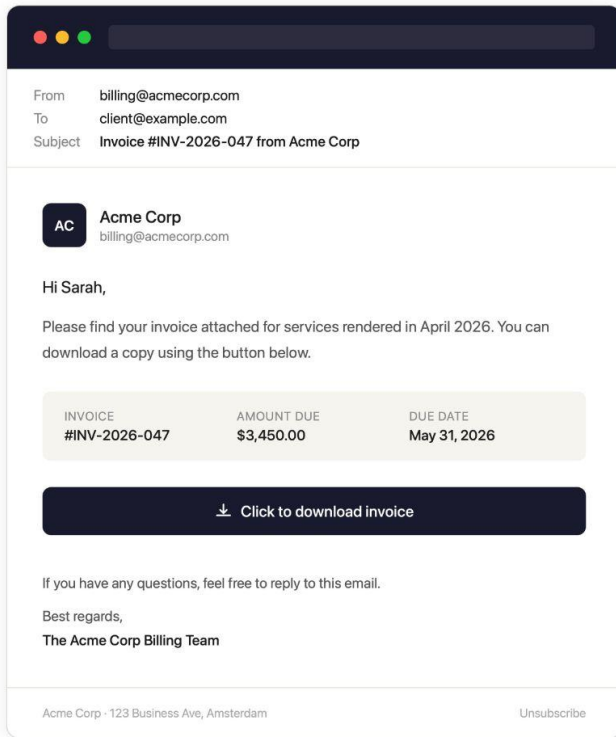
Debugging Systems



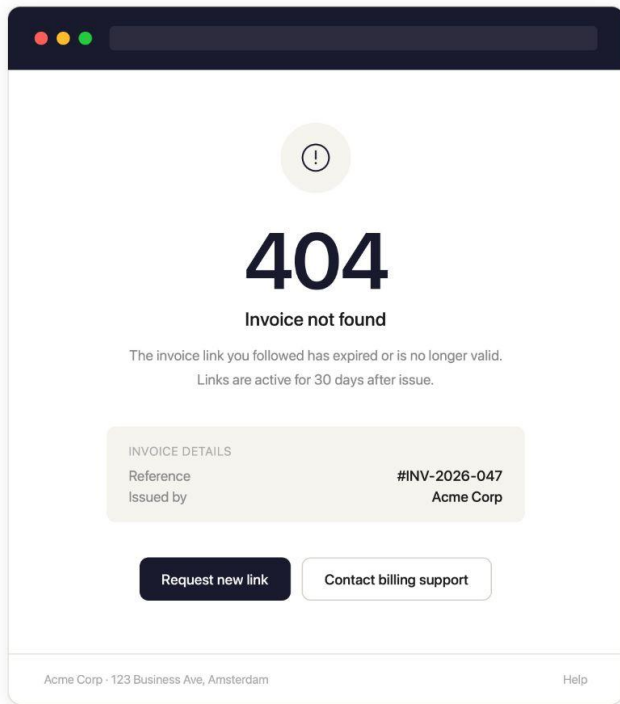
Debugging Systems



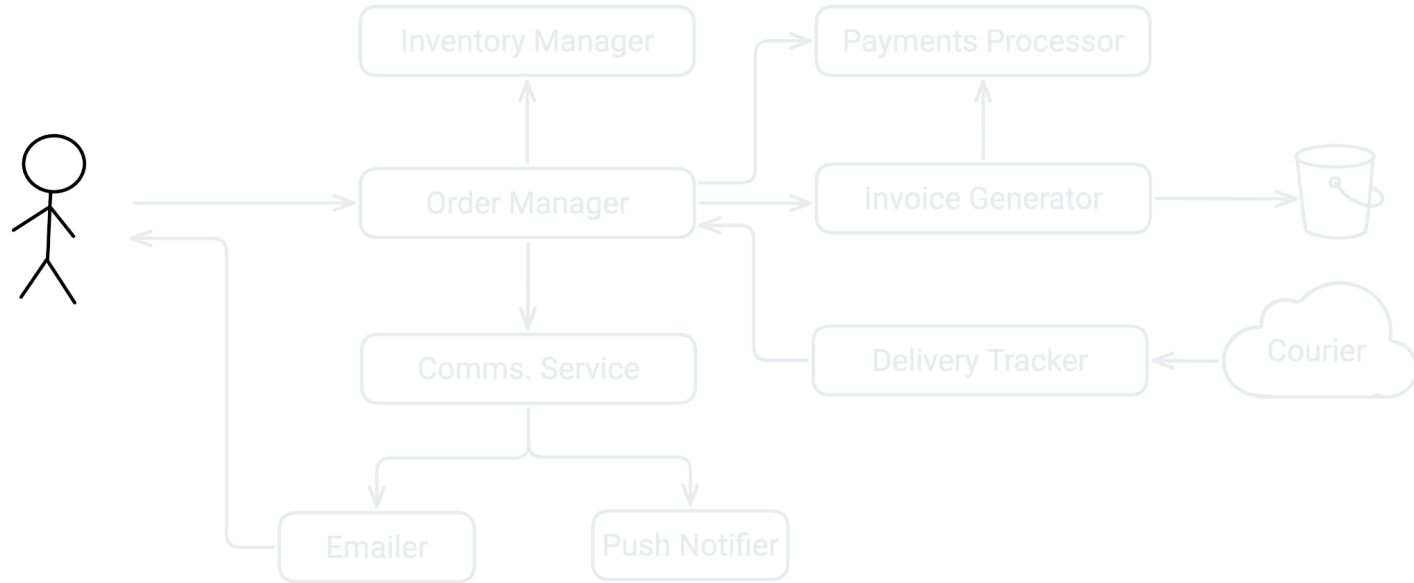
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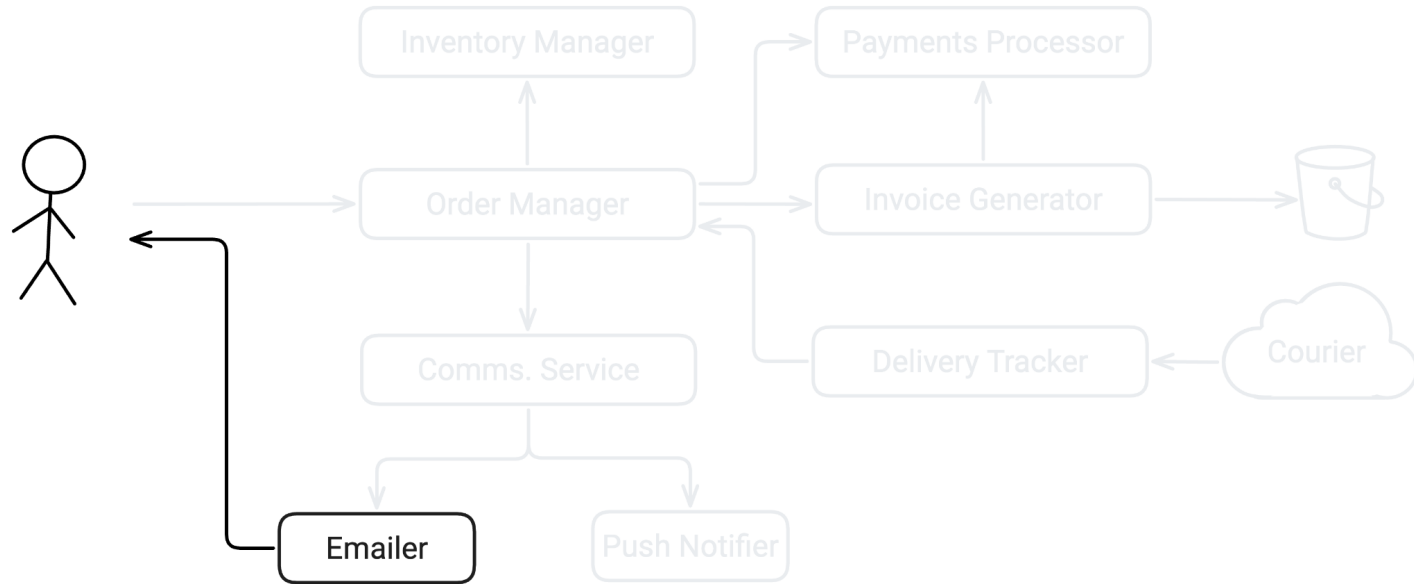
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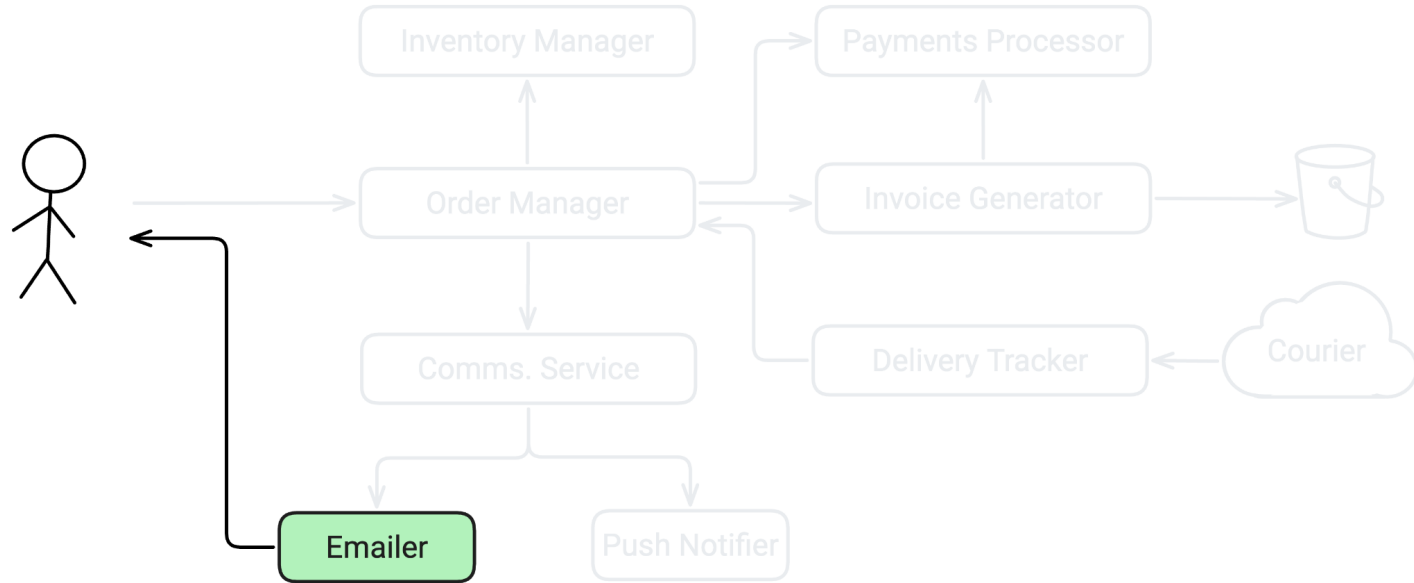
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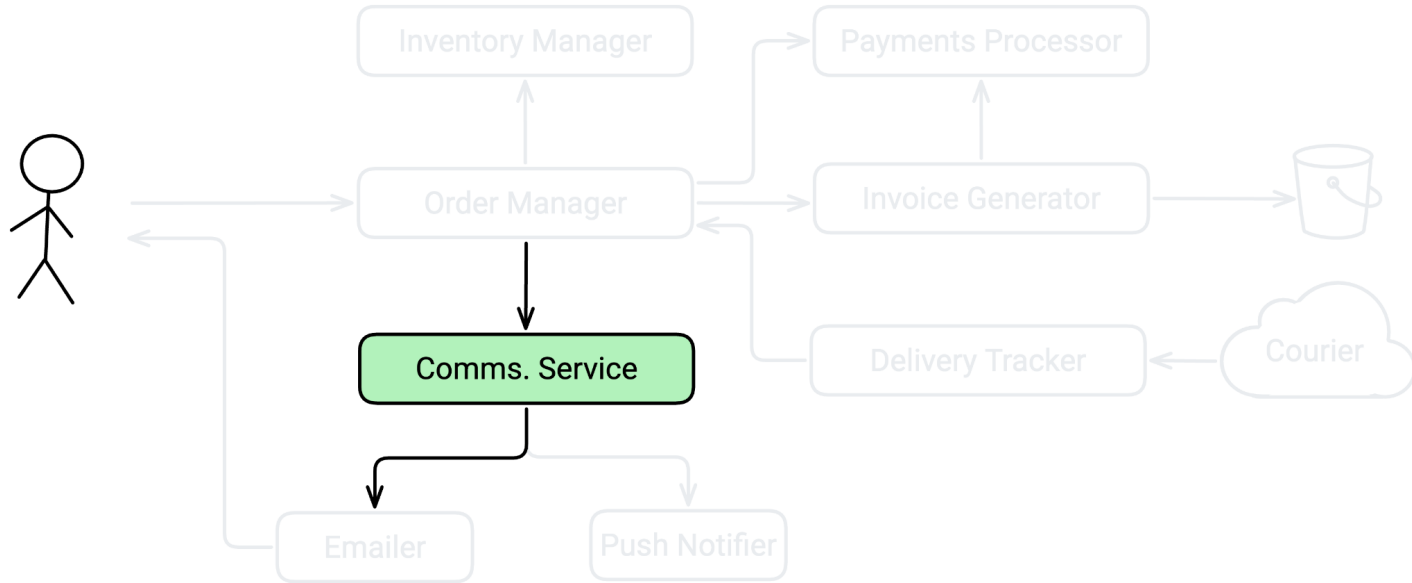
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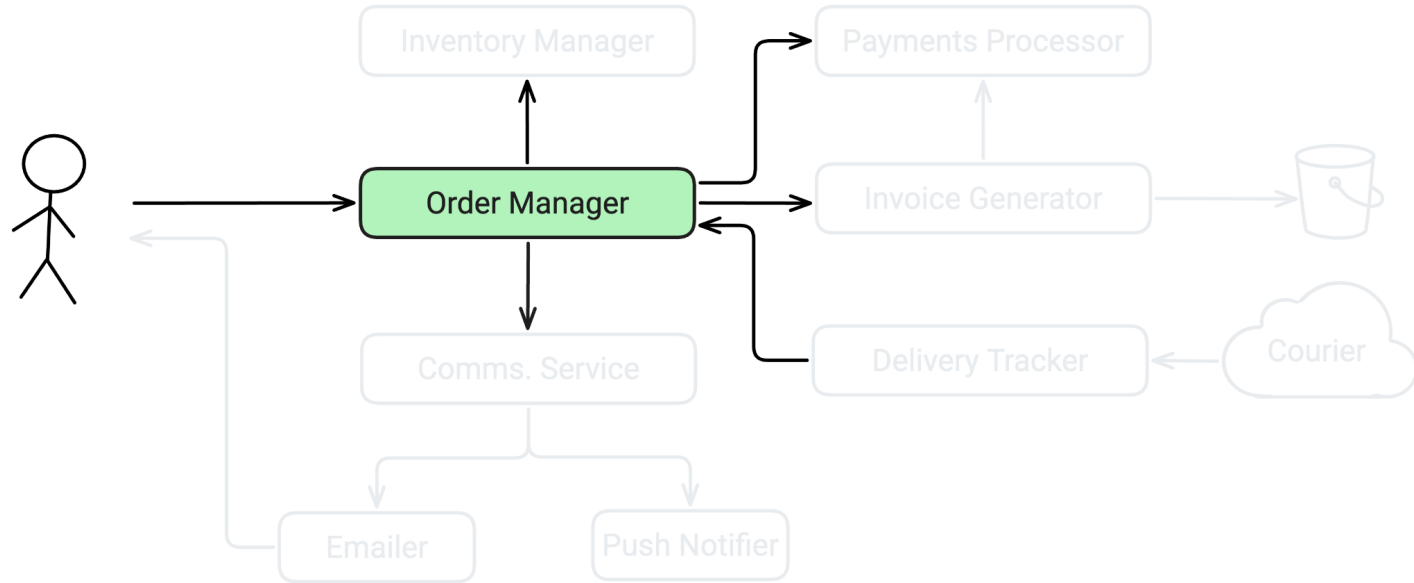
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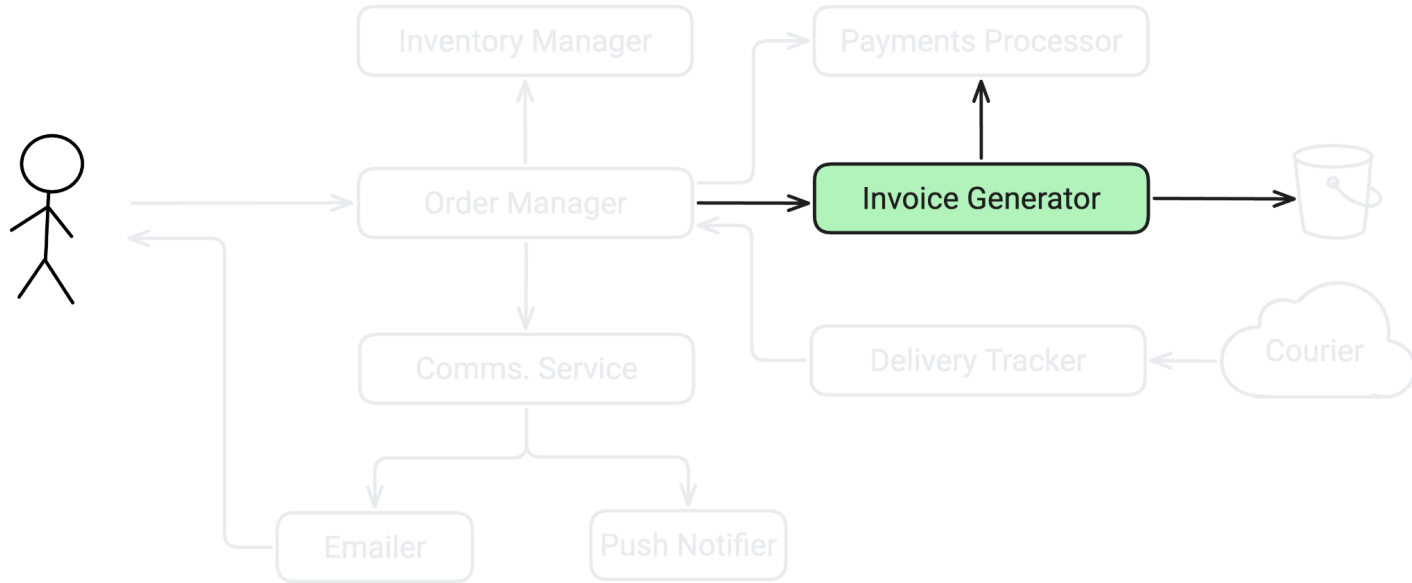
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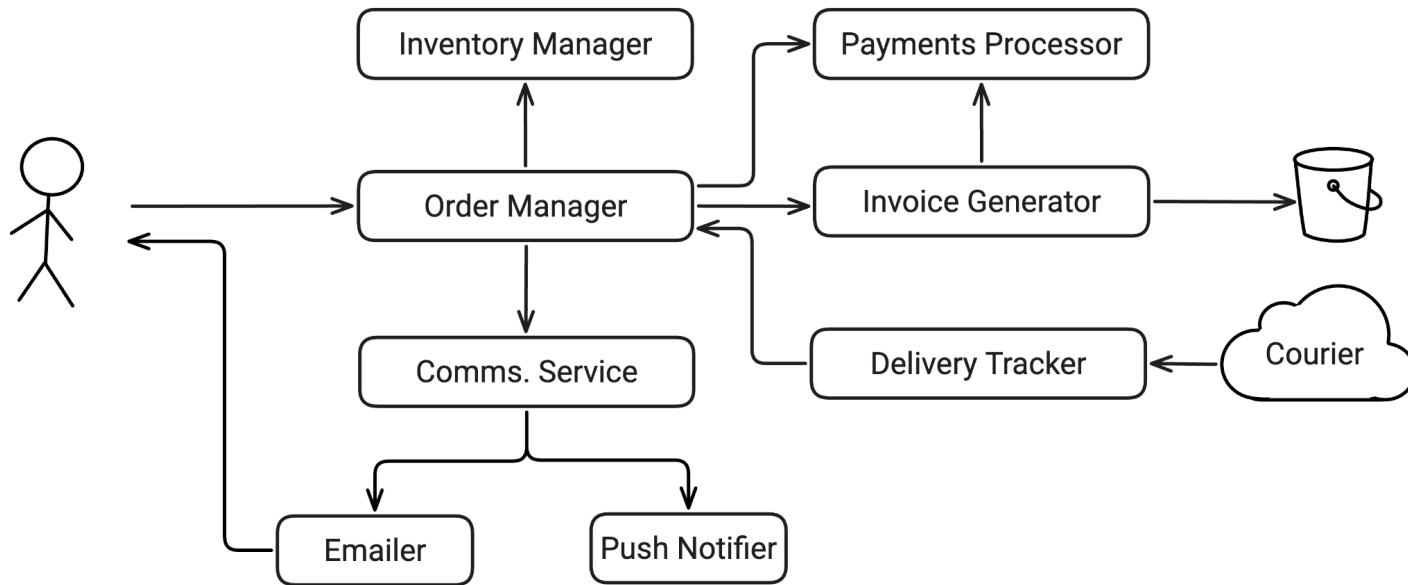
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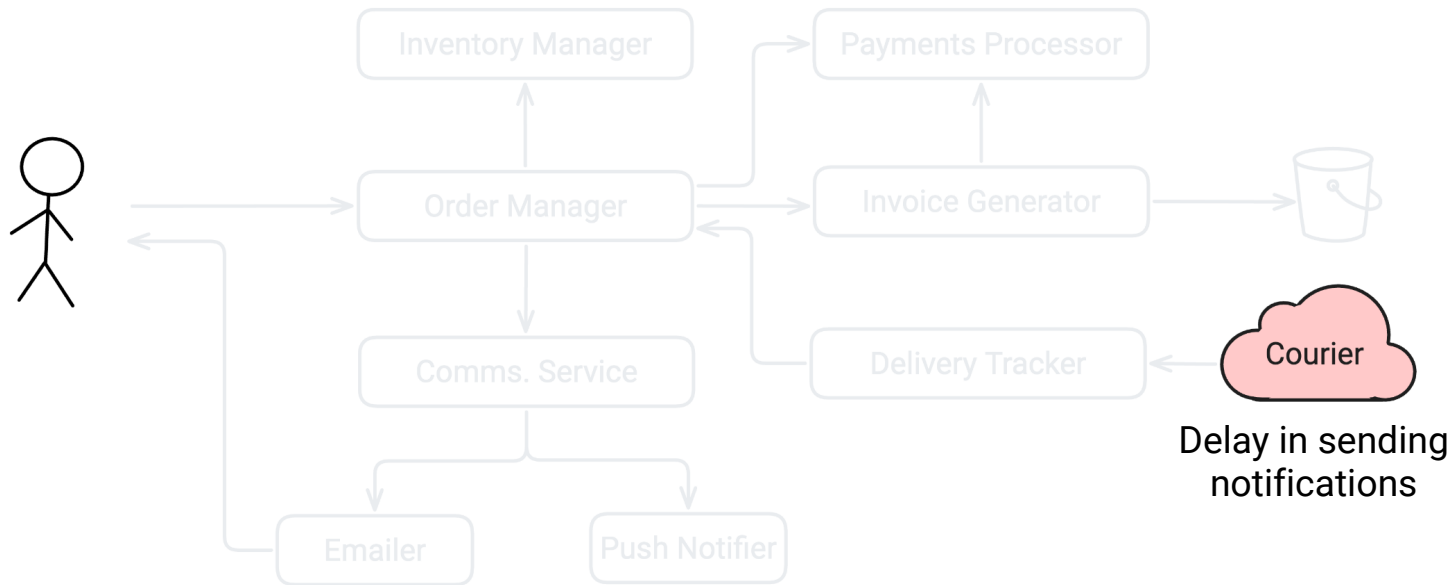
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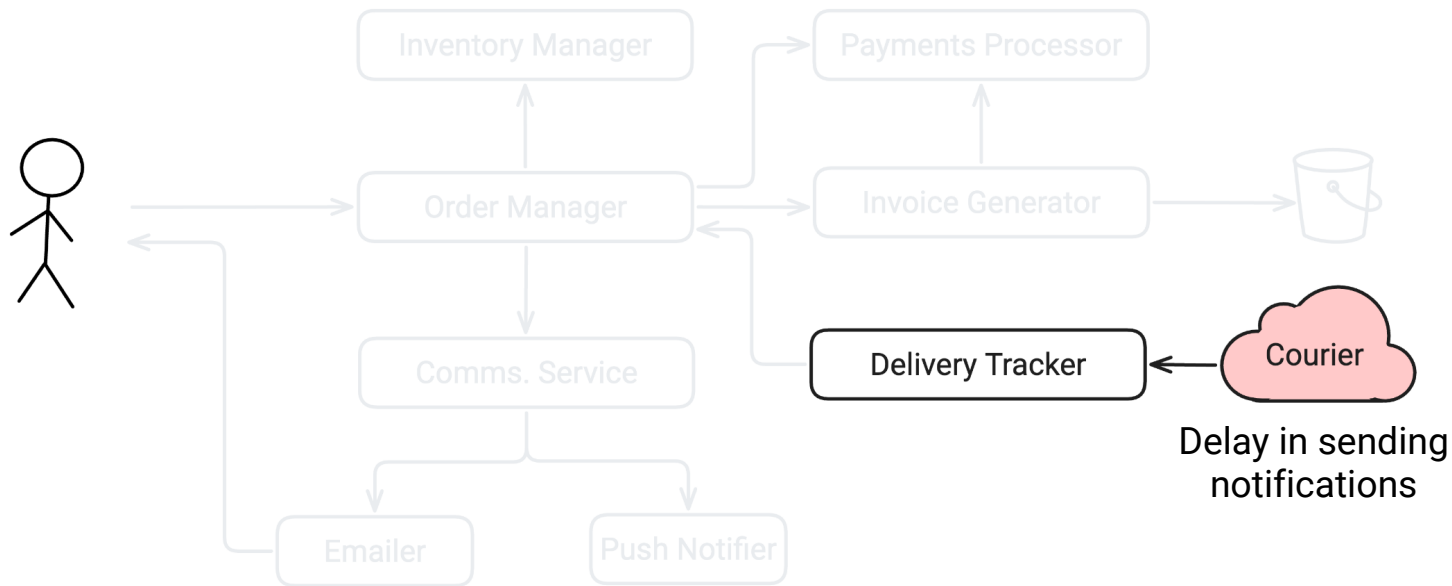
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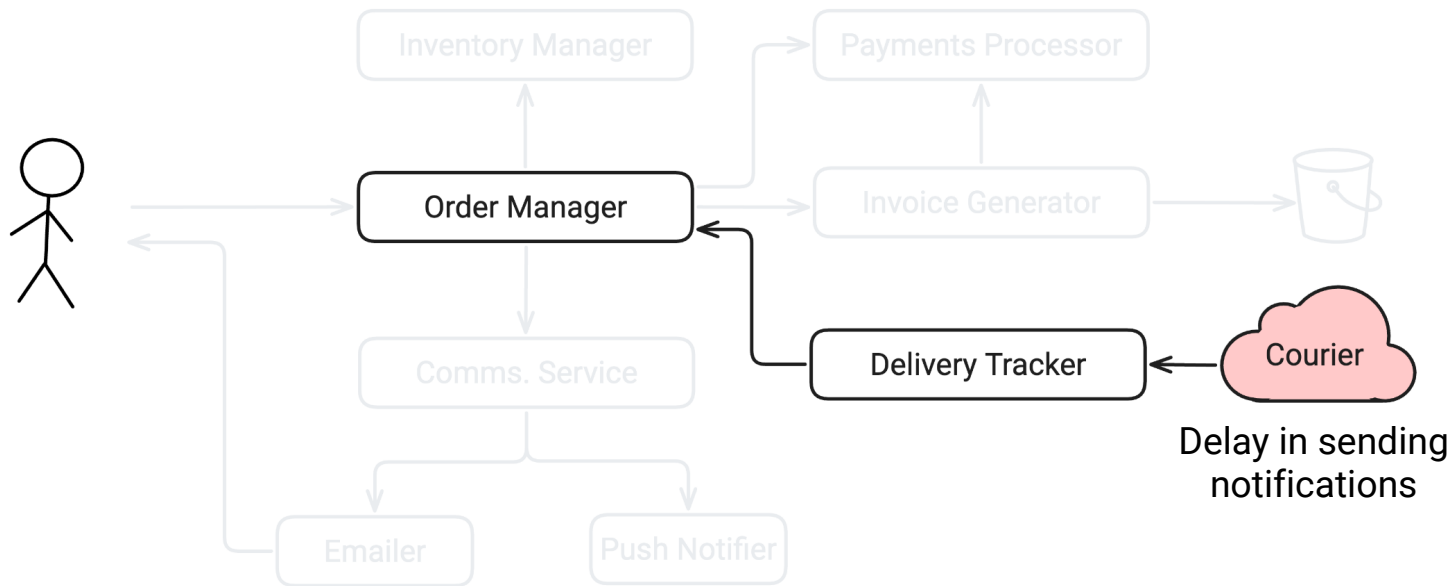
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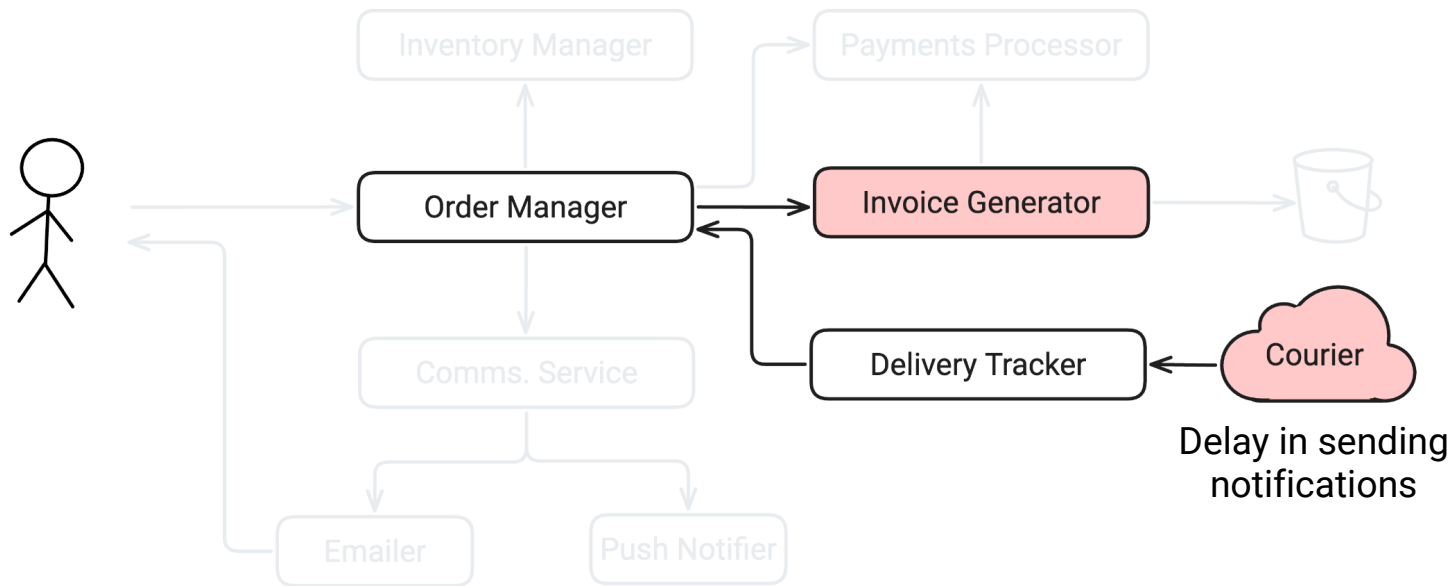
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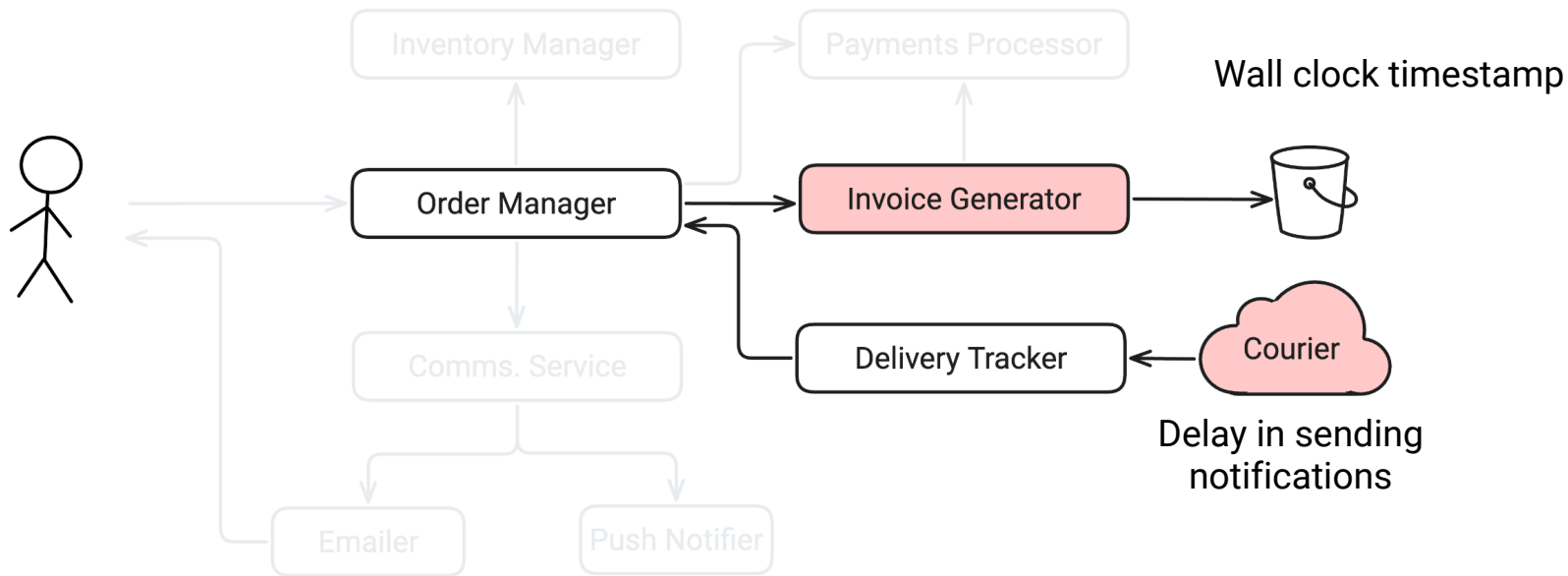
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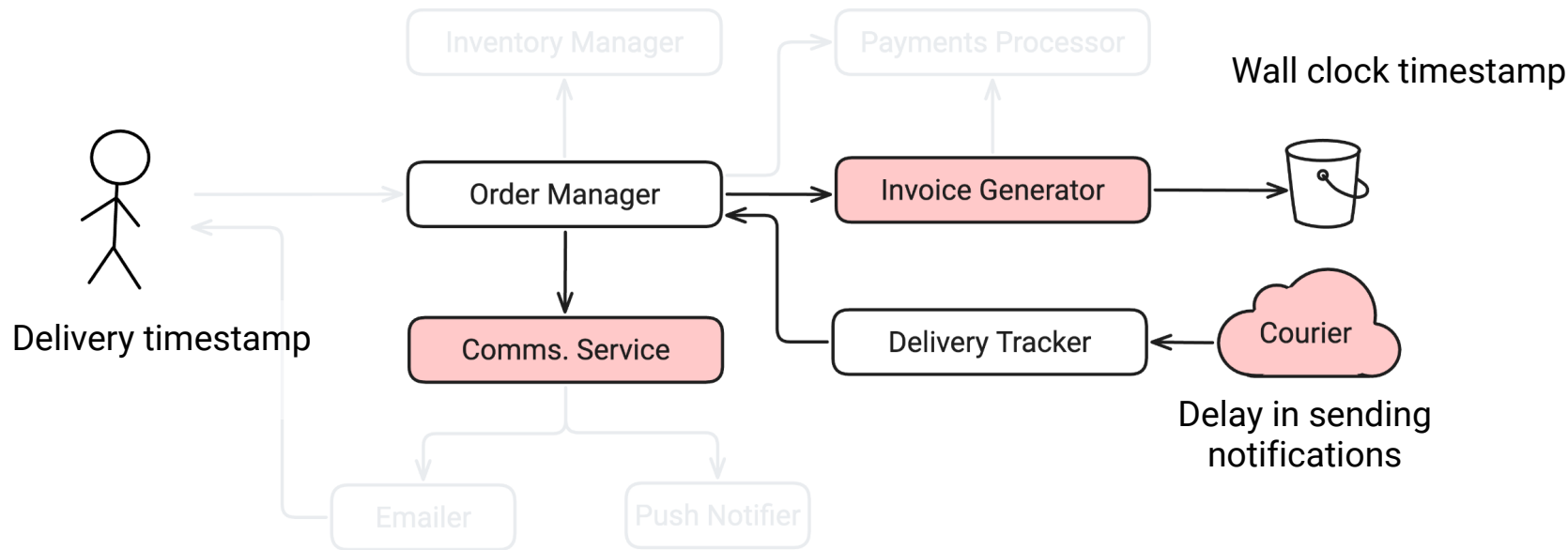
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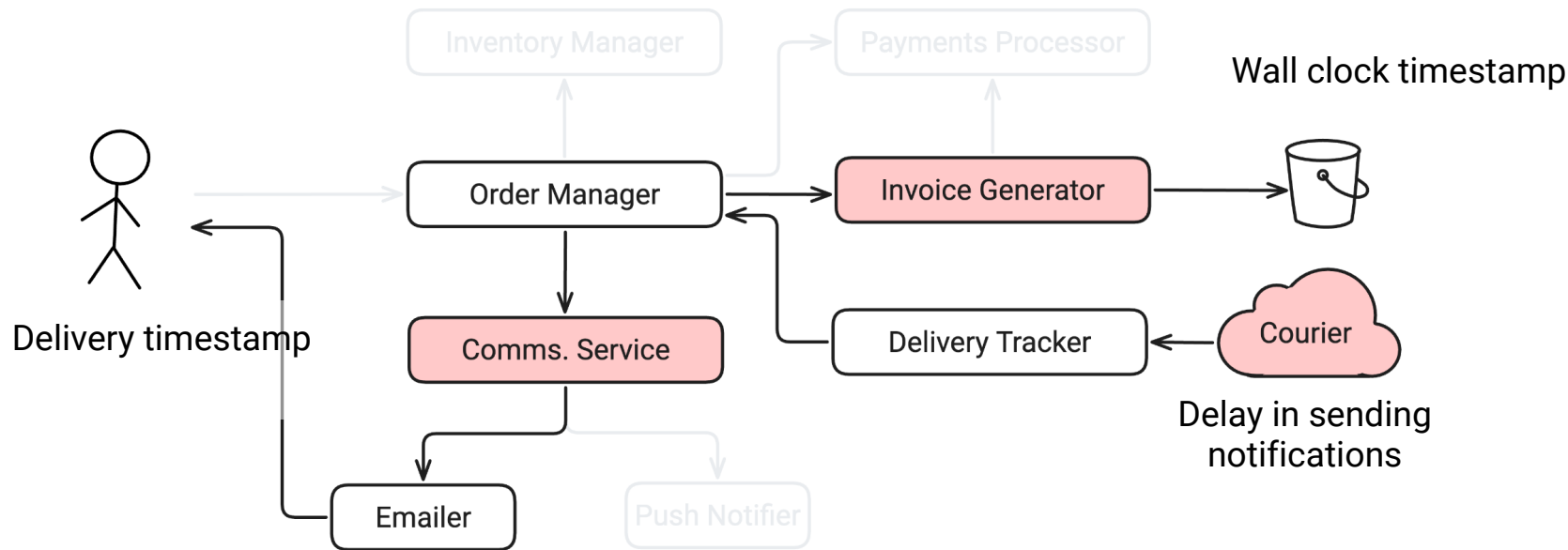
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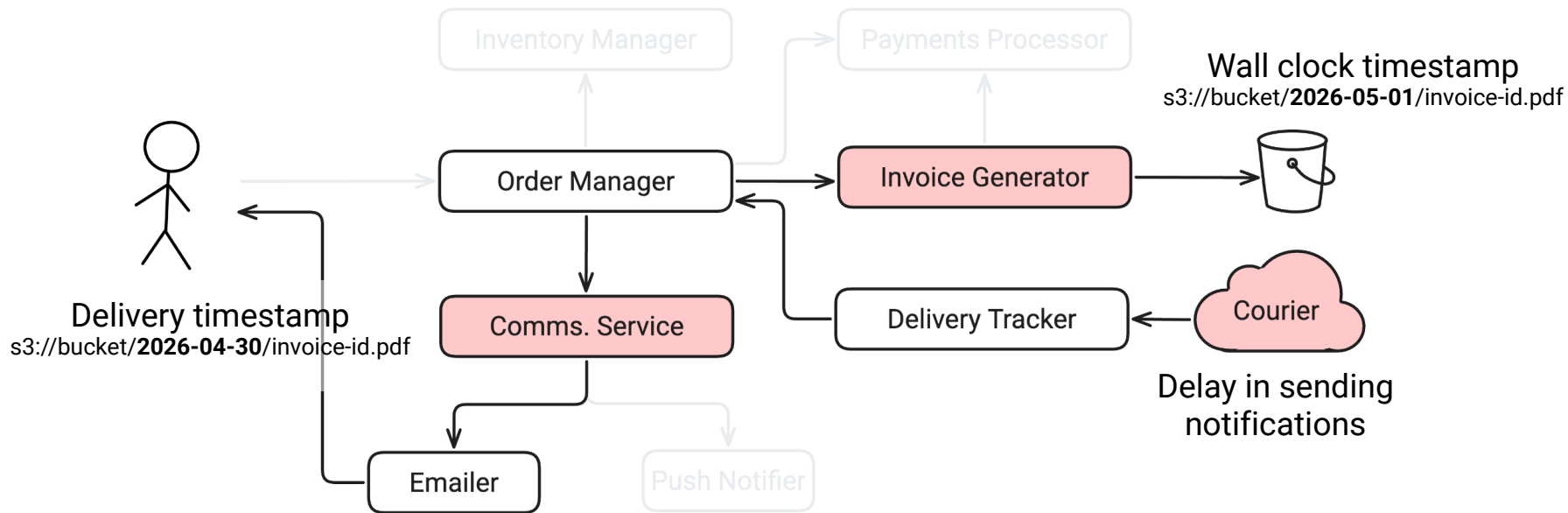
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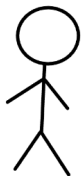
Debugging Systems



Debugging Systems



Debugging Systems



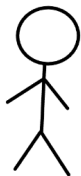
Comms. Service

Invoice Generator

Locally correct
Globally incorrect

Courier

Debugging Systems



Comms. Service

Invoice Generator

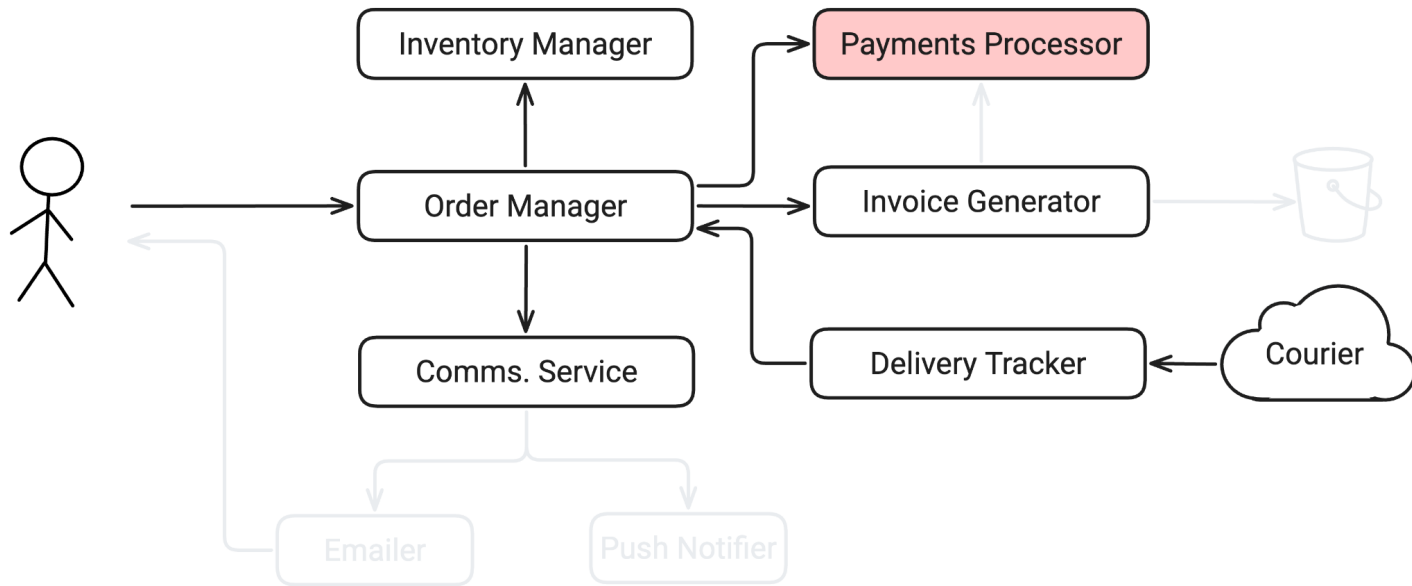
Locally correct
Globally incorrect

Courier

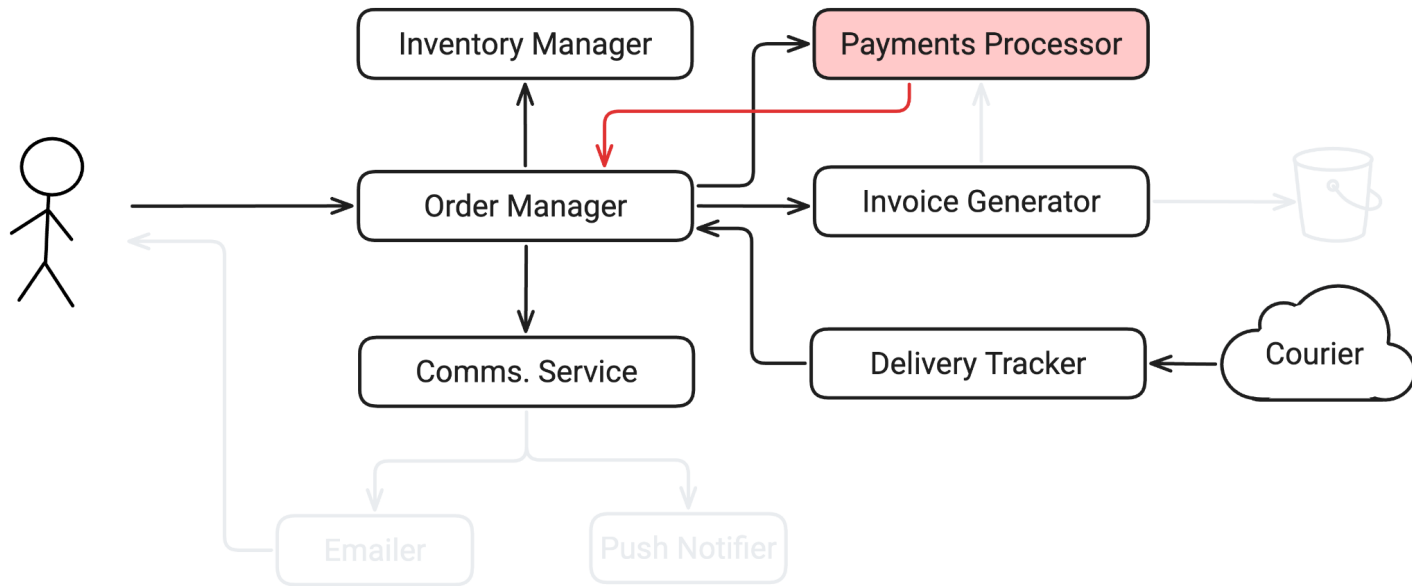
System Vulnerability:
Not obvious how one
component affects another

Changing Systems

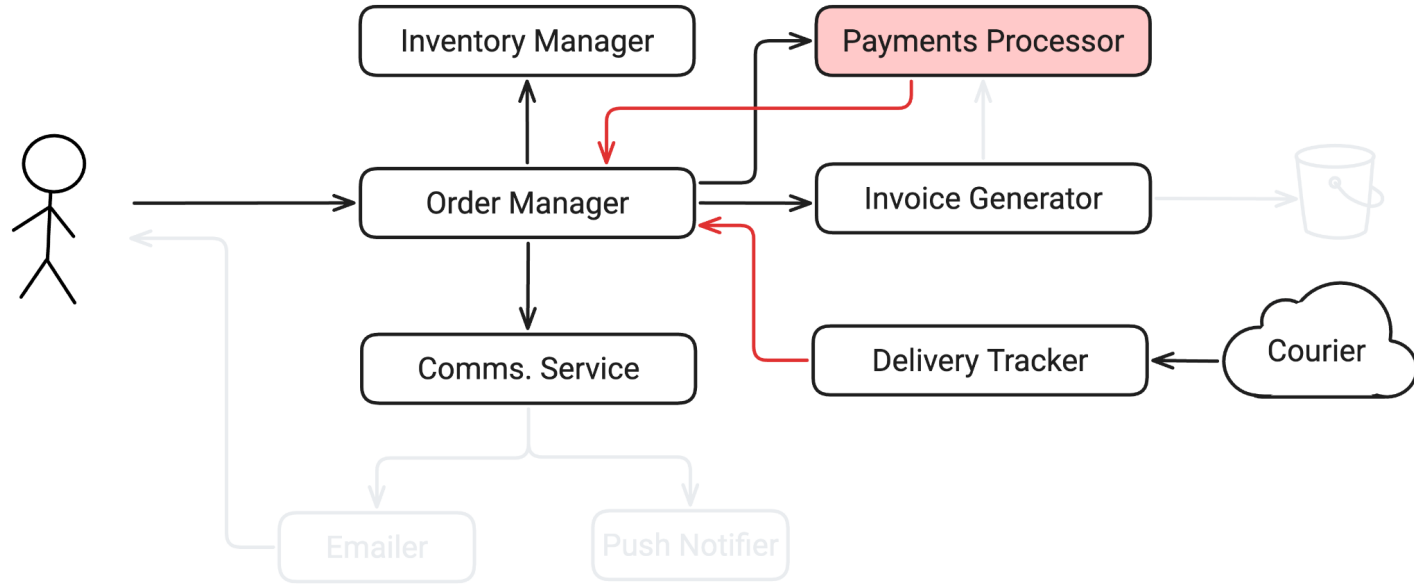
Changing Systems



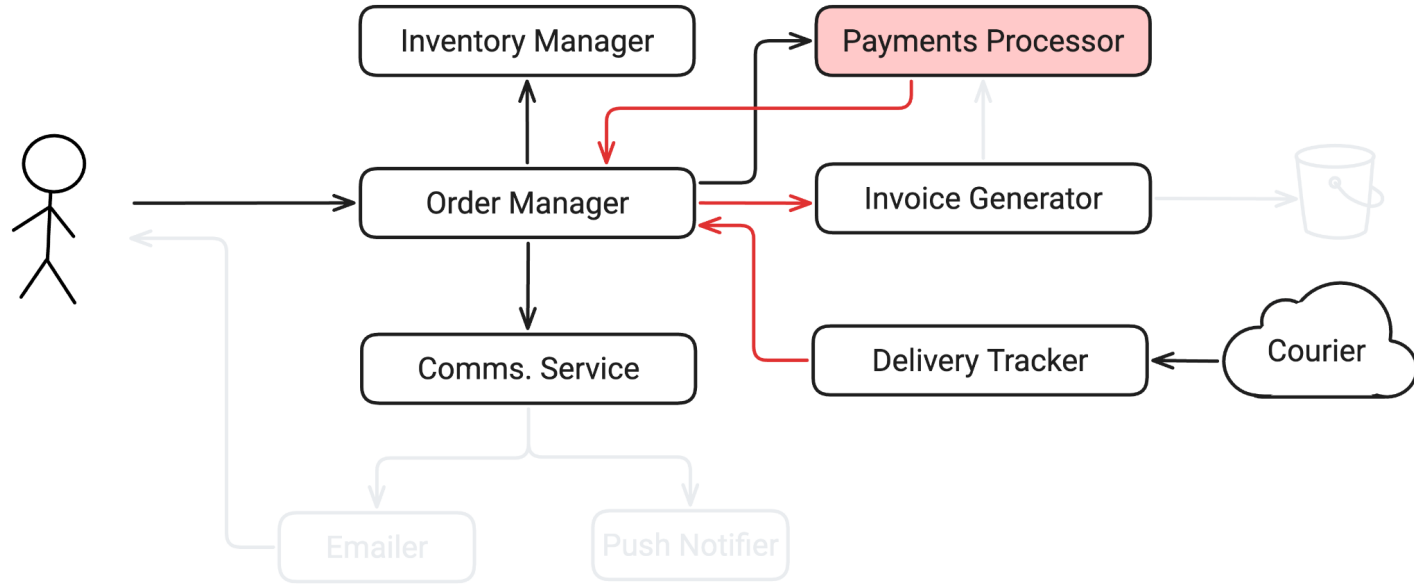
Changing Systems



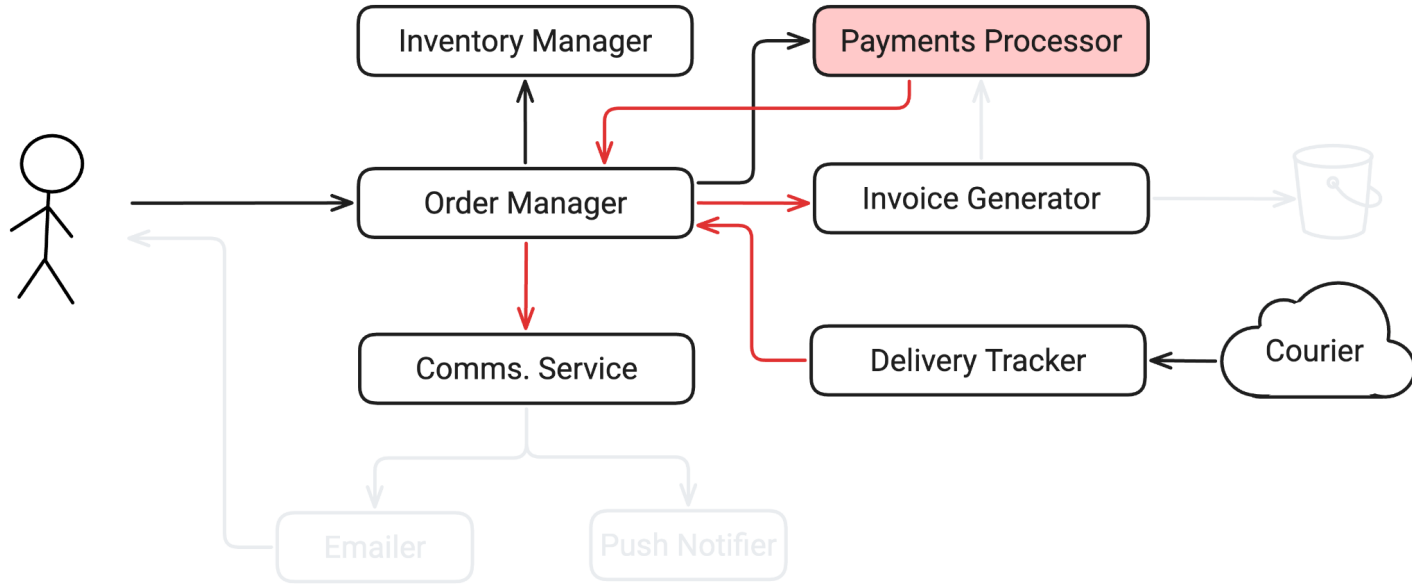
Changing Systems



Changing Systems



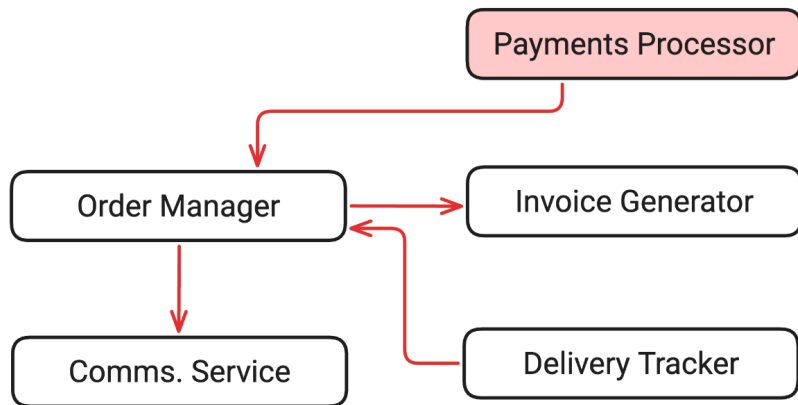
Changing Systems



Changing Systems

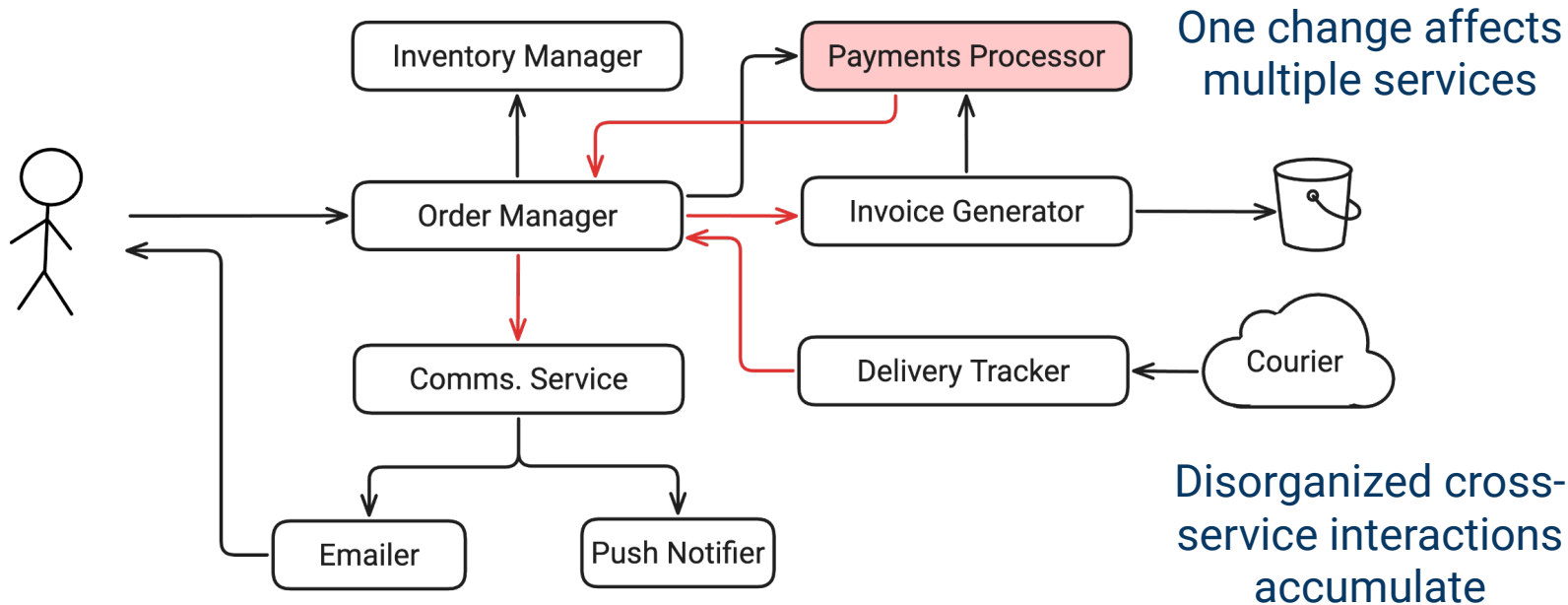
Payments Processor

Changing Systems



One change affects
multiple services

Changing Systems



Macroscopic Entropy

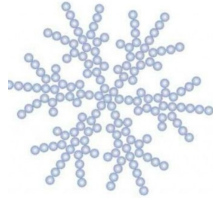
- Entropy is a measure of disorder or randomness

Macroscopic Entropy

- Entropy is a measure of disorder or randomness
 - Tendency to move towards a state of greater disorder

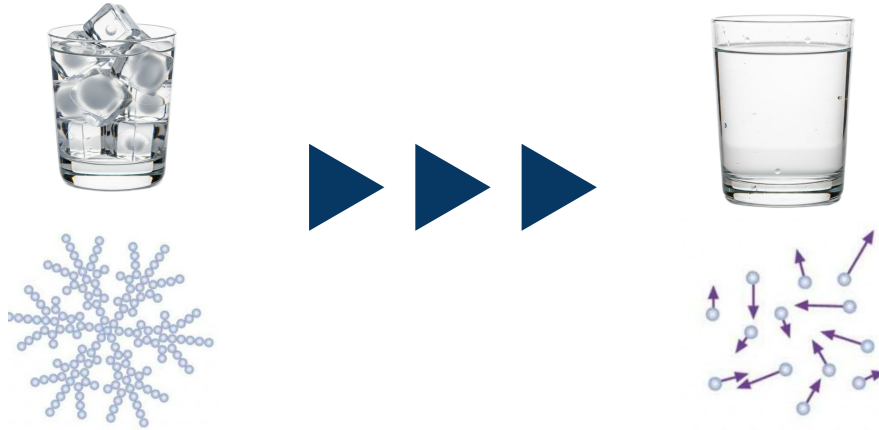
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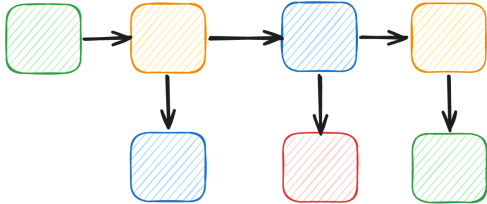
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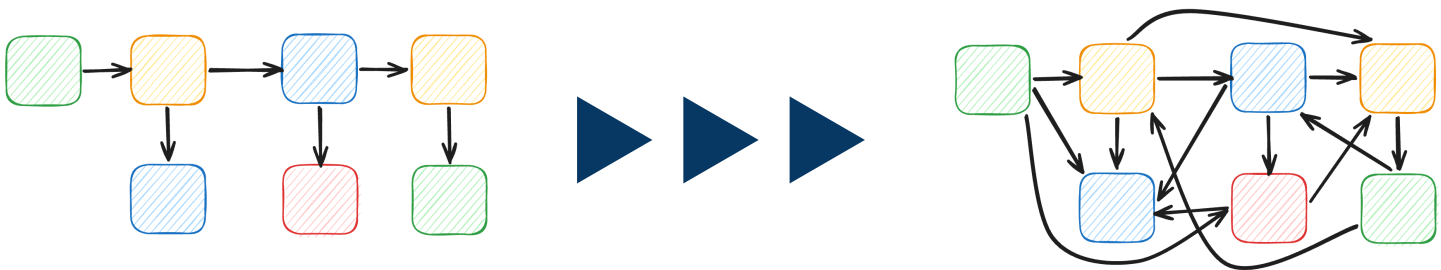
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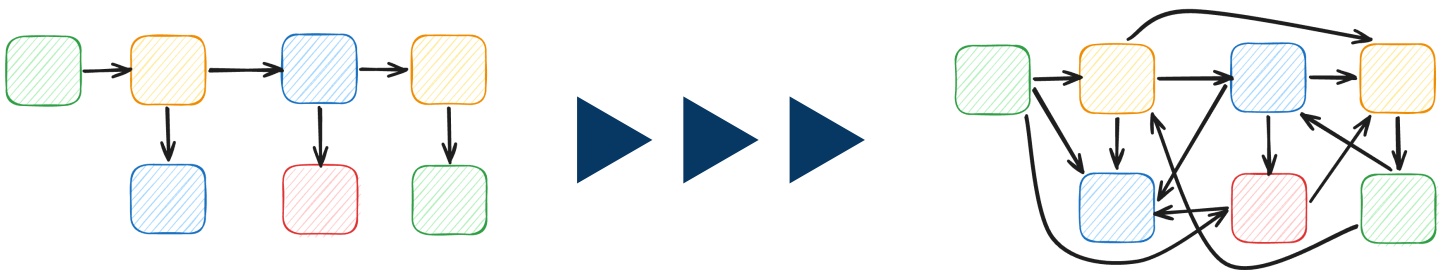
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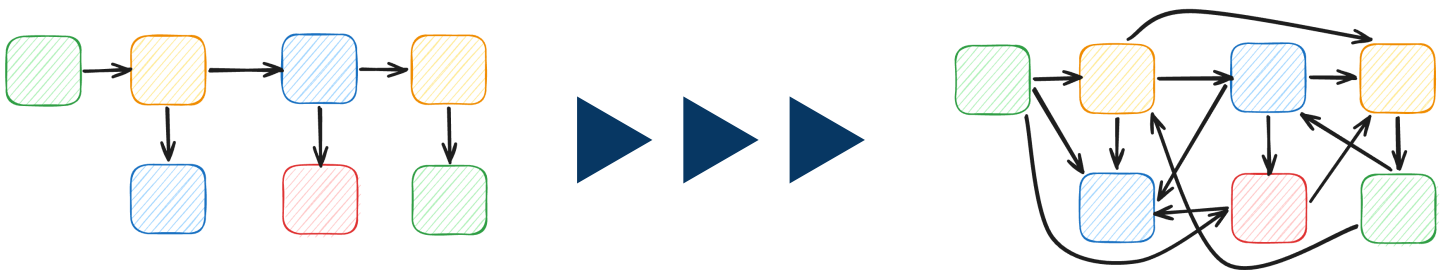
Macroscopic Entropy

- Entropy is a measure of disorder or randomness
 - Tendency to move towards a state of greater disorder
- Higher entropy, lower understandability



Macroscopic Entropy

- Entropy is a measure of disorder or randomness
 - Tendency to move towards a state of greater disorder
- Higher entropy, lower understandability
 - Hard to debug and change



Monolithic



Monolithic → Modular



Monolithic → Modular → Fragmented



?



Monolithic → Modular → Fragmented → Disordered



?



Monolithic → Modular → Fragmented → Disordered

- Lack of focus
 - Domain vs coordination



Monolithic → Modular → Fragmented → Disordered

- Lack of focus
 - Domain vs coordination
- Lack of clarity
 - How does it all come together?



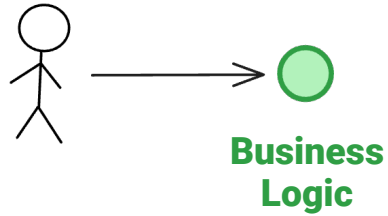


Problem 1:

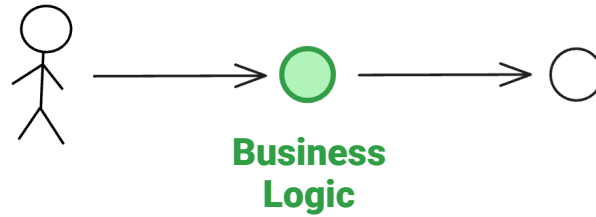
Lack of Focus



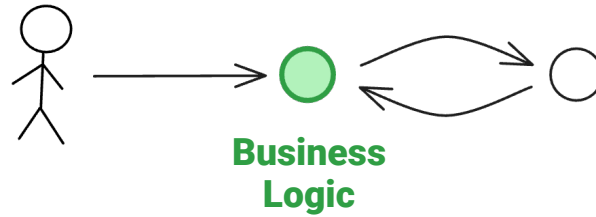
Business Logic vs Coordination



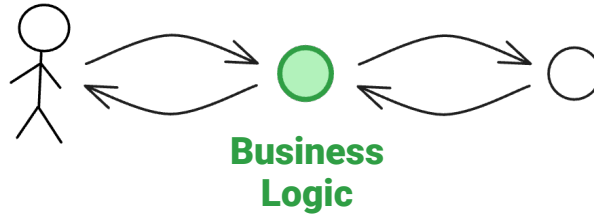
Business Logic vs Coordination



Business Logic vs Coordination



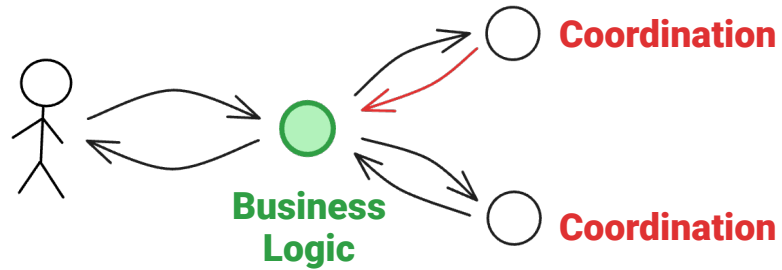
Business Logic vs Coordination



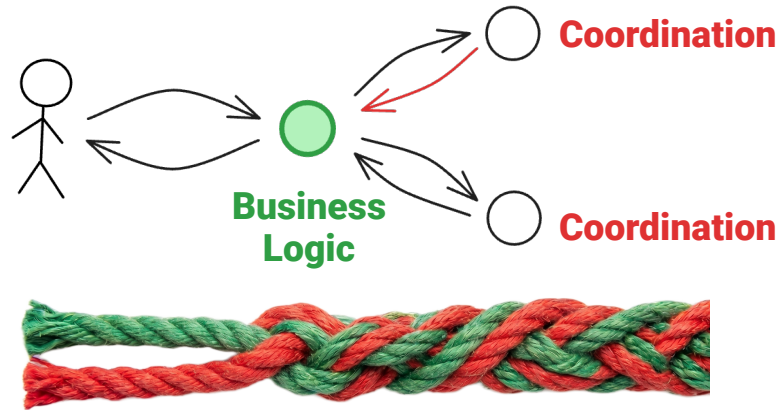
Business Logic vs Coordination



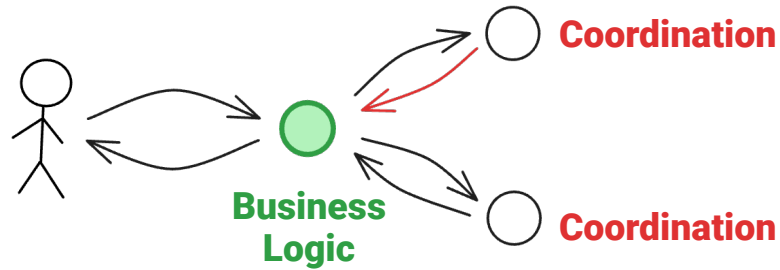
Business Logic vs Coordination



Business Logic vs Coordination



Business Logic vs Coordination



Coordination → **Disorder**
at the **local** level at the **system** level

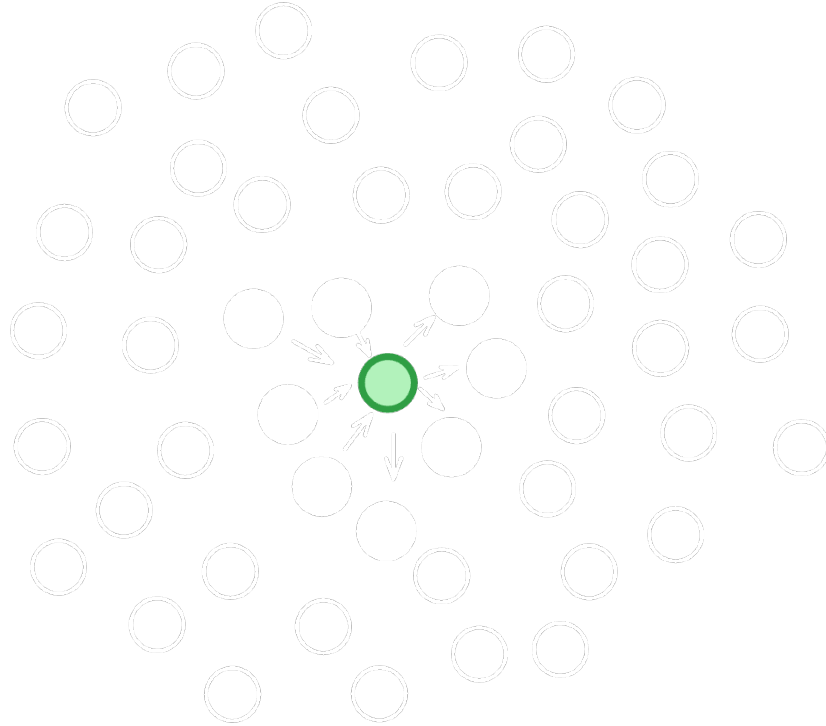
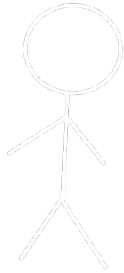


Problem 2:

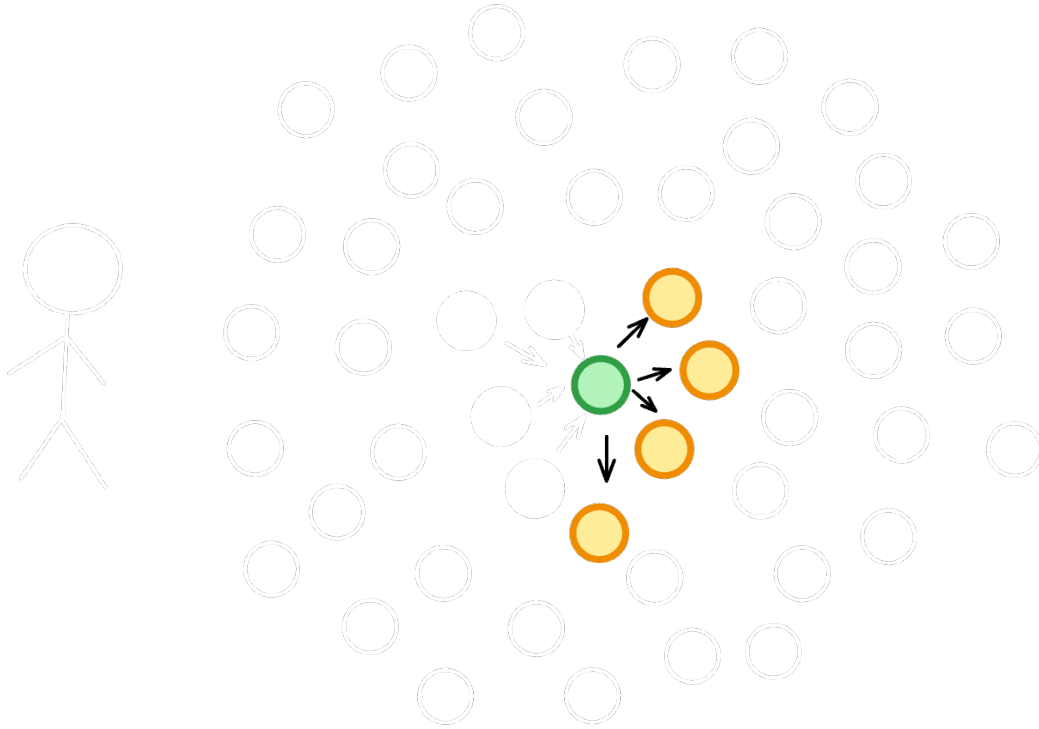
Lack of Clarity



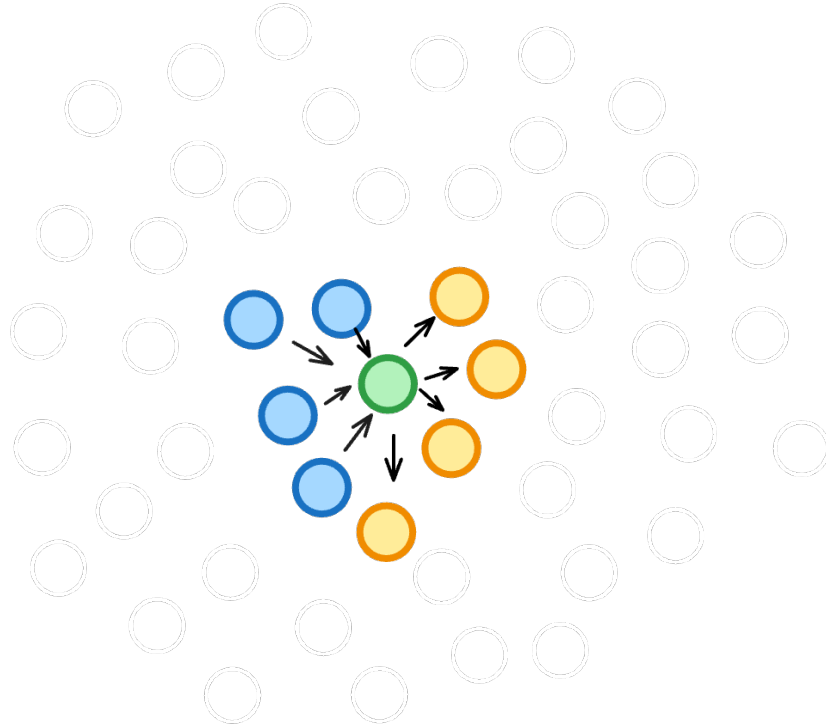
Micro vs Macro



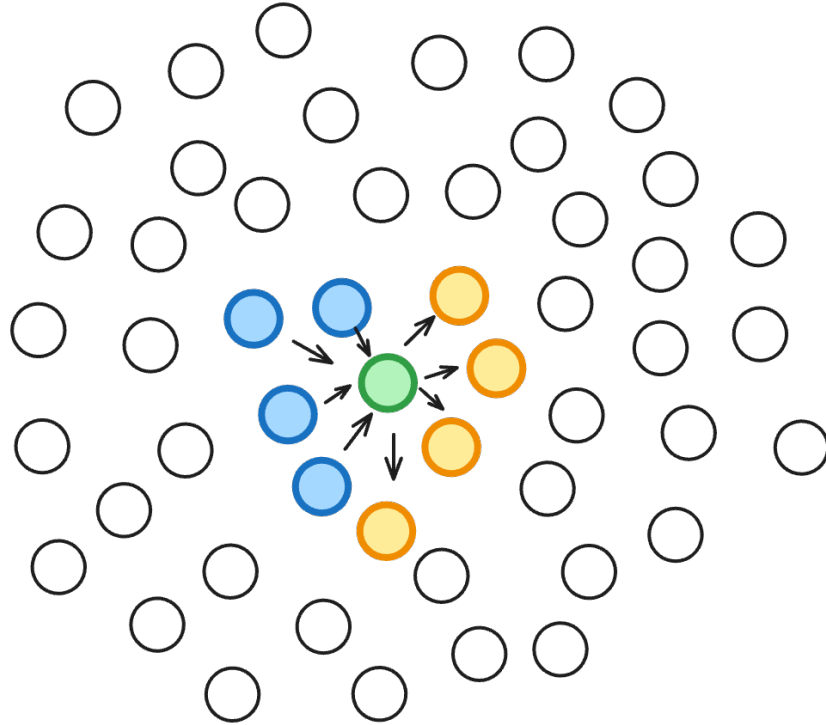
Micro vs Macro



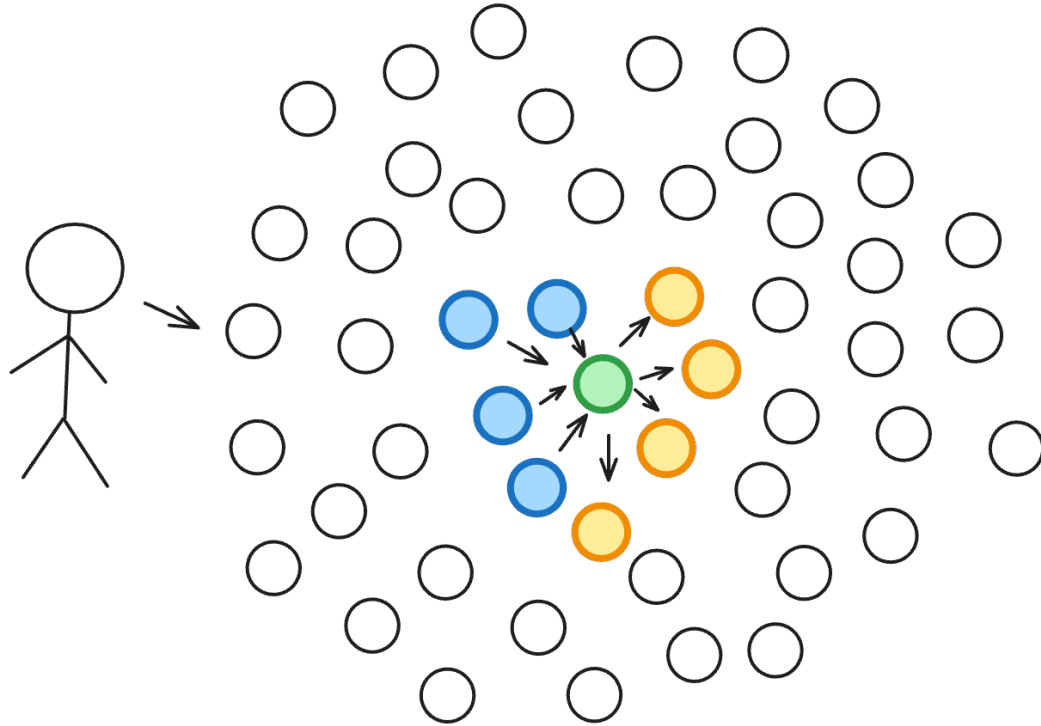
Micro vs Macro



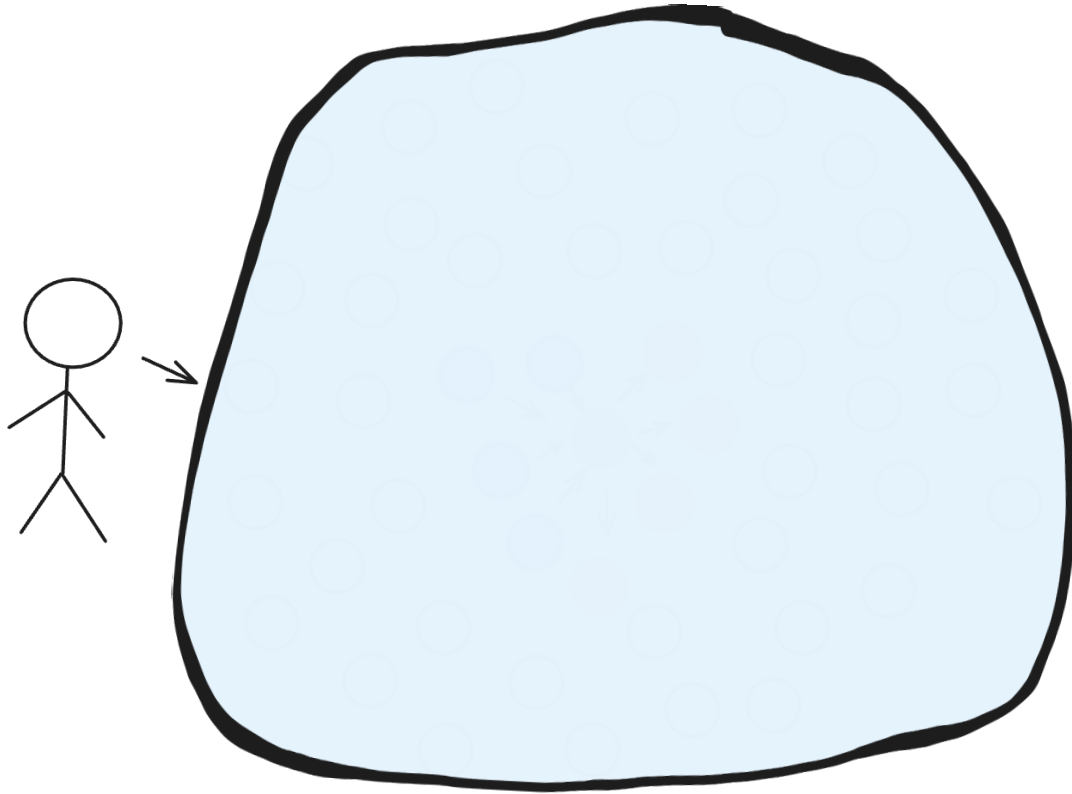
Micro vs Macro



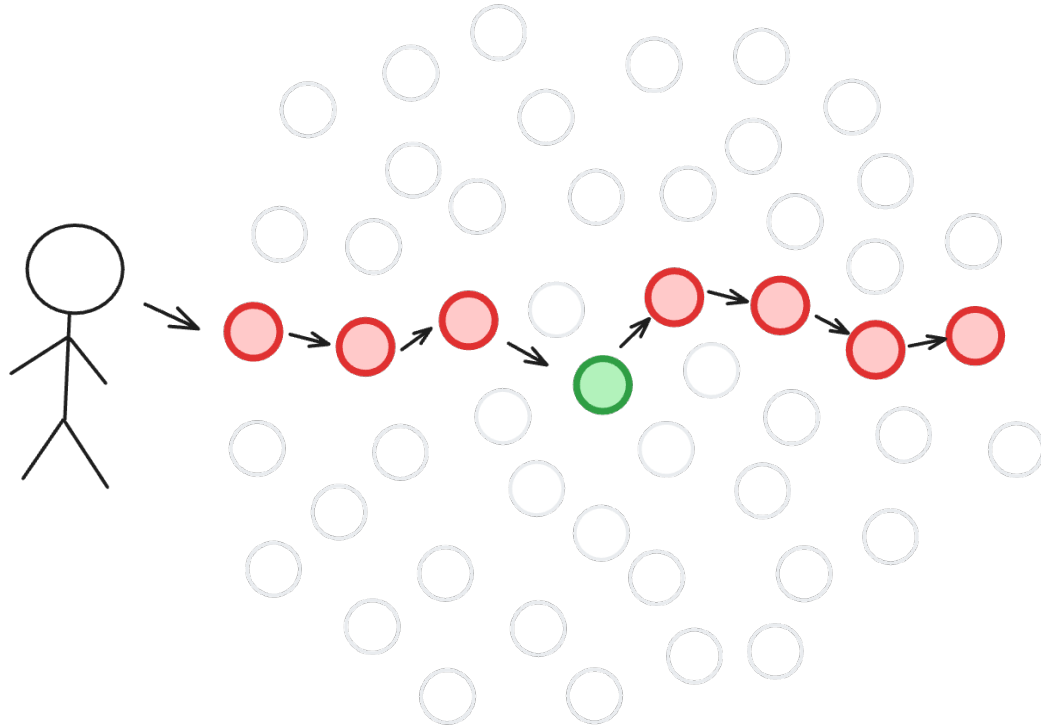
Micro vs Macro



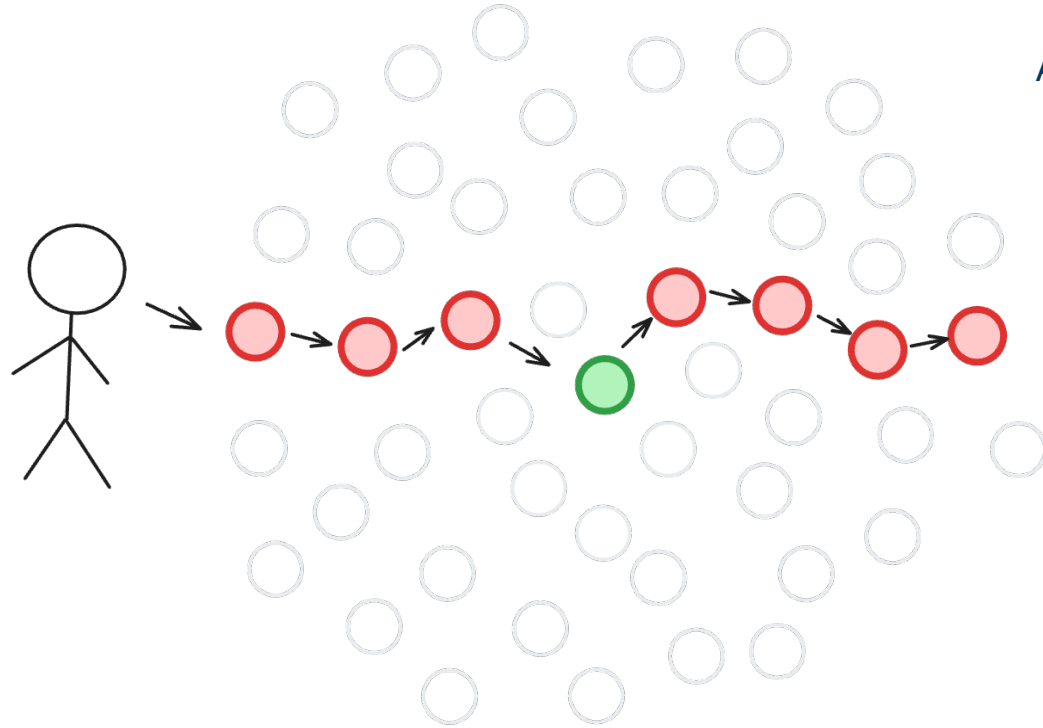
Micro vs Macro



Micro vs Macro

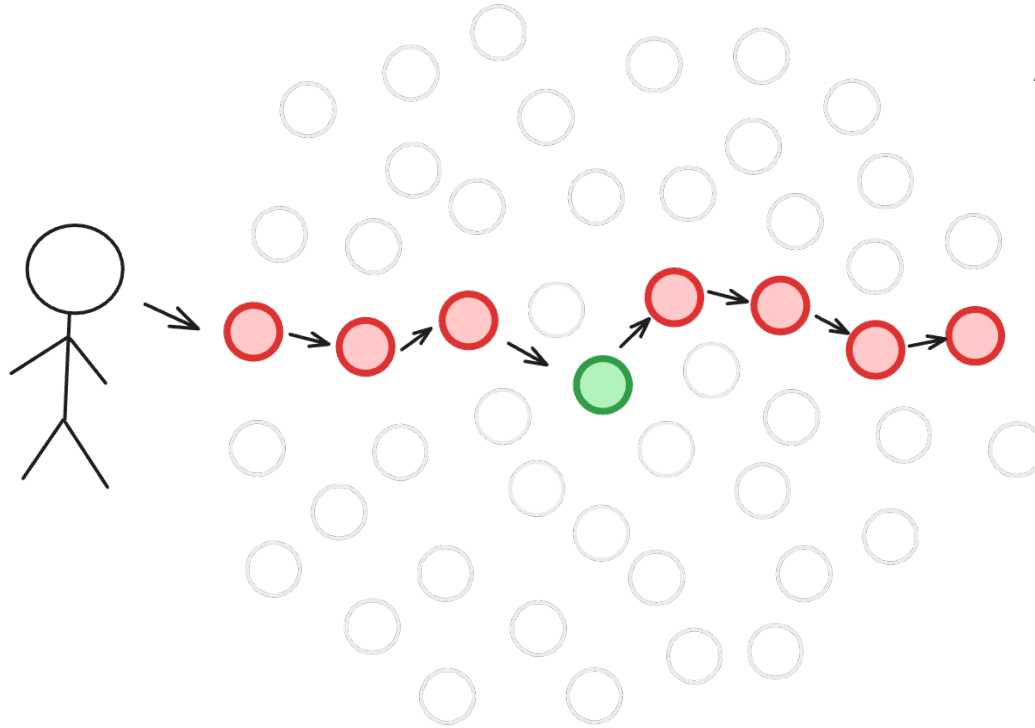


Micro vs Macro



A system is never the
sum of its parts.

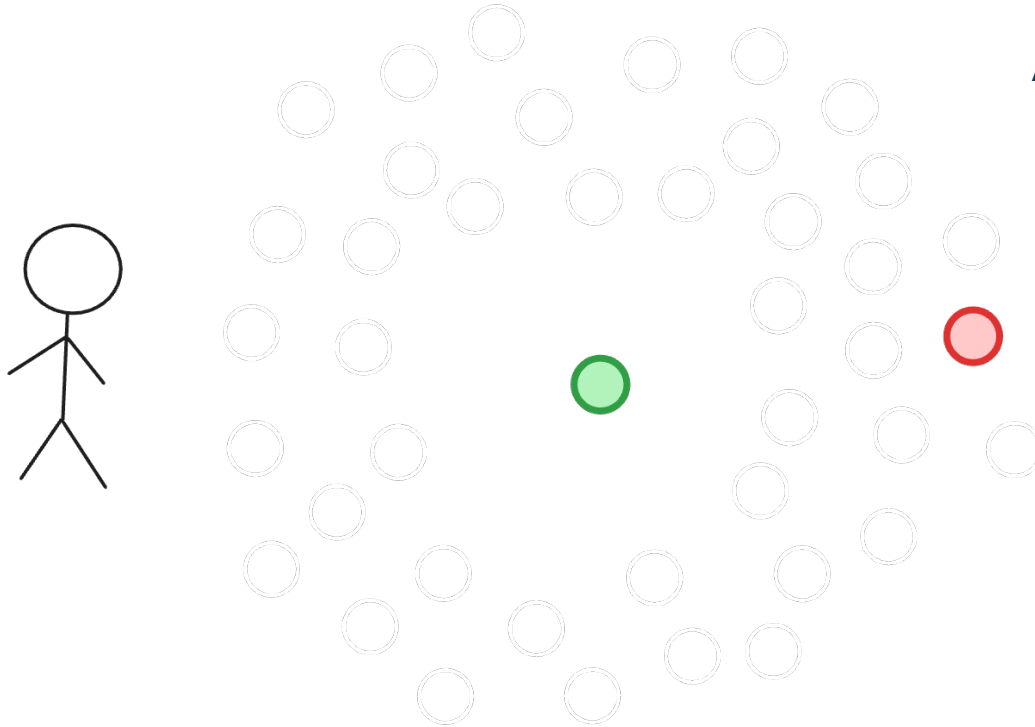
Micro vs Macro



A system is never the
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It is the **product of
their interactions.**

- Russell Ackoff

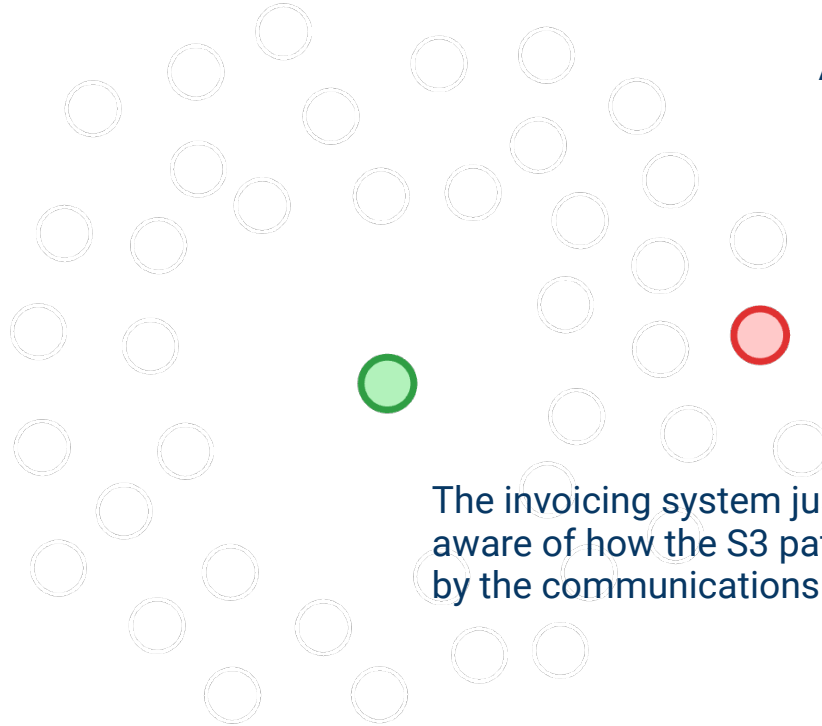
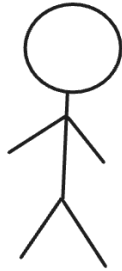
Micro vs Macro



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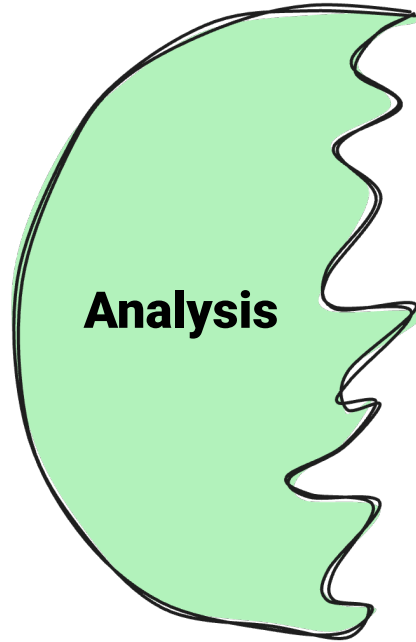
A system is never the
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It is the **product of
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- Russell Ackoff

The invoicing system just was not
aware of how the S3 path was used
by the communications service.

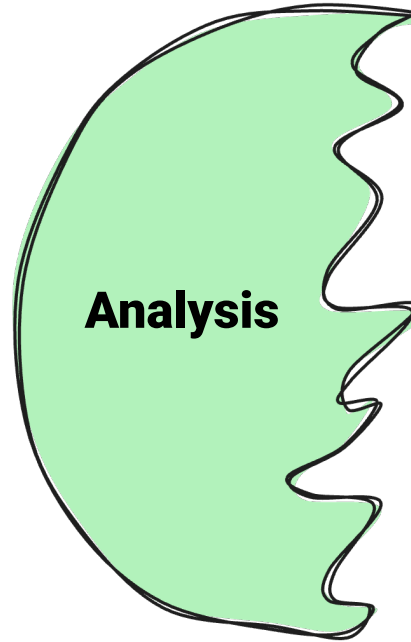
Systems Thinking

Systems Thinking



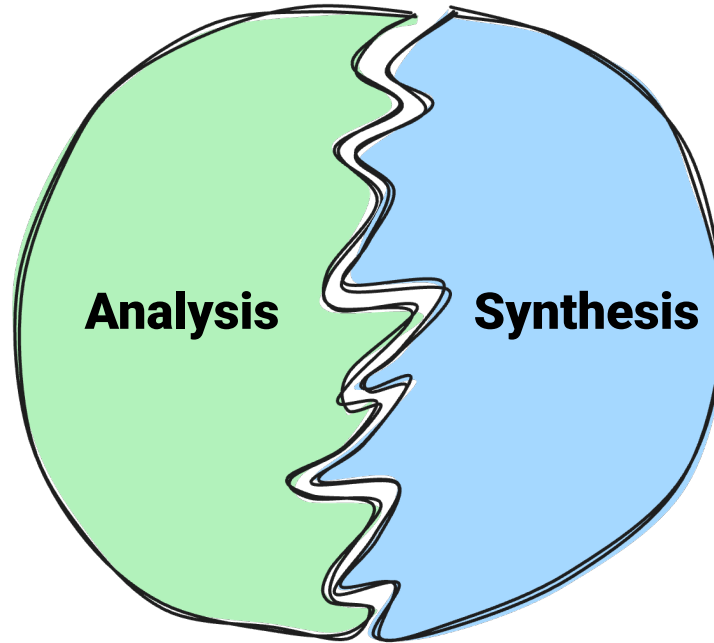
Systems Thinking

Breaking a complex topic
smaller parts



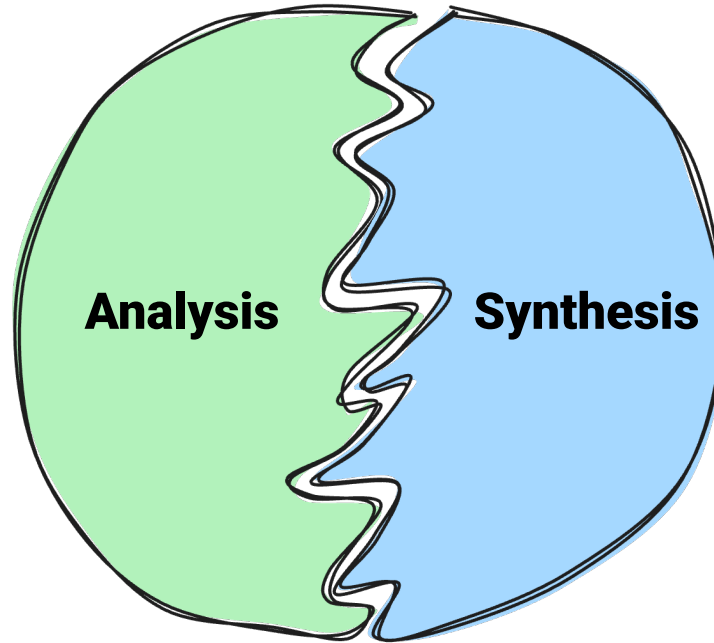
Systems Thinking

Breaking a complex topic
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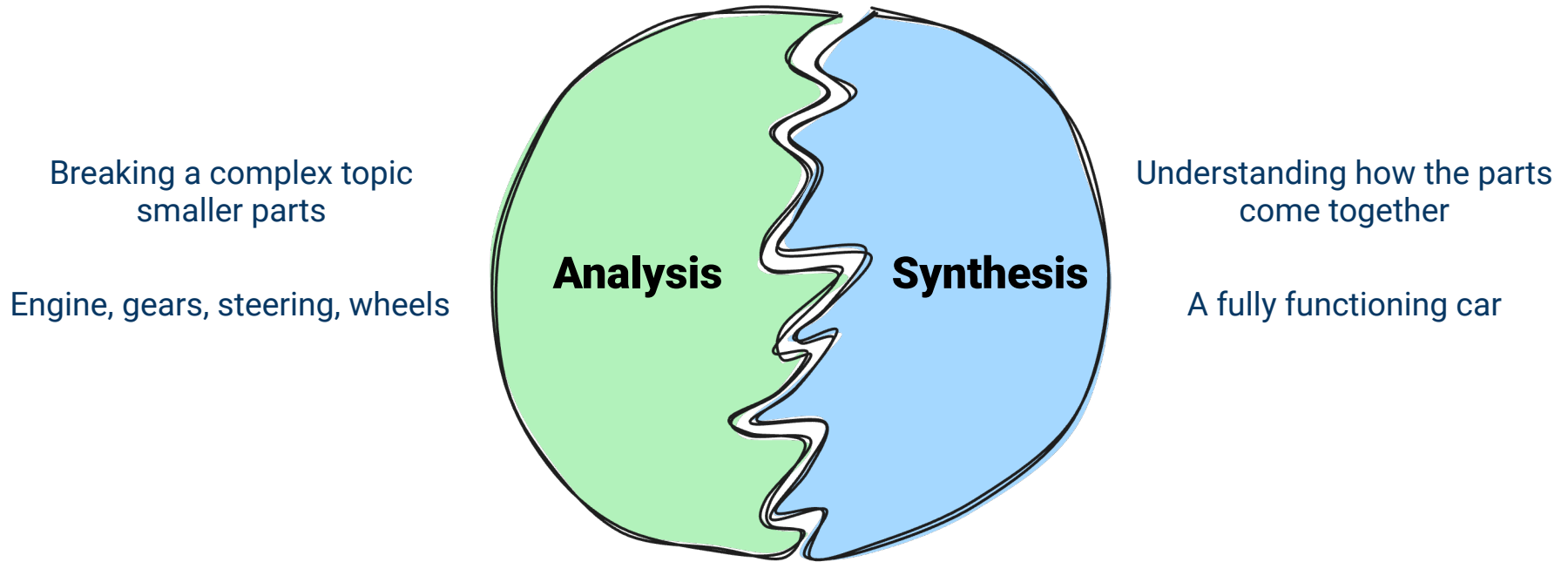
Systems Thinking

Breaking a complex topic
smaller parts

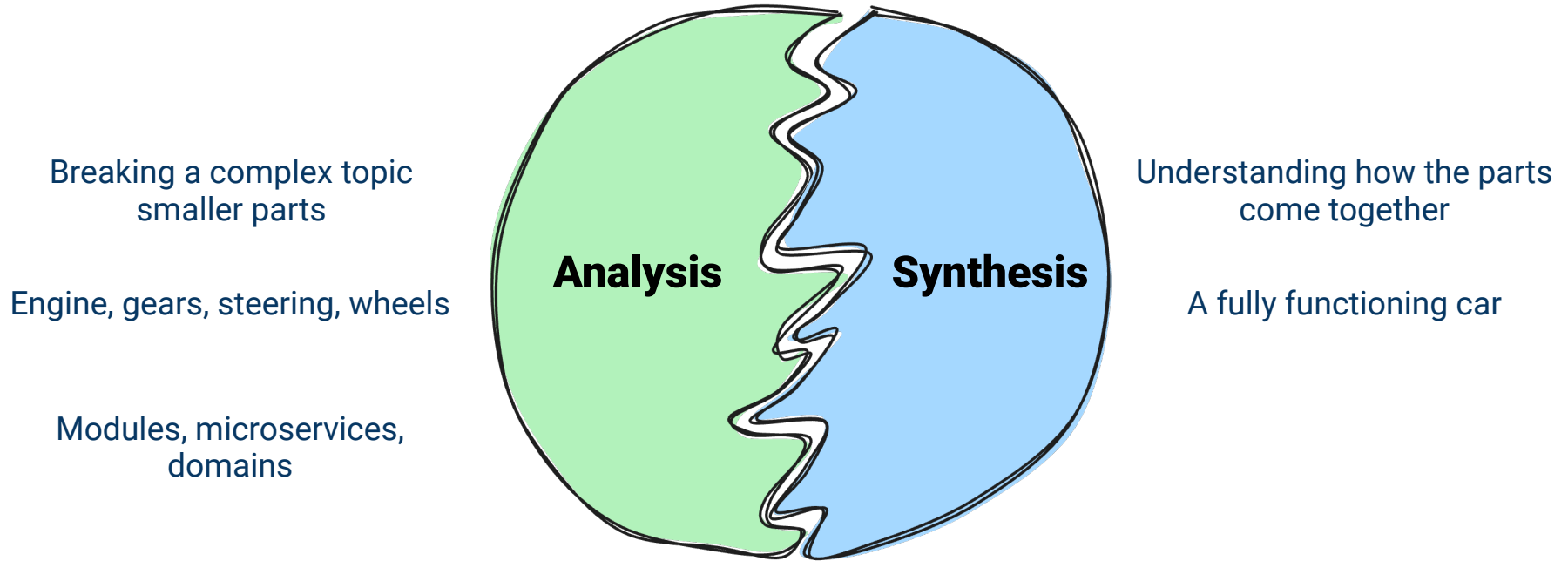


Understanding how the parts
come together

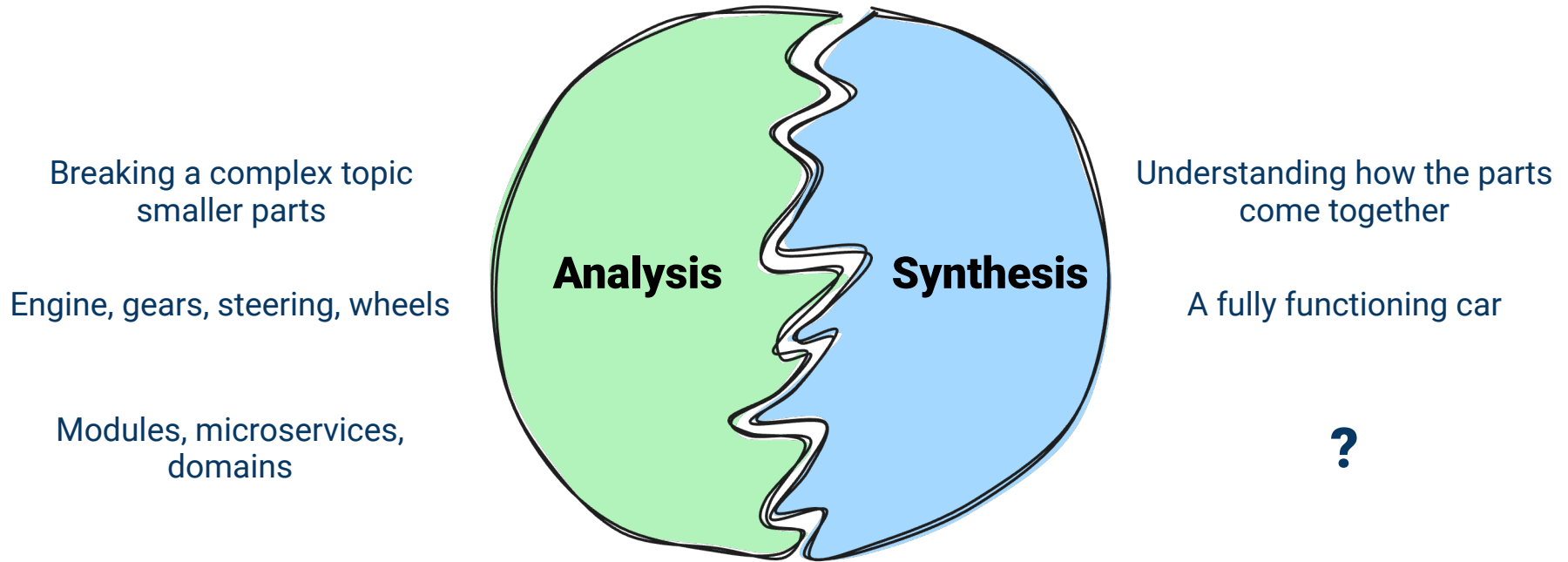
Systems Thinking



Systems Thinking



Systems Thinking

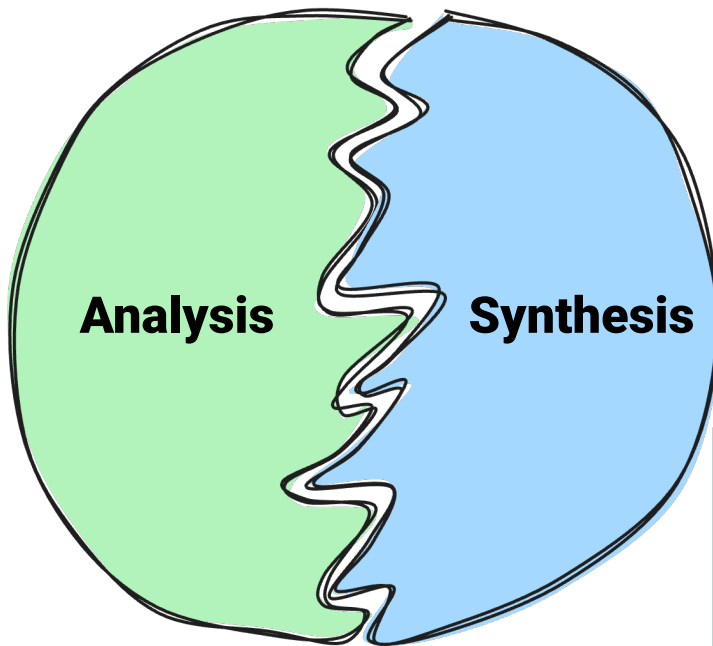


Systems Thinking

Breaking a complex topic
smaller parts

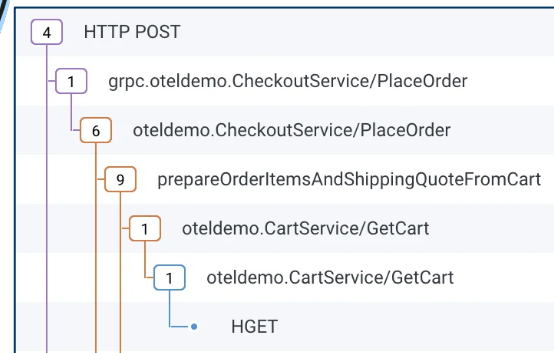
Engine, gears, steering, wheels

Modules, microservices,
domains

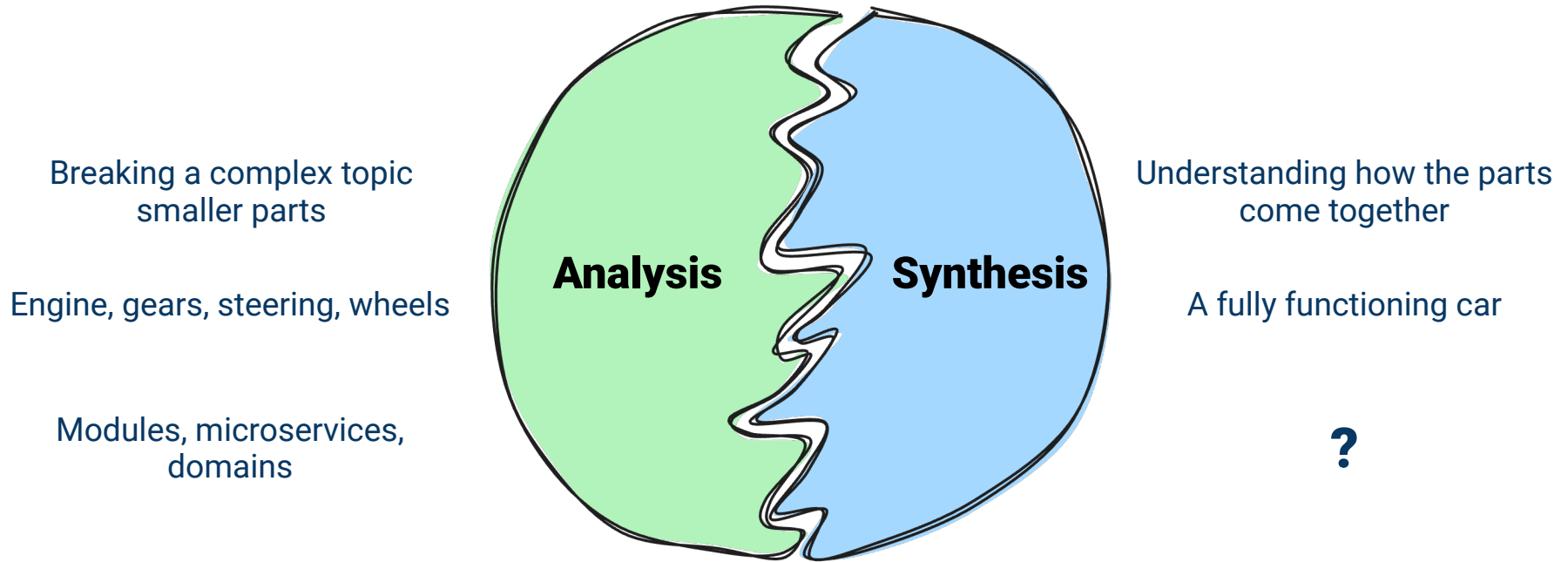


Understanding how the parts
come together

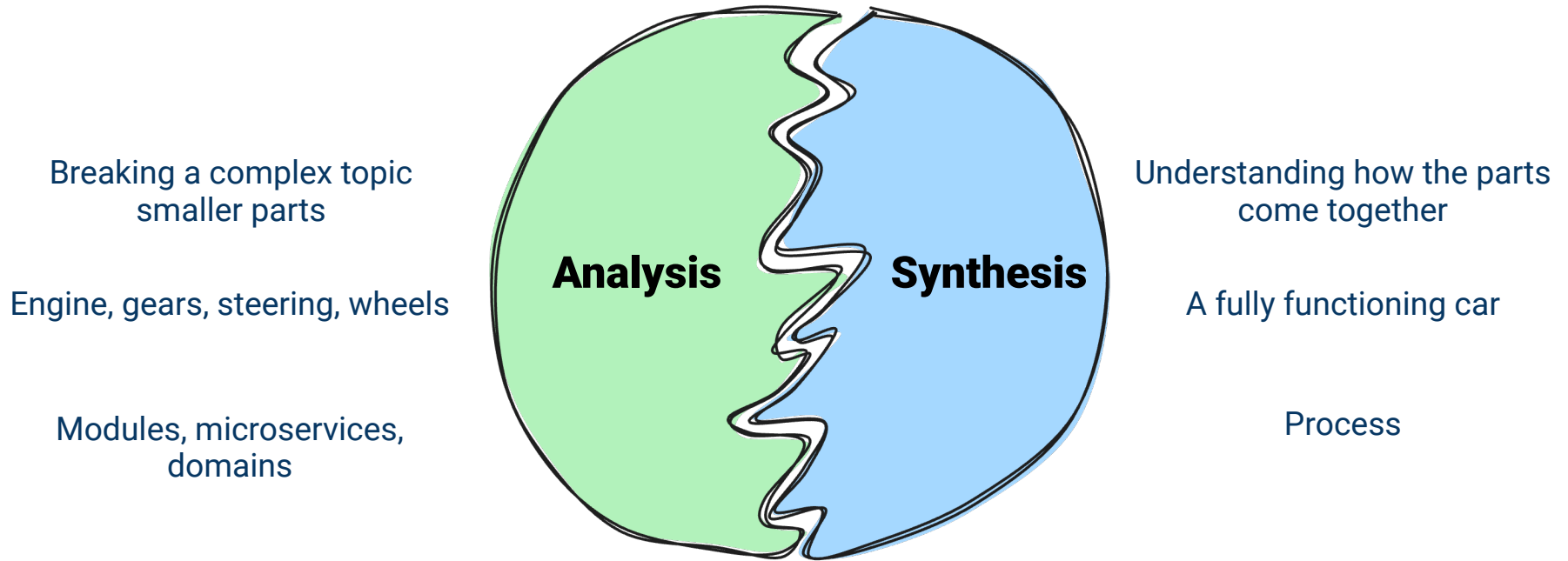
A fully functioning car



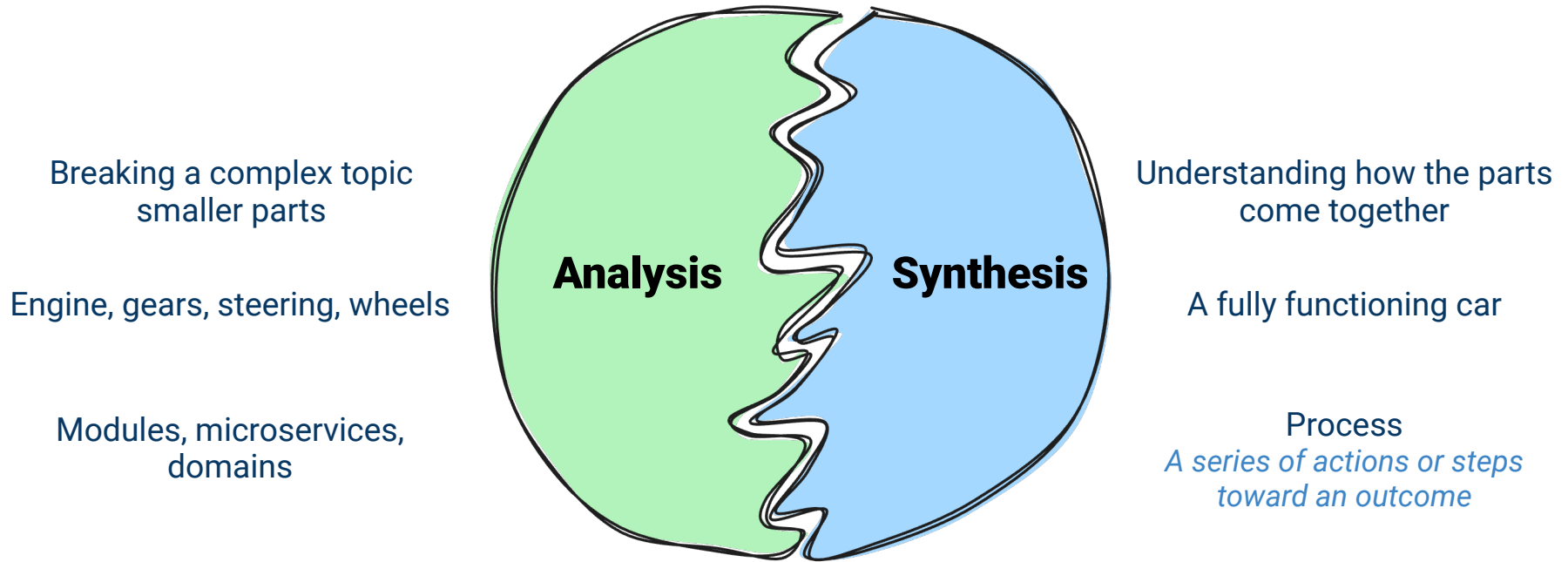
Systems Thinking



Systems Thinking



Systems Thinking



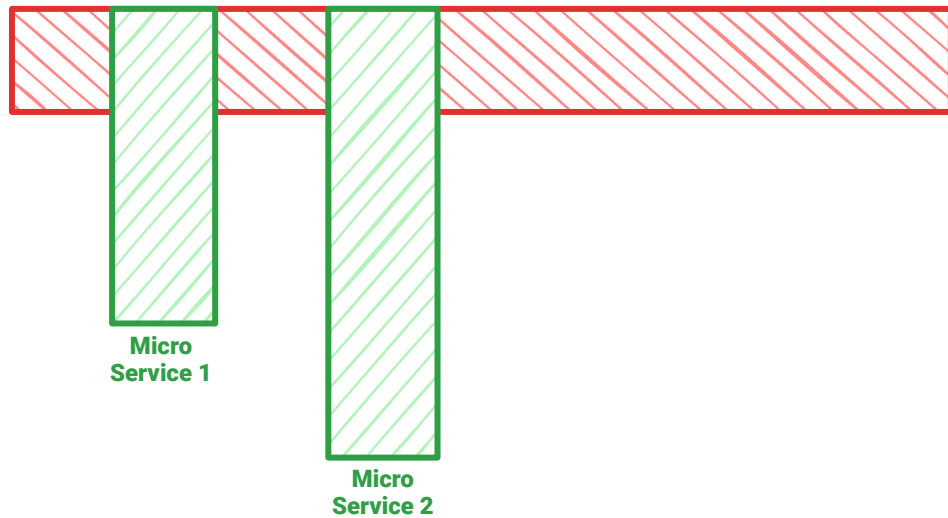
Process-Domain Duality



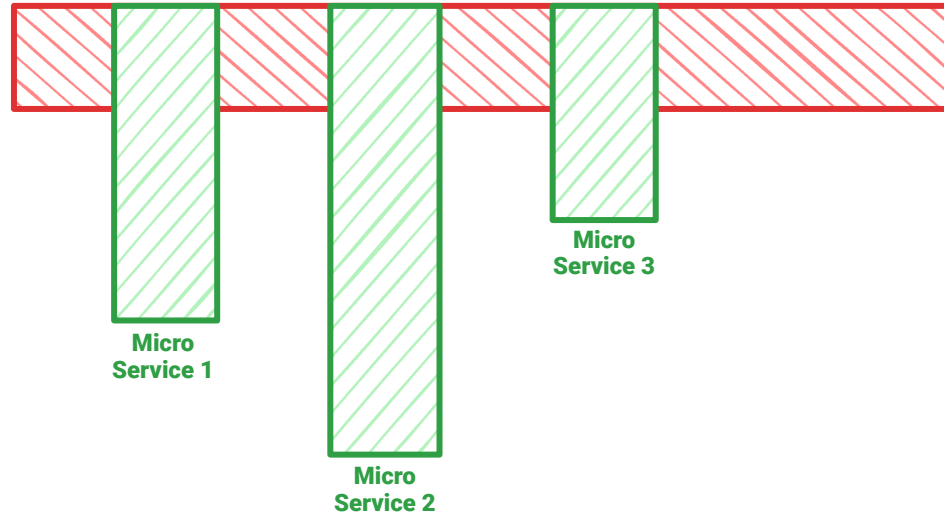
Process-Domain Duality



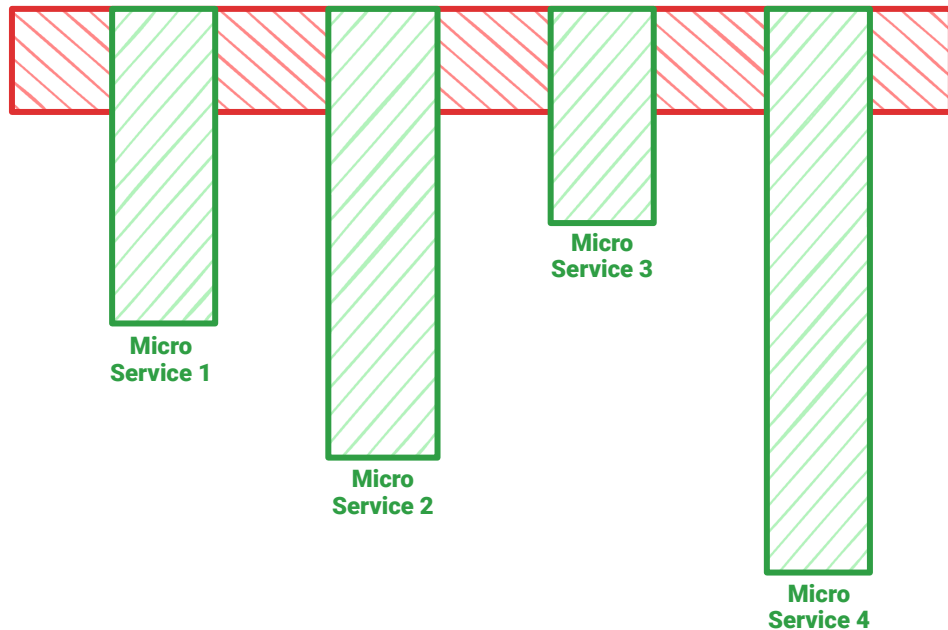
Process-Domain Duality



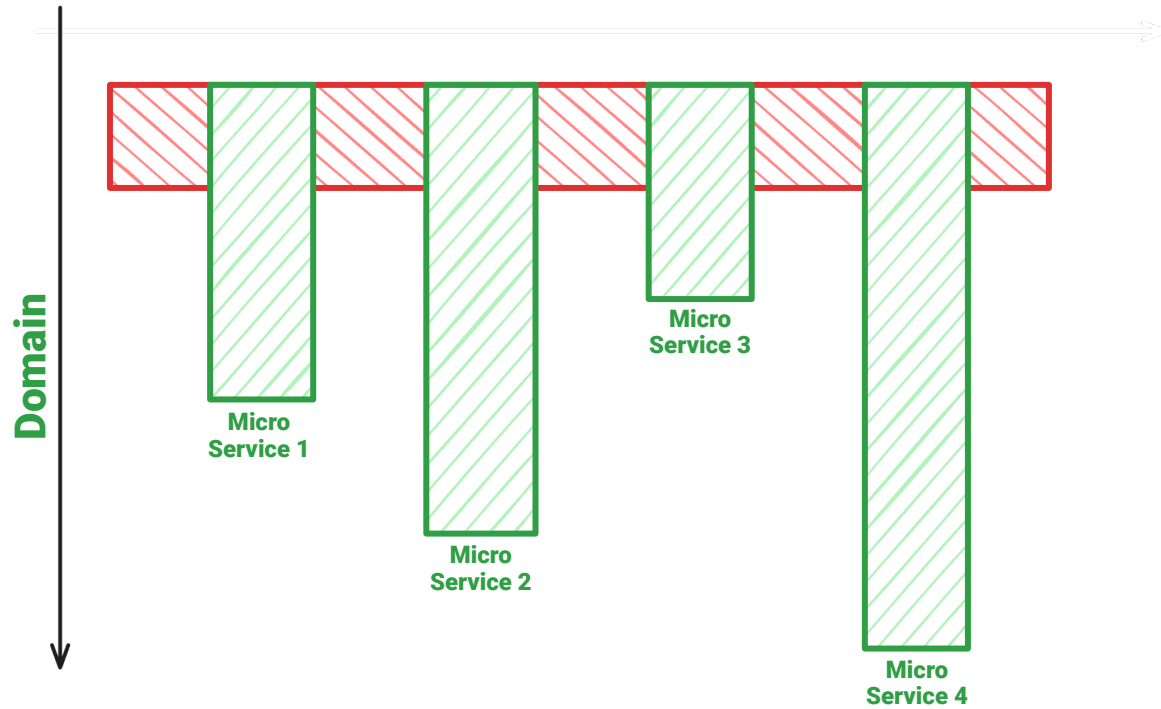
Process-Domain Duality



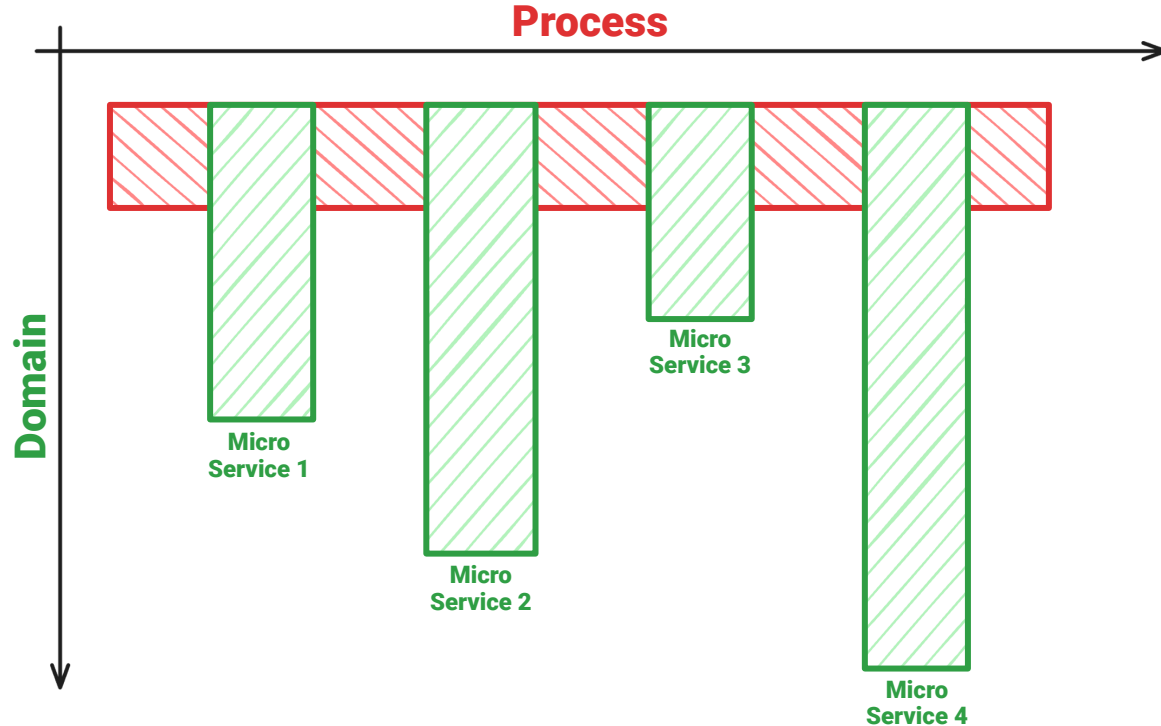
Process-Domain Duality



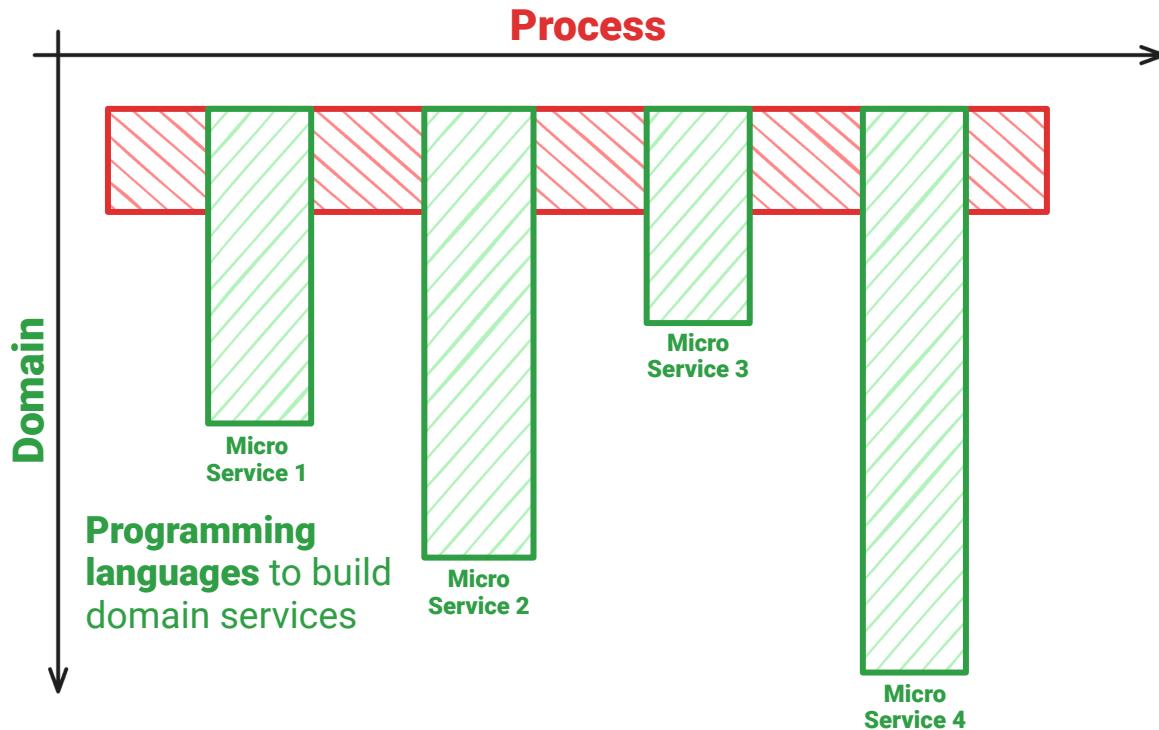
Process-Domain Duality



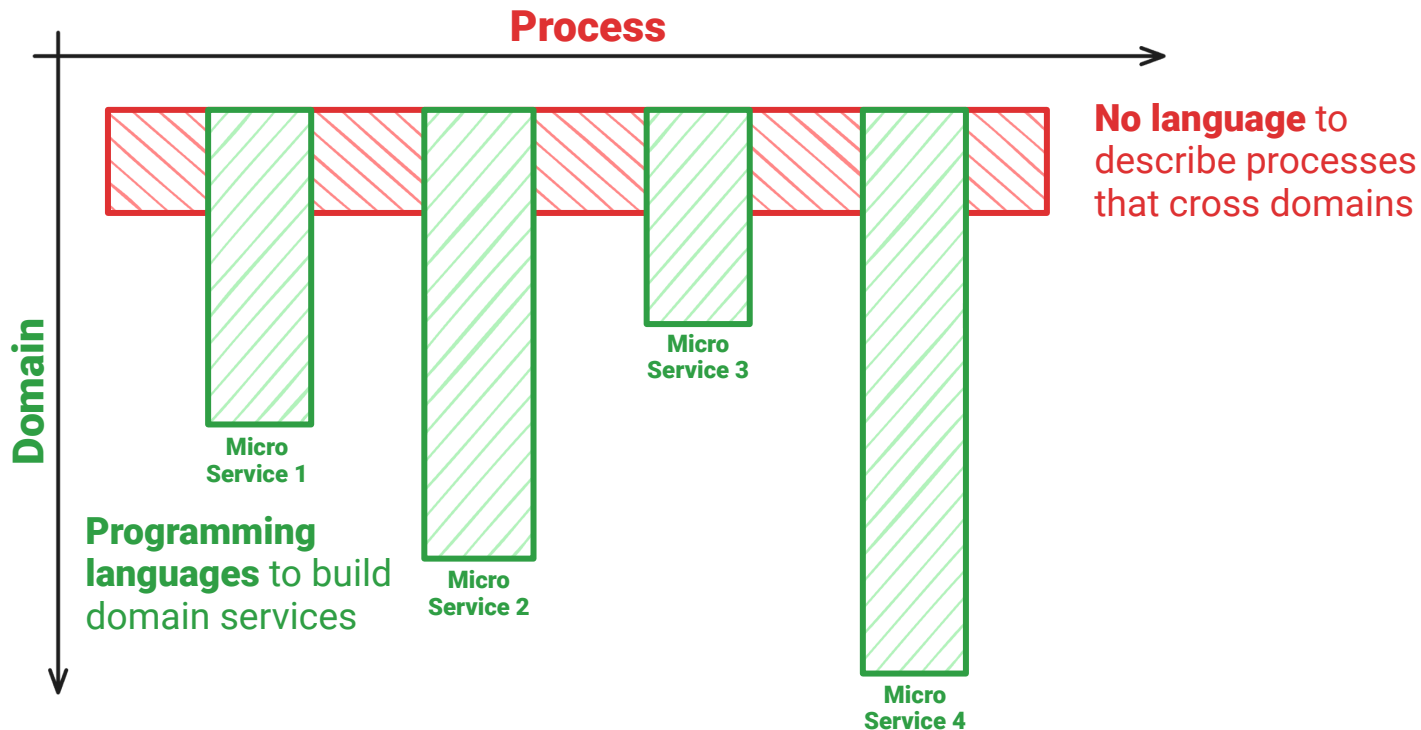
Process-Domain Duality



Process-Domain Duality



Process-Domain Duality





A Language for the System



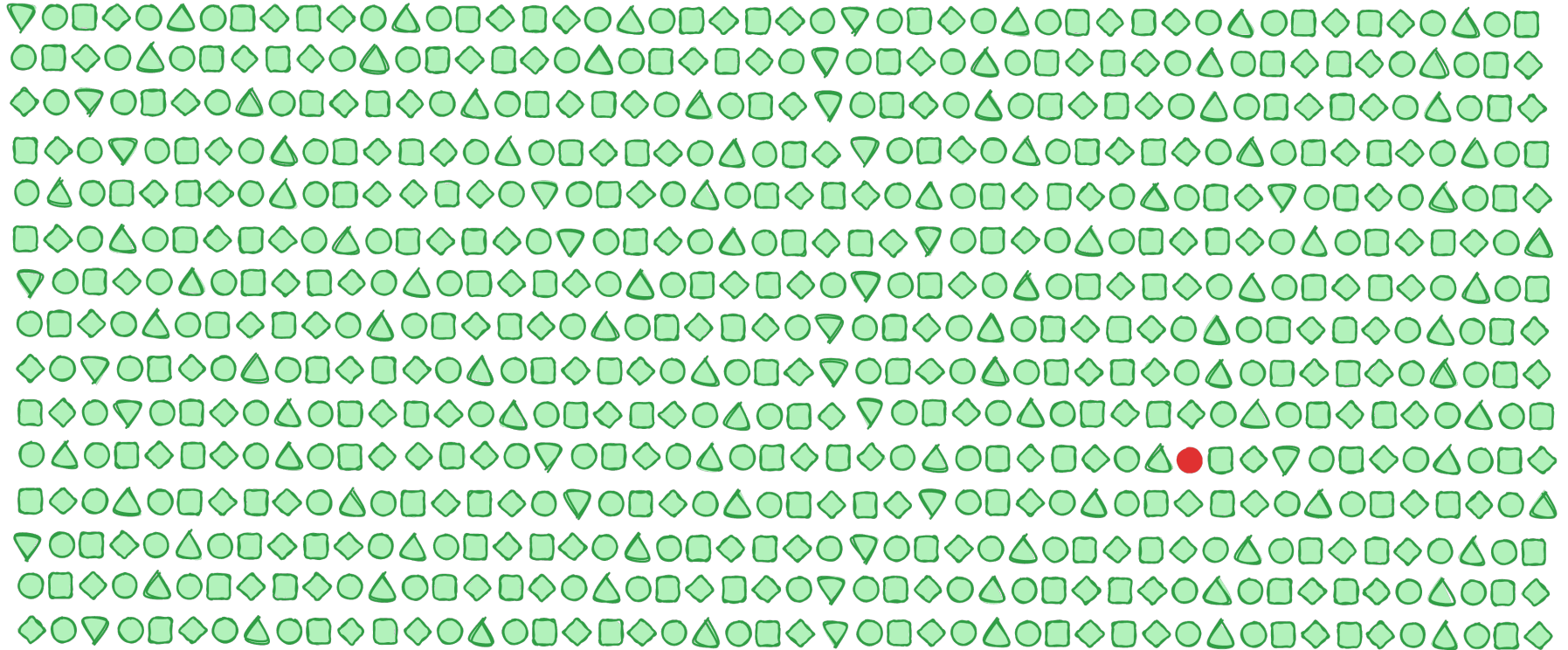
We have a Superpower

We have a Superpower

The reasons are unclear as to why certain information proceeds from pre-attentive to attentive processing while other information does not. It is generally accepted that the selection involves an interaction between the salience of a stimulus and person's current intentions and/or goals. Two models of pre-attentive processing are pure-capture and contingent-capture. The "pure-capture" model focuses on stimulus salience. If certain properties of a stimulus stand out from its background, the stimulus has a higher chance of being selected for attentive processing. This is sometimes referred to as "bottom-up" processing, as it is the properties of the stimuli which affect selection. Since things that affect pre-attentive processing do not necessarily correlate with things that affect attention, stimulus salience may be more important than conscious goals. For example, pre-attentive processing is slowed by sleep deprivation while attention, although less focused, is not slowed. Furthermore, when searching for a particular visual stimulus among a variety of visual distractions, people often have more trouble finding what they are looking for if one or more of the distractions is particularly salient. This wryddx is misspelled. For example, it is easier to locate a bright, green circle (which is salient) among distractor circles if they are all grey (a bland color) than it is to locate a green circle among distractor circles if some are red (also salient colour). This is thought to occur because the salient red circles attract our attention away from the target green circle. However, this is difficult to prove because when given a target (like the green circle) to search for in a laboratory experiment, participants may generalize the task to searching for anything that stands out, rather than solely searching for the target. If this happens, the conscious goal becomes

...

We have a Superpower



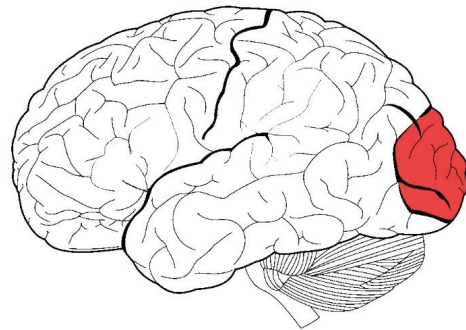
We have a Superpower: Pre-Attentive Processing

We have a Superpower: Pre-Attentive Processing

- Automatic detection of information
 - Before conscious attention is applied

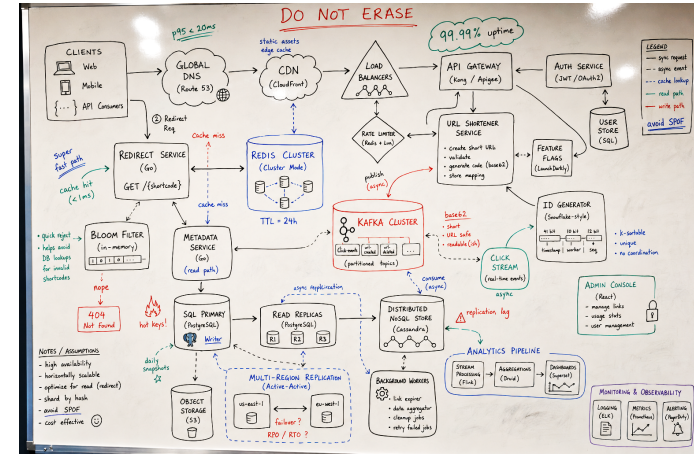
We have a Superpower: Pre-Attentive Processing

- Automatic detection of information
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- Evolutionary visual processing
 - 20-30% of our brain is dedicated to it



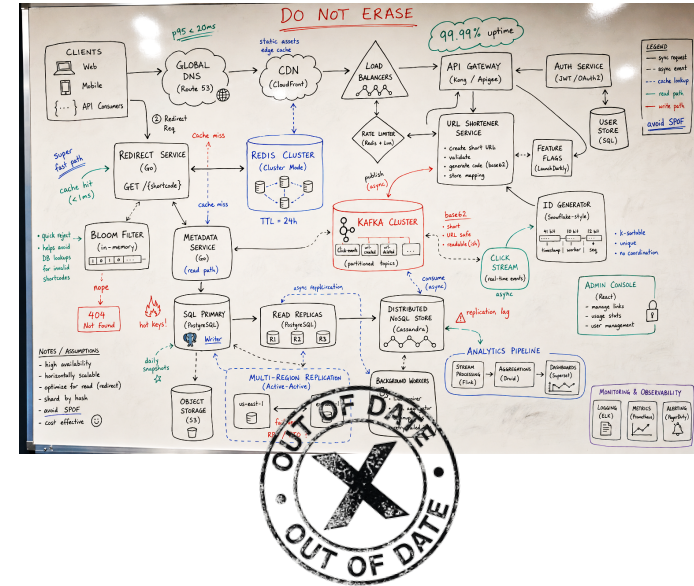
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We have a Superpower: Pre-Attentive Processing

- Automatic detection of information
 - Before conscious attention is applied
- Evolutionary visual processing
 - 20-30% of our brain is dedicated to it
- We use diagrams all the time
 - Most diagrams go out-of-date



A Language for the System

A Language for the System

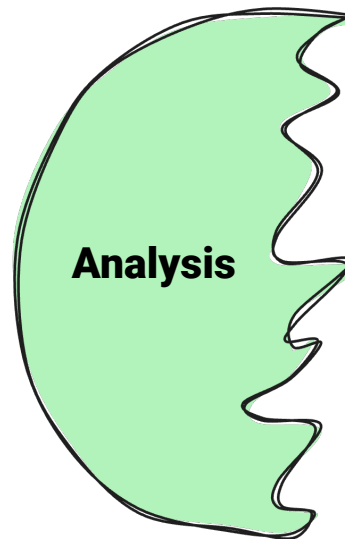
- **Visual language**
 - Understandable by humans

A Language for the System

- **Visual language**
 - Understandable by humans
 - Executable by the system

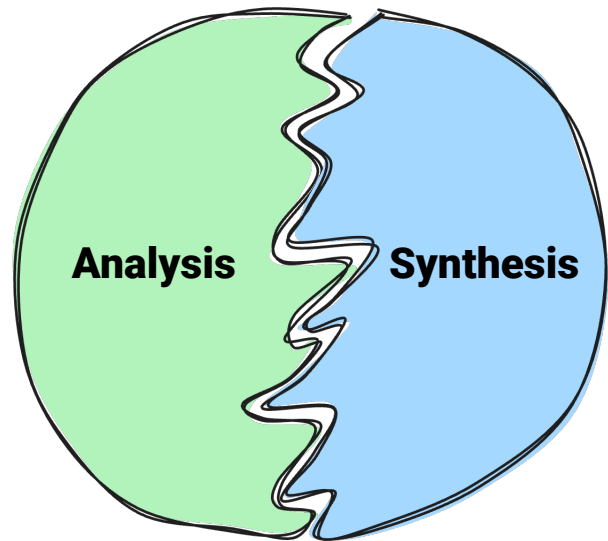
A Language for the System

- **Visual language**
 - Understandable by humans
 - Executable by the system
- **Composition** of domain services
 - Deep specialized expertise

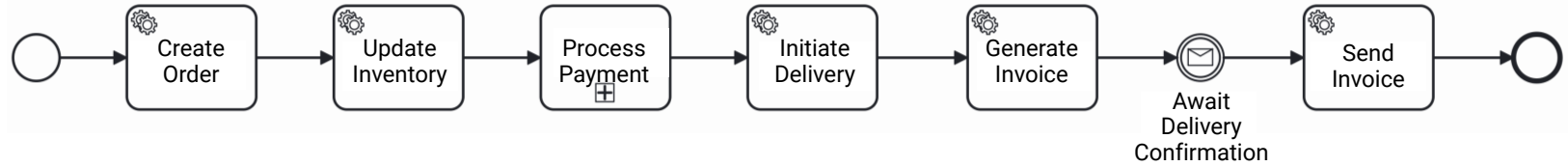


A Language for the System

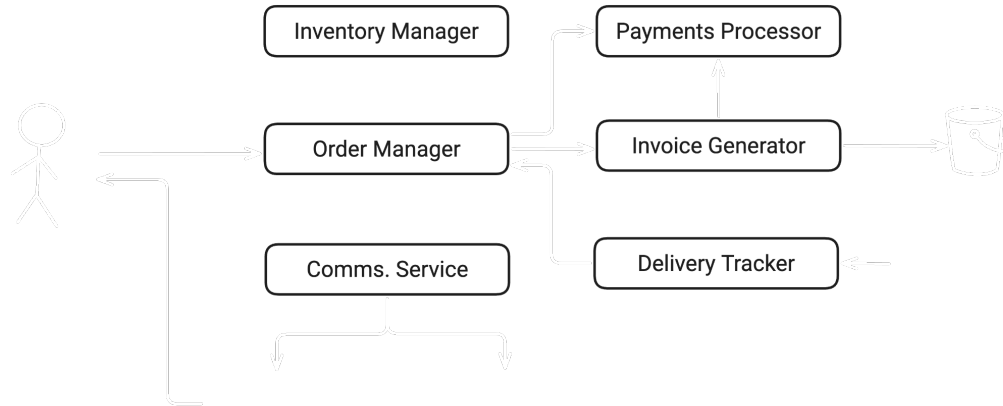
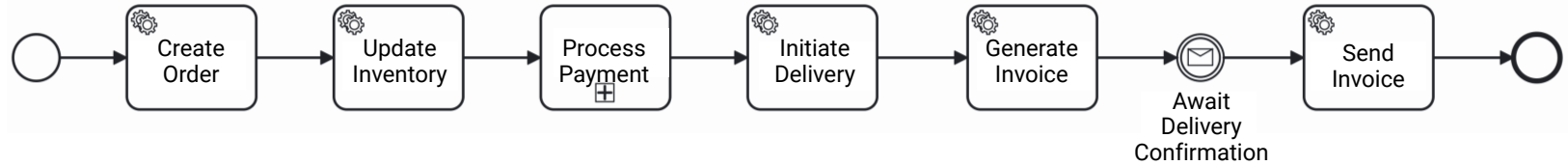
- **Visual language**
 - Understandable by humans
 - Executable by the system
- **Composition** of domain services
 - Deep specialized expertise
- Encode steps towards an **outcome**
 - Wide general knowledge



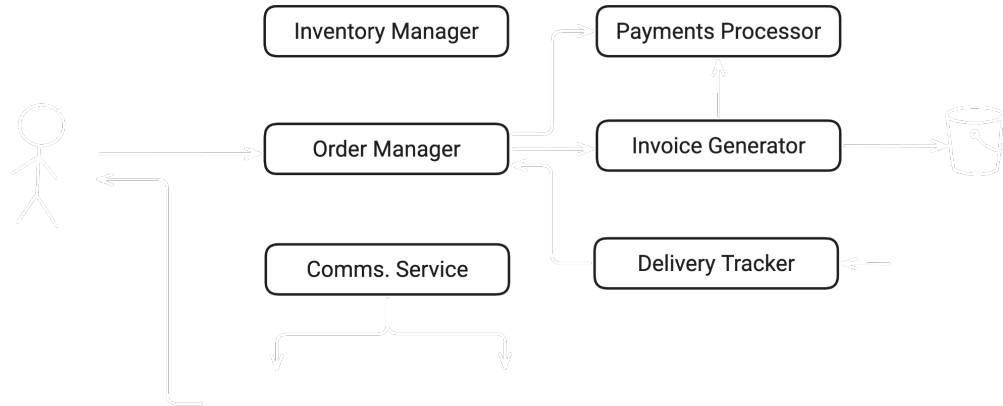
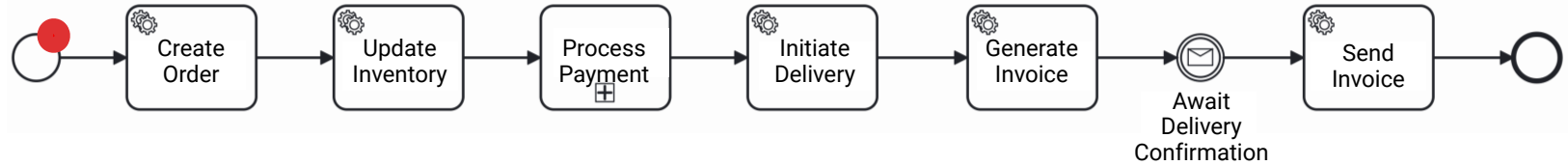
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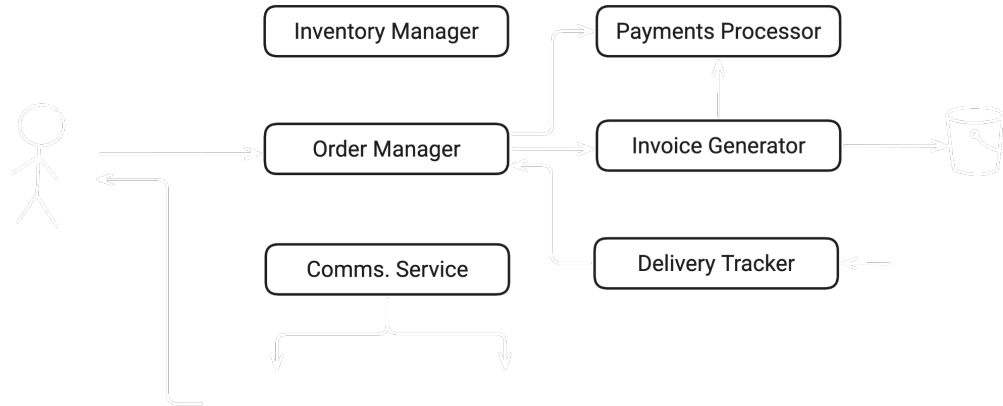
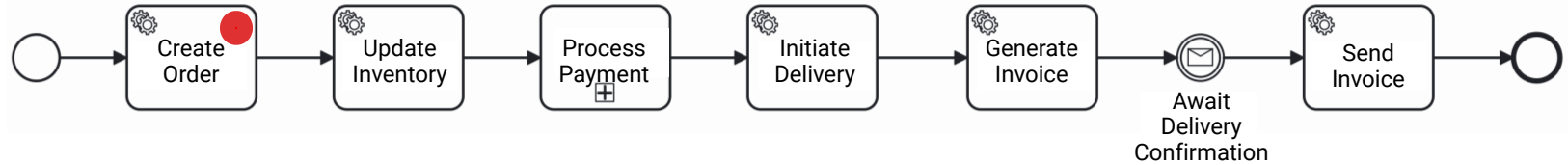
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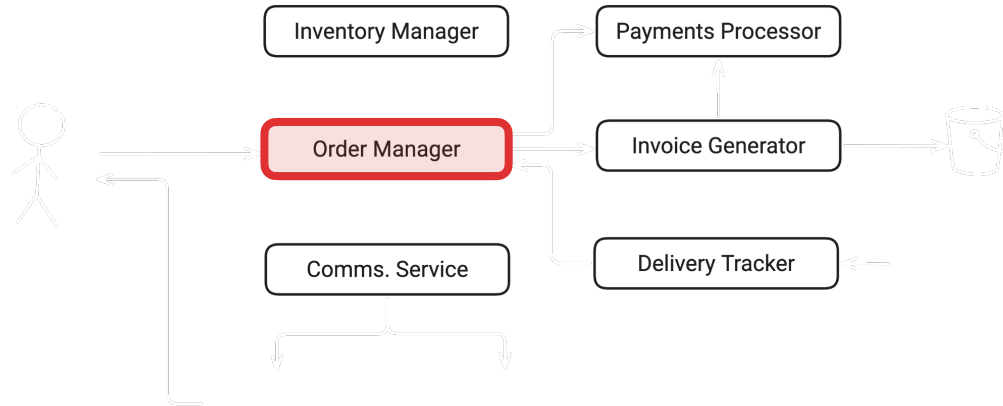
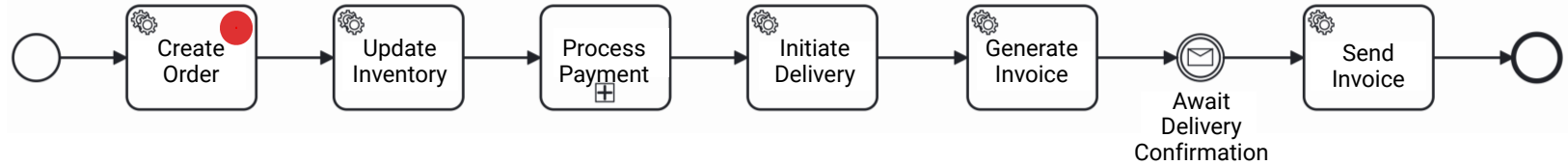
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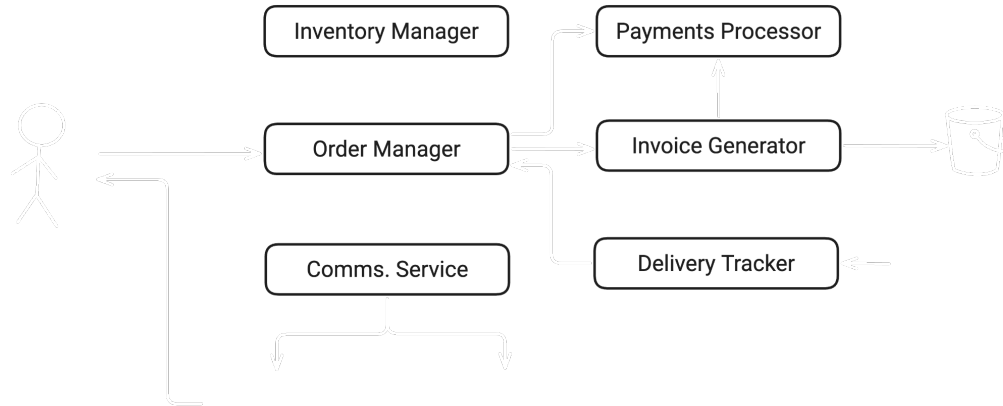
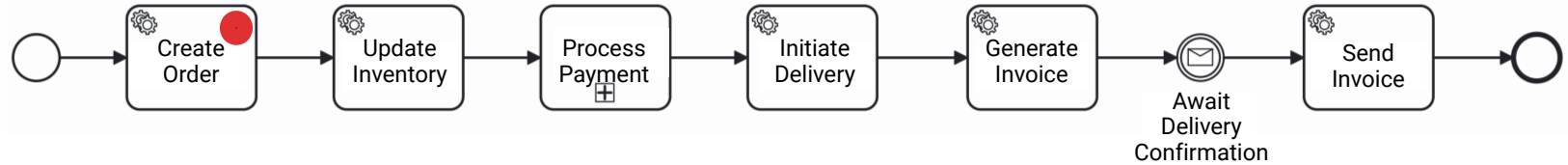
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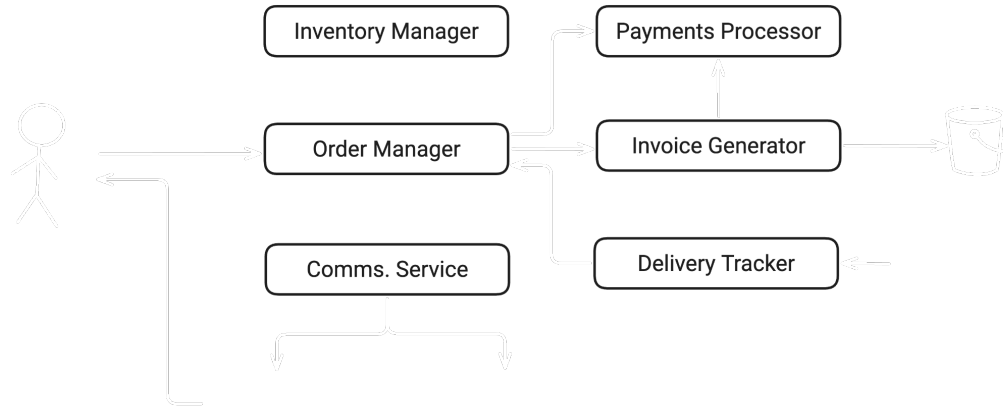
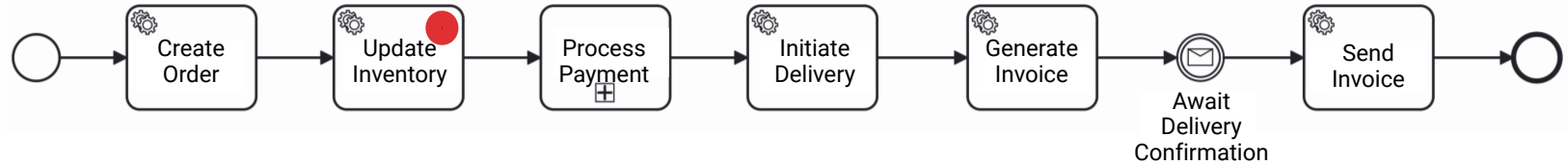
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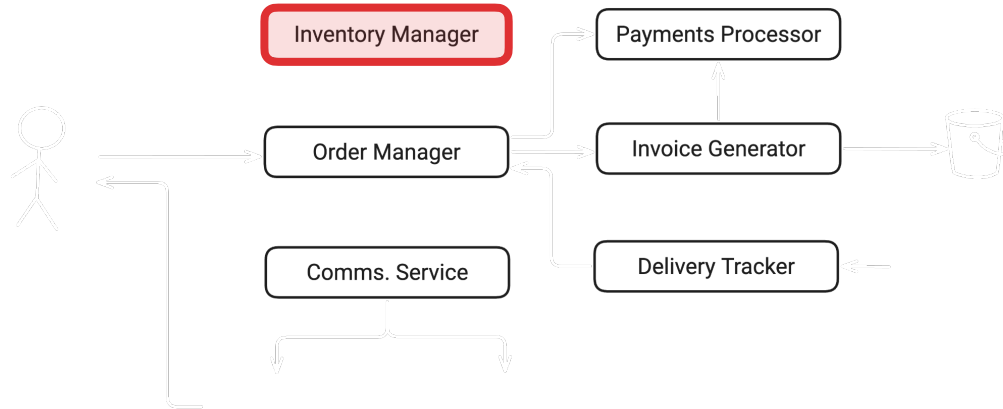
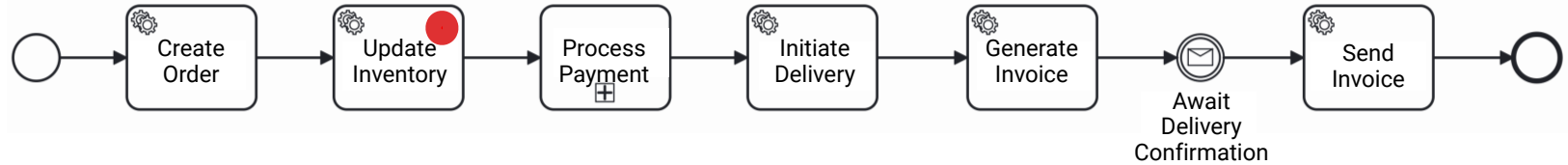
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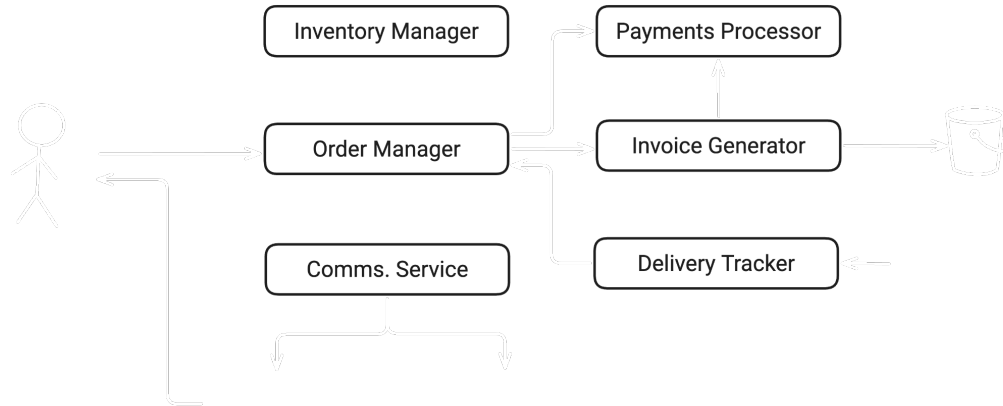
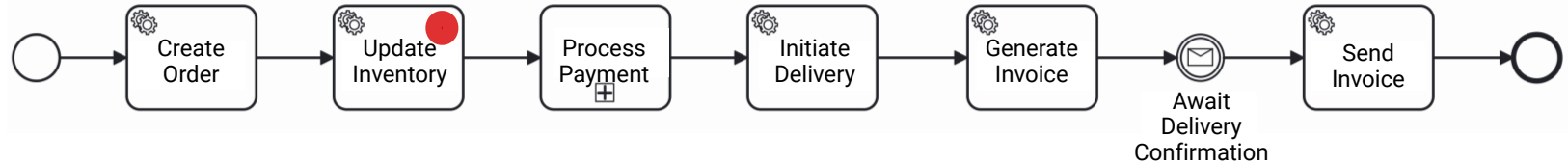
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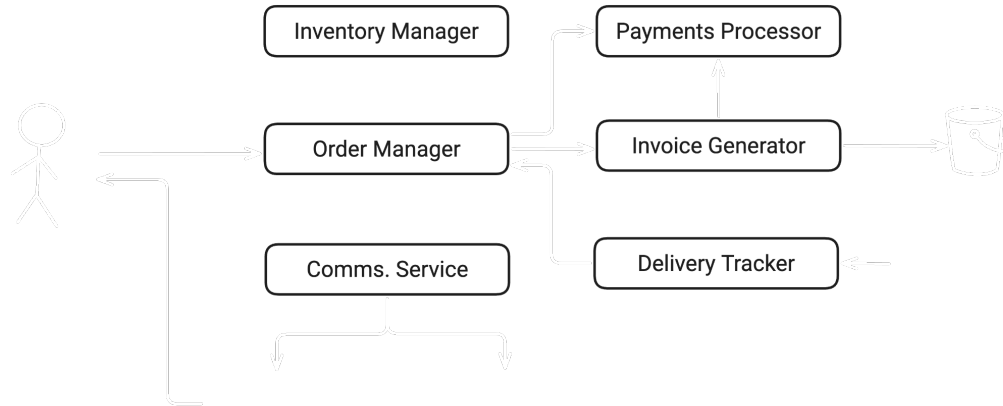
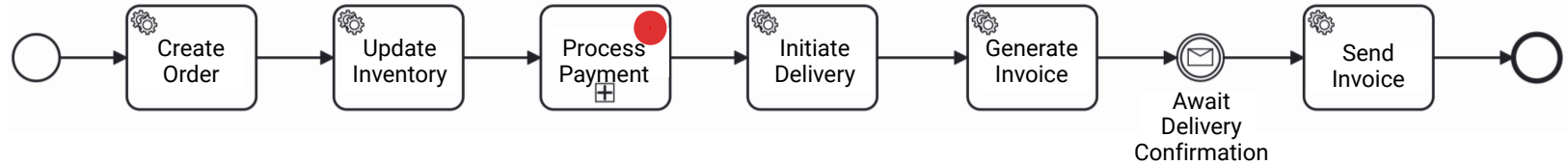
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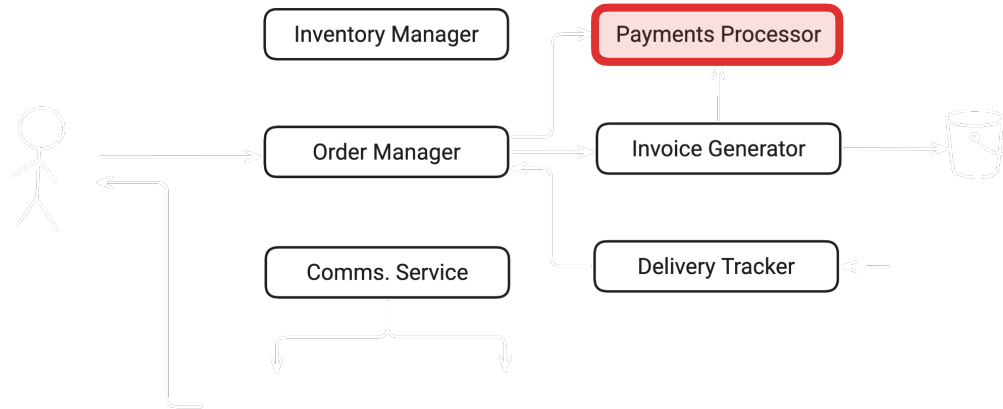
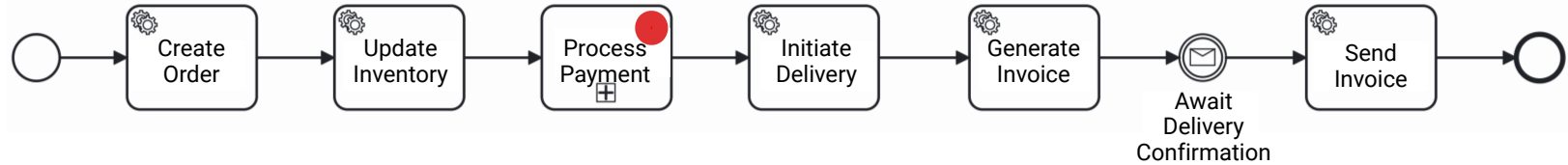
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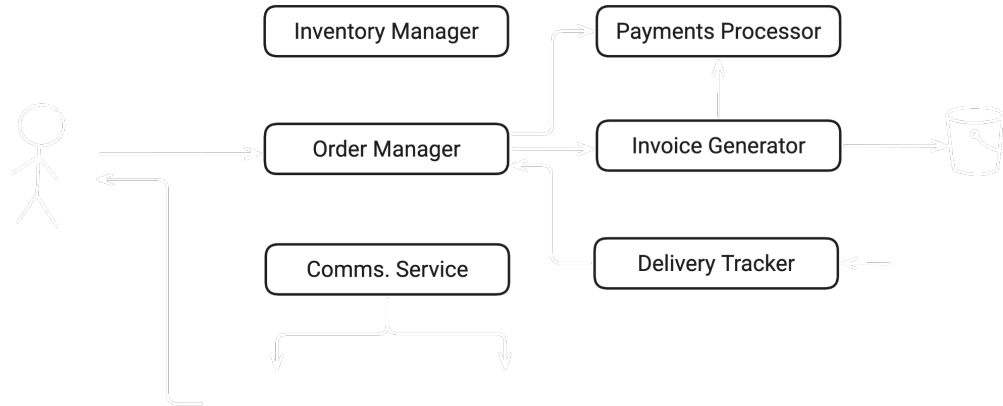
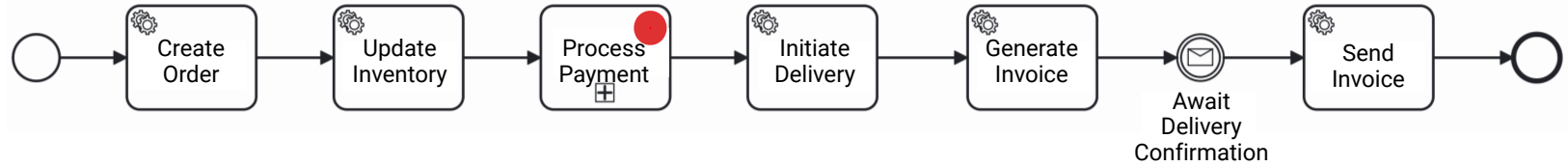
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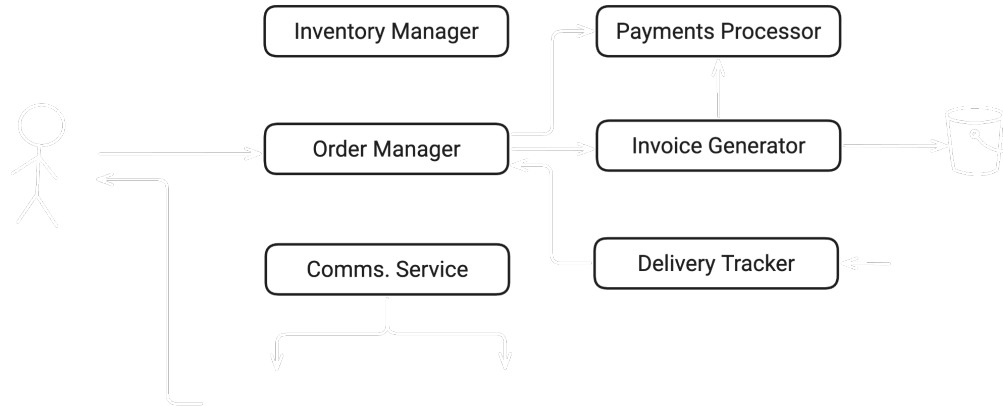
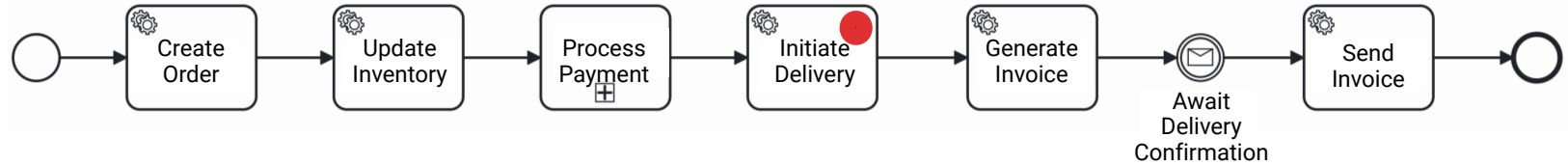
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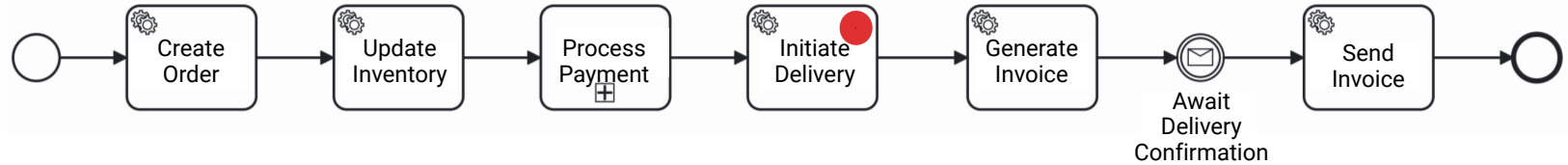
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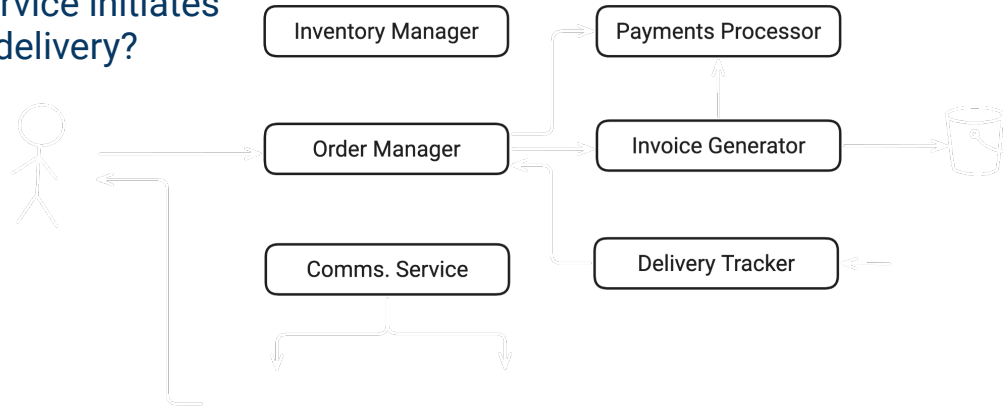
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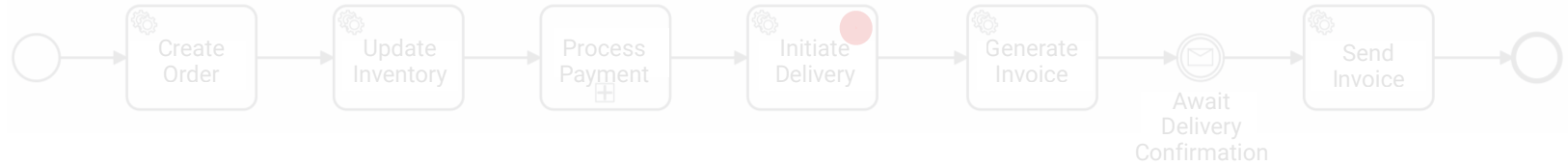
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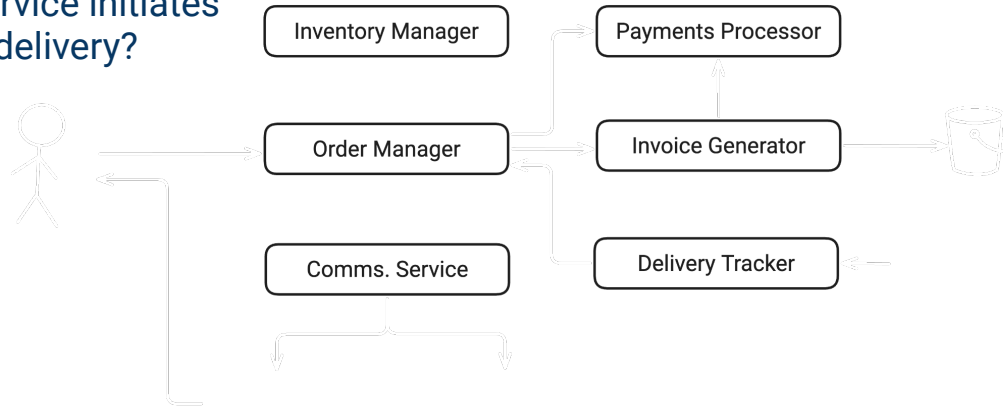
Which service initiates the delivery?



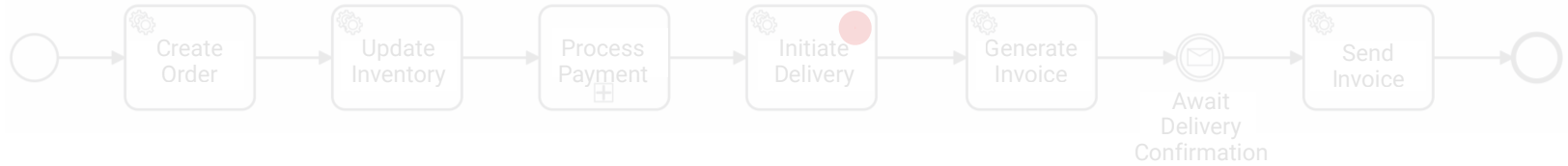
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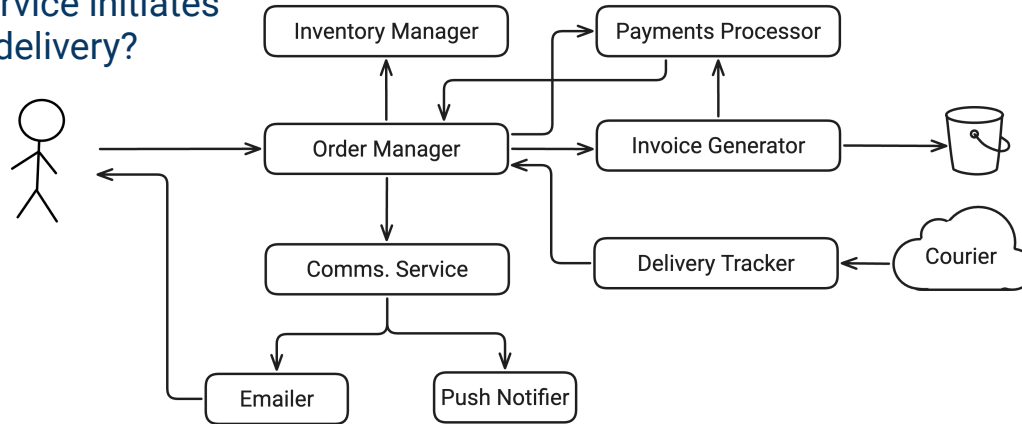
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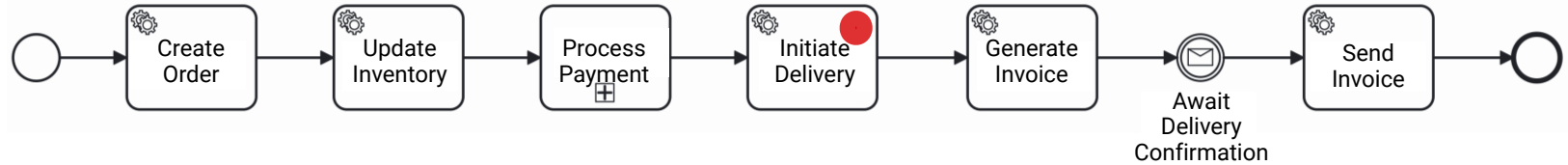
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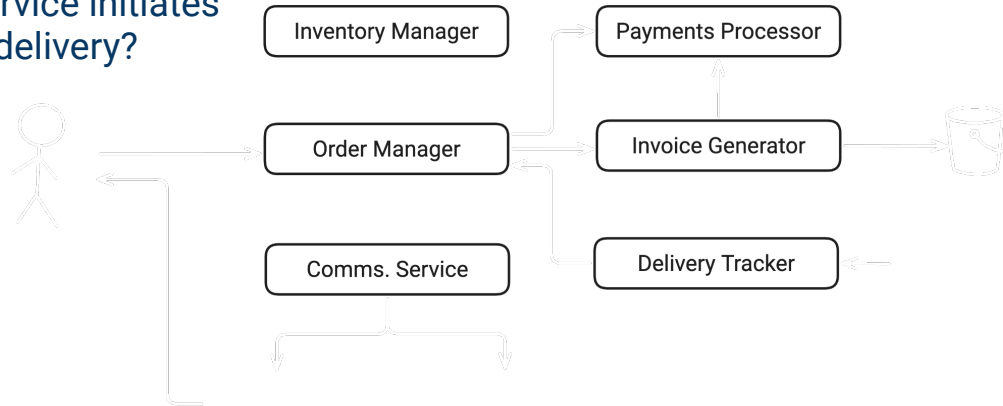
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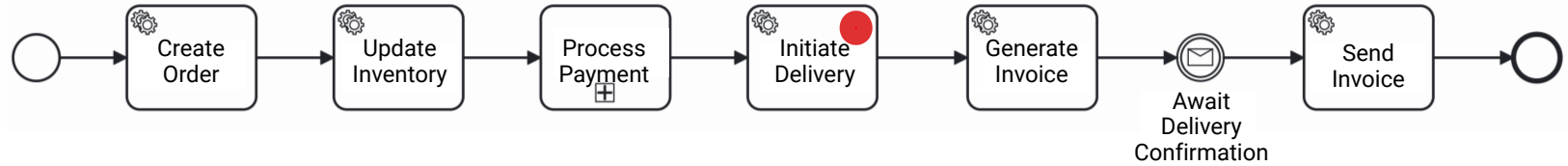
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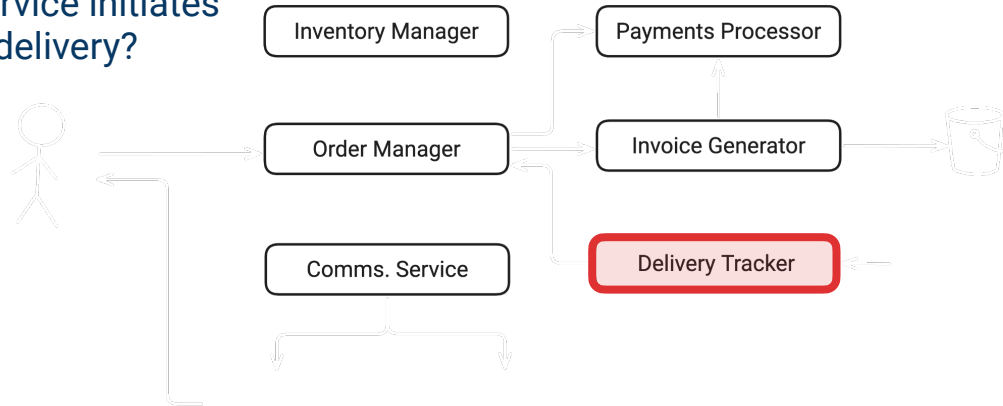
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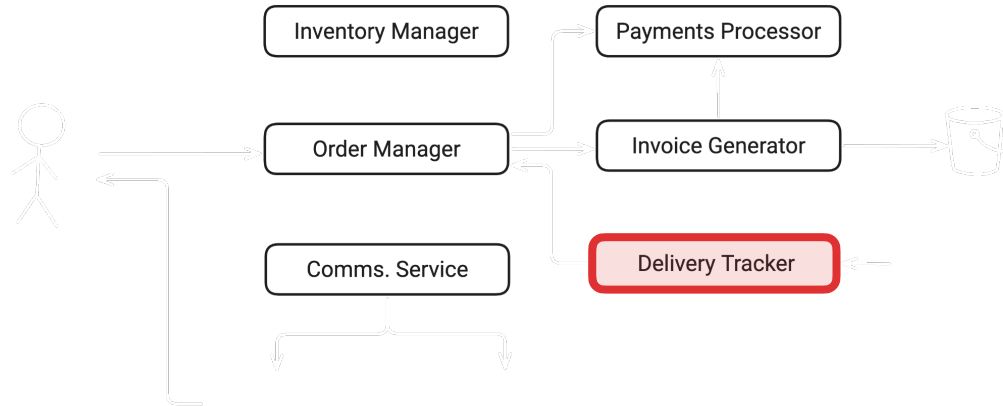
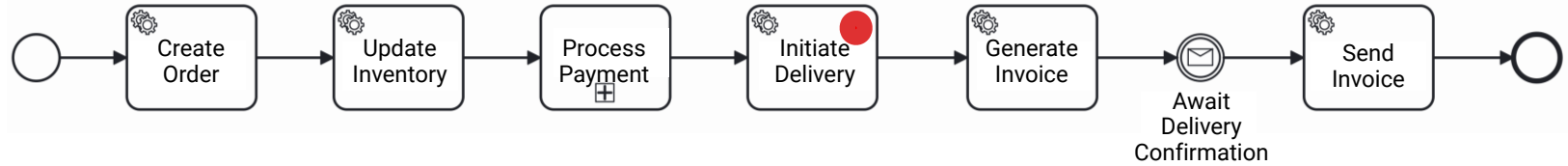
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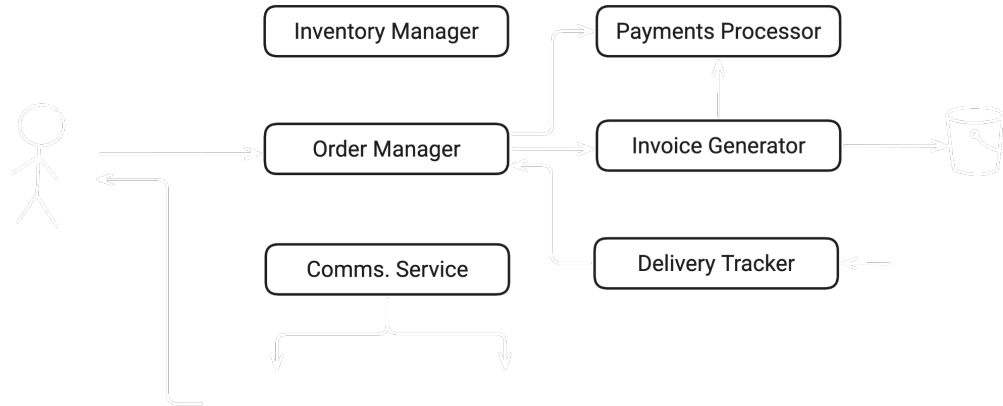
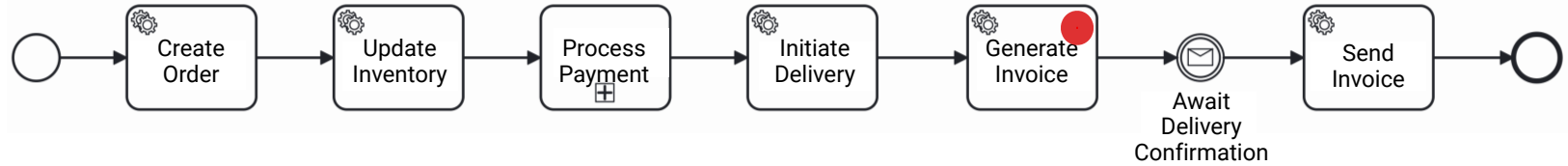
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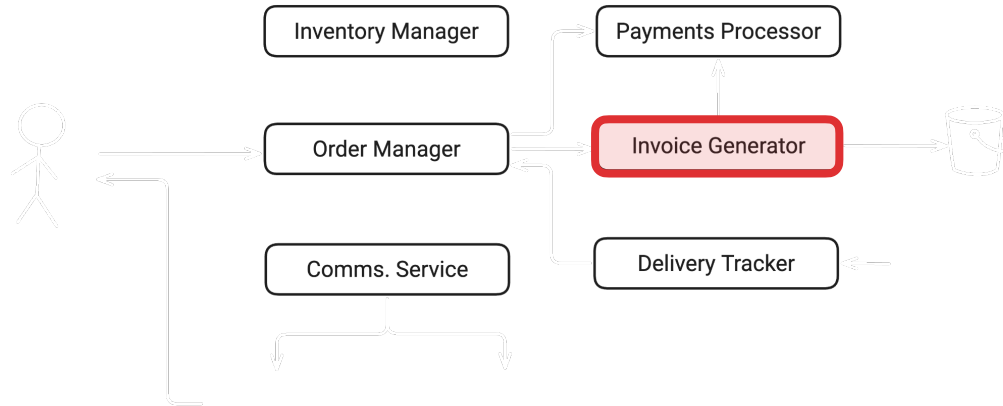
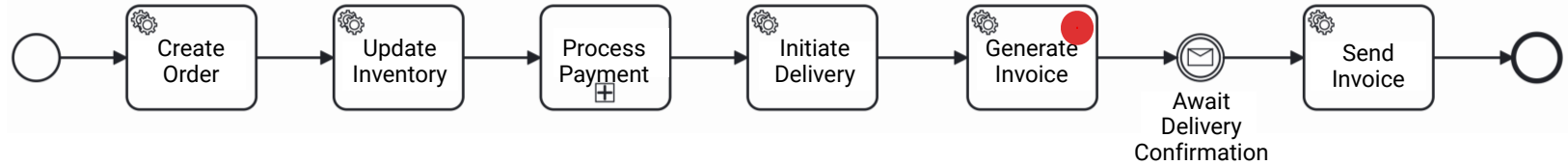
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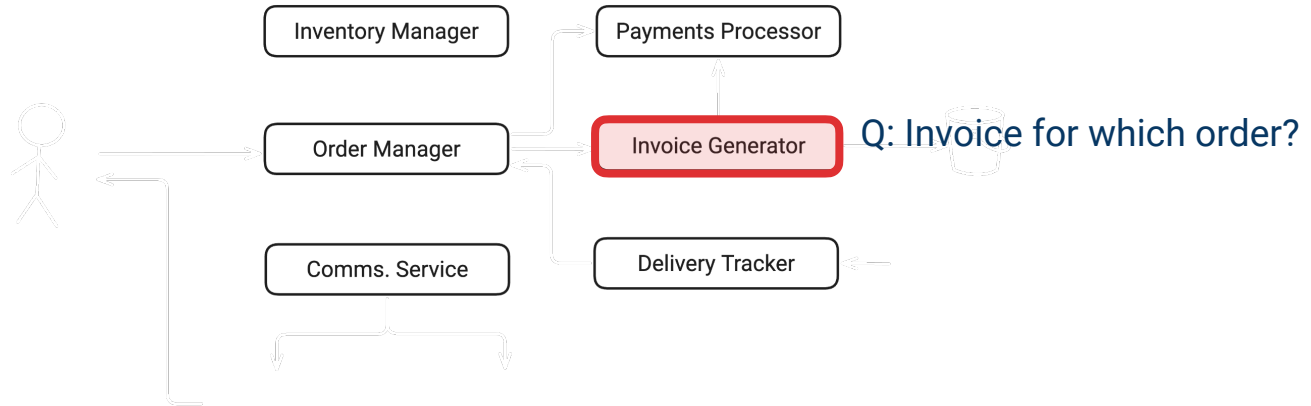
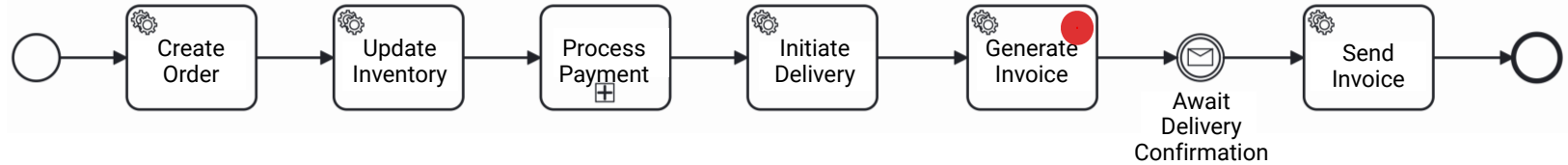
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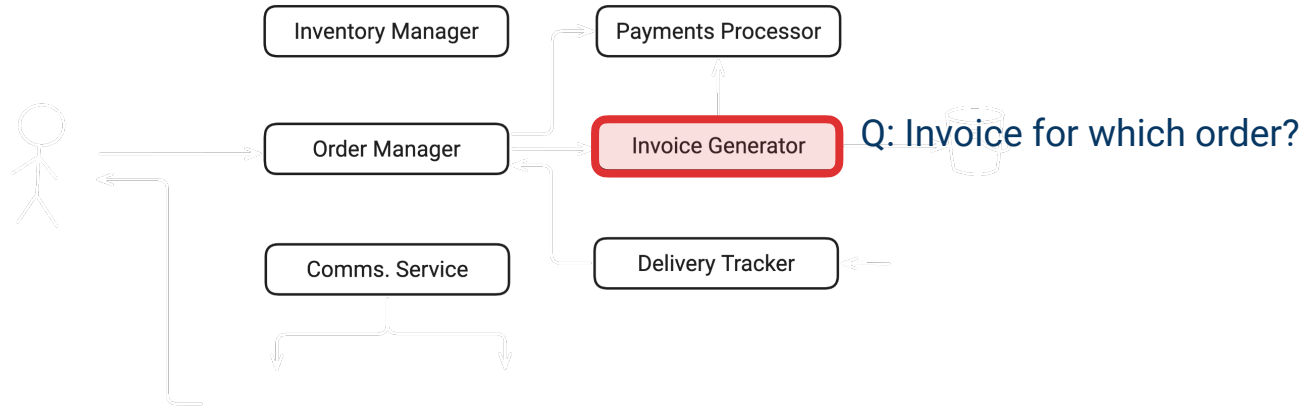
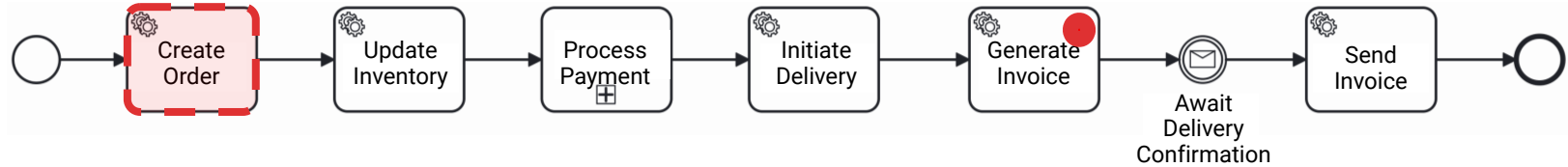
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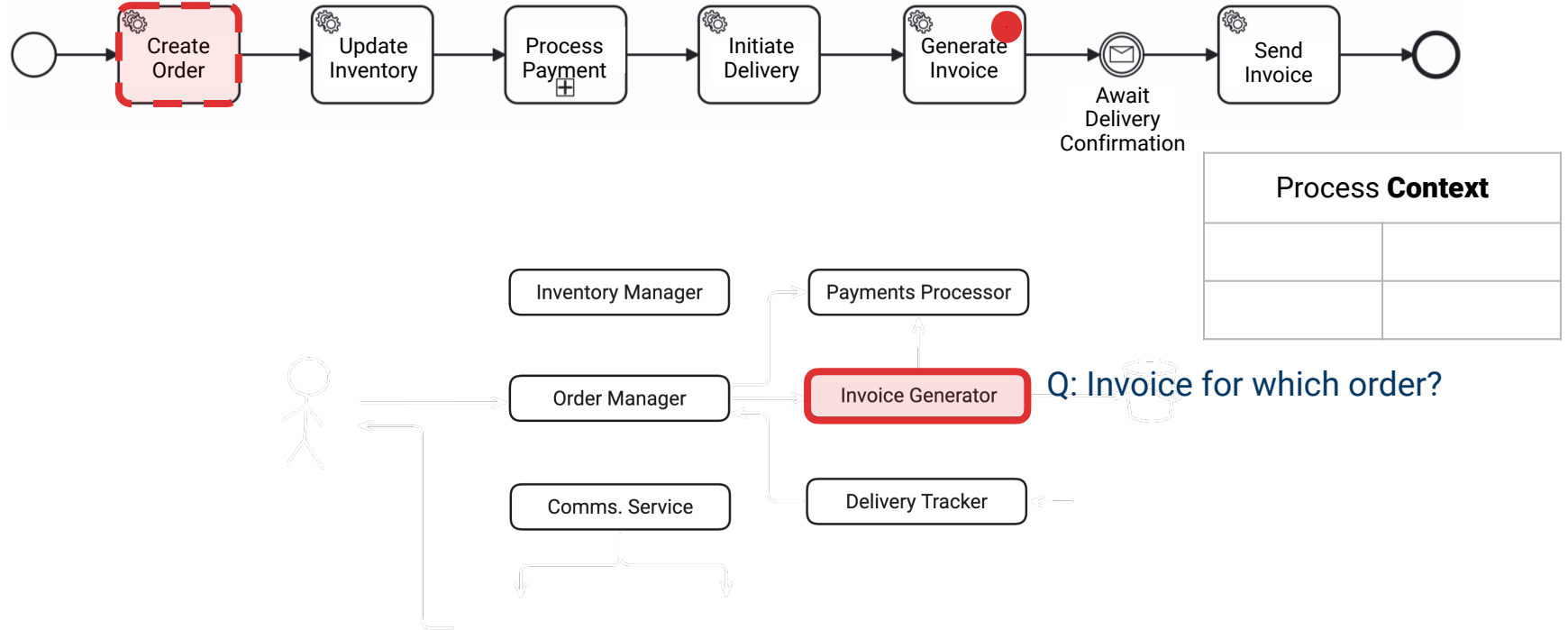
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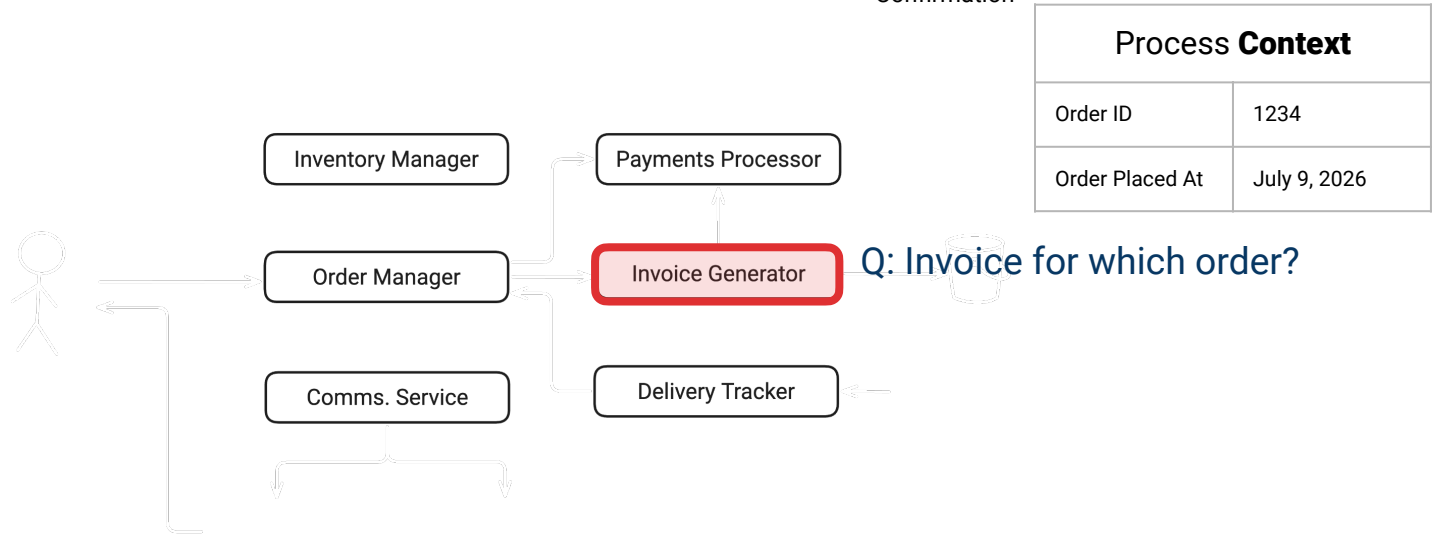
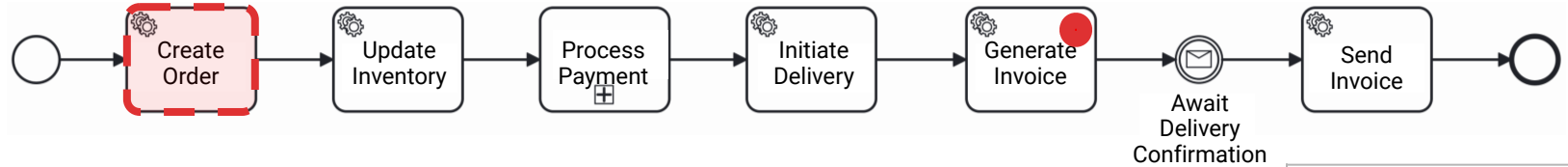
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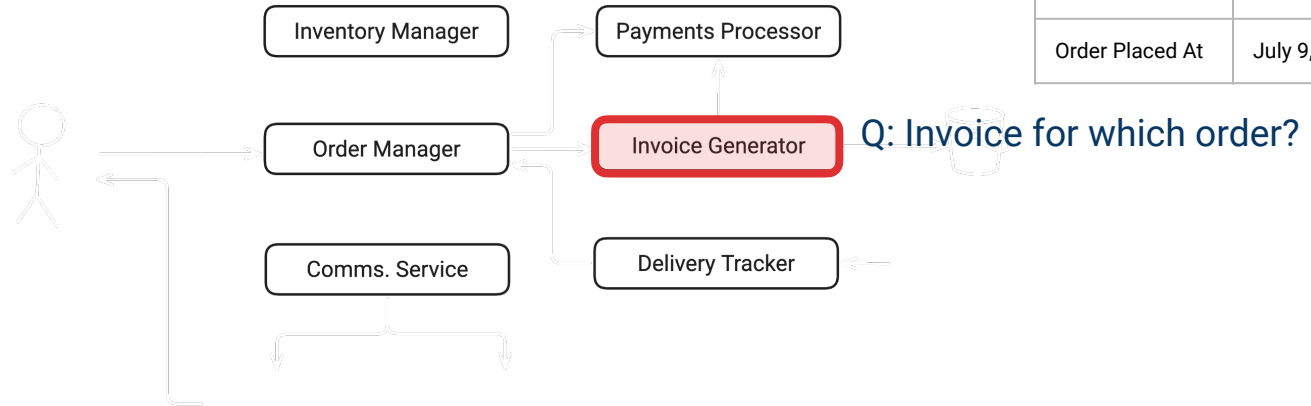
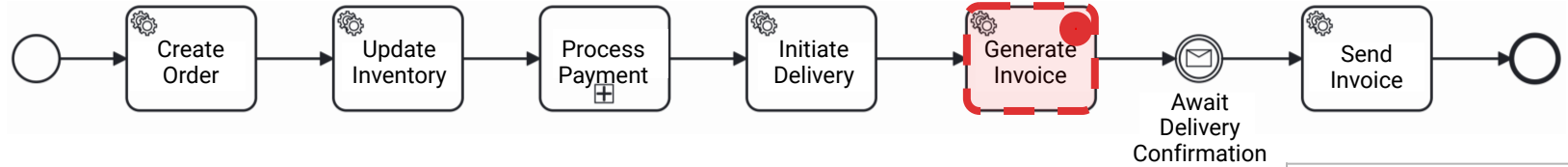
A Language for the System



Process **Context**

Order ID	1234
Order Placed At	July 9, 2026

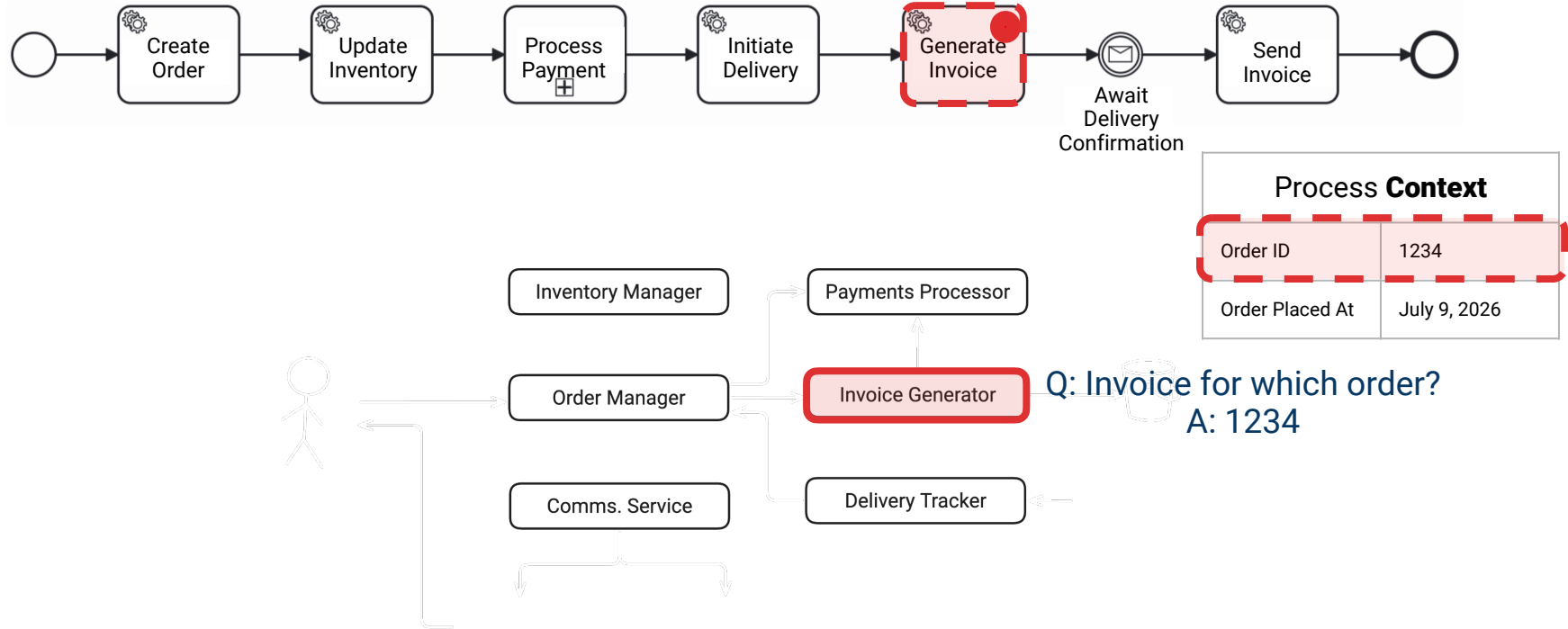
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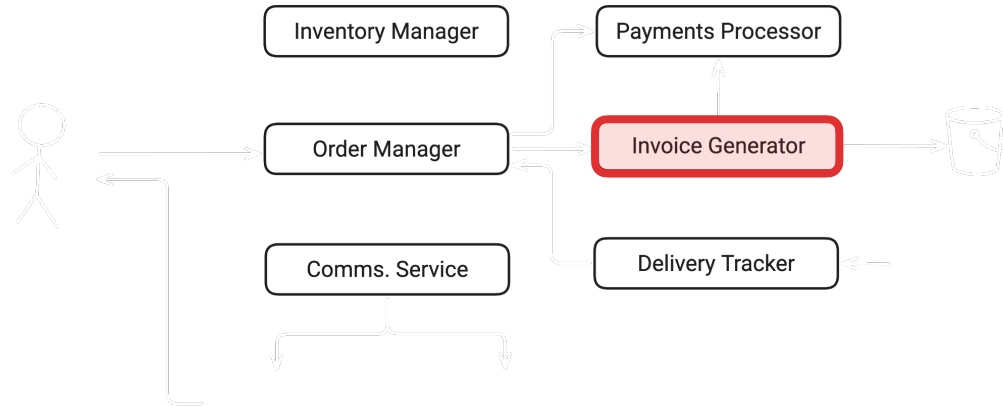
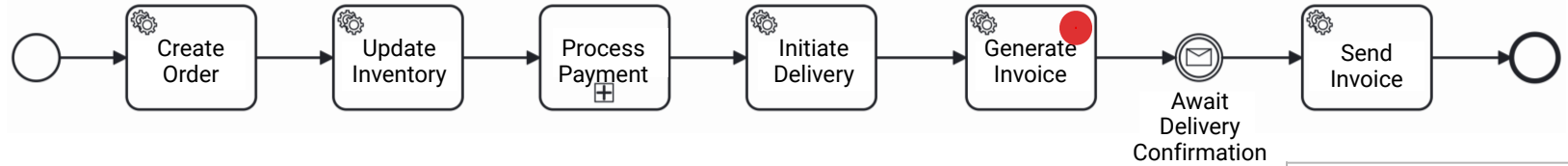
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A Language for the System

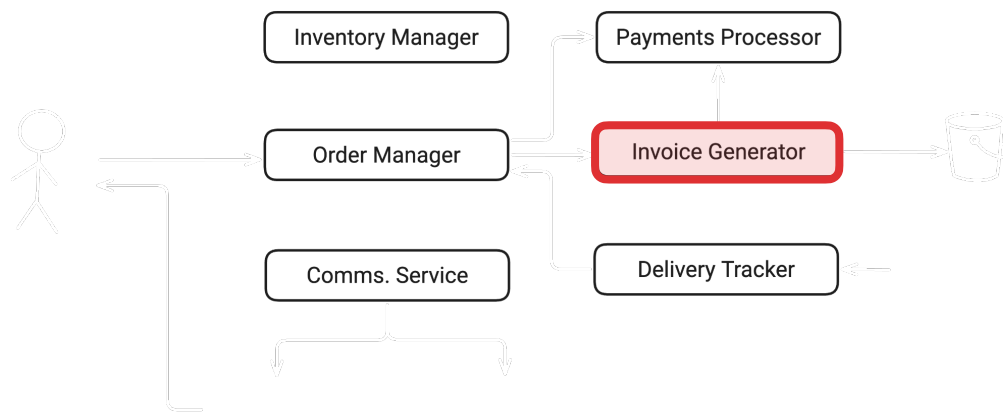
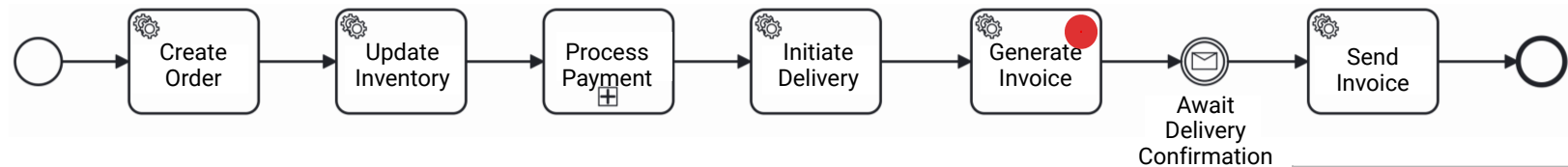


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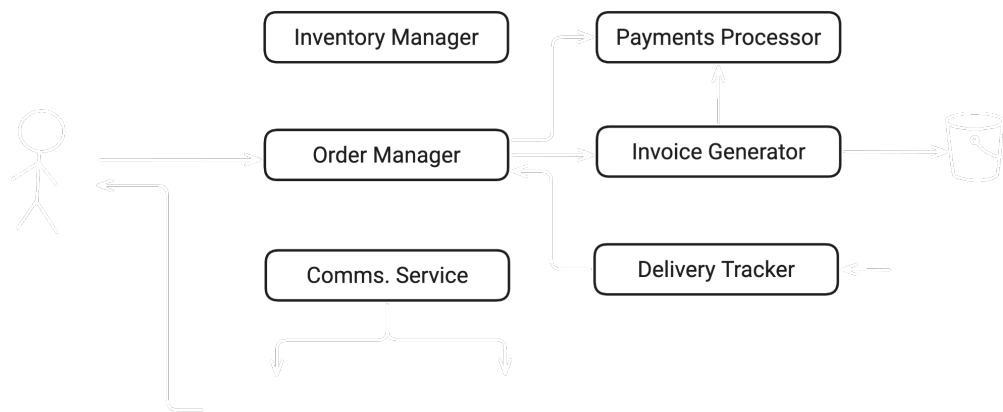
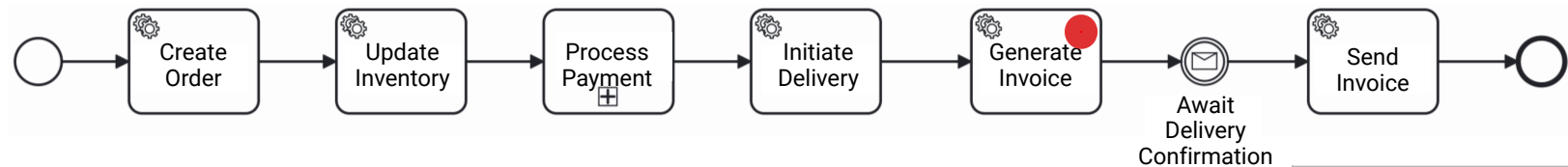
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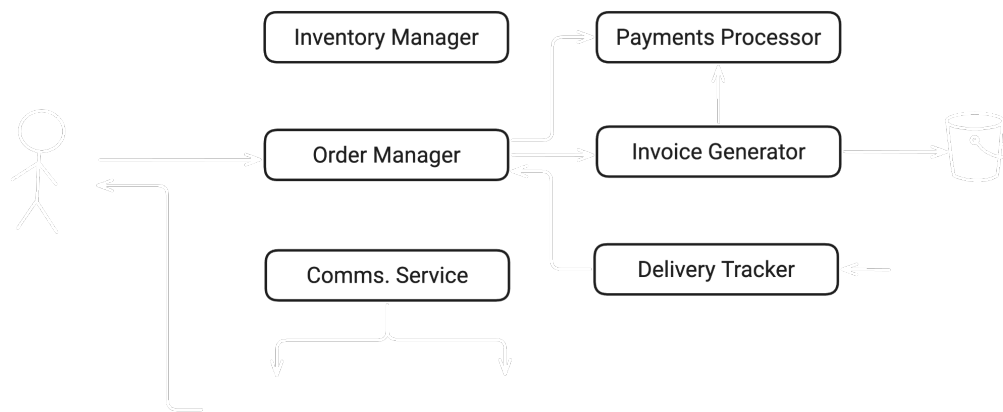
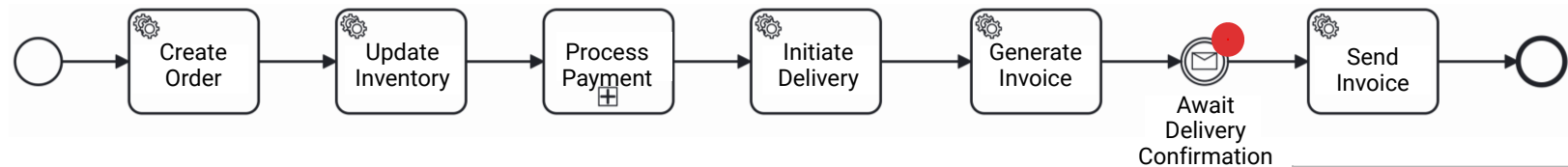
Process Context	
Order ID	1234
Order Placed At	July 9, 2026
Invoice Path	s3://.../...

A Language for the System



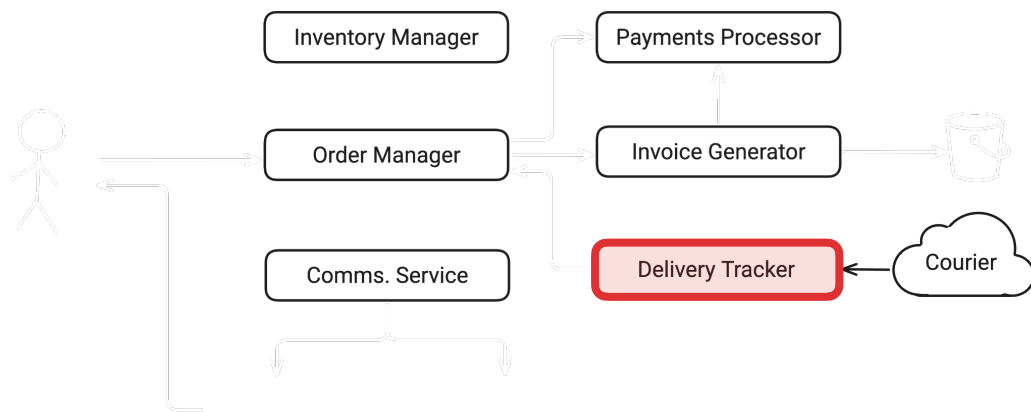
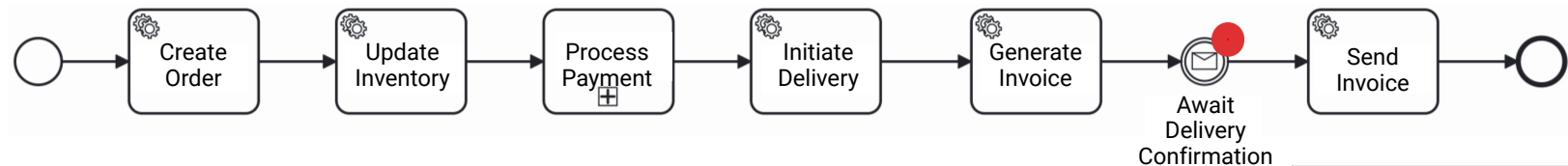
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A Language for the System



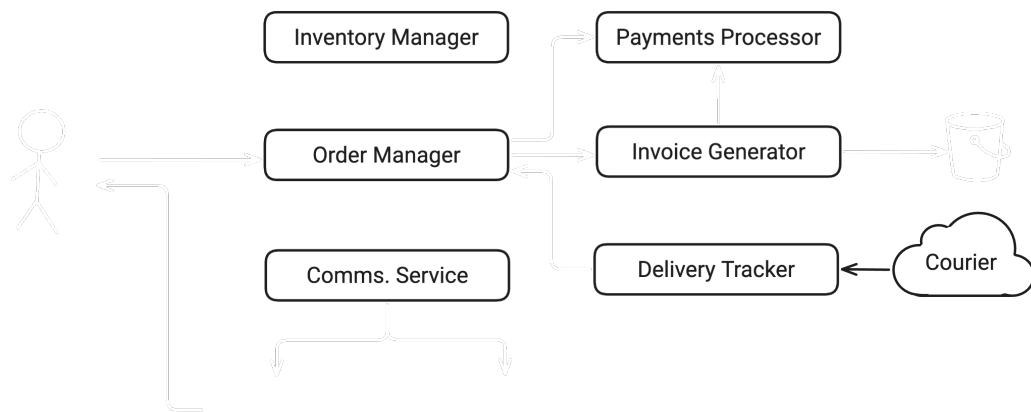
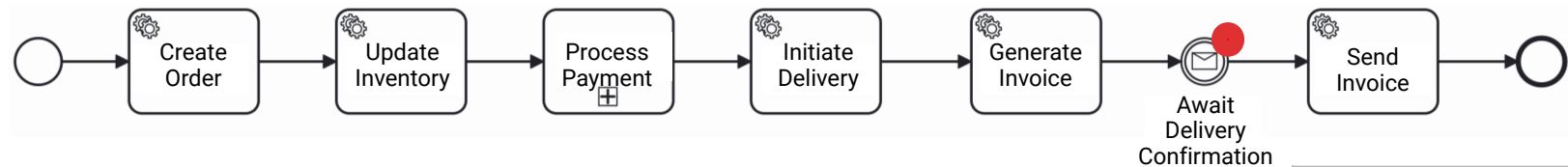
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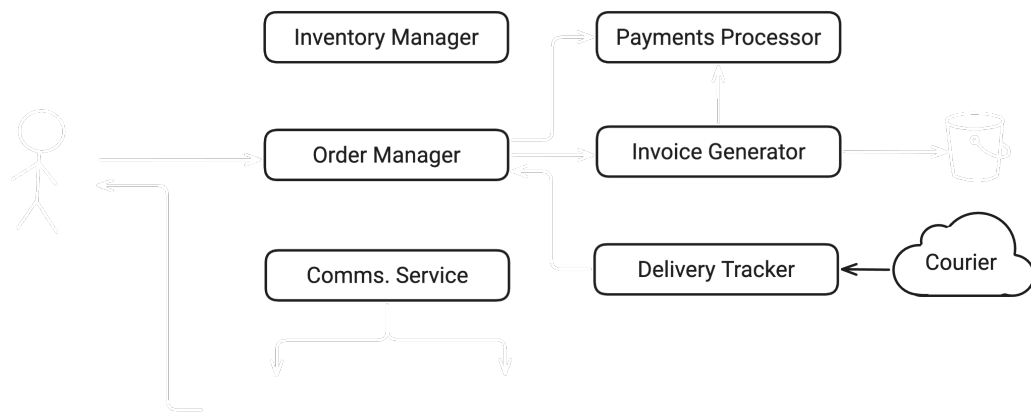
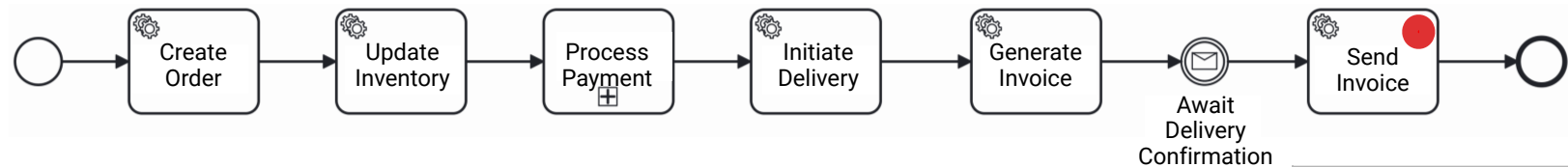
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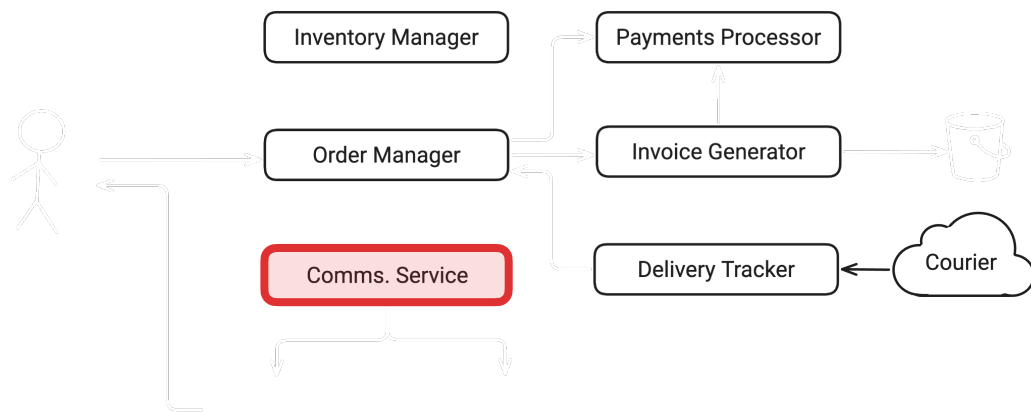
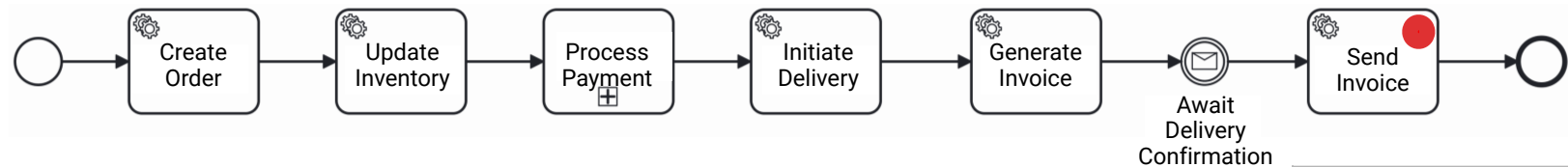
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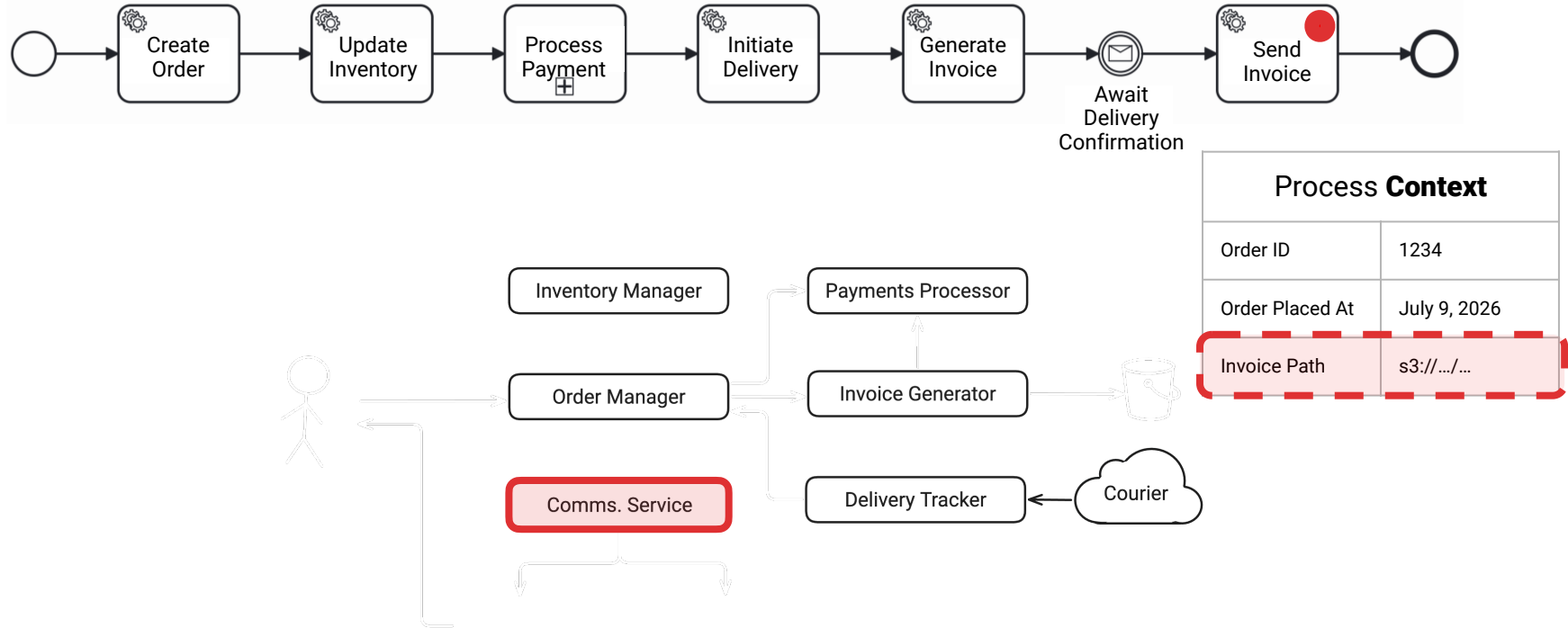
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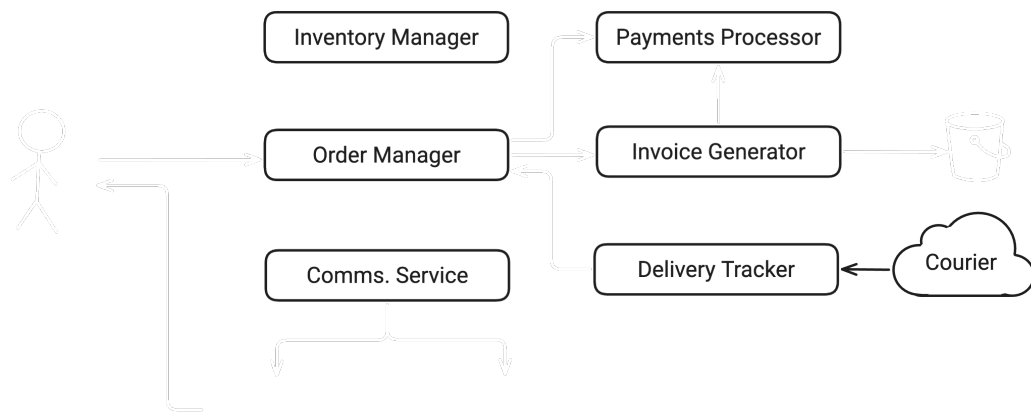
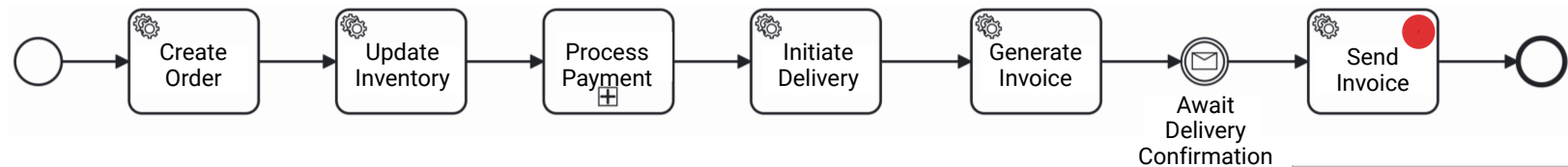


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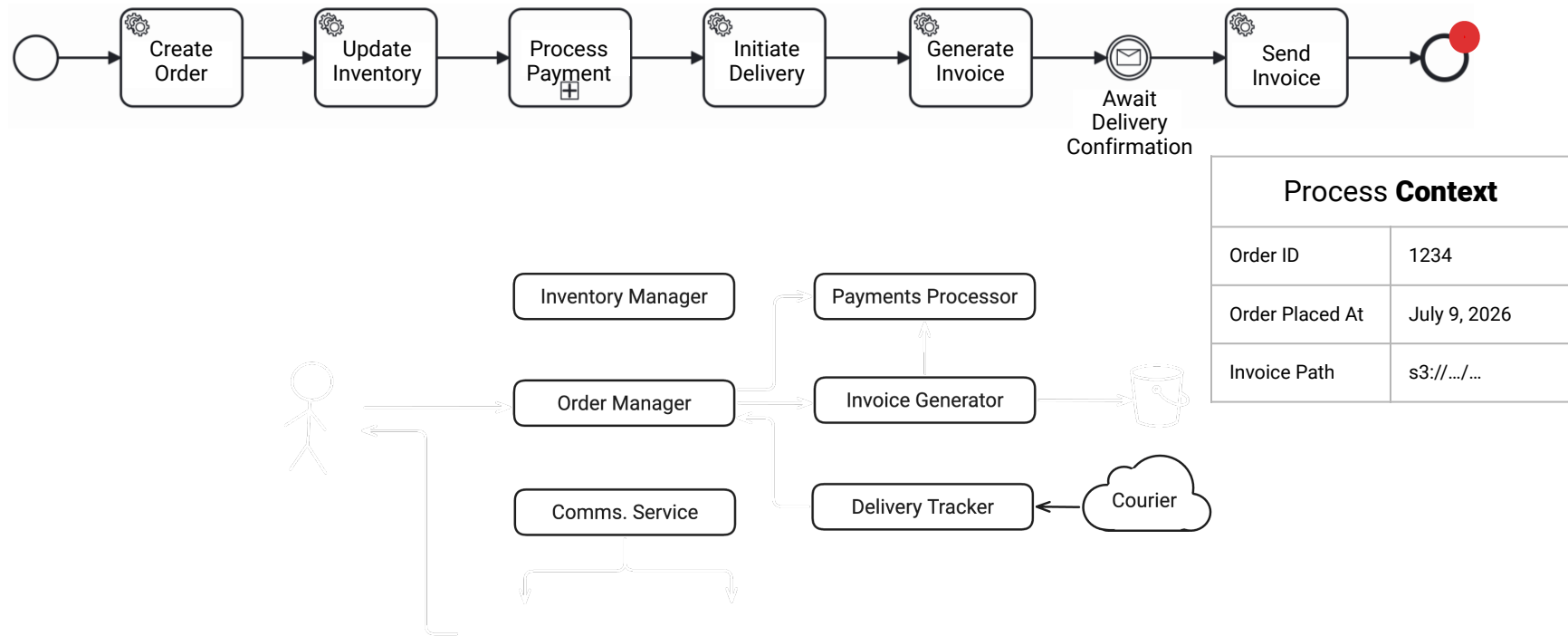


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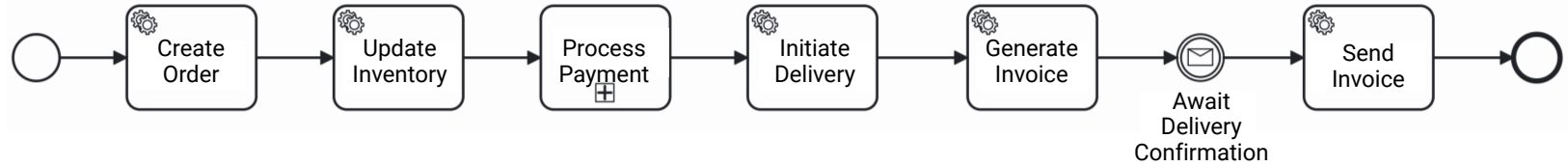


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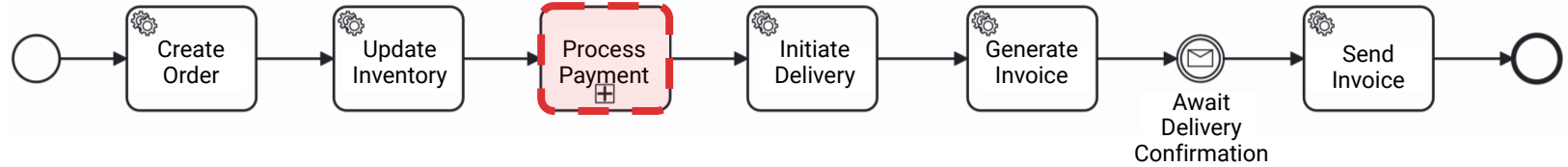
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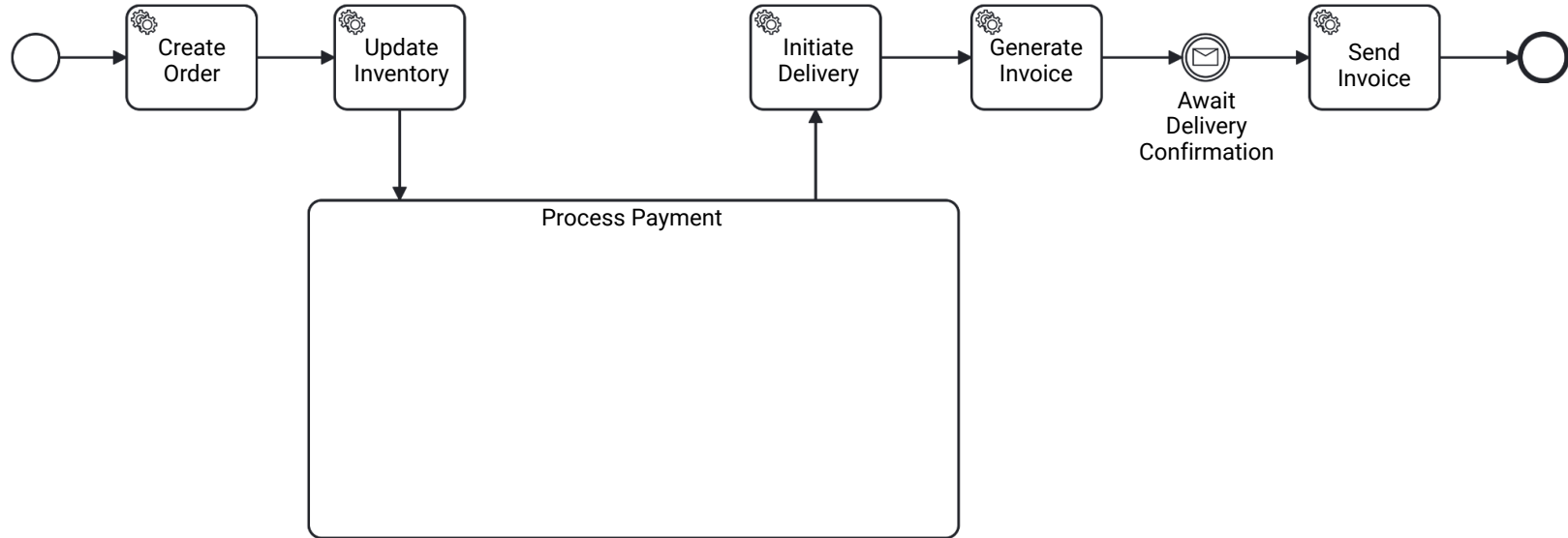
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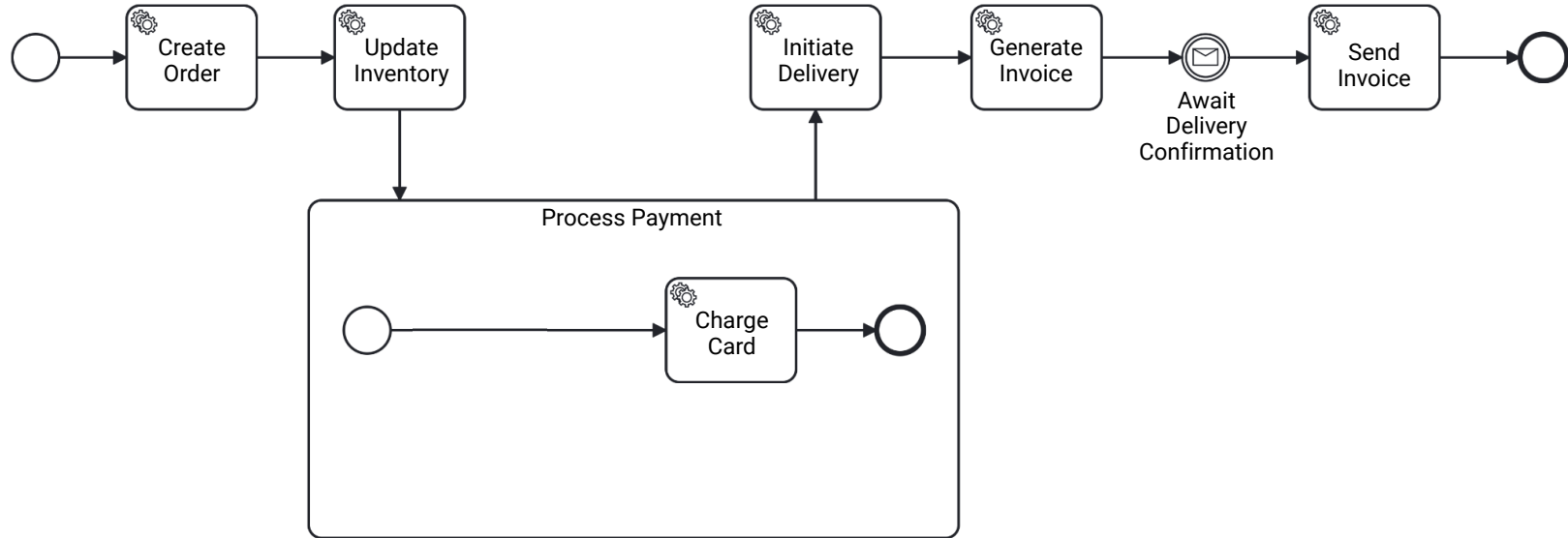
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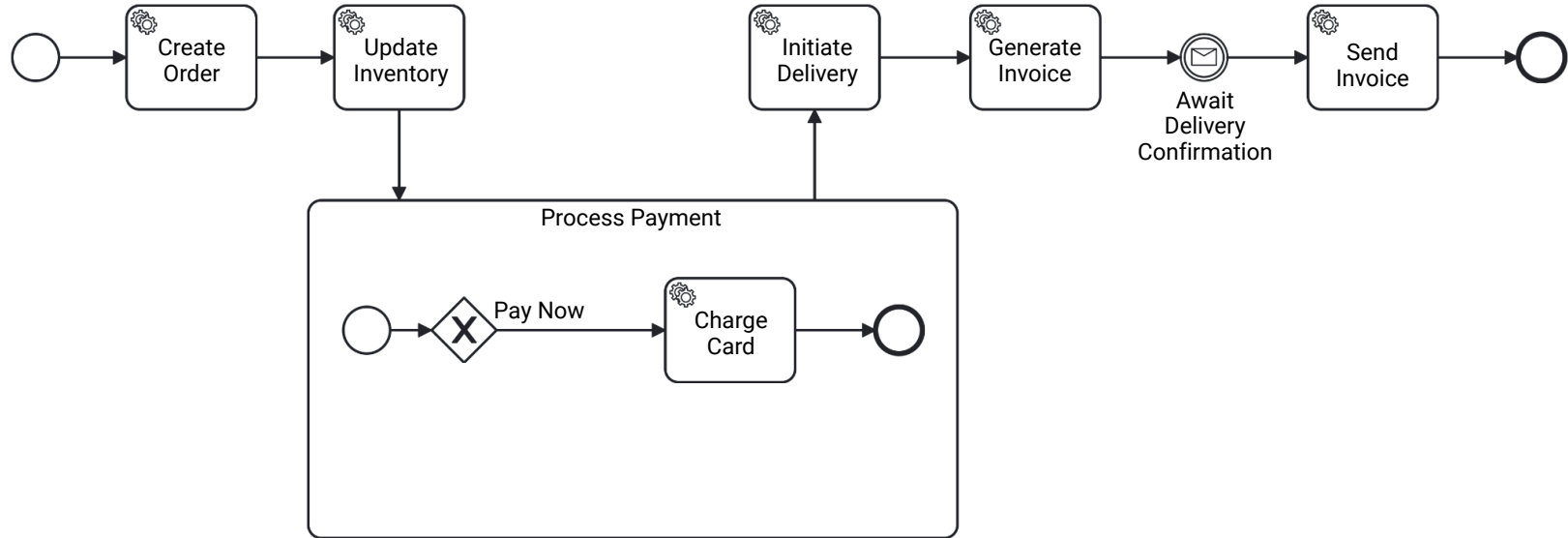
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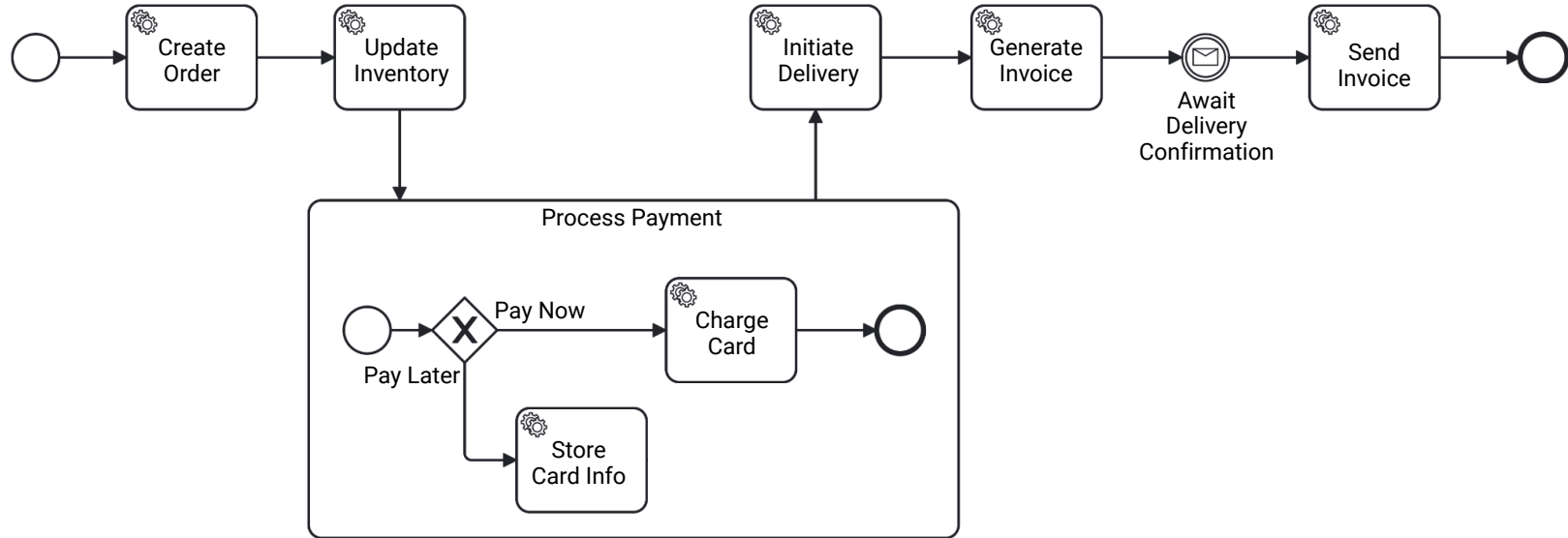
A Language for the System



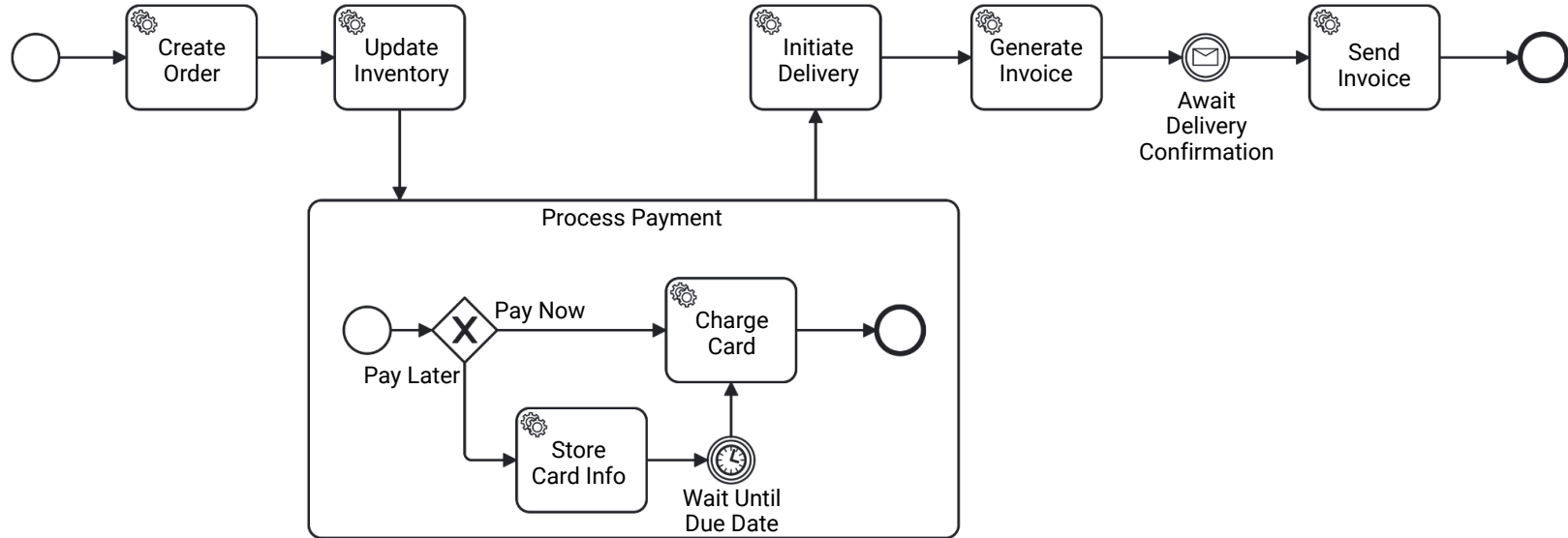
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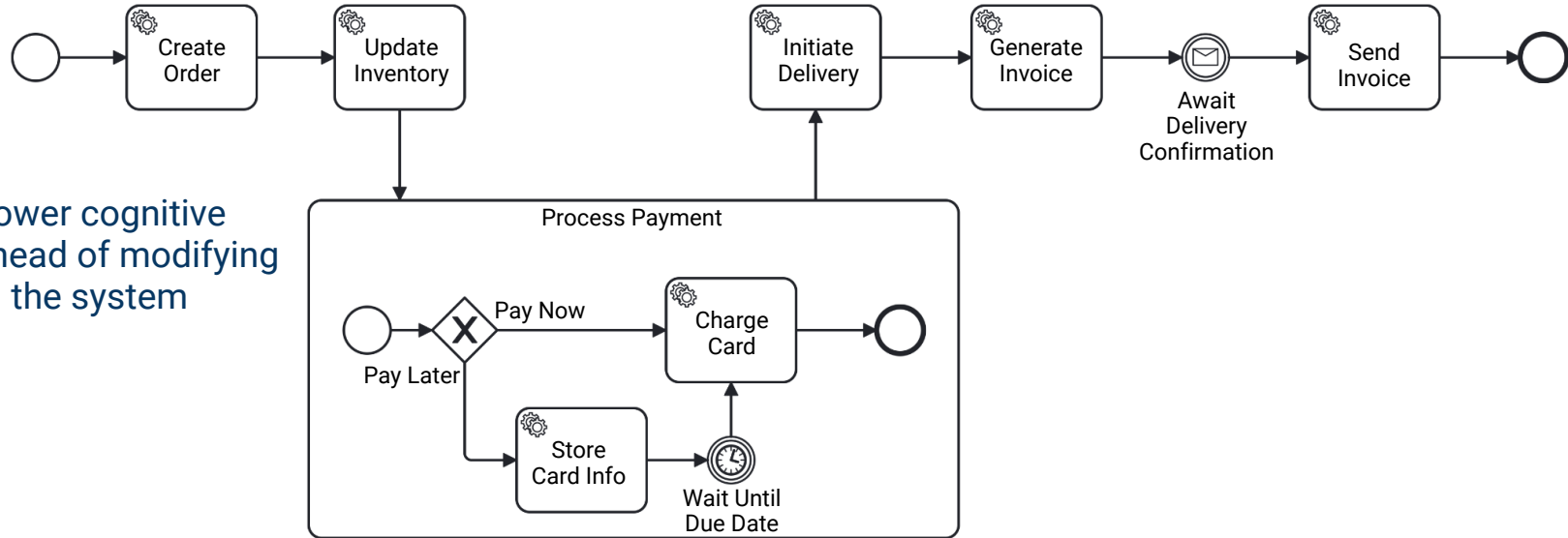


A Language for the System

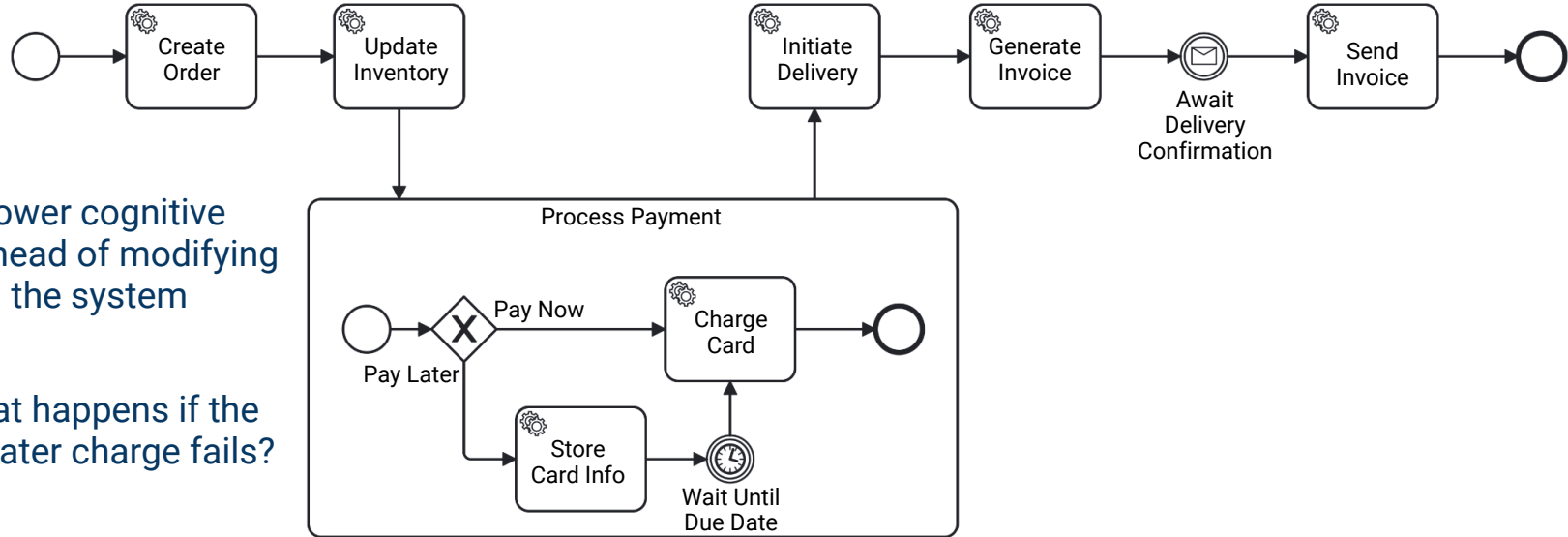


A Language for the System

Lower cognitive
overhead of modifying
the system



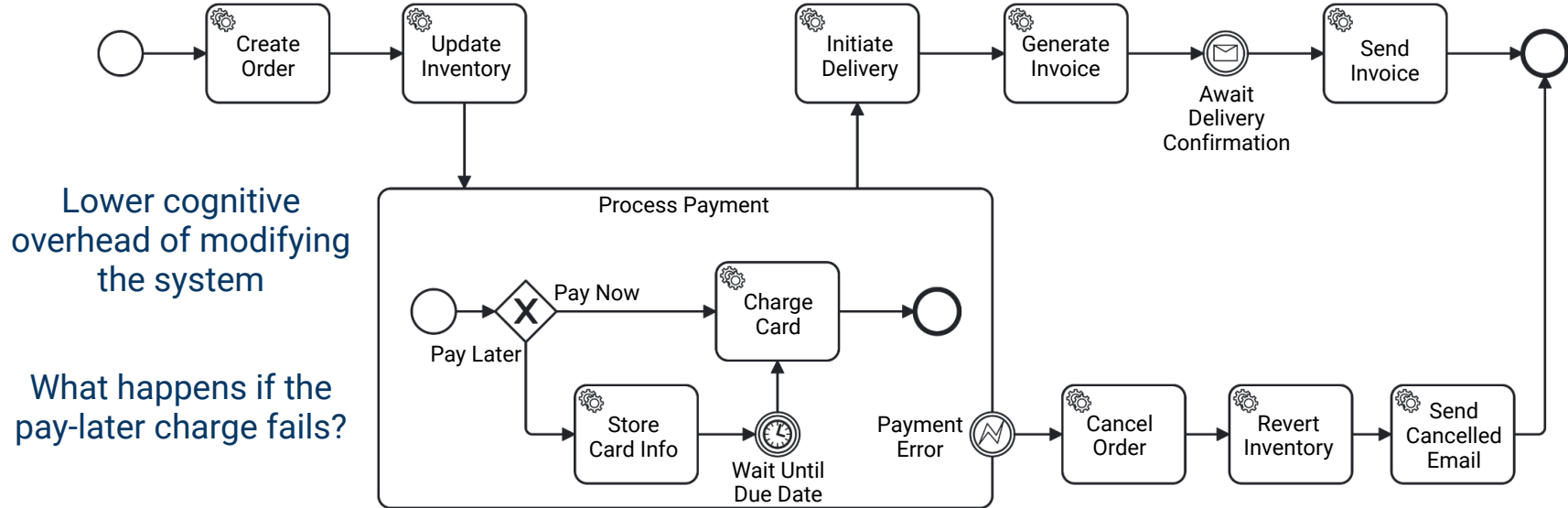
A Language for the System



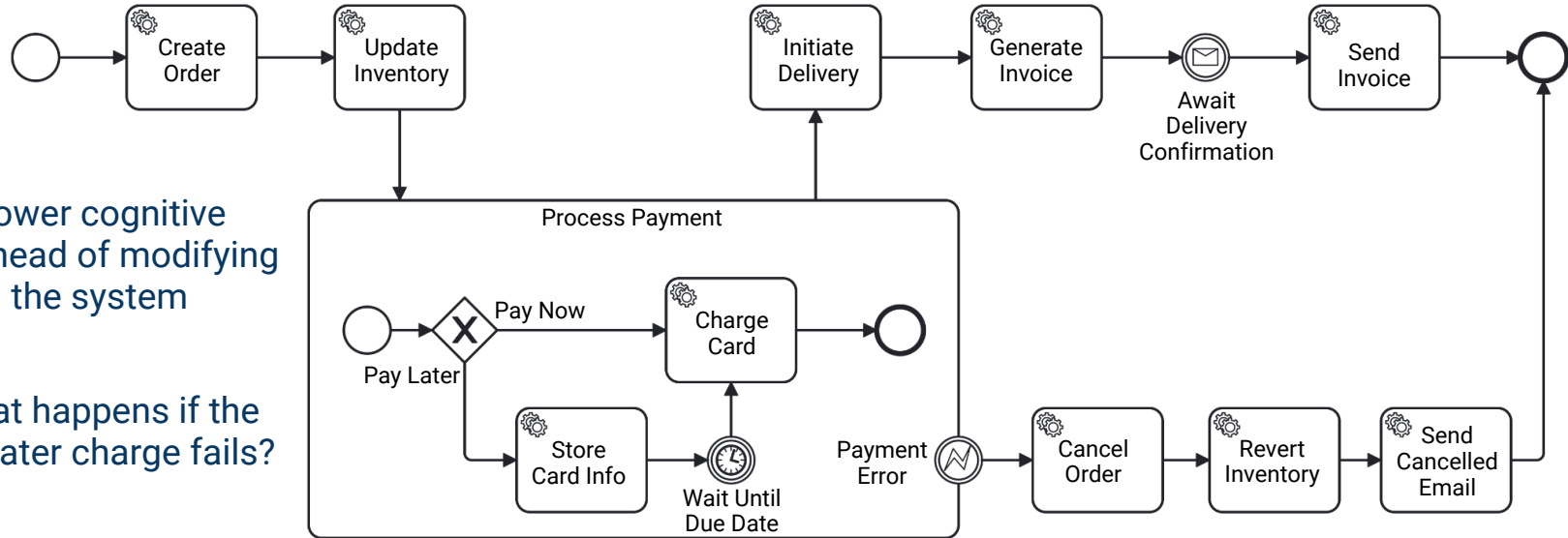
Lower cognitive overhead of modifying the system

What happens if the pay-later charge fails?

A Language for the System



A Language for the System

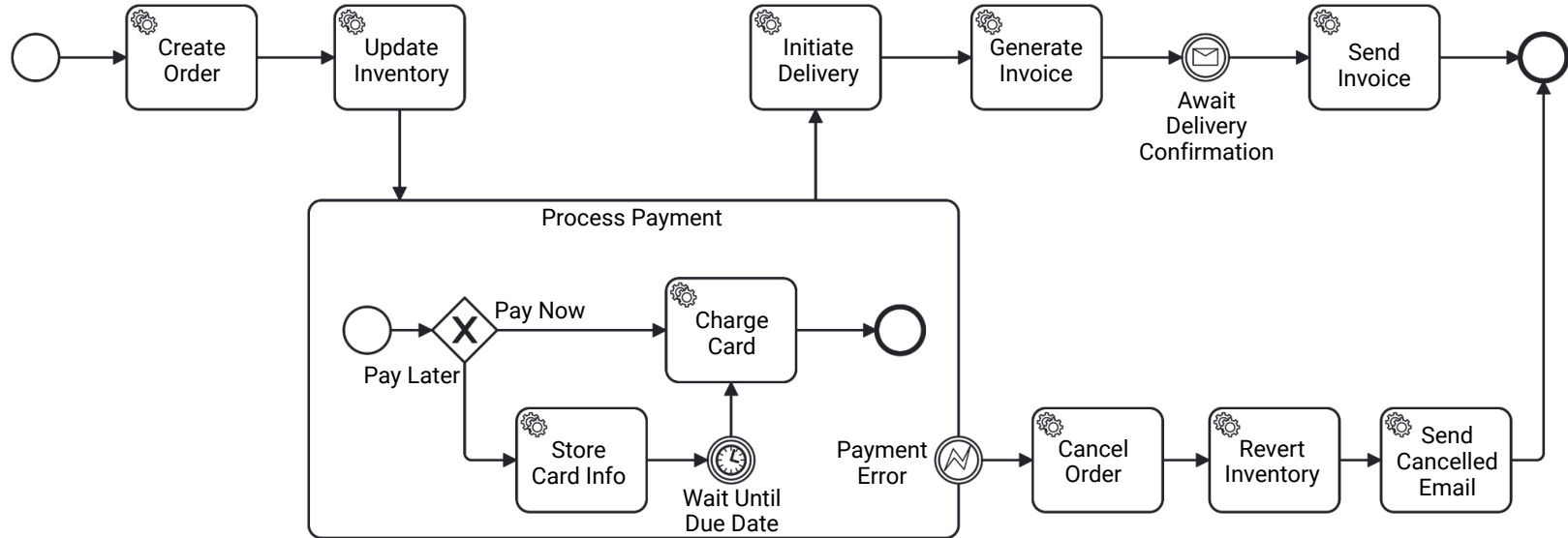


Lower cognitive
overhead of modifying
the system

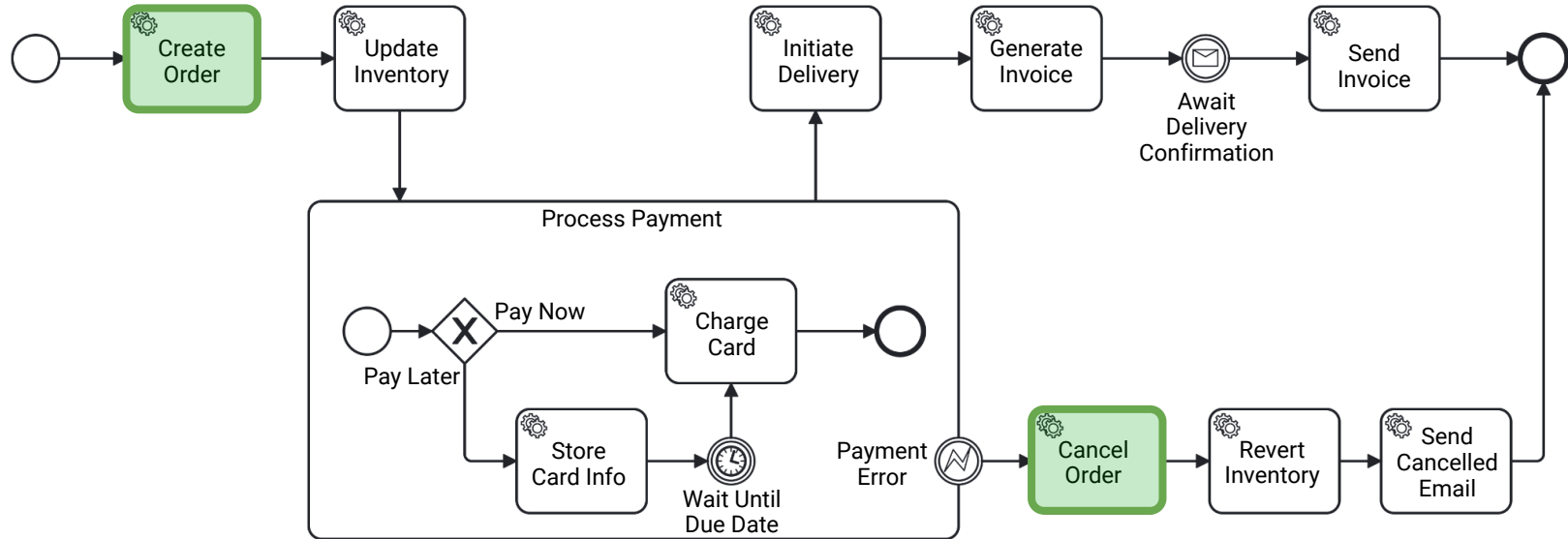
What happens if the
pay-later charge fails?

Clarity → Reasoning
→ Improvement

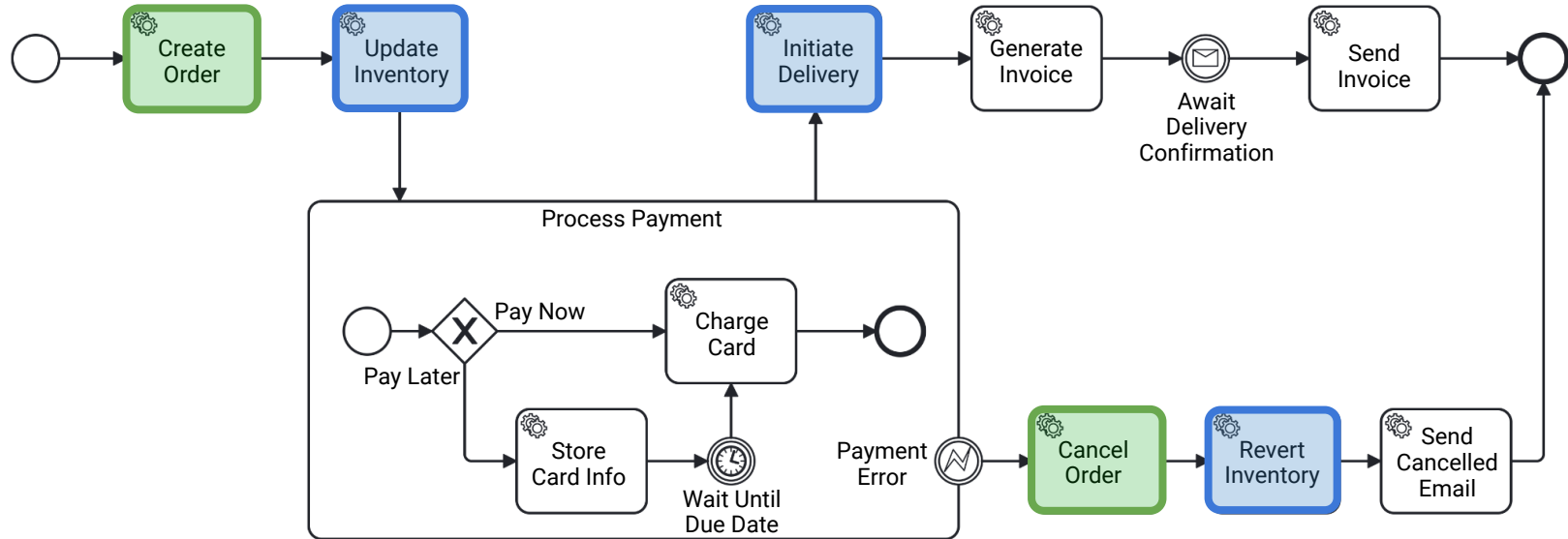
A Language for the System



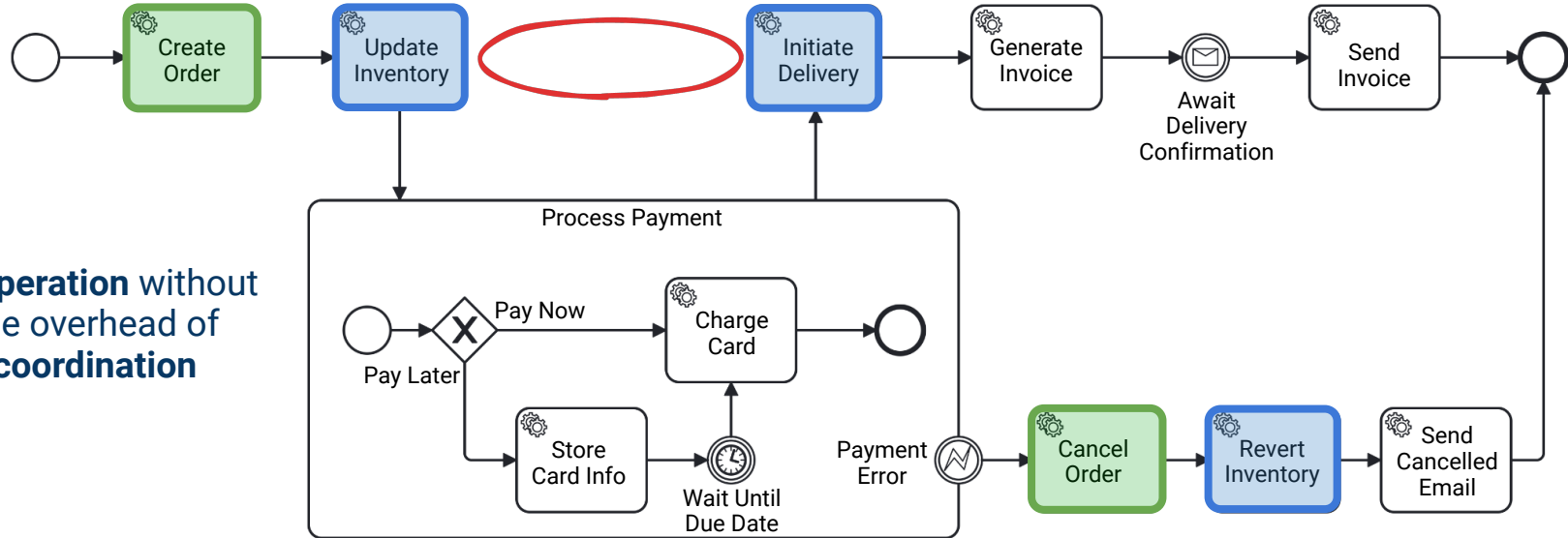
A Language for the System



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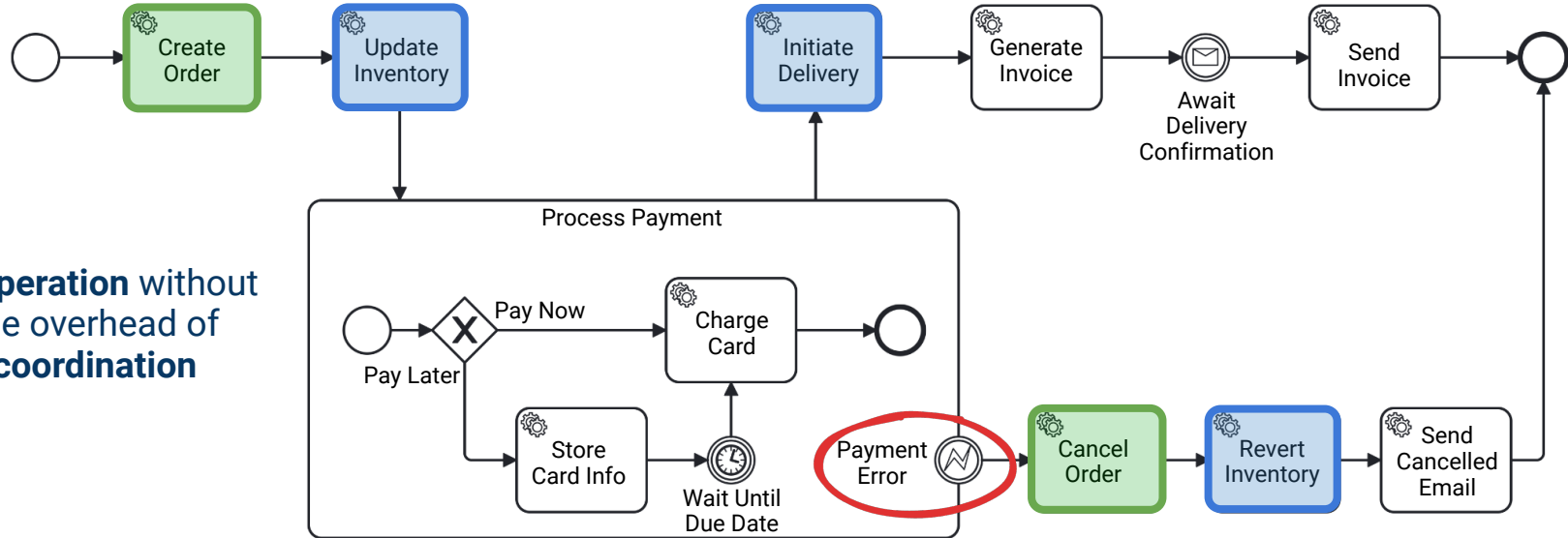
A Language for the System



Cooperation without
the overhead of
coordination

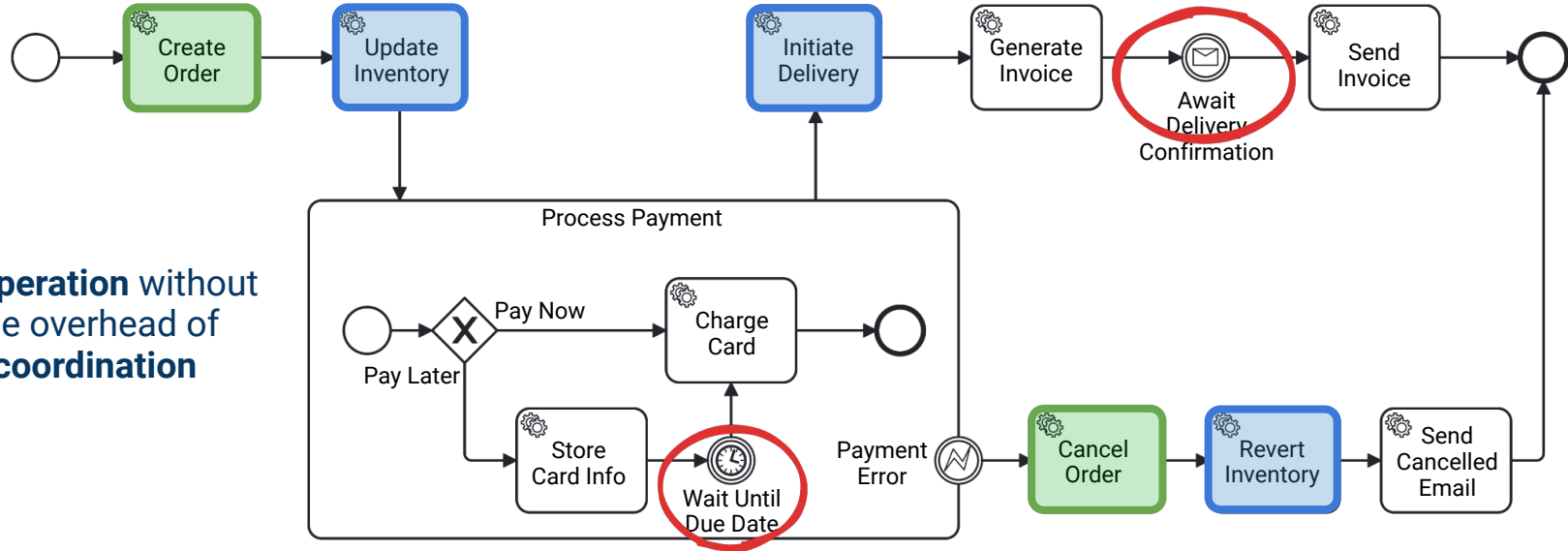
A Language for the System

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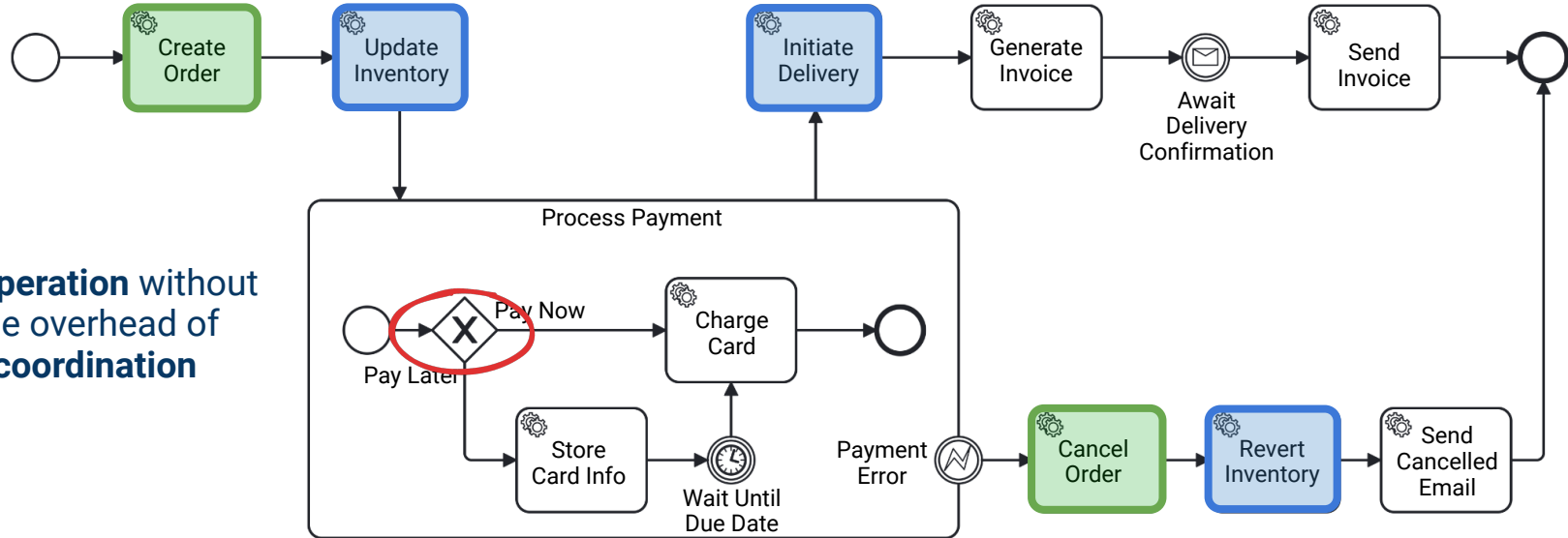
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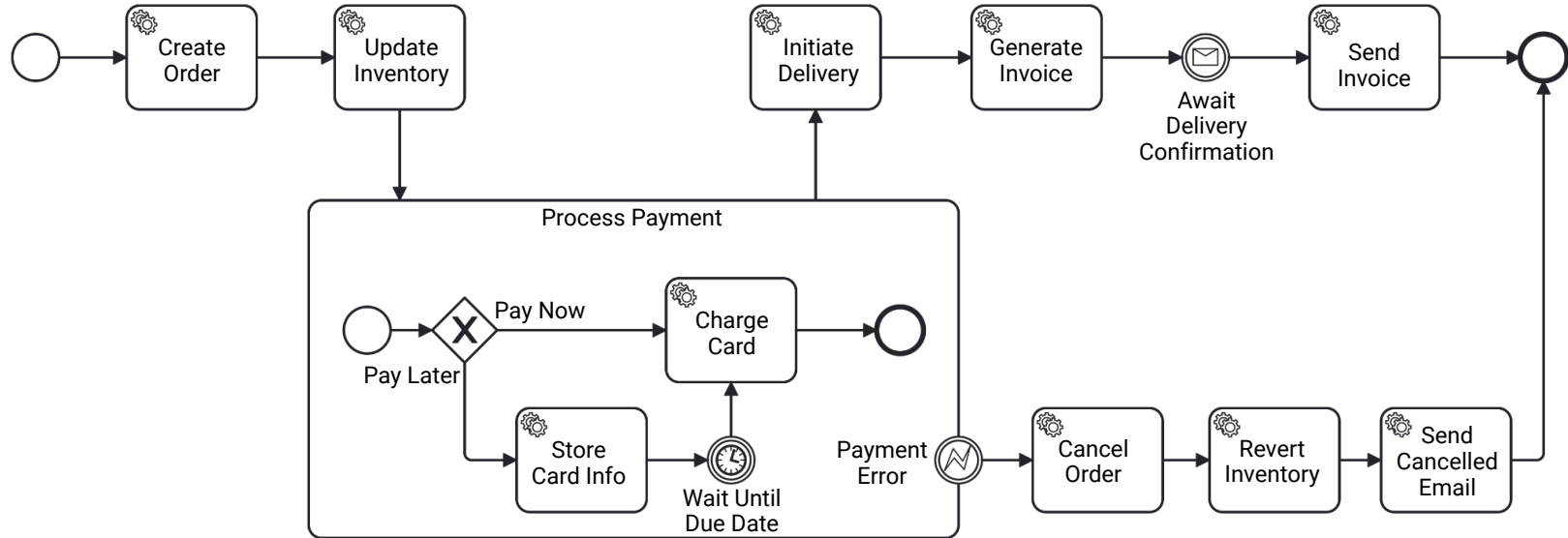


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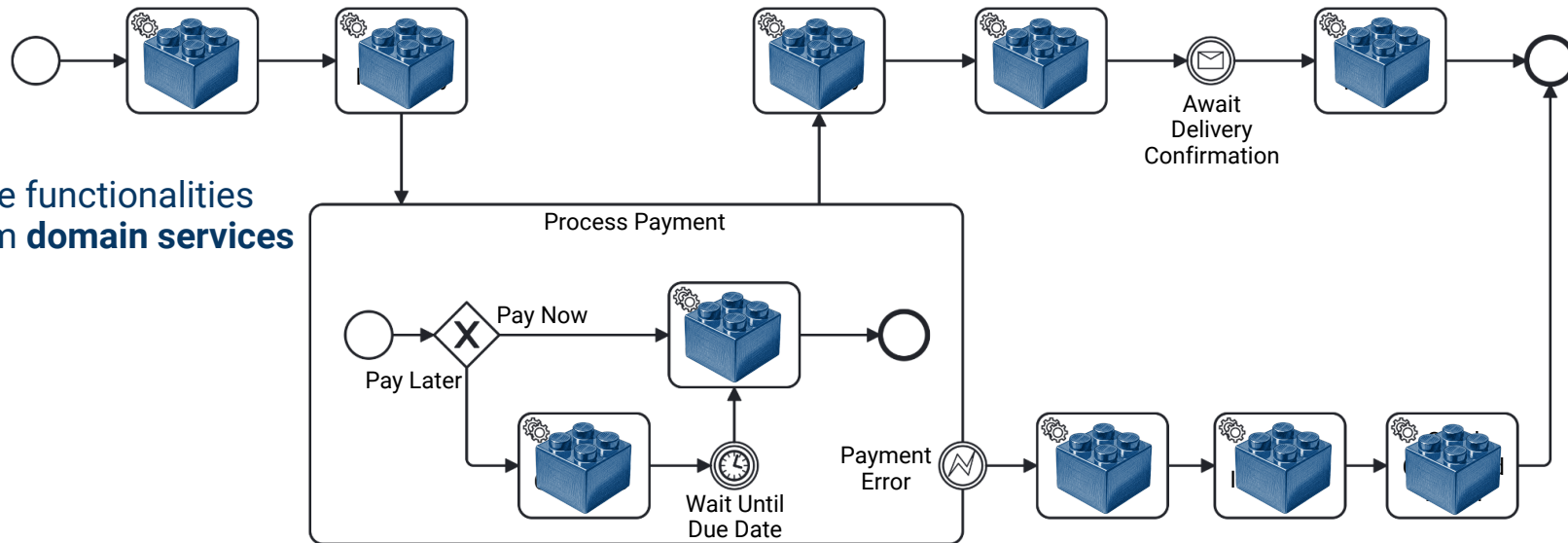
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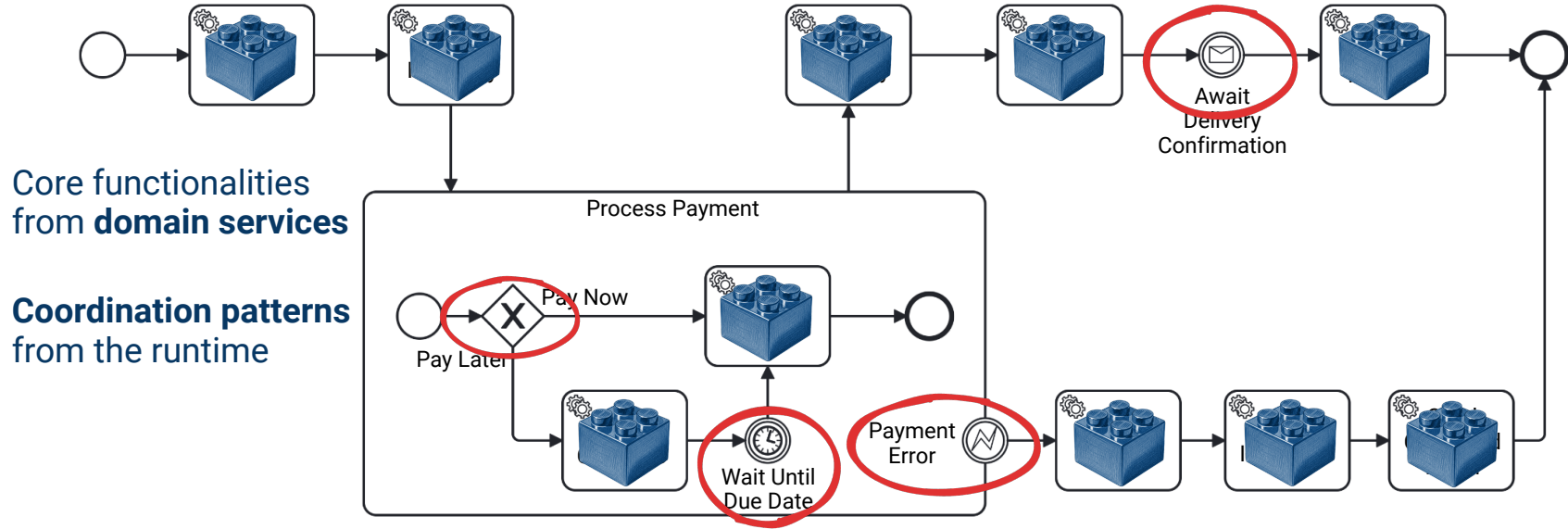
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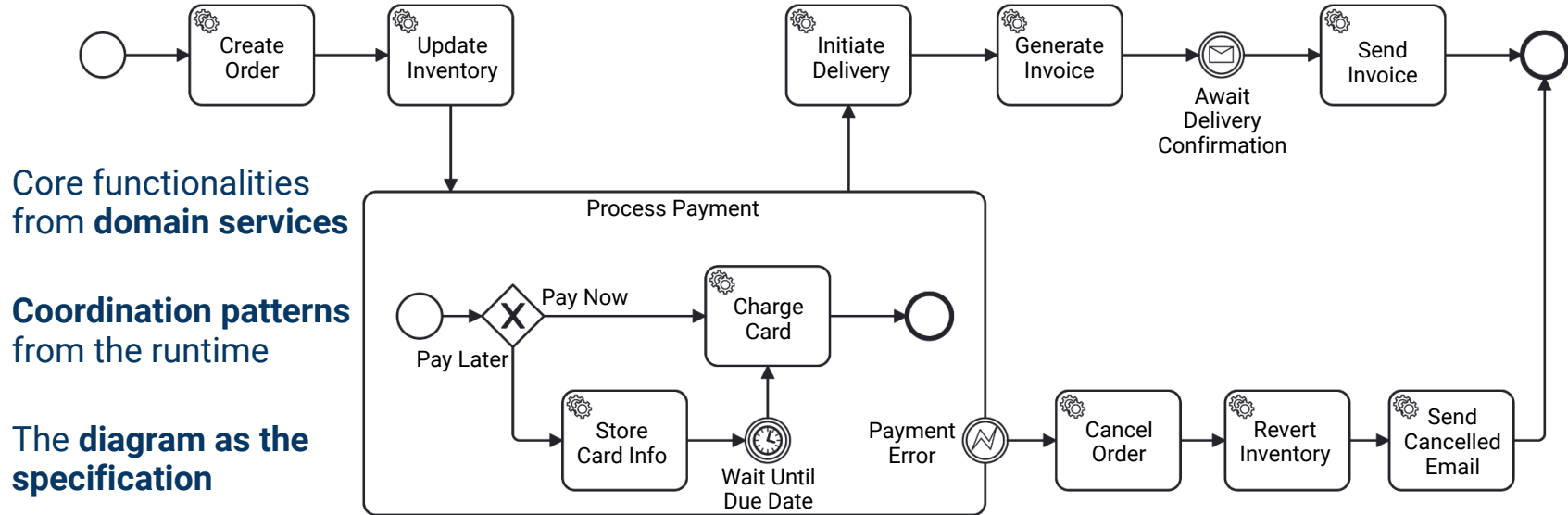
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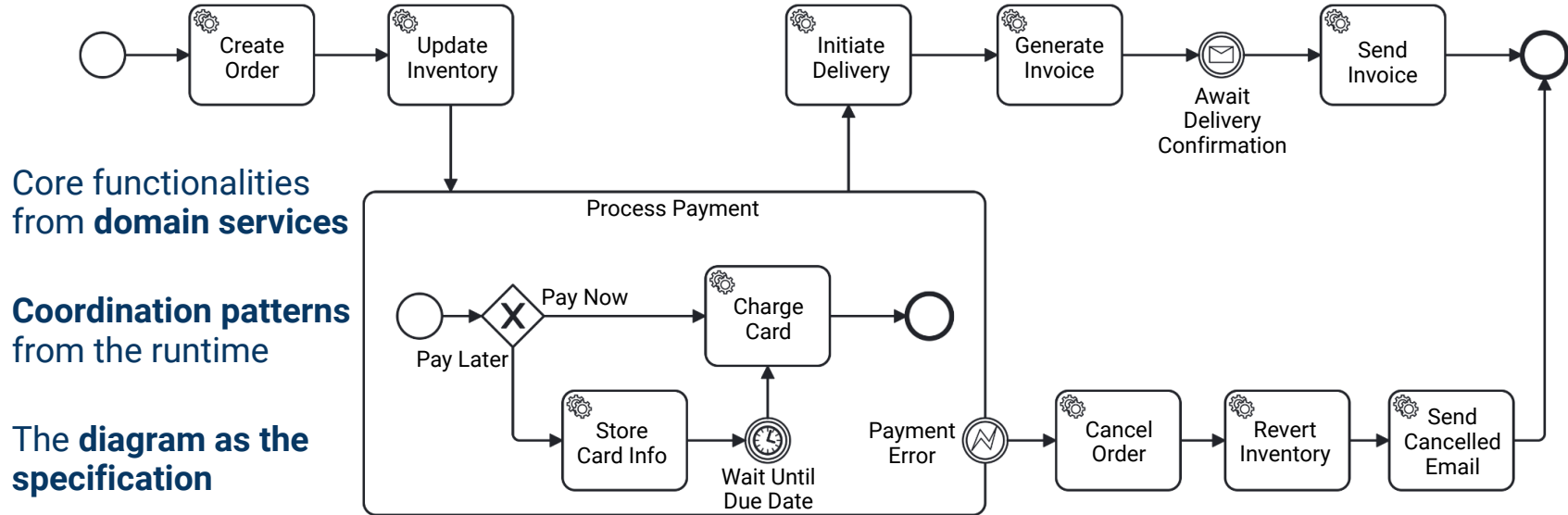
A Language for the System



A Language for the System



A Language for the System



Understandable by humans
Executable by the system

Business Process Modeling

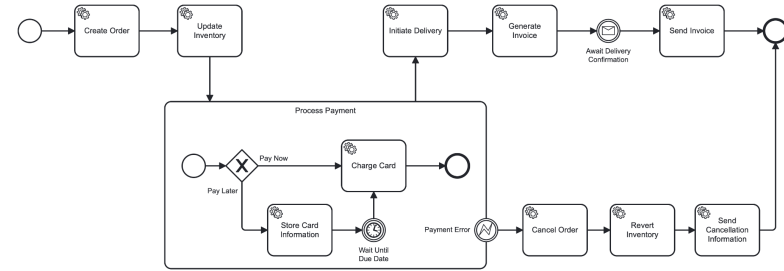
Business Process Modeling

- BPMN = Business Process Model and Notation
 - **Open standard:** ISO 19510
 - Object Management Group since 2005
 - Stored as XML

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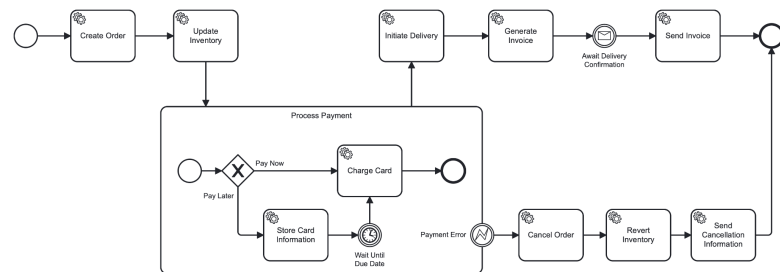
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Business Process Modeling

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```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<bpmn:definitions xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
  xmlns:bpmn="http://www.omg.org/spec/BPMN/20100524/MODEL"
  xmlns:bpmndi="http://www.omg.org/spec/BPMN/20100524/DI"
  xmlns:dc="http://www.omg.org/spec/DD/20100524/DC"
  xmlns:di="http://www.omg.org/spec/DD/20100524/DI"
  targetNamespace="http://bpmn.io/schema/bpmn">
  <bpmn:process id="Process_09906jj" isExecutable="false">
    <bpmn:startEvent id="StartEvent_13onmvp">
      <bpmn:outgoing>Flow_0qp953m</bpmn:outgoing>
    </bpmn:startEvent>
    <bpmn:sequenceFlow id="Flow_0qp953m" sourceRef="StartEvent_13onmvp"
      targetRef="Activity_00vxoet" />
    <bpmndi:BPMNEdge id="Flow_0vxd9bn_di" bpmnElement="Flow_0vxd9bn">
      <di:waypoint x="1173" y="430" />
      <di:waypoint x="1205" y="430" />
    </bpmndi:BPMNEdge>
  </bpmn:process>
</bpmn:definitions>
```

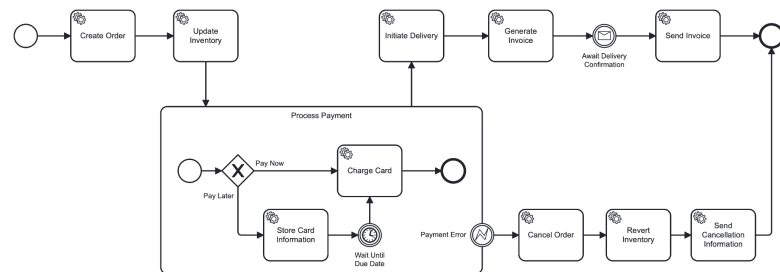
Business Process Modeling

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- Implemented by engines

- Flowable
- SpiffWorkflow
- Camunda
- IBM Business Automation Workflow
- ...



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    <bpmndi:BPMNEdge id="Flow_0vxd9bn_di" bpmnElement="Flow_0vxd9bn">
      <di:waypoint x="1173" y="430" />
      <di:waypoint x="1205" y="430" />
    </bpmndi:BPMNEdge>
    </bpmndi:BPMNPlane>
  </bpmn:process>
</bpmn:definitions>
```

Bridging the System-Component Gap

Bridging the System-Component Gap

Language of the **component**

```
@Component
public class OrderLifecycleWorker {

    OrderService orderService;

    @JobWorker(type = "create-order")
    public OrderInfo create(@VariablesAsType OrderInfo op) {
        return orderService.create(op.id(), op.quantity());
    }

}
```

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Language for the **system**



Bridging the System-Component Gap

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Language for the **system**



Bridging the System-Component Gap



Order
Service



Delivery
Service



Payments
Service

Bridging the System-Component Gap

Who does what when?



Order
Service

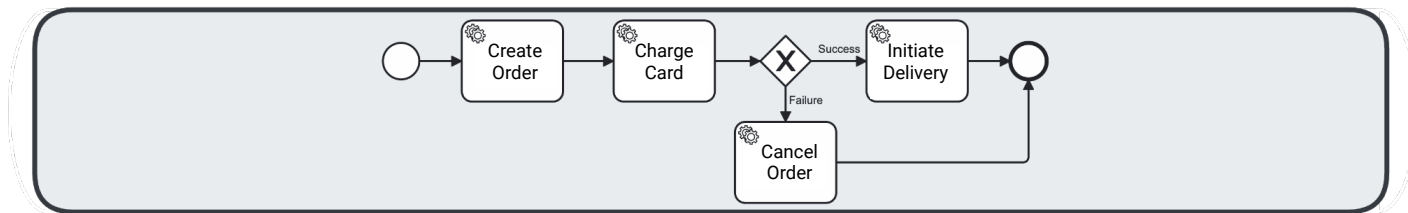


Delivery
Service



Payments
Service

Bridging the System-Component Gap



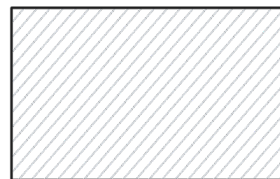
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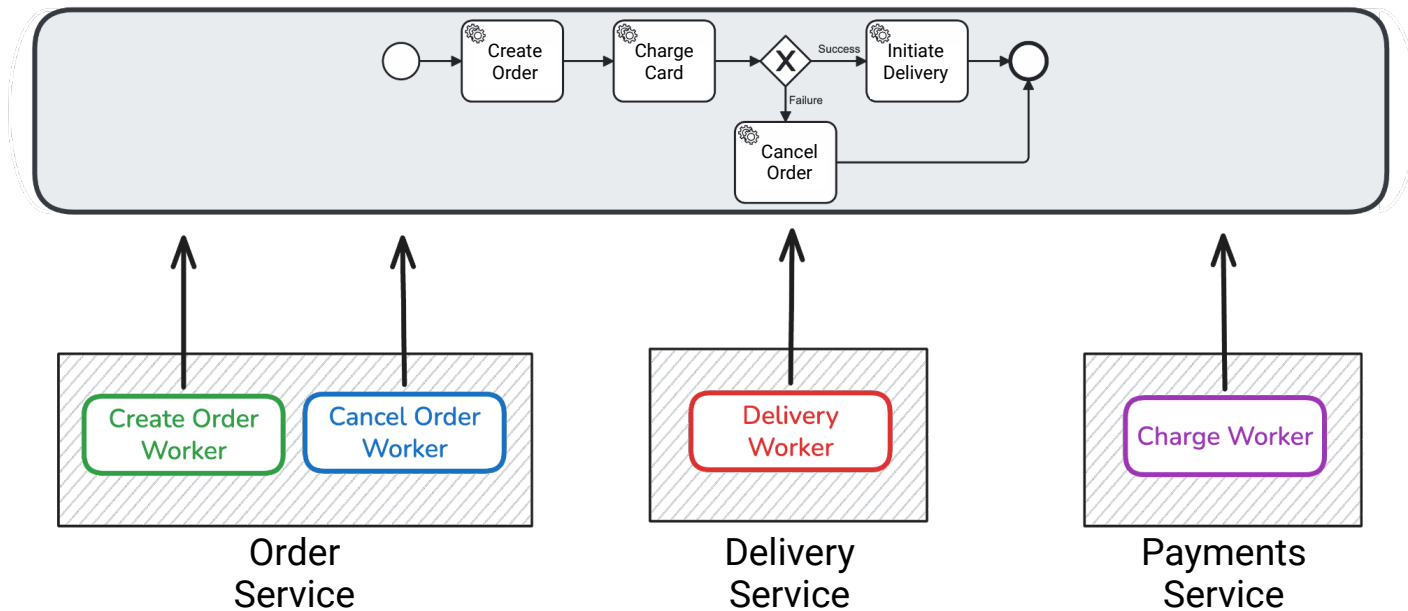


Delivery
Service



Payments
Service

Bridging the System-Component Gap





Human Centricity



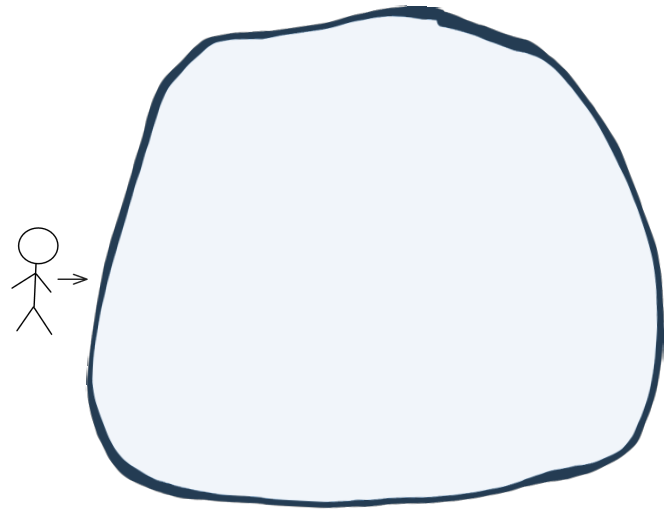
From Disordered to Understandable Systems

From Disordered to Understandable Systems

- Our **cognitive ability** is the limiting factor

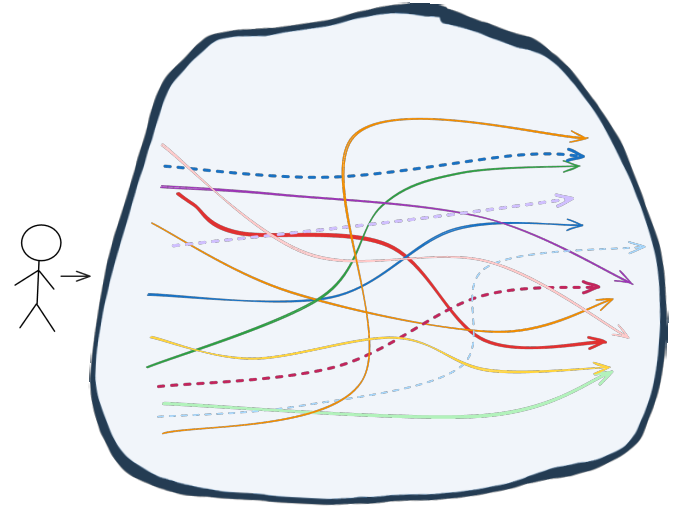
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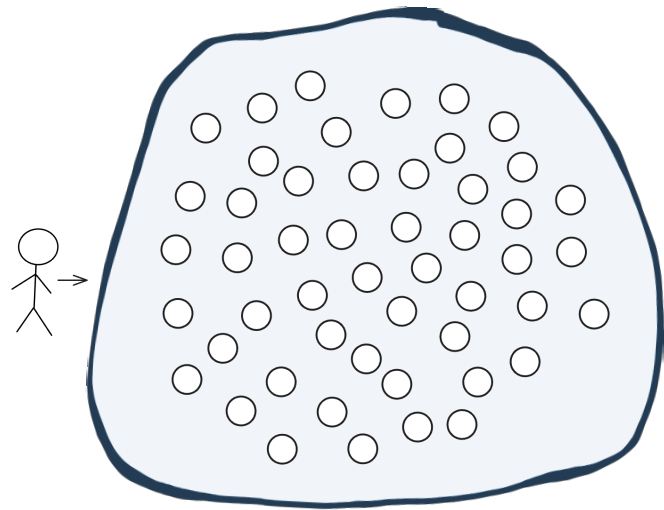
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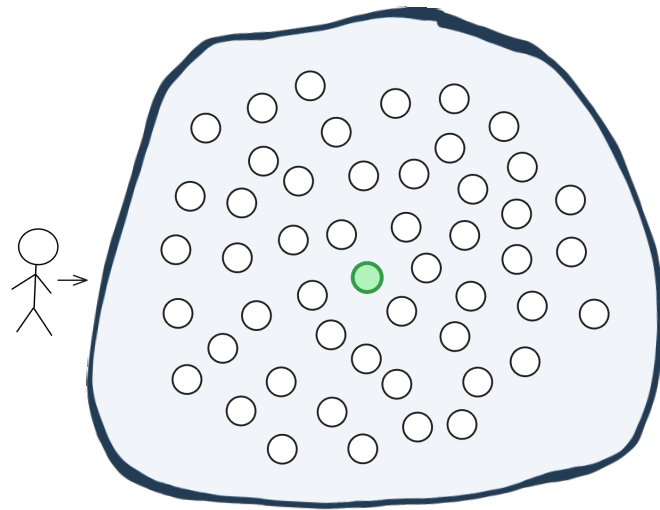
From Disordered to Understandable Systems

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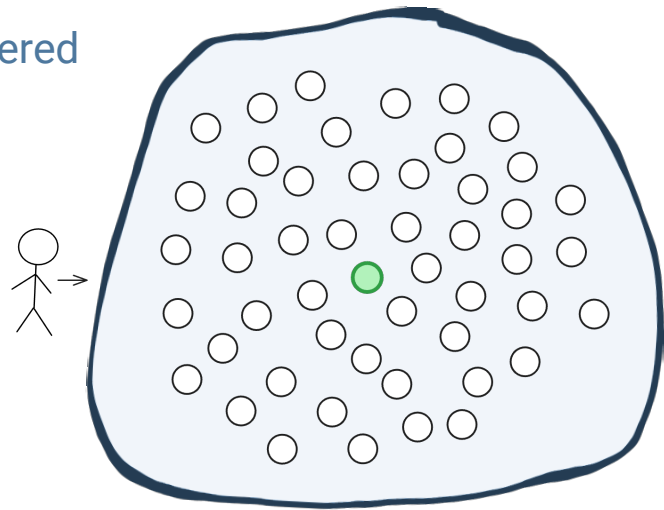
From Disordered to Understandable Systems

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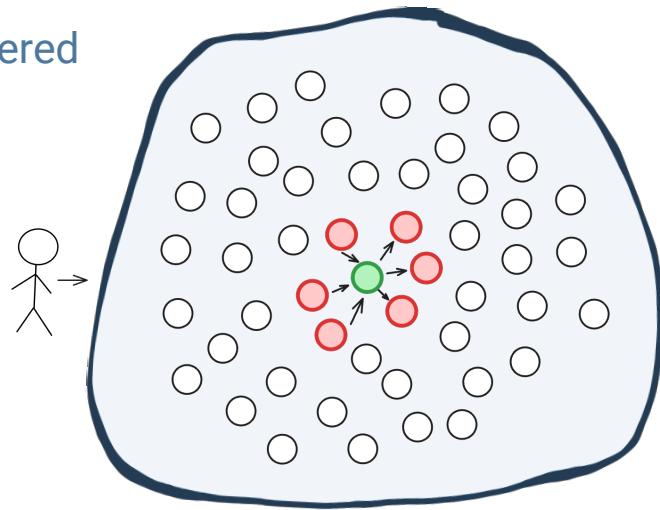
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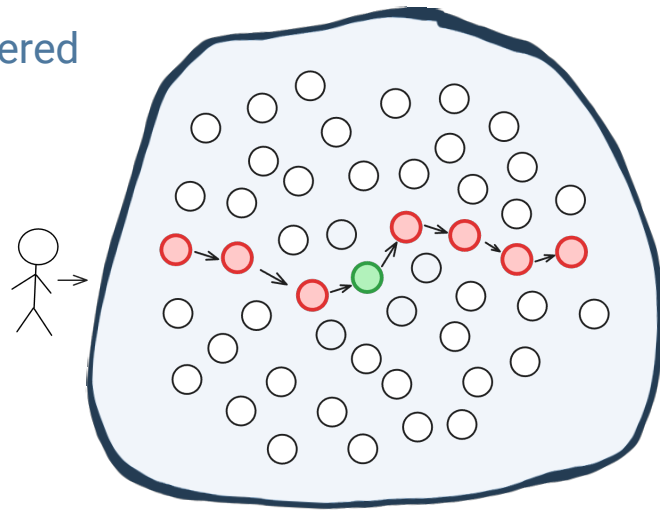
From Disordered to Understandable Systems

- Our **cognitive ability** is the limiting factor
 - Monolithic → Modular → Fragmented → Disordered
- Lack of **focus**
 - Business logic vs coordination overhead



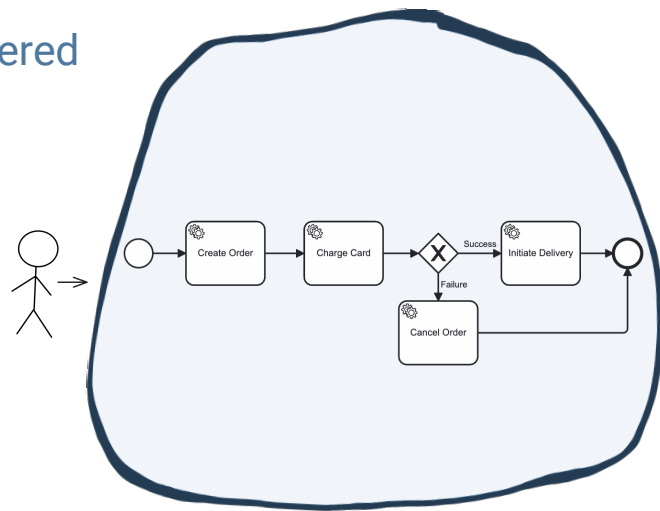
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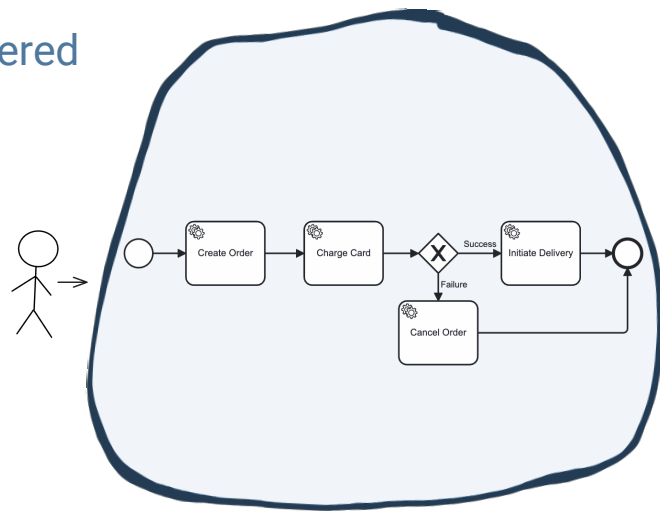
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- **Visual** language for the system



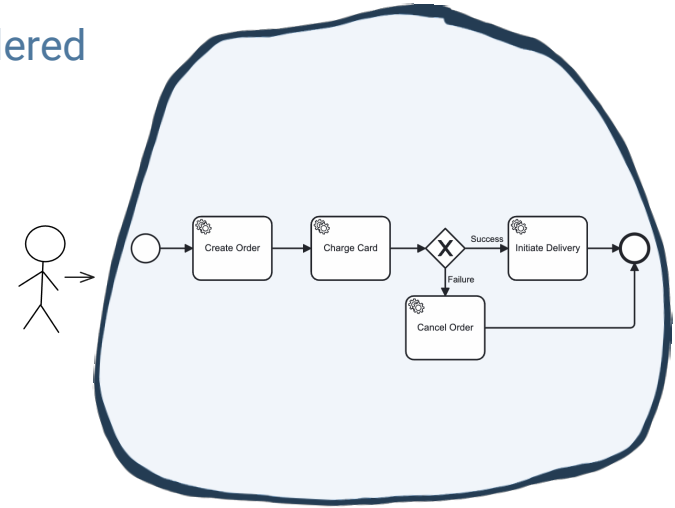
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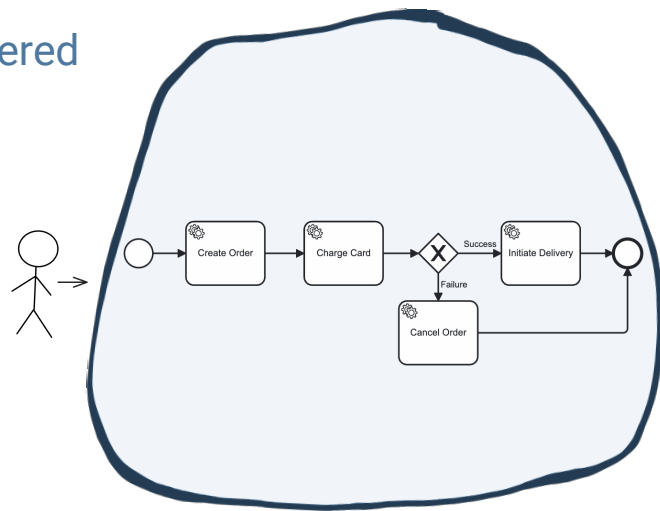
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 - Better composability across domains
 - Foundation for **human centric systems**
 - Profoundly valuable in the AI era



Thank you!

<https://mourjo.me>

Solving Architectural Entropy With
Runnable Diagrams

Mourjo Sen | July 9 2026