

Mapping Business Processes

Business processes are simply the way we do business. This includes everything from the handling of materials, to the information flow from Quotes to Accounts Receivables.

Business processes are in place to help us manage our business in order to deliver value to our clients and bottom line profits to our stakeholders.

Business processes tend to 'evolve' over time. Typically, this evolutionary event is subtle and localized, thus, causing processes to be dysfunctional as a whole. Multiple change events usually follow resulting from individual efforts to correct or enhance their respective piece of the process. If these changes are not managed, processes become out of control. This results in employees developing 'their own way' of doing things; which leads to lost productivity, questionable data integrity, and lost opportunities to leverage change (new systems, procedures, etc.) across the company.

Good business processes should be viewed as fundamental components of a company's future. Good business processes are:

- Long lived
- Supported by, and aligned with, systems
- Transactional and collaborative in nature
- Automated and manual
- Managed as business assets

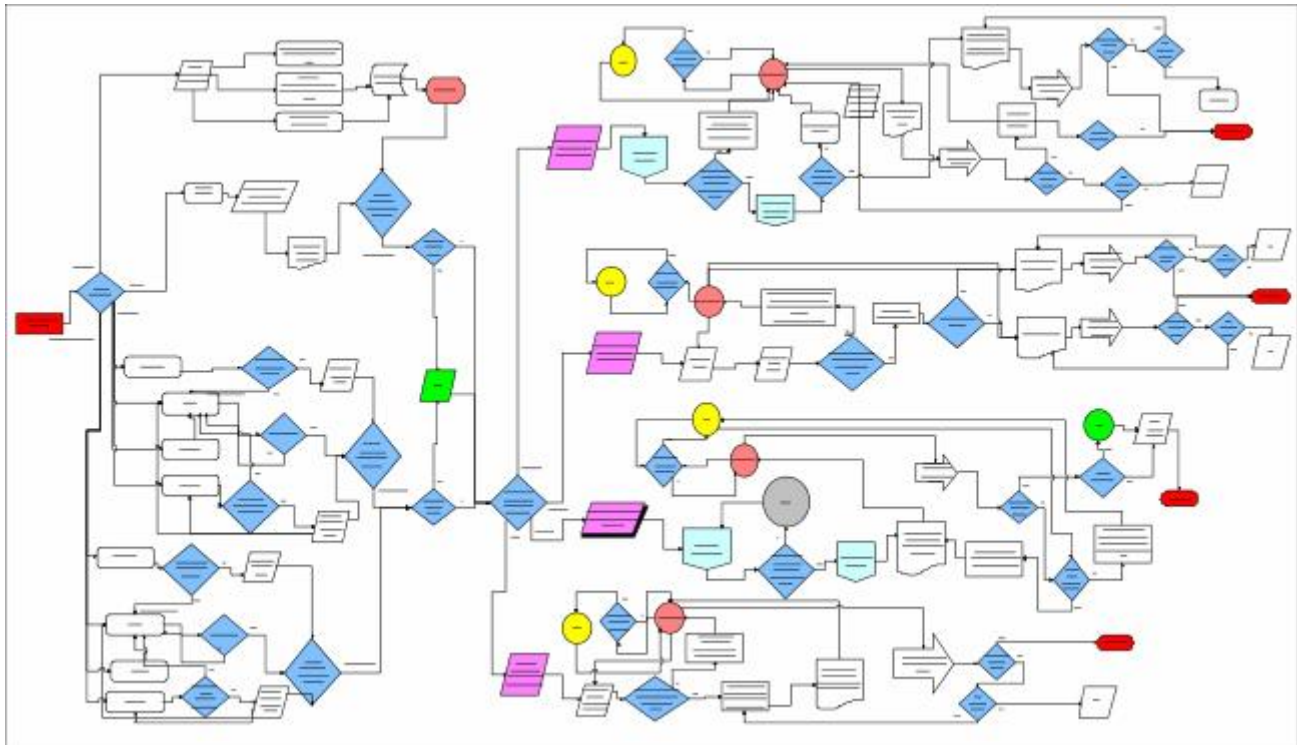
Effective management of such business processes relies upon the capability to discover, design, deploy, execute, operate, optimize and analyze end-to-end processes at the business level, not at the technical level.

I recently completed a project for a client where I mapped their existing business processes. Although challenging, mapping the current processes was easy compared to defining the future business processes and creating an implementation plan.

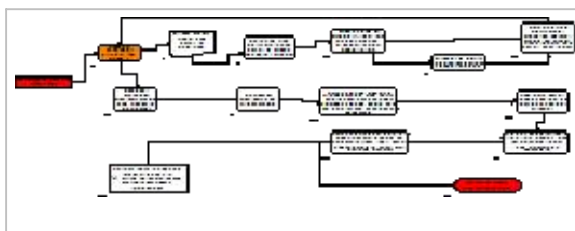
The Diagram

These diagrams were reduced purposefully to prevent you from seeing actual client information however, I believe they serve the purpose of showing the impact of the mapping process changes.

Process before changes



Process after changes



Imagine the time and cost savings this client realized once the new process was in place!

Fundamentals of Process Redesign

There are four steps that must be taken to accomplish a significant and successful redesign of any end-to-end process:

1. Develop Initial Vision of the New Process

In this step the innovations and improvements identified in the prior step are analyzed to determine the pros and cons of each. Additionally, the broader elements of the business architectures are considered including new job descriptions, reporting relationships, and culture. These ideas are then used to produce the first draft vision of the future state.

2. Elaborate End-to-end Processes and Incorporate Incremental Improvements

In this step the new processes are elaborated to more fully describe the details of the new processes as well as the incorporation of process improvements where existing problems/weaknesses would still exist in the redesigned process. The results are the ideal future state.

3. Develop Practical Vision of the New Process

Finally, the ideal future state business architectures are revised by pragmatically applying the relevant, practical constraints of the current organization and other influencers (support groups, vendors, etc.). This revised version will become the Practical Future State business architecture.

4. Develop Implementation Plan

After reaching the objective of this phase a comprehensive plan for how, where and when to introduce each change is developed. The planning process includes representatives from all effected departments. The plan will address all aspects of the process change including the development of system requirements, verification and/or modification of terms and definitions, training, documentation, and rollout. The plan must ensure that the introduction of change, whether organizational, technological, or manual processes are performed in close coordination with the all related changes.

Once changes are implemented, a change control process should be used to manage any future process modifications.

Mr. Waters has over twenty-five years of business experience, twenty within information technology. He offers a unique balance of practical business and I/T experience, as well as his formal education; Bachelors Degree in MIS, MBA in eBusiness, and formal Six Sigma training.

[For more information on this topic, please contact us as Gerke and Associates – 573-875-7125](#)