



They Needed a Roadmap for Change

Value Stream Mapping

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Organizations function in silos. It's understandable even if it's not desirable. The marketing people don't talk with the manufacturing people; the financial people don't talk with sales; operations people are just trying to get the product out the door. It's the same in service organizations. So then, when it comes to making changes in the organization, we don't know what others do. We don't often consider how changes we make in our areas may impact others. We need a roadmap—a way of visualizing how all of our processes fit together to serve our customers.

The Challenge:

A hospital's customer satisfaction scores were going down for their outpatient services. It seemed like a straight-forward issue until they really took a good look at the problem. One of the first activities they completed was a Value Stream Map. The results were eye-opening! Patient delays were identified at three separate locations. The Value Stream Map identified two units where registration was handled as an outpatient instead of in a more appropriate unit. Understanding the players in this situation resulted in the hospital making appropriate changes to its process. Had the team acted on their first instincts, the results would have been quite different.

1. **Select the appropriate team members.** Create cross-functional teams—including the process owners, and those who are upstream and downstream of the process you are analyzing.
2. **Identify the process to be analyzed.** It is sometimes difficult to limit the scope of your analysis. Where do you start? Where does the process end? What is the "theme" or purpose of the process you are analyzing? For example, you might look at the flow of information from the time a patient calls for an appointment through the discharge process. Or, you might look at the flow of material through your production process from the supplier through delivery to the customer.
3. **Document the value stream.** Value Stream Maps are most often created using a pencil and paper. The object of the exercise is to document all of the value-added and non-value-added activities as they are currently occurring (Current State). Once the current state is developed, problem-solving activities are used to identify areas to focus your organization's improvement efforts. A second value stream map is developed to show how these improvements will change the organization (the Future State). Value Stream Maps should be posted on the wall or published so that you receive input from everyone in the organization.

Deborah Miller, a Project and Process Specialist, has more than 25 years consulting and coaching experience. Deb believes in sharing her expertise with her clients so your staff learns how to manage and coach others—becoming self-sufficient and proficient. Deb is a Six Sigma Black Belt and Lean in Healthcare certified.

- Process & Value Stream Mapping
- Technical Documentation
- Project Management
- Process Reengineering
- Change Management
- Lean Facilitation