

## **Basic Characteristics of a Process Mapping Project**

Process maps are usually generated to help clients establish a clear understanding of their business processes so they can identify the work that takes place within the organization. Process mapping activities reveal the functional home of specific areas of work, as well as possible gaps or overlaps across different groups. This article briefly describes some of the key attributes associated with a project of this type.

## **Business Objectives**

A process map is a first step in developing the business tools and practices that will help organizations meet a variety of strategic, tactical, and cultural objectives. Common project objectives include the following:

### **Strategic**

- Better alignment of business unit initiatives
- Improved personnel planning
- Improved risk planning
- More definition of the functional impact of spending decisions

### **Tactical**

- Clarity of process roles, responsibilities, and decision flows
- Identification of gaps and overlaps in work
- Improved coordination of customer-facing activities
- Improved ability to leverage the touch-points that exist between the client organization and other groups

### **Cultural**

- Shared understanding of operations
- Improved ability to work more effectively across a matrix organization
- Strategy-driven culture that ensures the work that is done is aligned with the strategy

## **Project Scope**

The typical scope addresses the interconnectivities between individual groups. Clients can define the scope to include a variety of functional, geographic, and/or market-defined organizations. Other groups can be added in subsequent iterations as desired.

## **Deliverables**

The results of the project can include the following:

- Process map diagram for 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> level processes
- Recommendations for documentation of processes as needed
- Maintenance plan that will highlight the key steps for managing process documentation
- Map of resource requirements for key processes
- A list of key issues and gaps/overlaps in the organization's ability to execute processes
- A preliminary scope for the next phase of the project. The work in the next phase may include process redesign, and recommendations for addition or consolidation of processes.

## **Approach/Work Plan**

The project leader works with team members to conduct interviews with representatives of the stakeholder groups. These interviews allow team members to collect data on gaps and overlaps among the processes, as well as the interaction between groups. The team may focus its interviews on one division, department, or region initially, using the data from those interviews to identify processes that are common across groups. Other groups are canvassed as needed to identify critical differences. The team is encouraged to use any prior process-mapping work as an input to make the best use of available resources.

## **Project Risks**

The project risks revolve largely around possible resistance within the organization, particularly since the mapping activity is often a different way of looking at the business. Communication is critical to the success of a project like this, and the project leader typically defines and implements a communications plan that includes project roll-out, along with regular status updates.

**About the Author:**

With more than 25 years experience in manufacturing, product line management, program management, and outsourcing initiatives, Monica Johns (President and CEO of Clarity Management Consulting) can help radically improve your organization's performance. To learn how she can help you improve quality, reduce operating costs, and revolutionize the way you do business, visit [www.claritymanagementconsulting.com](http://www.claritymanagementconsulting.com).