

What is Process Mapping?

Process mapping is a simple yet powerful method of looking beyond functional activities and rediscovering your core processes. Process maps enable you to peel away the complexity of your organizational structure and focus on the processes that are truly the heart of your business.

Armed with a thorough understanding of your inputs, outputs and interrelationships of each process, you and your organization can:

- Understand how processes interact in a system
- Locate process flaws that are creating systemic problems
- Evaluate which activities add value for the customer
- Mobilize teams to streamline and improve processes
- Identify processes that need to be reengineered

Properly used, process maps can change your entire approach to process improvement and business management and greatly reduce the cost of your operations by eliminating as much as 50% of the steps in most processes as well as the root causes of systemic quality problems.

Analyze the way your organization really operates, identify opportunities for dramatic improvement, implement profitable process changes and increase customer satisfaction.

Why bother?

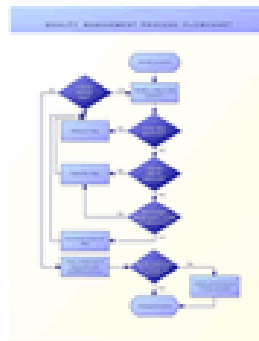
While most organizations may not have the resources or the need for this level of documentation or structure, they can benefit from this area of the business modeling. Process maps are an initiative that you should consider when addressing "Improving Customer Service" that evasive objective.

A Process is a series of connected steps or actions to achieve an outcome. Process Maps and flow Charts are the most commonly used methods for designing and analysing processes and are the most widely used of all the problem solving tools.

By graphically representing the logical steps of a process, an organization can promote a greater and shared understanding of 'how the work is done' and this presents opportunities for identification of problems and non value adding steps, which can lead to process improvements.

Process mapping approaches vary with respect to the following attributes: Level of detail, hierarchical linkages among maps, multiple types of flows, organizational structure, icons, logical operators, flow time, instructions and information.

Example process flowchart



What Will We Gain?

By improving processes, a business or organization can improve internal efficiencies and customer satisfaction. Documenting processes with group involvement can lead to insights and changes that can help improve an area or operation. One way to understand a process is to start thinking about inputs, steps and activities.

Improving processes include:

- Eliminating entire processes or portions of processes that are unnecessary.
- Combining tasks.
- Changing the sequence in which tasks are accomplished.
- Changing the location where tasks are done.
- Changing the people performing the tasks.
- Changing how tasks are done.
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Process mapping sets the momentum for:

- Revealing opportunities to improve or standardize processes.
- Establishing and documenting best practices.
- Fostering or jump starting these initiatives.
- Identifying "quick-win" opportunities.
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Training:

- Create training and reference manuals.
- Easier to train people when they are able to see the process visually.

Document, Review and Analyze Current State

Design Future State Processes:

- Protect your organization's knowledge capital by mapping critical processes.
- Visualize future-state processes before making changes to current-state or investing in major capital.

Intergration of Processes for Acquisitions, Mergers or New Services:

- Ensure effective integration of business operations, including formation of common business practices and understanding of system platforms.

Sale and Decommission of Business Operations:

- Map the entire business structure to show potential buyers how well the business is established and can run smoothly with little alteration.
- Map the processes required for a seamless transition of customer records, files or accounts and methodical shut-down of business operations.