Process Mapping 101

A Guide to Getting Started

Lombardi

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Part 1: Overview and Introduction

Background

This reference guide is based on the online training course "Process Mapping 101" created for Lombardi Software by Bruce Silver, founder of BPMessentials.com, and Shelley Sweet of I_4Process Consulting. If you are interested in learning more about this course please visit http://www.lombardi.com/bptraining.

Although this guide is meant to stand by itself, it is even more powerful when combined with the Lombardi Blueprint process mapping tool. For a 30-day free Blueprint trial, please visit http://www.lombardi.com/getblueprint.

The Big Picture

Before starting, it is important to understand process mapping's place in the larger context of business process improvement. Improving your process typically starts with documenting how it works today, what we call the "as-is" process. The mapping of the as-is process can be divided into two phases.

- **The Discovery Map:** The first phase, which we call the high-level map or discovery map, has the purpose of defining the scope, identifying team members, and articulating the sponsor's vision and improvement targets. It is created by a small team typically made up of a facilitator, project lead, and the senior management sponsor.
- **The Process Diagram:** In the second phase, a more detailed Process Diagram in the form of a "swim lane" diagram (where information is organized by lanes) is created. Its purpose is to document the current state of the process in more detail; the team creating that diagram is larger. For the Process Diagram, we usually start by describing a single instance in the recent past, but we can extend that later to show the significant exceptions that may occur.

The Discovery Map: It is the Discovery Map that we will focus on in this guide: who needs to be involved, what information goes into it, how to conduct the mapping session, and how to communicate your progress to stakeholders.

In the larger picture that's not the end of the story. After that you can analyze your as-is map for problem areas, propose process improvements, and capture those improvements in another swim lane diagram. The procedures for modeling the proposed to-be process are similar to the as-is. And you can go on from there to quantifying the expected performance improvement using simulation, and even creating an automated implementation of your process.

Part 2: Getting Started with the high-level Discovery Map

Setting the Stage

As you would expect, in order to get started with Business Process Management (BPM), you need to have identified a specific process to work on. Usually this is done by senior management, based on specific criteria, but it can be done by a work team who recognizes a need for process improvement. These criteria might be customer satisfaction, competitive challenge, or concern about defects or cycle time. Once a process has been decided it is helpful to articulate the business case – in other words what is the business reason we are working on this now.

When you have chosen the process to work on, the first step is to build a high-level map. This map is usually six to ten boxes which represent the high-level phases or milestones in the current process. You can build this high-level map with a small team.

When you begin working with the small team the facilitator or external consultant needs to articulate the process improvement road map. The road map includes:

- **Getting Started:** Selecting the process, doing the high-level map, identifying a sponsor, and eventually all the team members.
- **Following the Process Improvement Methodology:** You follow the methodology to build a Process Diagram for the current state view, analyzing the current state using various techniques, and redesigning the process based on design principles.
- **Implementation:** Although the methodology encourages you to start implementing quick wins very soon, you will have a larger implementation to plan at the conclusion of the redesign phase.

Team Members for Building the High-level Map

At this early stage of building the high-level Discovery Map, it is often best to keep the working group small and have just a project lead who really knows the whole process or a majority of the process and facilitator. Here is more detail to help you select the appropriate people for your team:

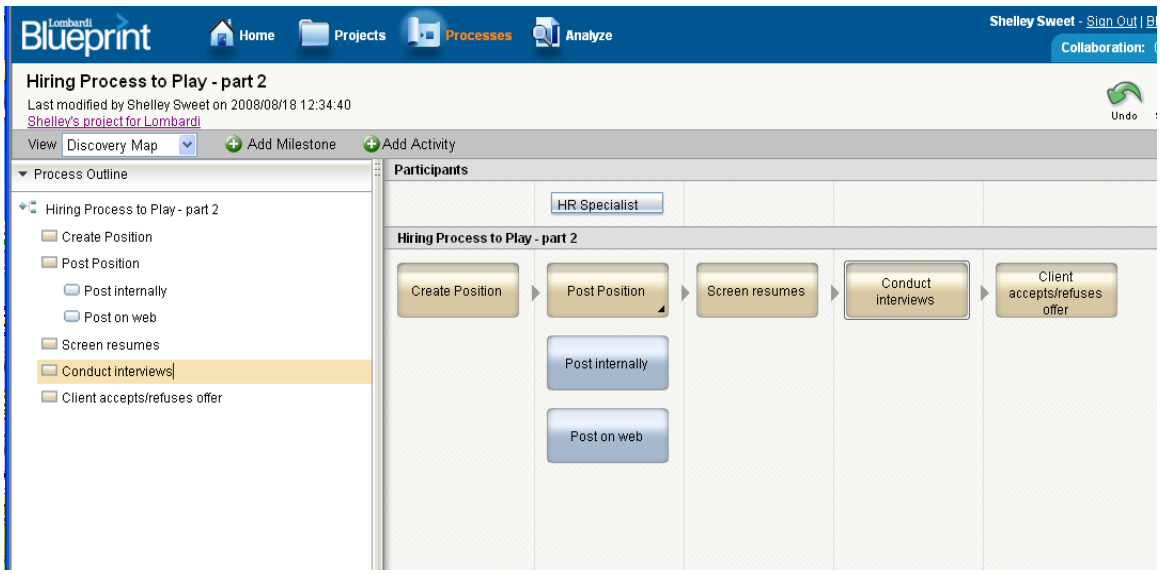
- **The Project Lead:** The Lead is a person who knows the most about all the steps in the process and is usually a supervisor or manager. This person is the key point person for the team with the sponsor and will be the point person for any of the team members who want to

raise issues outside of the team meeting situations. This person also helps coordinate the meetings.

- **The Internal Facilitator:** The Facilitator manages the meetings, and needs both group process skills as well as knowledge of process improvement methodology. She encourages participation, and builds the diagrams with the team. Later this person will help with analysis and redesign of the process. If you do not have an employee who has the skills and knowledge to perform this role in your organization, you can also choose to hire an external consultant.

The High-level Map

A high-level map is six to ten phases long. It usually contains just these phases and has no decision diamonds. It is a map of the current state of the process, not the should-be state or what you might like it to be. There is no magic to the number six to ten milestones or phases. So it could be as few as four phases and as many as twelve. More than twelve phases and you are probably getting too detailed and could combine some.



A high-level Discovery Map being constructed in Blueprint.

There are two main goals for the high-level map:

- **Communication Tool:** This map is an easy communication tool which gets everyone aligned. You want the high-level map detailed enough so people know the phases in the process and what's not in the process.

- **Surfacing Issues:** The high-level map often surfaces key problems, which means that we are articulating early on what some of the important issues are and documenting them for analysis later.

Once you have developed the map you will know most of the people who should be on your core team – namely employees or managers who know and do the work in these phases. There are a few other people we suggest having on the process improvement team as well and we will discuss them in part three. Additionally, once you have the high-level map, you will take it to the sponsor and ask him or her to review it, and give you important input. This will also be discussed in part three.

Tips for the Facilitator

- Identify start and end points first. This helps set limits right from the start. They may change as you communicate this map with more people but they are the starting point. It's better if the scope is within the sponsor's range of authority and responsibility.
- Name the process. The process name should tell everyone what you are talking about. When you name the process don't include acronyms or jargon. Keep the words straightforward business words.
- Add activities that are mentioned under their milestone. Even if you do not ask groups to list any activities when they build the high-level map, some will always come up. So add them, but don't try to gather more. You will have fewer activities the higher in the organization your content provider is. People doing the work will want to give you more activities. The time for the detail is the Process Diagram.
- Add roles to activities when they are mentioned. But don't feel you need to get them all. You will be able to add them later.
- Document problems as they come up. Now however, is not the time to discuss them or solve them. Just document them.
- Move activities and milestones where they need to go. [Note for Blueprint users: Your map can simply be re-arranged on the fly as the group thinks through the process.]

FAQs for the Facilitator – How do we include this?

Here are four typical questions that may come up from the project lead, sponsor, or others when you are developing or discussing the high-level map.

- When some says, “Here’s what happened in another example” they want to know how the map will capture all the different variations. The high-level map is not meant to capture all the variations, but rather to show the flow and phases from a high-level. You will capture more of the variations in the more detailed view called the Process Diagram.
- “We don’t do it the same way in Ohio as Texas” is another version of the question above, and we will not show all the variations. But this is also a statement that there is little standardization of the process. It would be good to list this as a problem. [Note for Blueprint users: this can be noted in the Details pop-up.]
- “Often when we do this process we don’t have the right information before the process begins,” is a statement of a problem and could be listed in the problems area at the process level. You can also capture what inputs are needed and list the inputs. [Note for Blueprint users: this can be noted in the Details pop-up.]
- “How will we measure this process?” It is best to ask for measures at two points. 1) output measures – one to two measures that show how the output meets customer specifications and 2) an in-process measure which will be a signal early how the process is going. Are we on target for our outputs or is there a concern? You can identify measures with the team and note them. [Note for Blueprint users: these can be listed in the documentation area of the Details pop-up.]

Part 3: Adding detail to the Discovery (High-level) Map

In this part you will learn additional elements to be added to the high-level map. [Note for Blueprint users: This is done using the Discovery Tool in Blueprint].

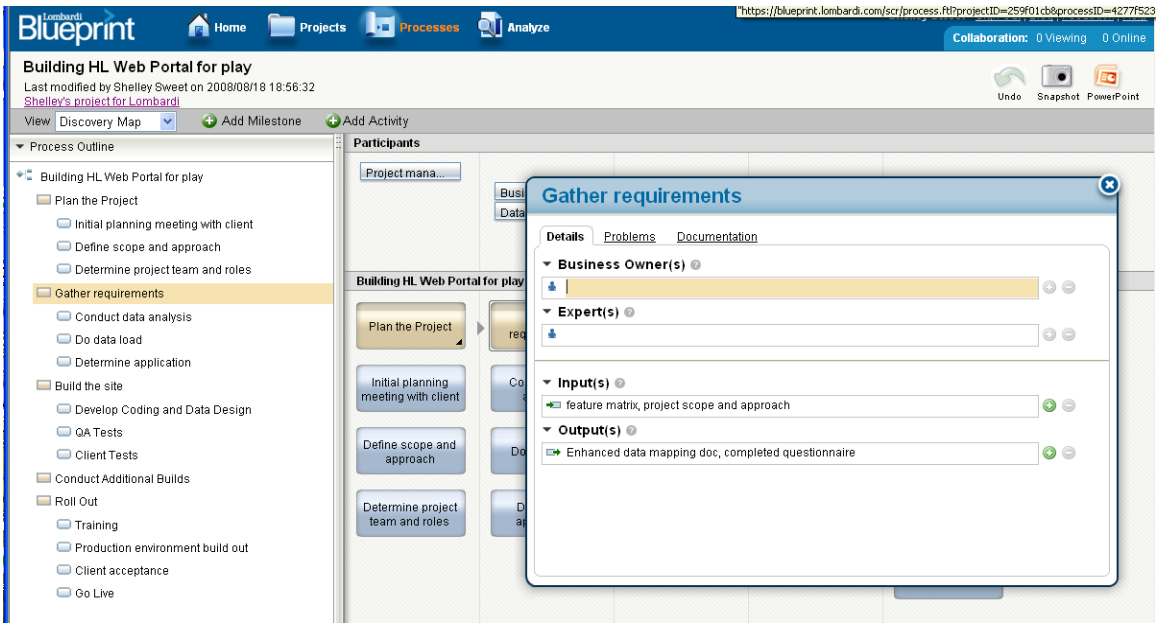
Adding Detail: People

- **Participants:** The participants are the most important to capture, because they designate who is responsible for getting this phase or activity done. In the Participant box, identify the main role responsible for the job. Don’t list multiple names. It gets overly confusing. Remember to list roles, not departments and not people’s names. If systems are important they are listed in the participant category.
- **Business Owners:** You will find that many companies don’t have business owners defined yet. Officially a business owner would be the owner of the whole process or possibly a milestone in the process. Later they might be the owner of a sub-process. A business owner is the person who is responsible for overseeing the whole process, making sure it is followed, monitoring the process, and building in continuous improvements. In very mature process

companies this person may have budget responsibility for the process and actually manage the people. In most companies the business owner acts through his influence.

- **Experts:** You may want to list experts so that others in the process know whom to go to for advice or input. They may be people you want to have as guests to help you improve the process. Here you would list a real name and their position. You may want to identify what type of help they could provide.

[Note for Blueprint users: You will find the three different process roles, "Participant," "Business Owner" and "Expert," listed in the Details pop-up window]



Adding details to the Discovery Map using the Details pop-up window.

Adding Detail: Inputs and Outputs

It is usually easiest to capture inputs and outputs at the milestone level. At this stage in the process it is too tedious to capture inputs and outputs for each activity.

- **Inputs:** Just ask the team what the inputs are. Inputs imply a document or organized form of information. The team may not get them all on first pass, put they will know the main ones. Inputs at the second milestone should be outputs from earlier milestones.
- **Outputs:** Outputs will be documents or information significantly enhanced or completed during this milestone.

To get inputs and outputs you have to ask for them. Clients don't volunteer them very often at the high-level.

Adding Detail: Problems

Problems can come up at any time. And you need to capture them as they come up. You can capture them at the process level, milestone level or activity level. When you are building a high-level map just add them where the respondent says they go. It will probably be at a milestone or activity.

- **Severity and Frequency:** Ask the group, how severe this problem is (low, medium, or high) and how frequently it happens (low, medium or high). You do not have to have specific standard definitions for these terms – low, medium, and high – but if the client wants to build them it would be beneficial to agree to specific criteria, such as severity as a dollar or time cost of so much for each level, and frequency is a certain percentage of occurrences by project for each level.

Adding Detail: Documentation

Documentation can be used in a variety of ways. You can use it to write a more detailed description of the activity. You could actually write full procedures here, but in the process session you would just add an example or expand on what you put in the activity box if that is what the speaker is suggesting. You can also use it for Improvement ideas.

Adding Detail: Documentation – Sponsor's Vision and Improvement

Another important element to record in Documentation is the sponsor's vision and improvement targets. When you have finished the high-level map, set a meeting with the sponsor.

Ask the sponsor about

- **His or her vision:** Ask what is important about this process to him or her, what they would like to see if it were really working. Often they will say things about values, important elements for the customer, needs for the marketplace, and any special hot buttons.
- **Specific improvement targets:** These are changes the sponsor would like to see after you redesign the process and implement –- say in two to three months after you have started implementing. When they give you a statement, help them revise it to make it quantifiable.

Sponsor Meeting

We have discussed several details that you can add to the high-level map. It is now time for a meeting with the sponsor. This is a meeting between the sponsor, project lead, and facilitator. One hour is usually sufficient. Now let's look at that meeting piece by piece:

- Review the milestones of the high-level map.
- Get their agreement to the beginning and end of the process as defined – or revise it with them.
- Get the sponsor to articulate their vision for the process and provide one to two quantifiable improvement targets. We mentioned this earlier in part three.
- Explain the road map so they know what the process improvement project will entail and the extent of the team member's time needed. The road map will also remind the sponsor of when they will be needed in the process improvement effort and the specific process advocacy role they have in the organization.
- Now you should go over the roles of each of the core team members for the sponsor. Explain that the core team members include the project lead, several employees who work the activities in the process, and a "maverick." Since we have already discussed the sponsor role, project lead role, and internal facilitator or external consultant role in part two we will not repeat them here, but you should start with reviewing those three roles with the sponsor. Then go onto the additional core team members.
    - **The Best and the Brightest:** Employees who do the work of each phase in the high-level map are critical to the core team for the Process Diagram. They should be your best and brightest employees not just the ones who are available. Often a team will be six to ten people. If the process happens in different locations, you should include people from those different locations. Blueprints collaborative features make this a practical solution.
    - **The Maverick:** There is one more person who is a great addition to the team, the "maverick." This person does not need to know the process, and in fact it is often better if he doesn't. His role is to ask the question, "Why do we do it that way" or "Couldn't we try it this way?" In other words encouraging the team to think out of the box.
    - **IT, Customer and Supplier Representatives:** There are other people who would be strong additions to your team. Most business processes involve IT and an IT member will bring their expertise. An IT member can often tell you

what is possible today and how technology might help in the future. Having a customer on the team will always provide the perspective of the customer, and is usually a very inspiring addition to the team. If you have a key supplier, you can really build a stronger relationship and solidify requirements by having him on the team. Sometimes the customer and supplier players just come for one or two meetings.

- Now come back to the high-level map and get the sponsor to help designate who should be on the team for the next part of the methodology, developing a more detailed Process Diagram in a swim lane format. The project lead and facilitator can bring a draft of names and roles that you recommend or just build the list with the sponsor.
- For the other stakeholders, the presentation is largely the same, but with a different emphasis. With them, you want a reality check. Does this make sense? Have we missed anything? Can we actually achieve the sponsor's vision?

Part 4: Summary and Next Steps

Summary

What's needed for a successful start to the improvement project? We have developed most of these already:

- **High-level Discovery Map:** We already have this. We have completed it with the project lead and facilitator, added more details to it in this section, and then reviewed it with the sponsor.
- **Have the right resources identified,** based on the process you want to improve:
    - The project lead and facilitator who build the initial high-level map and then discuss it with the sponsor.
    - The core team members who actually do the work of the process and will help you build the Process Diagram, then analyze and redesign the process.
    - Other team members such as an IT person, customer and supplier.
    - The sponsor vision and improvement targets.
- **Road map:** The facilitator prepares a road map of the process improvement methodology for the sponsor, project lead and team members. The road map should include different phases

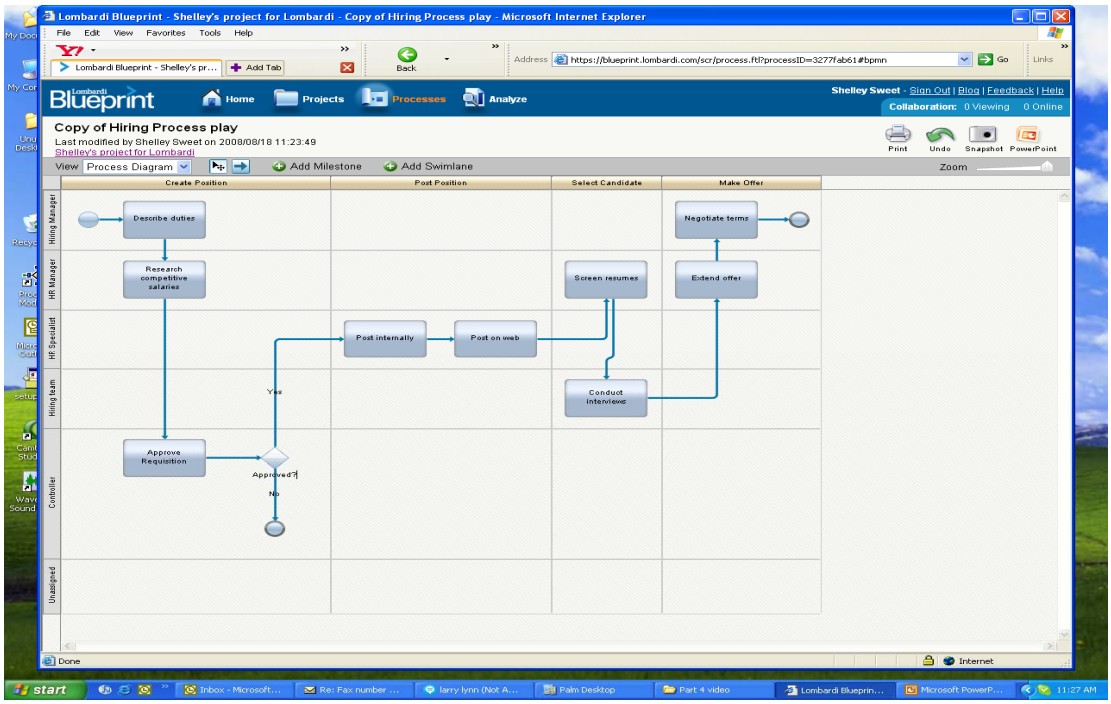
– getting started (the high-level map, selecting team members, sponsor vision and targets, and roles and responsibilities), process mapping and analysis, and redesign meetings and implementation. Share this overall road map as well as the high-level map every time a new person joins the project.

- **Scheduled meetings:** This is an aspect of project planning. In order to make the process happen in three months or less you need to schedule the meetings at the beginning. In this training we will cover the first meetings but not the phases of analysis, redesign, and implementation planning. Time should be put aside for all these meetings. You should have meetings about every week or every other week for two to four hours each time. If you meet every month you will never get it finished. You can also do it faster – say six days in a row. It's up to you.

- **Presenting the High-level Map:** After you've completed the high-level map, your presentation to senior management should emphasize the sponsor's vision and improvement targets, key problems identified, and a list of the participants needed for the Process Diagram.

Where to next?

After you have created and gotten buy-in on your high-level map the next step of the as-is process is creating the process flow or "swim lane" diagram.



A Process Diagram automatically generated by Blueprint from the high-level map.

The purpose of the Process Diagram is to document the current state of the process in more detail; the team creating that diagram is larger. For the Process Diagram, we usually start by describing a single instance in the recent past, but we can extend that later to show the significant exceptions that may occur. [Note for Blueprint users: Blueprint generates an initial version of the Process Diagram in a swim lane view automatically from the high-level map.]

Beyond As-is

Once your as-is map is complete, you can analyze it for problem areas, propose process improvements, and capture those improvements in another swim lane diagram. The procedures for modeling the proposed to-be process are similar to the as-is. And you can go on from there to quantifying the expected performance improvement using simulation, and even creating an automated implementation of your process.

The goal of BPM is to improve your processes, make them more effective, more efficient, more agile, with greater satisfaction for both employees and customers. By creating a solid high-level map you have created a sturdy foundation on which to continue building your BPM efforts.

About Lombardi

Lombardi is a leader in business process management (BPM) software for companies, systems integrators and government agencies of all sizes. We offer award-winning BPM technology, know-how and services to help our customers succeed with their process improvement initiatives. Our products are built on open standards, and provide ongoing prioritization, planning, visibility and control of business processes, increasing the speed and flexibility with which organizations can manage their business process activities and decision-making.

Teamworks® is Lombardi's BPM software for designing, executing, and improving processes. Teamworks for Office™ makes it easy for anyone to participate in BPM using the familiar Microsoft® Office System products. And Lombardi Blueprint™ is the only on-demand, collaborative process documenting tool that enables companies to map processes, identify problems and prioritize improvement opportunities. At the core is Lombardi's unique shared model architecture, which significantly reduces the time and effort versus competing solutions.

Lombardi is behind some of the largest, most successful BPM implementations in the world. Our customers include Allianz Group, Aflac, Banco Espirito Santo, Barclays Global Investors, Dell, El Paso Energy, FETAC, Financial Services Authority, Ford Motor Company, Hasbro, ING Direct, Intel, Maritz Travel, National Bank of Canada, National Institutes of Health, Safety-Kleen, T-Mobile, UCLH, Xbridge and numerous governmental agencies.

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