Process Mapping... at a glance

What?

The process map is a tool that graphically shows the inputs, actions and outputs of a process in a clear, step-by-step map of the process.

Process mapping helps people visualise the details of a process closely and guides decision making and helps to identify the different areas of strengths/ weaknesses in existing processes. It also helps to reduce the cycle times and defects in the process and enhances its productivity.

Why?

You would use a process map when you want to get a visual representation of your process, this will also allow you to identify any waste. Depending on the audience and the level of detail needed, you should decide which process flow is best suited.

It provides the necessary information and helps to determine the Who, What, Where, Why, When and How aspects of the process and problem, and even guides towards possible solutions.

How?

The major components of a process map include the inputs, outputs and the steps in the process. A good process map should illustrate the flow of the work and the interaction with the organisation. An ideal process map should contain detail with respect to multiple paths and decisions.

Each step in a process is represented by a shape in a process map. These shapes are also called flowchart shapes.

Comms Process Mapping symbols

Symbol	Name	What it signifies
(oval)	Terminal	Used both where the process starts and ends.
(rectangle)	Activity	Task or activity in the process.
(diamond)	Decision point	A decision is made. Different process paths and actions are taken as result from different decisions.
(subprocess)	Subprocess	Sub-process steps included within this item.
(document)	Document	A written or electronic document is produced as an output of actions in the process.
(cylinder)	Database	Database of information involved with this step.
(parallelogram)	Input / Output	Input or output to a process, such as information or a report.
(circle)	Connector	Continue process map on another page when it won't fit on only one. Put a letter (A or B, etc.) inside the circle where you end on one page, and put that same letter in another circle at point the process continues on the next page.

Want to learn more?

Process Mapping v 1.0

Process Mapping (5mins):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLkvvqypq1E

Swimlane Mapping:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQxnzLu7TqU (3mins)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4W-vLESAhoo (11mins)

**Some of the reasons for the need of a process map are:**

• Process maps facilitate improvements in the process, since it becomes easy to pinpoint the specific areas that need changes, like bottlenecks, delays, capacity constraints etc. in the light of efficiency and effectiveness of the process.

• Decision making becomes fast as it deals with the 'show me' aspect and not the 'tell me' aspect of the process and the problem areas.

• The improvements made in the process can easily be tracked using process maps since it becomes possible to audit and understand different areas in the process as well as the organisation.

• Visual examples register faster in human brains and help them to understand better and faster.

• Process maps provide a detailed outlook of the current process and guides the effective management of change.

• Process maps serves as a measurement tool for a process that is very much necessary to manage and finally improve it.

There are different types of process maps: Basic flowchart, High-level process map, Detailed process map, Cross functional flowchart
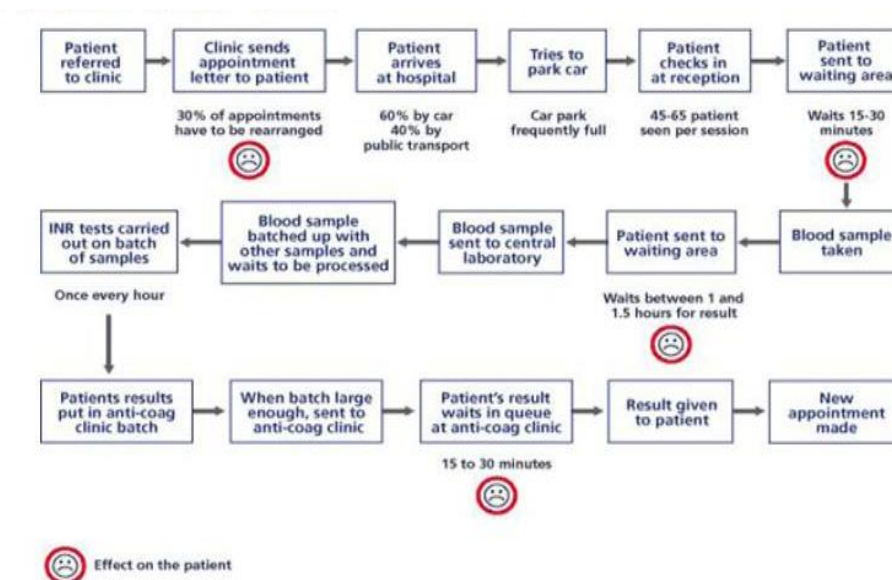
Basic flowchart:

High Level Process Map:
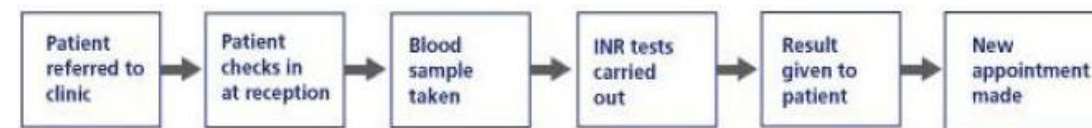
Detailed Process Map:

Your process map should have provided insight into your process.

This will help teams brainstorm ideas for process improvement, increase communication and provide process documentation.

Process mapping will identify bottlenecks, repetition and delays.