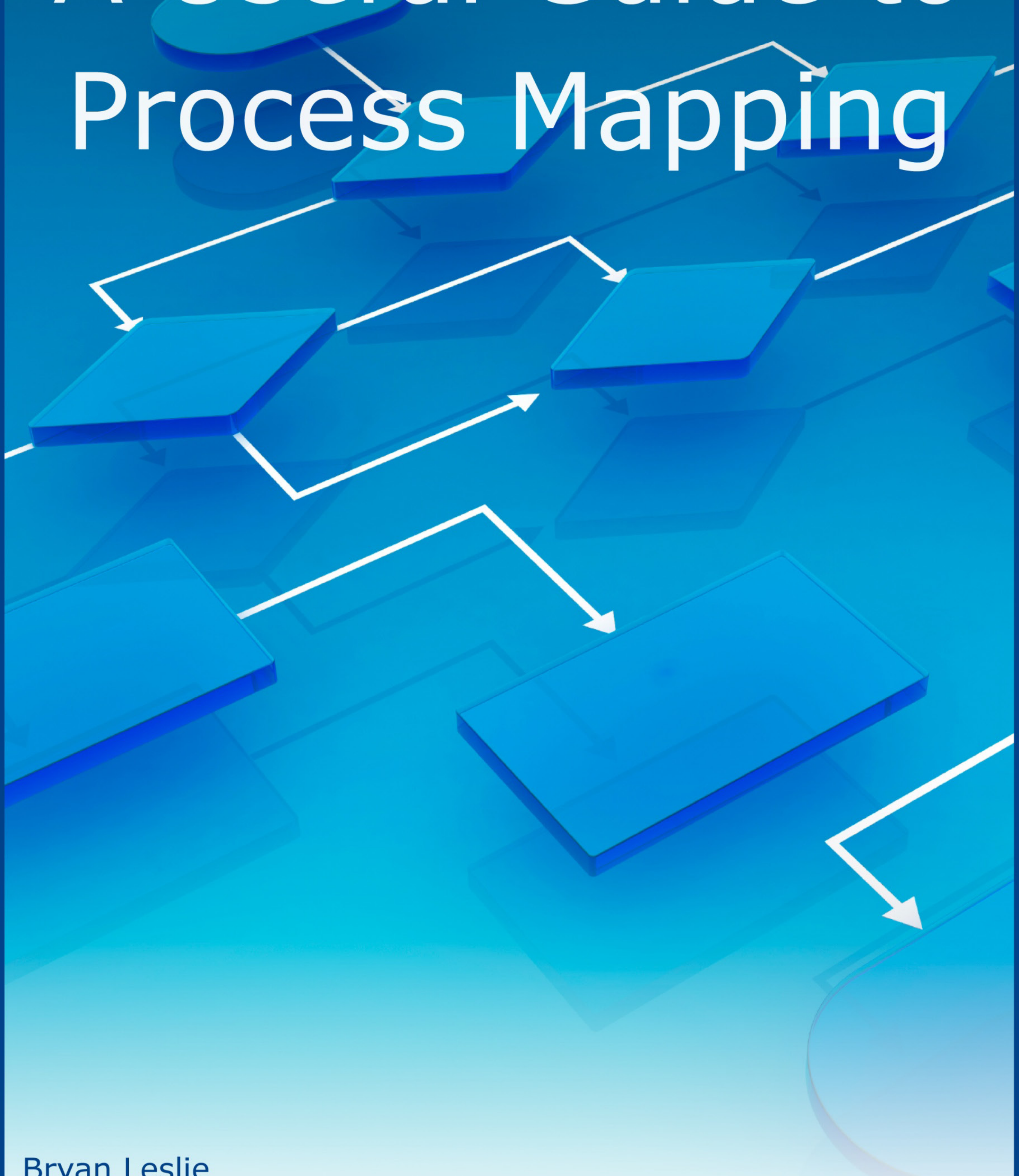
A Useful Guide to Process Mapping



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A Useful Guide to Process Mapping

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"To *improve* the work, you must *manage* it.
To *manage* the work, you must *measure* it.
To *measure* the work, you must *understand* it.
To *understand* the work, you must *know how it gets done*."

1. Introduction

Background

This guide has been produced to help you answer this crucial question:

"How can I improve the way we do things?

The key roles of a Manager/Leader are ...

1. Ensure the work gets done today as efficiently and effectively as possible;
2. Ensure the work gets done more efficiently and effectively tomorrow than it did today.

Let's face it, if you don't know *how* the work gets done now, you've got a serious problem with getting it done as efficiently and effectively as possible today and you won't be able to start working on making it more efficient and effective tomorrow.

And even if you do know how the work *should* get done, how do you know it *is* being done in that way, by every person, in every instance? The answer is you don't and the problem of varying techniques and differing quality is seen in varying customer service levels and differing costs of production or service etc. **Only when you truly understand a process can you improve it.**

So as a manager, if you have been tasked with improving your business unit performance (and if you haven't you should be doing it anyway), it all starts with understanding your processes or getting clear about how the work gets done.

This is something you can't delegate to someone else to do. It's your job to understand the processes, although it isn't your job to actually do the work itself. For example, if you run a call centre, you must know how the work is done: how calls are routed, how your people answer the phone, the systems they use to service the customer, which other teams are involved later in the process, etc. However, your knowledge isn't so you can do the job when the phones are busy, it's so you can review the process and make it better (i.e. faster, cheaper and higher quality).

So, as you can't delegate the need to understand the process, let's go through the ways you can get to know it:

GCTTW (Getting Close to the Work)

When was the last time you sat down with someone in your team and watched what they had to do to get the work done? Have you <u>ever</u> done this? It is fascinating to spend 30 to 45 minutes with someone and talk with them about the things that work and what they would like to change. By getting close to the work, you will be able to see, hear and feel the process and understand the areas that need to be improved.

BTTF (Back to the Floor)

In the 1990's the BBC made a series called Back to the Floor. It was a fly on the wall documentary as the Chairman or Chief Executive of an organisation swapped the boardroom for a period of time (usually a week or more) where he or she actually performed a series of jobs on the "shop floor". This wasn't a photo opportunity for them; they really did take on the role! Channel 4 produced a similar programme in 2011 called Undercover Boss where the Chief Executive started working in the organisation, but none of their new colleagues were aware the person was the boss.

Each programme was fascinating because it showed how quickly the senior member of staff was able to spot the improvements that were needed to improve customer service and enhance staff morale, just by understanding how the work gets done or, more specifically, the barriers people have to jump over to get the work done.

GCTTW and BTTF both take time though. It is a real commitment. You can't just sit with one person and know what is going on or do one job once. You need to sit with a number of people undertaking different processes at different times of the day or you need to immerse yourself in the job and do it full-time and, even then, you may not see, hear or feel everything that goes on.

How easy will it be for you to free up 35 hours this week to focus on GCTTW or BTTF? Even if you schedule this time, how often will you be interrupted and not do it properly? If you're like most managers, the likelihood is, even with the best of intentions, you won't be able to spend sufficient time to really understand how the work is done. Here is where you do some delegation. You employ someone (either from your team, who has the skill and experience) or an external consultant to produce process maps that clearly show how the work is currently done.

Process Mapping

Most business units are regularly required to review their processes. The key element of any process examination is the need to define the current sequence of activities undertaken, as the necessary first step towards development of new working procedures, particularly any combined processes designed to achieve improved efficiency.

This Useful Guide aims to provide you with a basic guidance and the principles of process mapping, together with the key features of any process improvement exercise. It is based on classic process mapping and business improvement techniques where process maps are …

- Constructed
- Examined and
- Improved.

Process mapping enables us to clearly and simply record existing processes, examine them thoroughly and develop improvements by ...

- Eliminating unnecessary tasks
- Clarifying roles within the process
- Reducing delays and duplication
- Increasing the amount of work undertaken.

It also enables implementation of an effective joined-up process, often in partnership with external bodies and customers, by ...

- Identifying areas of duplication
- Agreeing common processes
- Improving the organisation/customer interface
- Achieving maximum effectiveness in operations.

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2. What Is Process Mapping / Flowcharting?

A process map is a picture. Just as a road map is a picture of how you get from A to B, a process map is, for example, a picture of the customer's journey through your process. It can also be a picture of how a transaction travels through your process, for instance the journey that a purchase order takes, from first contact with the supplier to payment of invoice. The process map shows all of the steps in a process.

The reason we use a road map rather than a narrative description of how to get from A to B is obvious – we would get hopelessly lost otherwise. We use a process map for the same reason.

We want the simplest possible picture of how the process works, and *simplest* is the key word here. The aim of process mapping is to make things clear – to provide us with insight, and the best map is the simplest map that provides that insight.

It is therefore very important to have a sense of proportion with respect to process mapping. You do not need to go on a day's workshop to learn how to draw two shapes (a box and a diamond). You already know how to 'do' process mapping. It is what questions you ask as you are mapping and what happens after mapping that matter.

Although the process map is an essential element of your toolkit, it is not about learning what lots of different shapes and symbols mean. It is also not about drawing fancy, computer-generated pictures. It is simply insight that you are after.

Flowcharts show people what their jobs are and how they should interact with one another as part of the process. Everybody should be able to see from the chart what their job is and how their work fits in with the work of others in the process.

Processes are simply sequences of actions designed to transform inputs into outputs. For instance, baking a cake will involve taking various ingredients (inputs) and producing the cake (output) using the recipe (process).

Process mapping is an exercise to identify all the steps and decisions in a process in diagrammatic form which …

- Describes the flow of materials, information and documents
- Displays the various tasks contained within the process

- Shows that the tasks transform inputs into outputs
- Indicates the decisions that need to be made along the chain
- Demonstrates the essential inter-relationships and interdependence between the process steps.

There are many different types of chart, each designed to capture particular aspects of work. For the purposes of this Useful Guide we will concentrate on two of the most common techniques – Flowcharts and Deployment Charts.

Flowcharts provide a basic 'birds eye' view of all the actions undertaken; whereas Deployment Charts not only provide the basic overview above but also indicate where or by whom the actions are performed. These are explained in greater detail in Section 4.

It is important to remember that although there are many types of chart and numerous charting conventions, you should not be drawn into a technical maze. Make the charts work for you and keep them as simple as you possibly can. The primary objective is to make the chart as clear as possible, so that the process under review can be readily understood and improvements identified by almost anyone, even someone unfamiliar with the process.

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3. Why Process Map?

The Process Map is a picture of how the process is working today. Just like a road map it is not the territory itself, but a picture/graphical representation of the territory. The picture/representation allows you to consider making changes to the way things get done, and allows you to visualise and anticipate the impact (positive and negative) of the changes.

Making changes to manual or computer systems without truly understanding how the process is working today, and why, can lead to costly mistakes. Changes can also create conditions that make it difficult for staff to work effectively, and often create further problems.

If you do not measure a process, you will not be able to manage it effectively and if you cannot manage a process, you cannot improve it.

Abacus Coaching Ltd, a business consultancy specialising in process improvement, estimates that people working in organisations can waste about 15 – 20% of their time by doing things that are unnecessary, re-doing things that are wrong, chasing things without result, querying incomplete instructions, doing other people's jobs and so on.

Process mapping enables us to clearly define the current processes in chart form, identifying problem areas such as bottlenecks, capacity issues, delays or waste. Once identified, this knowledge provides a solid basis from which to develop solutions and introduce and plan new improved processes.

Process mapping enables an organisation to ...

- Establish what is currently happening, how predictably and why
- Measure how efficiently the process is working
- Gather information to understand where waste and inefficiency exist and their impact on the customer or partners
- Develop new, improved processes to reduce or eliminate inefficiency.

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4. How to Construct Process Maps

Types of process map

There are two basic types of chart that you may find useful ...

- **Process Flowchart**

  This chart simply sets out the sequence of activities and decision points. These are useful for capturing the initial detail of the process. Labels showing the grade/level of staff doing each step can be added if required.

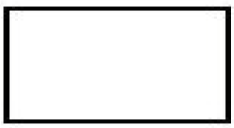
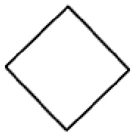
- **Deployment Flowchart**

  This shows who does what along with the interactions between people and departments. This is sometimes known as a "swim lane" chart as the page is divided into vertical lanes showing the various actions and how the process moves from person to person, team to team, or department to department.

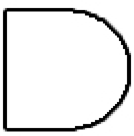
  If your process mapping relates to processes involving more than one person, it is recommended that you adopt the deployment or "swim lane" format, to highlight the different actions taken by different people and different sections within the organisation.

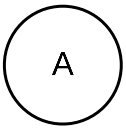
Basic flowcharting symbols

The two most important symbols are ...

- A rectangle, representing a task: 
- a diamond, representing a decision: 

You may also find it useful to label certain actions on your chart to highlight -

- Delays  and

- Connectors 

  A connector shows continuation of the flowchart from one page to another. When you reach the bottom or far right hand side of the page draw a connector and connect it to the last item on the chart. Label the inside of the connector with a letter. When the process continues on another page draw a connector, label it with the same letter and connect it to the next item where the flowchart continues.

Preparation for process mapping

Think carefully about who needs to be involved in the process mapping. Remember, if you don't involve people you can't expect them to be committed to the improvement process. Therefore you should ensure you involve those who work IN and AROUND the process. All the following need to be involved ...

- Those who DO the work
- The SUPPLIERS to the process
- The CUSTOMERS of the process
- The SUPERVISORS / MANAGERS of the process

It is essential to involve operational staff in any process mapping exercise. Only by asking the people who do the work will you be able capture the information required.

There may be some suspicion from staff about the ultimate aims of a process improvement exercise and how change will affect individuals. Communication and openness about the exercise, its aims and expected outcomes is therefore critical in reassuring staff and securing co-operation.

Assemble a small team ideally comprising representatives from ALL teams/departments or sections involved in the exercise, who have a good overview of the processes under examination. Key points to ensure are that ...

- Terms of reference are agreed and clearly understood by all participants – everyone knows what you are trying to achieve with this work
- Sufficient time is provided to do the job properly – sensible deadlines are set
- There is clear, visible Management commitment and support to the exercise

- All staff are made aware of the exercise, terms of reference and likely impact on them, together with an invitation to contribute or voice any particular anxieties
- Team members receive some basic guidance on process mapping / flow charting techniques.

If necessary "sell" the benefits of the process mapping exercise. Staff, supervisors and managers will need to be assured that the process mapping exercise will help them to work SMARTER rather than HARDER by enabling them to ...

- Learn much more about their processes by pooling their knowledge and working together both internally and externally to perfect them
- Work out how to do their jobs excellently and consistently without procedures being forced on them from above
- Visualise various kinds of changes likely to produce improvement
- Focus on the most troublesome aspects of their processes
- Demonstrate where processes fit into the overall system
- See where they, as individuals, fit into the overall system and to recognise their internal customers and suppliers
- Explain simply and easily the nature and detail of the processes to interested parties and new staff
- Identify any existing (and new) skills needed by those involved in the process
- Effectively help to plan implementation of proposed changes
- Select and define the scope of the project ...

    Where will the process mapping start and finish? For example, the START might be the receipt of a request from a customer and the END might be sending the customer a letter confirming the action taken.

All parties should be clear and agree on what they wish to achieve through a process mapping exercise. It is unlikely that time and resources will permit a detailed examination of everything and it may be sensible to identify key processes and concentrate on those. Examples might be interfaces with other organisations or elements where ownership of a process may change, such as file preparation or client relationship management.

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Defining the Clean and Dirty processes

When you start process mapping you will be bombarded with information from the people you speak with. They will tell you about the processes they follow, but without direction from you, they may focus on all the things that go “wrong” with the process. Although this information is crucial to your mapping and improvement project, you have to start by focusing on what the process is when it runs properly.

A process that runs properly is called a “clean” process. It is how the process flows if there are no issues. It may never, or hardly ever, happen in this way but if you don’t get the “clean” process documented first you may never get the process documented at all.

When you start to get information on how the work gets done, make clear to the person or people providing the information that you want to know the clean process first, and you’ll then come back to all of the exceptions and problems, which you will use to map the “dirty” process. As you take notes about the process, when people say “this is what usually happens”, or “sometimes this happens”, make sure you ask them for frequencies in terms of percentages. An exception that occurs 1 time in 100 is less of an issue than one that occurs 35 times in 100.

Once you’ve been through the entire process you will have details of what the process should be, and is, when everything works as planned; this is called the clean process and should be labelled as such. On the map you should make notes about potential exceptions, and when the clean map is agreed as being correct you can work on process mapping the highest frequency, biggest cost exceptions.

The exceptions can be drawn onto the same process map as the clean, and this map should now be labelled as “dirty”. Comparing the clean and dirty process maps will help the critical examination phase detailed later in this guide.

Gathering information

If more than one team or department is involved in the exercise, try to have a member of the OTHER team(s) / department(s), who are familiar with the process under consideration, present during process mapping sessions. This will give everyone a 'hands on' practical understanding of your process and will hopefully facilitate future stages when considering combined or improved processes. It can also be useful to have the "blindingly obvious" question posed by someone not too close to the process.

Observe the process in operation and talk to the staff involved. Walk through the process in sequence asking how the work gets done. Try to obtain a clear overview without too much fine detail at this stage. If it proves difficult to get people to think sequentially it may help to ask the following types of questions at various steps in the process ...

- What are the inputs to your task which are relevant to the process under consideration?
- Where does your work come from? (Your SUPPLIER)
- What do you do with it?
- Where do you send your output? (Your CUSTOMER)
- What form does that output take? (This output then becomes the input for the next box (Process Step) in the flowchart)

Roughly and simply sketch the Process (without too much detail) describing the sequence of tasks and decision points ***as they actually happen***. The sketch should indicate ...

- WHO does WHAT (Job title/Function)
- WHAT is done and WHEN
- What DECISIONS have to be taken
- What possible paths follow from each decision.

Draw the flowchart initially to represent the operation, ***as it actually happens*** - NOT what you might prefer it to be. Use a flip chart or whiteboard to produce your initial charts. It can be helpful to use 'POST-IT' notes on a large whiteboard (or just stick them on the wall or desk!). Each note can represent a 'step' in the process and save a lot of pain when it comes to re-shuffling the sequence to get it right!

Keep it simple to facilitate broad understanding of the OVERALL process. Too much detail early on can be overwhelming and/or lead to confusion. If you agree that more detail is required on a particular action, it is easy to highlight that action and produce a separate chart showing the process taking place within.

Leave the flowchart on the board / wall if possible. This enables reflection and re-thinking between meetings. Continue until consensus is reached. Rarely is the flowchart complete without re-work. When you have an agreed final product it is time to document your work. There are numerous flowcharting packages available such as "Visio" or "Flowcharter Plus". Alternatively software such as Excel, Word, or PowerPoint can also be used to draw flowcharts.

Constructing a process flowchart

Decide how you will layout the sequence: i.e. are you going to sequence the tasks within the process downward or across? Whichever you decide, lay the sequence out by working in a consistent downward or across direction. Once you have thought through the main 'steps' of the process, flowchart them in sequence as they are performed using rectangles for 'tasks' and diamonds for ‘decisions’. Use connecting arrows between boxes to represent the direction of the sequence.

Concisely describe each task or decision in its own box. You may sometimes wish to number (some of) the boxes and provide a key to where the activity is described in more detail. If forms or computer programs are used it can be useful to reference these numerically and provide an appendix of photocopies and/or screen prints so everyone can see what “complete pro-forma ABC” means for example.

If the process includes decision points, this will normally imply some 'return-routing' causing some boxes to have more than one input. In the example below the “return routing” or "loops" indicate an inefficiency or waste.

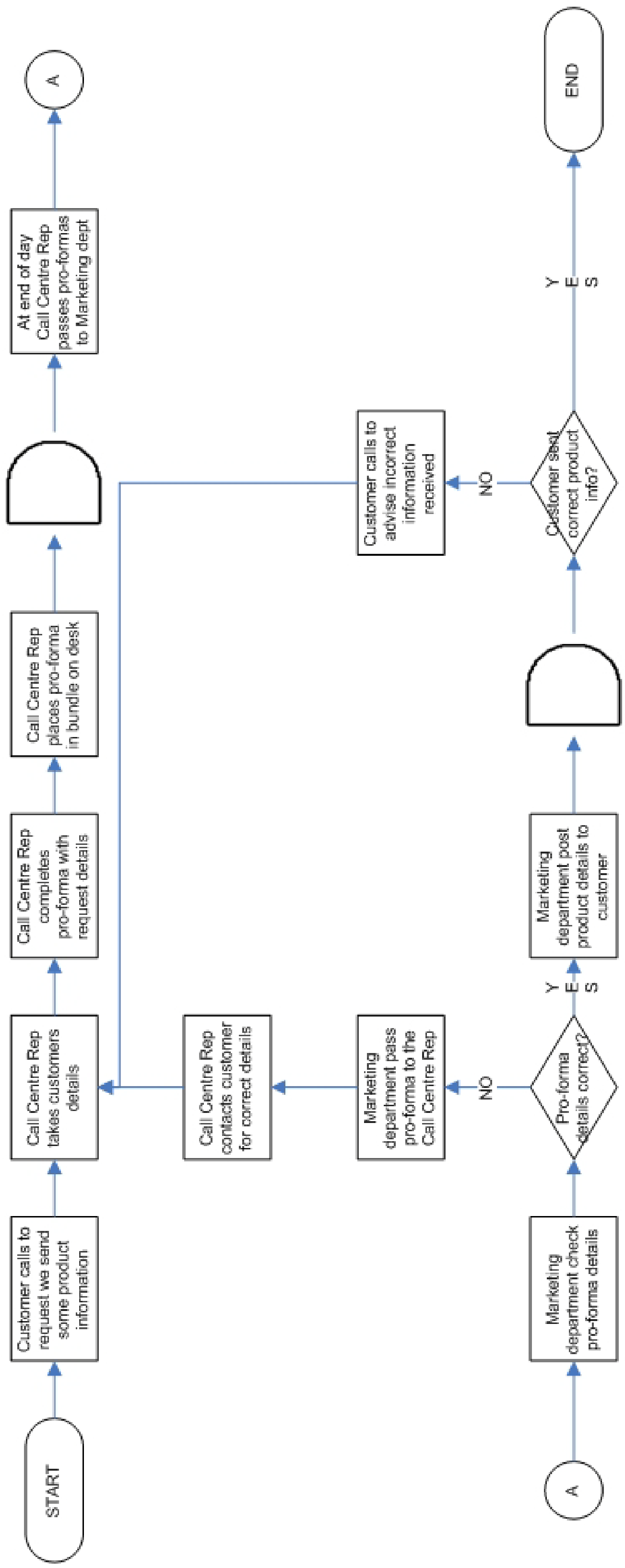
Decisions often (but not always) pose questions answerable by YES or NO. It is recommended you consistently structure the questions so that the preferred answer is 'YES' whereas 'NO' leads to re-routing etc. In our example overleaf the most efficient process takes the form of a straight line down the page.

Useful conventions that follow are to draw ...

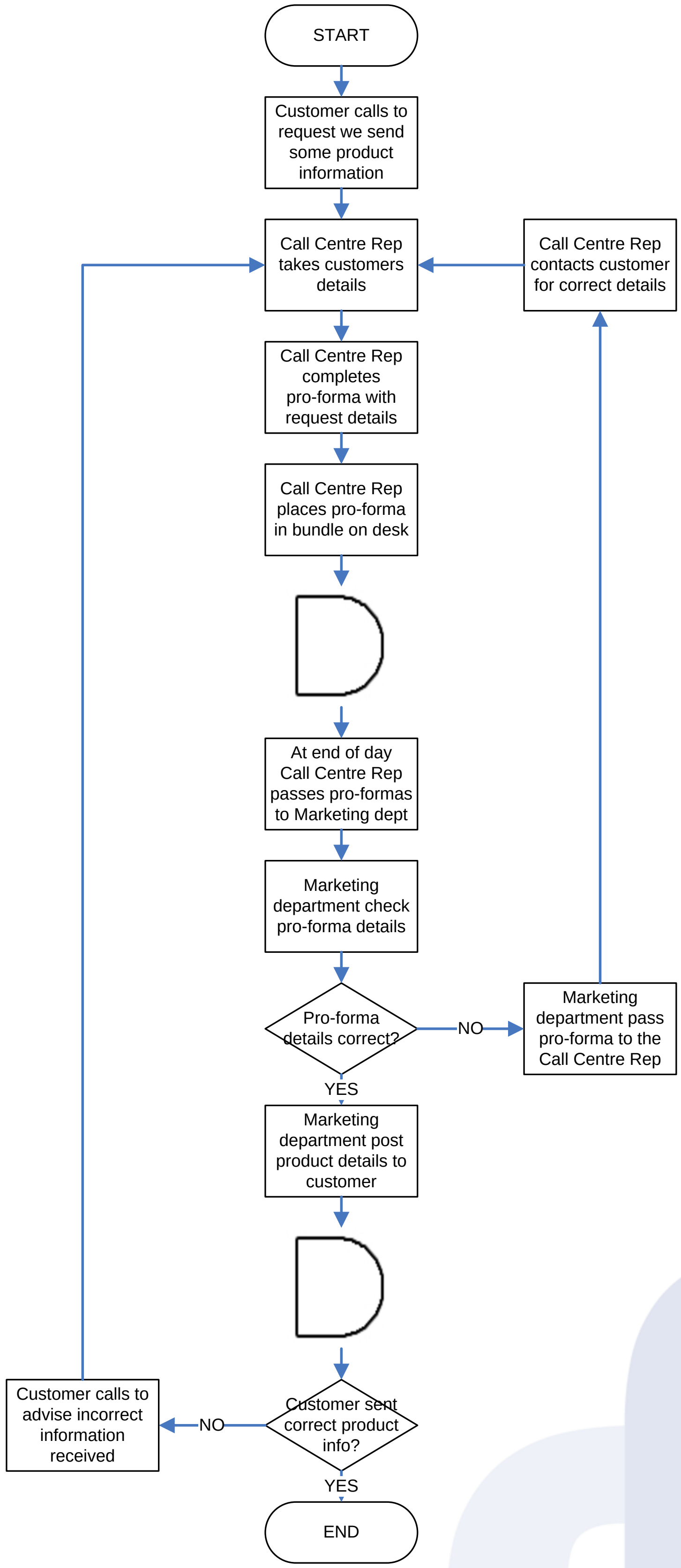
- The 'YES' route out of the bottom of the diamond (i.e. normal flow downward through the chart)
- The 'NO' route as a line out of the side of the box

Examples of a simple process flowchart sequenced downwards and across are on the next 2 pages.

An example of a simple across flowchart



An example of a simple downward flowchart



Constructing a deployment flowchart

Here a "department" dimension is added horizontally along the top of the chart. You may use individuals, groups, departments, agencies, and functions etc - whatever kinds of 'units' play major roles in the process.

Draw vertical lines to separate the functional boundaries

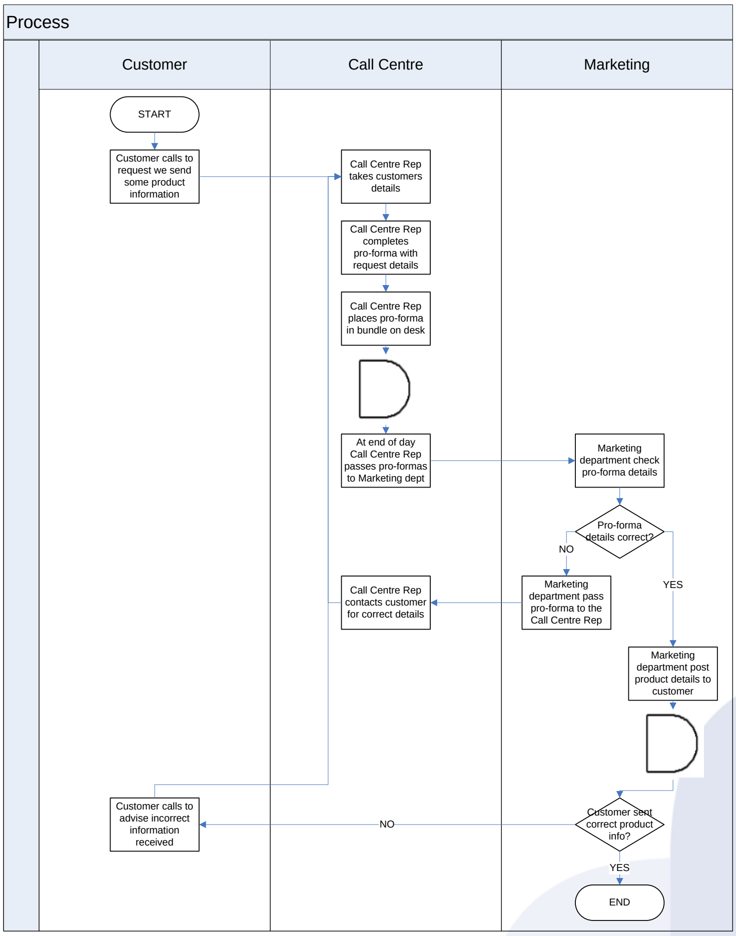
When the flow moves from one function to another, this is ideally denoted by a horizontal line.

Apart from the ideally horizontal moves between functions, aim when possible, to draw the sequence of activities from top to bottom.

Use the task and decision-making symbols as before and always connect symbols with arrows indicating the direction of flow.

An example of a simple Deployment Chart is shown below.

Example of a simple downward deployment flowchart



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5. How to Process Improve

Critical examination

Having selected and recorded key processes, the next stage is to critically examine them and develop new processes where necessary. This may well take the form of combining, for example, existing processes undertaken in different teams or departments and deciding who will take responsibility for various actions.

In many instances the thoughts and discussions required to chart existing processes will lead to easy identification of improvements. These should be noted and retained for the improvement stage. Many improvements will "leap off the page" once an existing process is charted.

Analysing your process maps in a structured way, known as Critical Examination, can identify process improvements. This basically involves the use of primary questions – WHAT, HOW, WHEN, WHERE, and WHO.

Firstly define what is actually happening, before moving onto identifying alternatives and finally deciding. The table below outlines the approach taken.

Critical Examination summary

Examine your process maps and ask the following questions ...

PRIMARY QUESTIONS	WHY?	SECONDARY QUESTIONS	SELECTION
PURPOSE WHAT is achieved?	Why that way?	What else could be achieved?	What should be achieved?
MEANS HOW is it achieved?	Why that way?	How else could it be achieved?	How should it be achieved?
SEQUENCE WHEN is it achieved?	Why then?	When could it be achieved?	When should it be achieved?
PLACE WHERE is it achieved?	Why there?	Where else could it be achieved?	Where should it be achieved?
PERSON WHO achieves it?	Why that person?	Who else could achieve it?	Who should achieve it?

In essence we should be asking …

- Why are we doing it?
- Is it essential to do this?

In doing so you should also consider …

- The impact on Customers/Stakeholders
- The implication of not doing parts of the process
- Why we needed the old process
- What do we want to change
- What are the requirements of the new process
- What needs to change.

Wasted work

Earlier in this guide we introduced the concept of "clean" and "dirty" process maps. The activities that are in the clean process will generally be value-adding, that is they provide value for the customer and/or the organisation. Most, if not all, of the exceptions that you documented will be "wasted work", that is they are not value-adding for the customer or the organisation and should be examined to see how they can be reduced or eliminated.

Wasted work is …

- Spending time doing things again which have not been done right first time
- Duplicating effort
- Doing things that add no value to the customer or the organisation.

Wasted work should be evident from your "dirty" process maps and often from any discussions you have with staff, when you …

- re-work something not done right first time
- complete unnecessary forms/paperwork/reports
- do not have access to the right equipment
- work from unreliable or inaccurate information
- deal with misrouted phone calls or post
- do things that you've found others are doing/have done
- deal with problems caused by other departments not doing their job correctly first time

- encounter "bottlenecks" of work, or excessive delay/movement of work
- fire fight and deal with symptoms rather than causes
- have to obtain unnecessary authorisation
- attend unnecessary or poorly managed meetings
- have to handle issues that others should have dealt with.

Typical examples of wasted work ...

- Answering complaints is an activity that would appear to be value-adding. However, complaints should always be reviewed to ascertain how they could have been avoided in the particular instance and in the future. Complaints are wasted work.
- Sending forms back to customers because they haven't been completed correctly is wasted work. You have to do it because the customer wants it to be completed correctly, but you should be reviewing *how* to make sure the forms are completed correctly in the first place; for example, are the instructions clear, if customers regularly don't sign in the right place can you highlight this on the form, can you provide a checklist for customers to check what they have completed, etc. Returning forms to be corrected is wasted work.
- Checking work to improve quality is value-adding. However if you install too many checks, they may become wasted work. For example, in my first job I worked in a bank in a team that processed international payments. All payments were seen, checked and authorised by five people before funds were released and we still made mistakes. Once the process was changed to one inputter, one checker, and one authoriser for items over a set value, the costs of processing reduced significantly and the quality improved dramatically. The quality improved because each person knew they had to get it right, they were responsible, and they couldn't hide behind the fact that maybe four people had already checked it, or four would check it afterwards. Too many checks are wasted work.

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6. Brown Papers

What are Brown Papers?

Basically, a Brown Paper is a large scale flowchart, literally produced on a roll of brown paper. By creating a large, visual image of the process, created by those who actually do the work, you will start to highlight ...

- Obvious areas to review and improve
- The value-adding parts of the process for the customer and the organisation
- The number of people involved in the process overall
- How each part of the process helps (or hinders) other parts
- Processes that are unwieldy or over complex

Brown Paper Fairs

This mapping approach starts with a large sheet of brown paper taped to a wall. It is used when we need to understand the details of the steps in an activity, improve a specific process in a value stream, or find the root cause of a problem. Holding a "Brown Paper Fair" is a good way to engage a larger number of people in the activity.

Brown Paper Maps are most useful ...

- When less time is available than required for a process mapping and critical examination exercise.
- When limited training in map building has already taken place within the organisation.
- When the scope is limited to a specific function or operational area.
- When the staff responsible for creating the maps, rather than skilled analysts, are building the map.
- When we are trying to highlight specific problems that need to be fixed.

Pros and Cons of Brown Papers

Advantages are that Brown Paper Mapping ...

- Is simple to do and easy to understand.
- Is one of the fastest ways to analyse or identify process problems.

- Works in office, manufacturing, or other areas.
- Can also be used as a training tool.
- Quickly reveals problems at the task or activity level.
- Documents process ownership.

There are a few disadvantages …

- Accelerating by making quick estimates can compromise accuracy.
- The number of people required to build broad consensus requires careful resource management.

Who should be involved?

You will need to involve the people who actually do the work to create the brown paper. It is usually a good idea to keep management out of brown papering during the creation phase; as we saw earlier they generally don't know how the work gets done and they can inhibit the debate. Management should be involved in the review of the processes; this will help them to understand how the processes actually work.

When you get a boundary (e.g. when the process output goes to a different team for action), if you haven't got the people there who work on the other side of the boundary, don't let the people in the room tell you how they *think* the process works. People guessing process steps will be wrong; always make sure people who do the work are involved.

Essential Tools

The tools you will need to create a Brown Paper are …

- Brown Paper – lots of it! Usually a roll can be borrowed from the post room or purchased from stationers. A large roll works better than individual sheets as the process map can then be rolled up and will not require to be glued together.
- Different coloured "Post it" labels large enough for detailed comments.
- Marker pens in a variety of colours.
- Masking tape to stick the paper to the wall (don't use sellotape or blu tack to stick the brown paper to the wall as these are more difficult to remove afterwards and can result in the map tearing).
- Big scissors.

- Prit-stick glue or sellotape to stick the post it notes to the brown paper once the map is completed.
- Flipchart to capture comments, issues and solutions.

Where to hold a Brown Paper Fair

The best place is a large room with a big, flat wall that you can stick the brown paper to. The room will need to have plenty of room for people to move about so if necessary, remove the chairs and tables to create more space.

The Facilitator Role

Your role is to facilitate other people creating and then reviewing the process map; the more others do the mapping themselves, the more they will "own" the result, and the better the outcome.

The style needs to be sleeves up, getting everyone involved, building the map, and having fun. Once the participants start moving the bits of paper themselves, you're onto a winner!

Remember, they might feel a bit threatened at the start as they may feel their job or team is threatened by reviewing and improving the processes. Clearly stating the objective of the exercise and reminding everyone it is everyone's job to improve processes will help to overcome any fears they may have.

How to run a Brown Paper fair

Start by asking the participants what they believe the purpose of the process to be brown papered is. Check there is consistency in everyone's understanding of the process purpose and explore any differing views.

Make sure you know what you are actually brown papering, for example, can you produce a map for the process in one go, or will you need to do several brown papers to cover several processes? Get the participants to help you with this by seeking their opinion and agreement.

Identify the departments and key people that are involved, and decide which type of process map (e.g. flowchart or swim lane) you will create. If you decide to create a swim lane brown paper you may need to stick two pieces of brown paper side by side to get height as well as width.

Draw connecting lines in pencil until everyone is clear that the result is right; you can always reposition Post Its, but not inked in lines!

Don't be frightened of starting again if it's not working or getting untidy. As you progress you will figure out better layouts.

When the chart is finished ink in all of the lines, stick sellotape over the Post-It notes so they don't fall off, name and date the brown paper, and write on it the names of everyone who helped create it.

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7. What Makes an Efficient & Effective Process?

To help you identify some of the characteristics in an efficient process the following should always be apparent ...

- several tasks/jobs combined into one
- workers making decisions at the lowest possible level and monitoring their own progress
- steps in the process following a natural order
- work being performed where and when it makes sense (with the fewest possible people involved)
- the fewest possible interfaces and handling points
- the fewest backward movements
- the fewest possible activities
- the process has a named "owner" who is responsible for ensuring the process runs as effectively as possible.

The importance of process ownership

Many processes don't improve because they don't have a dedicated "owner" and therefore they don't have someone who is responsible for ongoing reviews and improvement activity. This is usually the manager, or team leader, of the people that perform the tasks and activities within the process.

The process owner is the person allocated specific responsibility to design the processes necessary to achieve the objectives of the team or overall business. They are responsible for the documentation, review, improvement and support of the process. The process owner is the only person who has authority to make changes in the process and manages the entire process improvement cycle to ensure performance effectiveness. This person is the contact person for all information related to the process.

Each process should be allocated a process owner before new processes are agreed and implemented. It is even better if ownership is known and communicated before the process mapping starts so the owner can be actively involved in the entire mapping exercise.

Mapping the new process

Having completed the initial process examination and improvement stage, and assigned a process owner, you should be in a position to chart the new processes.

It is important to chart any new improved process that you develop as this can be used as a training aid for all staff and should clearly define who is responsible for each action. These charts should also form the basis of any future work aimed at improving processes further.

If the process examination covers more than one team or department, an agreed combined process map may also be useful in supporting any Service Level Agreements which are developed for joint working.

It is also important to remember that a process mapping exercise, as described in this Useful Guide, is merely the first stage in a **CONTINUOUS** cycle of **INCREMENTAL** improvement and refinement of processes which is ultimately aimed at ...

- Eliminating duplication of tasks and to reduce costs
- Improving efficiency and co-ordination of working practices
- reducing the transportation of materials e.g. files between locations
- improving quality and timeliness in the organisation
- improving the effective deployment of staff
- improving relationships between teams, departments and customers
- reducing delays
- improving the service for Customers and stakeholders.

Process Improvement should be viewed as a continuous activity because the environment we all work in is constantly changing, and processes have to adapt with these changes.

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8. Case Studies

Here are three case studies of organisations that have used process mapping to improve their processes.

Customer Care

A housing association has over 300 clients in 150+ properties. The customer care team is responsible for taking telephone calls and email messages from tenants and dealing with the enquiries as quickly as possible.

If the tenant was calling with details of a repair that was required, the customer care team would take all the details, and then pass it to the maintenance team to deal with the request. The customer care team would agree a date and time for the repair to be carried out, but they had no access to the maintenance team's diary.

Tenant feedback showed that a number of appointments were being missed, cancelled and changed, and the maintenance team had to deal with upset and angry tenants by telephone and face-to-face.

By process mapping the process for resolving repairs, the housing association became more aware of what the issues (from the customer's point of view) were. They decided to "merge" the customer care team and the maintenance team so when a customer called they could immediately diagnose the fault and schedule a time in the maintenance team diaries to carry out the repair.

Report Distribution

A financial services company produced a large number of paper reports every morning. The reports automatically printed to a dot matrix printer. At 7am a member of staff started work and their job was to "split" the reports into individual reports, and place them in the pigeon holes of the appropriate teams.

Each team would take their reports and work on them during the day.

Management were concerned at the cost of report production (paper and staff time) and wanted to know how they could be produced and distributed cheaper and quicker.

By mapping the process as an overview and adding detail for individual reports, it was discovered that of the 59 reports produced overnight, only 13 had any value; the remaining 46 were simply thrown away by the team that had been given them. Of the 13 that were actually used, all of them showed data that was available as an online report.

In this case, the organisation decided to cancel 46 of the reports and switched the remainder to be online only, saving money in report production and processing cost. The teams were able to speed up their work, as the online reports were available from 5am, whilst the paper reports were distributed around midday each day.

Invoicing

A finance team in a local authority is responsible for invoicing service users for hire of rooms at the local council offices for meetings. Most of the bookings are from local companies.

The team that take bookings and agree details with the hiring company work in a different building from the finance/invoicing team. The team that takes bookings send an email to finance with details of who to invoice and how much as soon as the booking comes in.

The issue that kept arising was that the hiring company would on occasions (32%) change the booking to a larger or smaller room, or cancel it totally, because their requirements changed. 90% of these changes occurred at least six weeks ahead of the booking. Because the invoices had already been sent, this caused the hiring company to query their invoice and delay payment, and/or request a refund of payment.

The finance and booking teams ran a joint brown paper fair to review the process and see how they could cut down on queries and improve customer satisfaction. They invited three customers to this session to get their input and feedback too.

The brown paper fair participants determined that customers were being invoiced too quickly and decided to only invoice 28 days before the room hire. Their terms of hire were changed to make it allowable for hirers to make any change to a booking up to 28 days in advance, with any changes made within 28 days charged a % of the booking fee. They also decided that the booking team should create the invoices, leaving the finance team to check invoices and make sure payment was received prior to the room hire. This improved the quality of invoicing, lead to significantly more money being received in advance of the hire, and improved customer satisfaction.

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9. Personal Practice

To practice and develop your skills in process mapping, draw a flowchart for each of the following scenarios. You should decide in each case...

- whether you are going to draw a Flowchart or a Deployment Chart
- what the scope (start and end points) is.

Each of these scenarios has a model answer available for you to contrast and compare with your own. Please complete your own first and then follow the link to see the model answer.

Scenario One

Draw a process map for making a cup of coffee. (Model Answer)

Scenario Two

Draw a process map for organising a trip to the cinema with a friend. (Model Answer)

Scenario Three

Draw a swim lane process map for organising your work's Christmas party. (Model Answer)

Scenario Four

Draw a process map for cooking a Sunday meal with your family. (Model Answer)

Scenario Five

There is no right or wrong in the process maps you have created so far. By practising your skills you will now have the confidence to tackle the next process map, Scenario Five, which is more detailed than the previous four. For this scenario, you should produce a process map that accurately depicts the information given to you below. This is a "clean" process. There are obviously many possible exceptions to it (which would make it "dirty"); please ignore the potential exceptions when drawing your map.

If you would like feedback on your completed map, please email me (bryan@bryanleslie.com) a copy of your map and I will give you feedback by email within one week.

The Scenario: RECRUITING AND SELECTING NEW STAFF

- A manager (the recruiting manager) decides he needs to recruit a new member of staff. He first of all requests agreement to recruit from his line manager (he does this by sending an email); the line manager reviews the request and decides to approve the recruitment or not and advises the recruiting manager of her decision (by email).
- If it is approved the recruiting manager advises the Human Resources team of the Job Vacancy; he does this by completing a standard online word document and emailing this to the "recruitment@hr.com" email address along with an up to date job description and person specification.
- The HR team writes a job advert for the vacancy which is then emailed to the recruiting manager for approval. Once approved, the HR Team will issue the job advert in the local paper for insertion in the "vacancies" column.
- Candidates for the position are asked to send a hardcopy of their CV and a covering letter to the HR Team. As candidates send in their documents the HR Team will store the received applications until the closing date (two weeks after the advert appeared in the paper). Once the closing date is reached, the HR Team scan all of the applications and email copies to the recruiting manager (HR retain and store the original applications).
- The recruiting manager reviews the applications and produces a short list of candidates he would like to invite for interview. He advises HR via "recruitment@hr.com" of the candidates he would like to interview and the dates/times allocated for interviews. HR contacts selected candidates by telephone and invites them for interview; a mutually acceptable date/time is agreed with each candidate. HR confirms the interview details with each candidate in writing. HR confirms the interview schedule with the recruiting manager by sending him an email.
- The recruiting manager prepares an "interview pack" for the interviews containing the questions to be asked and a pro-forma for recording each candidates answers.
- Interviews are held with each candidate; attending for the organisation is the recruiting manager and a representative from HR. During each interview the recruiting manager asks the questions and the HR representative records the answers given. At the end of each interview the recruiting manager and the HR rep summarise ensure the interview record is accurate and summarise their view of each candidate.
- Once all the interviews are complete the recruiting manager and the HR representative decide to which candidate (if any) they are going to make

an offer of employment. HR retains all of the interview sheets for storage and subsequent review if required.

- HR telephones the successful candidate to make a conditional job offer and once the conditional offer has been verbally accepted, they take up references as supplied by the candidate. HR writes to the unsuccessful interviewees to advise them they have been unsuccessful.
- Once references have been received and confirmed as ok, HR advises the recruiting manager and HR telephones the candidate to agree a start date.
- HR then sends an unconditional offer of employment to the candidate, confirming the start date, starting salary, formal contract, to whom and where to report etc. HR confirms all details to the recruiting manager.
- The candidate then starts work on the agreed start date.

Remember, once you've drawn your process map (either as a flowchart or deployment chart) if you want feedback on it, please send the map attached to an email to me. Your attachment can be any Microsoft Office format (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Visio, etc) or a PDF format.

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10. Further Information

This Useful Guide, whilst addressing many issues that arise as part of a Process Improvement exercise, may not cover items specific to individual teams or departments.

If you would like further advice or information please contact Bryan by email at bryan@bryanleslie.com.

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11. Feedback

As we are always trying to improve our Useful Guides we would appreciate any feedback you can give us on A Useful Guide to Process Mapping. Please click on the link below to access our online feedback form …

http://www.pansophix.com/useful-guide-feedback.html

If we use your feedback to improve A Useful Guide to Process Mapping we will email you a copy of the updated version.

You can access lots of free tips and tools at 247freetips.com.

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12. About the Author

Bryan Leslie, author of this Useful Guide and A Useful Guide to Goal Setting, is a highly experienced Coach, Leader and Motivator specialising in Leadership, Management and Team Working coaching and training.

He enjoys working with individual and corporate clients who set "impossible" goals, because he believes that by aiming for the impossible you achieve the improbable.

Bryan specialises in Personal and Corporate Development through Coaching and Training.

His background combines fourteen years of line management with a blend of Operational Management, Consultancy and Human Resources experience in the Standard Life Assurance Company, Standard Life Bank and Royal Bank of Scotland plc.

Bryan is accredited by the ...

- Corporate and Executive Coaching Company as an Executive Coach
- Coaching Academy as a Life Coach

He is also certified by the University of Strathclyde in Coach Training and Performance Coaching.

When not writing or with clients Bryan spends his time with his wife, two children and Labrador dog walking the coasts of East Lothian. A keen amateur cook, Bryan loves devising recipes for fish and vegetarian meals.

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