

# Process Mapping--Efficiency

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will discuss process mapping--what it is and why it is used.

Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Process Mapping
2. Why Process Map?
3. Where Is Process Mapping Used?
4. Process Mapping in Microeconomics

## 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.

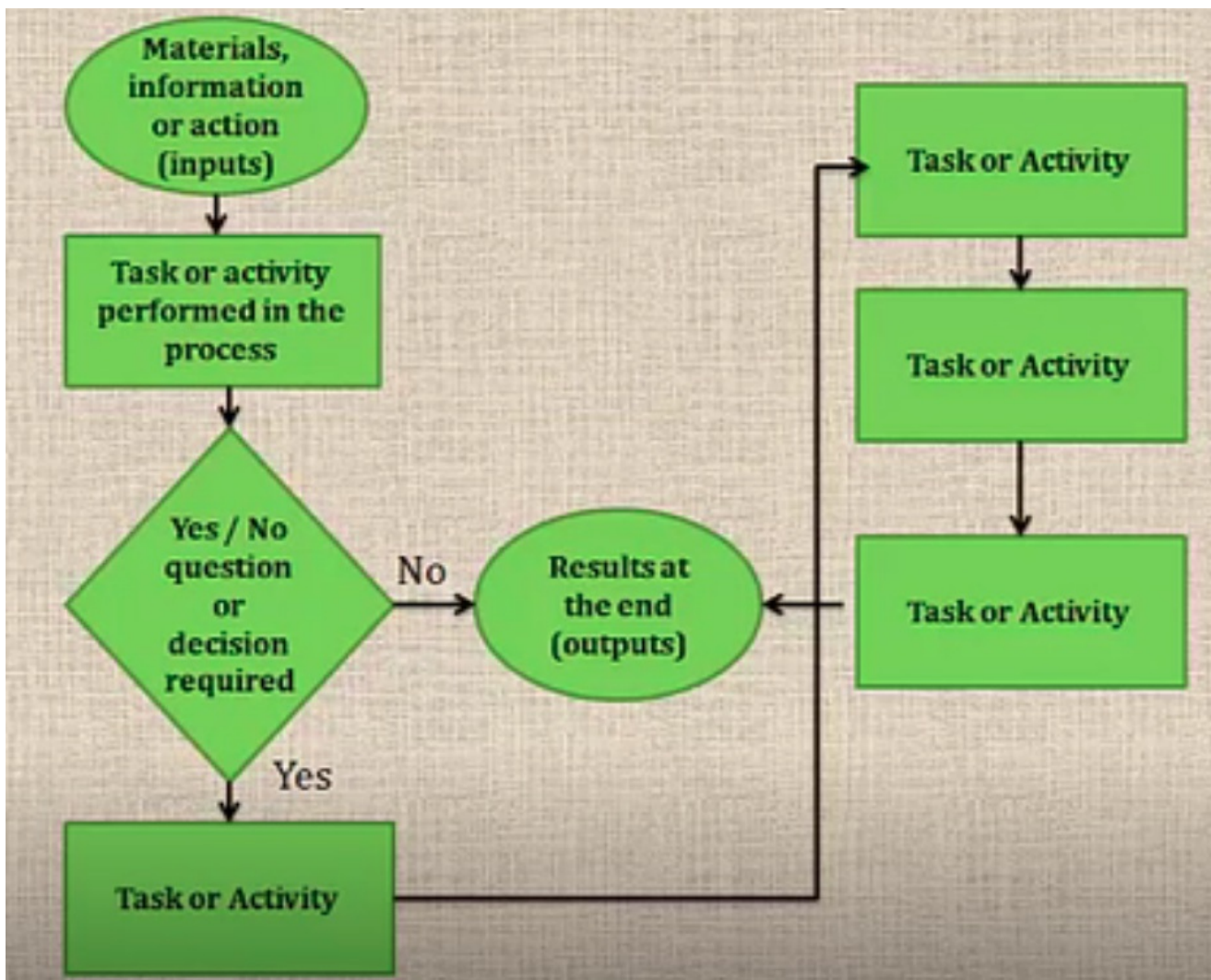
When we take a process, break it down into various steps, show it pictorially, we can make a process map.

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.

Here is an example of a process map:



Notice, we have the oval to start, which includes the inputs. Some kind of action is required because the process is starting with this oval.

The first step in the process, or the first task completed, is shown by a rectangle.

Next, we come to a yes or no question where some decision needs to be made. In this particular process map, there are two ways to go:

- If the answer is "yes," we continue on with a series of tasks or activities, and it eventually comes to an end.
- If the response to the question is "no," it takes us right to the end.

As you can see, the "yes" and "no" paths tend to branch off in to different tasks.



#### TERM TO KNOW

### Process Map

A workflow diagram developed to document activities across a process

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## 2. Why Process Map?

So, why do we use process mapping?

Well, it helps people and firms 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.

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## 3. Where Is Process Mapping Used?

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.

Especially regarding efficiency, it allows people and firms to visually see if they are doing a task or activity in the most efficient way possible, or if there is a way to avoid some of the inner steps or a particular roadblock.

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## 4. Process Mapping in Microeconomics

You may recall that in microeconomics, we study the individual firm and the individual consumer.

We know that both firms and individuals are involved in processes every day.

A consumer decision-making flowchart can show how an individual ultimately makes a purchase decision.

➡ **EXAMPLE** For example, suppose you are hungry and want to order pizza. What are the steps involved in your ultimate decision, as a consumer, regarding where to order the pizza, how much you are willing to pay for the pizza, and whether you are a repeat customer. This would be an example of a consumer decision-making flow chart.

A firm flowchart can document any process involved in the line of business.

➡ **EXAMPLE** Two examples of a firm flowchart might involve their process of scheduling appointments or taking an order, allowing them to evaluate if their process is the most efficient way to accomplish these tasks.



## 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 as well as **why we process map** and **where process mapping is used**. Lastly, we discussed **process mapping in microeconomics**, learning how a consumer decision-making flowchart can show how an individual makes a purchase decision, while a firm flowchart can document any process involved in the line of business.

Source: Adapted from Sophia instructor Kate Eskra.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Process Map

A workflow diagram developed to document activities across a process.