SIMPLE PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM

A step by step approach to optimization.

Want to know how a system can be implemented or improved? A simple process flow diagram is an effective way to map your process and document how a particular task is done. Get started by assembling a small team familiar with the process, find some wall space, gather some writing materials and use these rough guidelines:

1. Create a key to help map your process:

a. Elongated circles typically symbolize the beginning and/or end of a process.
b. Rectangles indicate instructions or actions.
c. Diamonds show decisions that must be made.

2. Ask the team what is the focus of the flow diagram? Are you mapping a distribution channel? An approval process? Etc. Put this focus at the top of your diagram and have each team member spend a few moments jotting down the key process steps to reach the focus goal.

3. Start your diagram by drawing the elongated circle shape on a Post-it® Note and label it "Start."

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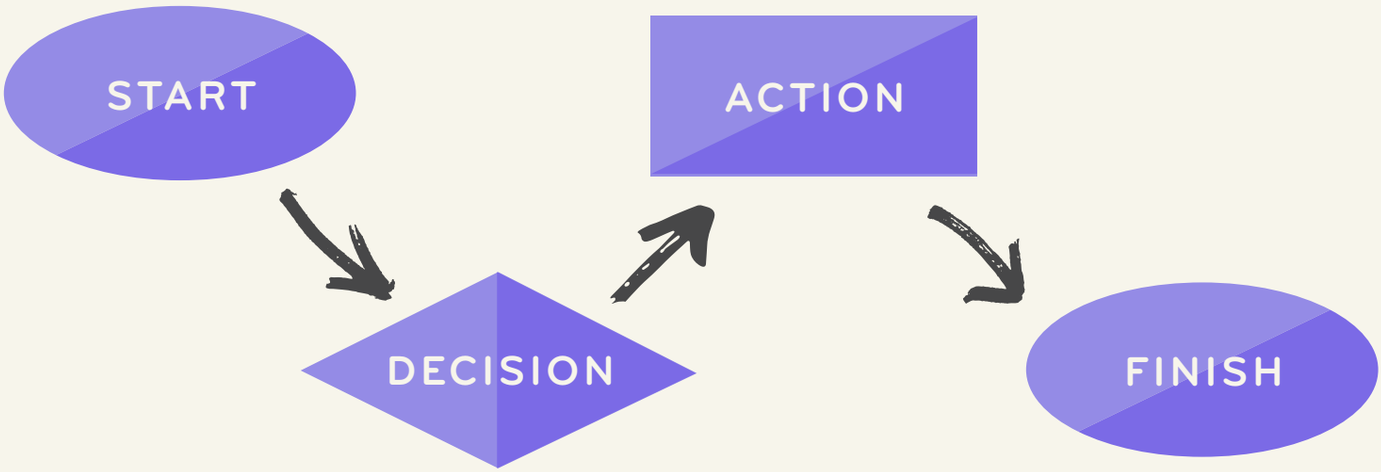
4. Move to the first action/question and use the rectangle or diamond shape depending on your specific scenario. Write the action/question down and connect it with an arrow to the "Start" shape. (Hint: use a Post-it® Full Adhesive Roll to create your arrow to allow for flexibility in case your diagram changes.)

5. Continue throughout your entire process. Document your actions and decisions in the order they occur, and document any resolution in regard to a decision. Some decisions may have two (or more) different outcomes, leading to different path channels — map each. Connect all actions and decisions with an arrow.

6. Once you've mapped the entire process, place an elongated circle at the end and label it "Finish."

7. Have your team scrutinize the diagram. Are there ways to improve your process? Should additional steps be added? Are the right people in the right roles? From this point, you may gain new perspectives about the efficiency of your operation.