

Case Study: Firm Process Mapping

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover a case study on firm process mapping, discussing what process mapping is and how it can be used to show a firm process.

Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Process Mapping
2. Firm Process Map: Example
3. Why/Where Use Process Mapping?

1. Process Mapping

A **process map** is a workflow diagram developed to document activities across a process.





Taking a step back, a process is simply a series of steps that we go through in order to complete a task or achieve some specific purpose--in other words, how do things get done?

Our daily lives involve many processes, either at work or as a consumer. In this tutorial, we will focus on firm processes.

When we take a process, break it down into various steps, show it pictorially, we can make a process map.

To start, you would write out a very detailed narrative of the process and all of the steps involved.

Next, you would turn the steps into a pictorial diagram using these symbols.

	Start & End: An oval shows the inputs to start the process of the outputs/end result of the process.
	A box/rectangle shows each task or activity performed in the process. Generally, only one arrow leaves each box.
	A diamond is used where a decision is required (usually a yes/no question).
	A circle with a letter or number can be used to show a break in the process map.



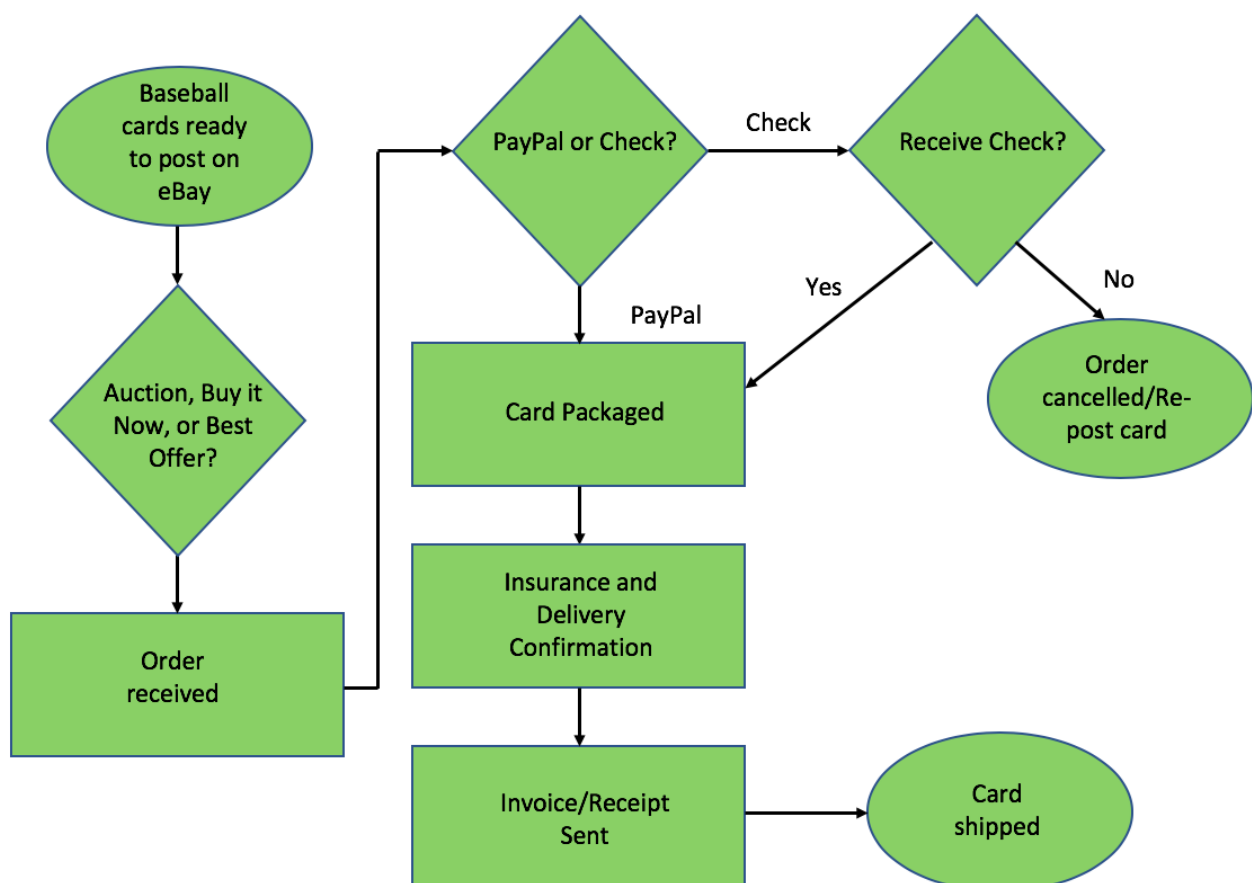
TERM TO KNOW

Process Map

A workflow diagram developed to document activities across a process

2. Firm Process Map: Example

Here is a process map detailing an individual's side business of selling baseball cards on eBay to generate some extra income.



The oval indicates the beginning of the process. He has baseball cards that are ready to post on eBay.

In this process map, we don't have an activity first; instead, we have a question. He has to decide, when he's posting his cards on eBay, if he should put them in as auction, buy it now, or best offer.

Typically, this is a "yes" or "no" question, but here you can see there are three choices.

In all three cases, he's simply posting it on eBay, so there is not a different way branching off of each question. He just has to decide whether to post it as auction, buy it now, or best offer.

Once he makes that decision, he puts it on eBay and the order is received.

Once his order is received, he has to see whether the customer is going to pay by PayPal or check.

If they pay by a check, a question comes up: did he receive the check? He needs to wait to receive payment in order to sell it, or release the card.

If he does receive the check, the card gets packaged. He figures out the insurance and delivery confirmation at the post office, and then he sends out an invoice or receipt and ships the card.

These are all the steps in the process to land at our end result with the card being shipped.

However, if he doesn't receive the check in the mail, then the order is canceled and he reposts the card.

If he receives payment via PayPal, the process simply continues as if he had received the check.



Remember, all of the boxes are tasks in the process. The diamonds indicate where there was a question that needed to be answered, and the ovals represent the end--which is either the order being canceled or the card being shipped and the order is finished.

3. Why/Where Use Process Mapping?

So, why do we use process mapping?

Well, it helps companies to break down exactly how things get done, so it provides a better understanding of the processes.

It can help to illustrate any areas along the way that might need improvement; many processes are complex and it helps to evaluate these holistically.

When you see a process visually, you can determine what areas might need improvement.

Process mapping is used in many different applications, although today the majority of processes are not documented in this way.

It is a relatively new process, but because of its dynamic nature, it is:

- Used for continuous improvement
- Used in holistic evaluation (overall picture)
- Used for efficiency evaluation

It is especially being used in holistic operational assessments of efficiency and in developing and analyzing solutions that are sustainable.



SUMMARY

Today we learned that **process mapping** is a pictorial representation of tasks that make up a process. We discussed the symbols that are used in process mapping. We explored an **example of a firm process map** to see how process mapping can be used to show a firm process. Lastly, we learned **why we process map** and **where process mapping is used**

Source: Adapted from Sophia instructor Kate Eskra.



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Process Map

A workflow diagram developed to document activities across a process.