TESSERACT
Management Systems

WORKBOOK

PROCESS CONTEXT MAPPING

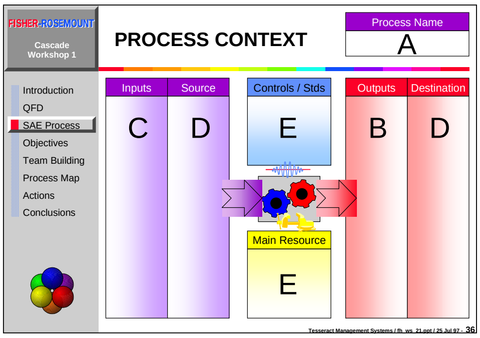
A basic guide

The following guide is an extract taken from a client workshop

It provides a basic step-by-step approach to using process context mapping to fully explore the boundaries of each process within an organisation, and more importantly, the relationships between them.

With grateful thanks to the client in question.

Reflect on the role of your process as defined in the overall map, and fill in the 'Process Context' sheet, by discussion, and as completely as you are able.



The process context sheet is shown on the right and each group will be provided with one copy as an example. In order to keep your team focussed however, we request that your first step is to reproduce this sheet onto a flipchart. This will mean everyone can see what is going on and will help them getting back into things if they drift off occasionally (don't we all?).

Please make sure that all discussions and points are recorded on the flipchart as they happen - this will increase the likelihood that the group remains involved, and that you can control the process and keep it moving.

For ease of documenting things afterwards we ask that each team puts their process name in the top right hand corner (A).

The next step is for the team to list the main outputs of the process under 'Outputs' (B) and the inputs it needs to function under 'Inputs' (C). In each case the associated source or destination process should be identified (D).

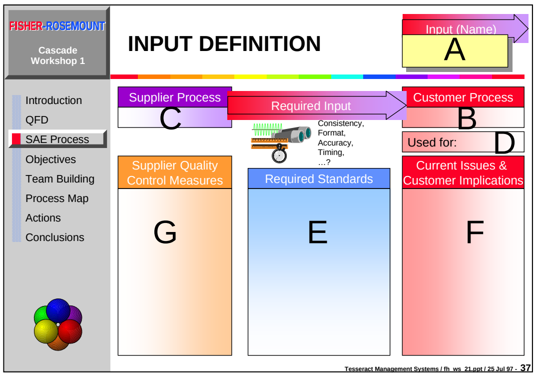
If there is sufficient time the team might also consider the external controls (standards, targets etc) that are applied to the process, and the resources and facilities it requires to process the inputs into outputs.

On completion the diagram should reflect all of the process's interfaces with the outside world and the rest of our organisation. Asking the team whether this is the case provides a good quality check that the map is largely complete.

As a guide you should allow no more than 30 minutes to complete the syndicate to this point.

For the most important 5-7 Inputs you have defined for your process, complete an 'Input Definition' sheet (excl. the Supplier Quality Control Measures)

The next step in this process is to check that the relationships you have defined are recognised by your suppliers and customers. If we have a lot of inputs and outputs defined this could get very confusing, and take a long time, so for the purposes of this particular session we want to limit the check to 5-7 inputs per process. To define which 5-7 we ask that you have a brief discussion as to which the group feels are the most important inputs to your process, and circle them. If the discussion becomes bogged down in disagreement make it clear to your team that this is not the end of this exercise, merely a first pass, and that we will continue it as a team when we return to base.



Each process team should have eight sheets like the one indicated on the right and we ask you to fill in one sheet for each of your most important 'inputs'. The name of the input should be written in box 'A', the name of your process in box 'B' and the name of the source process for that 'input' in box 'C'.

Also you should indicate exactly what the input is used for in box 'D'

Then the team should consider the standards it requires of that 'input' for it to be truly effective and efficient in helping them to meet their performance objectives. These they should list in box 'E'. The standards may relate to accuracy, or timeliness, or the way it is presented, or anything else that affects your performance and efficiency. Finally, where the team is aware of current issues in the supply of that 'input' with regard to meeting that standard of performance, they should list these along side of the compromised standard (Box 'F') and write down the implications of the problem on them.

Do not write anything in box 'G' at this stage.

If you have a large process team (4 or more people) and a lot of issues, you might divide your team into 2 to complete these forms.

Allow yourself up to 30 minutes for this section of the exercise.

Pass your 'Inputs' to the relevant supplier process and receive 'Inputs' from your customer processes

Literally, get members of your team to act as postmen, taking the input sheets you have written to the relevant supplier process. Ensure you leave someone on your table though to receive sheets from your customers.

Beware of members of your team taking this period of activity as an opportunity to wander off and do something else – be firm on getting people to come back quickly – you still have a lot to do in the remaining 25 minutes.

Review the 'Inputs' requested by your customers and clarify any issues. Update the 'Process Context' if necessary or challenge surprise items.

When you have received the 'input' sheets from your customers (your 'outputs') you should review these with your team. Where your customers have identified new 'outputs' for your process, make sure you capture these on your 'Process Context' sheet – if you are in agreement with them. Where you are not in agreement, then talk to the other process to clarify what they meant.

Where your 'outputs' have not been reflected in an 'input sheet' from the defined customer, this probably means that it isn't one of their top 5-7 inputs – but it does <u>not</u> mean that the output is trivial or can be forgotten. If you are convinced that it has been forgotten as an oversight then check briefly with the other process. Take no more than ten minutes over this.

Consider the Quality Control Measure you use.

The final part of this exercise is to look at the customer standards for their inputs, and consider the means you use as a process to control the quality of your output to meet these standards. These you should list in box 'F' adjacent to the relevant customer standard.

At the end of this work you will not have defined any priorities to work on or have decided any quick fixes. Discourage your teams from attempting this at this stage, and also discourage any tendency by the team to rationalise things.

You have, however, got a wealth of data on your process performance and its current relationship to other processes. This information is valuable in its own right and should be the basis for an objective, systematic and measured campaign of improvement. Ensure all points of clarification are captured and that the data will be developed and looked after. Allowing quick fixes at this stage is often counter-productive because the base data gets forgotten in the rush, and people then rationalise that they have solved the problem when often they have just created new ones.

Make personal notes on everything that is important to your process as this syndicate develops.

1.2 Defining Priorities for Improvement

Another reason for discouraging quick fixes is that we have a very limited resource in our organisation, and we need to ensure that it is fully focussed on our strategic priorities. Defining these strategic priorities is the objective of this syndicate work:

- To establish the priorities in each process for sustaining overall performance improvement.
- To further establish the definition and interfaces of each process.

The main focus for this syndicate is to ensure that our early work is focussed on continuing to avoid the overall performance issues that have plagued our organisation in the past.

Ensure your group have a clear and full understanding of what they are doing and why. Agree with the group the steps they will need to work through and agree the time to be allocated to each. You should act as time keeper and endeavour to move the group on when it gets bogged down in any area.

The steps for undertaking this syndicate are outlined below. You only have 30 minutes:

Reflect on your performance in producing your 'key' outputs, based on your customers perceptions.

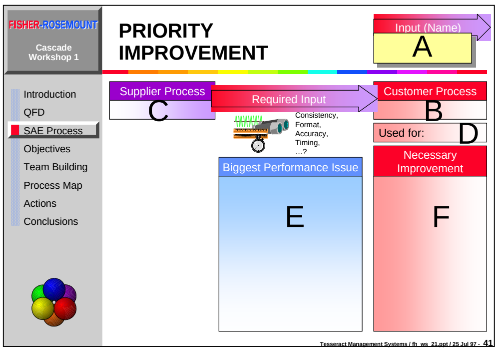
Get the team to reflect back on the 'process' context diagram and to consider the main issues that they have in the quality of their outputs and the implications that has on their main customers. Use the input sheets given to you by your customers to help this process. Put an asterisk beside the outputs that the team agrees, by discussion, are the biggest output issues to address in sustaining and building on our organisation's overall performance. As a guide, take no more than 5 minutes over this discussion.

Reflect on the inputs you most need to have right if you are to improve your performance in these areas.

Move quickly on to discuss the inputs to your process which are your priorities for getting right. Ignore for the moment any focus for improvement internal to your process – that will be easy enough to pick up once the team is back in 'isolation'. Our main focus in this activity is that each process team will get informed of it's customer's improvement priorities. This means focussing in this exercise on what <u>your</u> supplier can do to best help you. As a guide, take no more than 10 minutes over this discussion.

Identify the 3 most critical performance improve'ts you need from your suppliers, and pass on these 'Priorities' to the relevant supplier process. Receive similar 'Priorities' from your customer processes.

Focus on a maximum of 2-3 inputs (that are your priorities for having right) and complete a sheet like that indicated on the right for each of them.



Each process team should have three of such sheets and we ask you to fill in one sheet for each of your priority 'inputs'. The name of the input should be written in box 'A', the name of your process in box 'B' and the name of the source process for that 'input' in box 'C'.

As before, you should indicate exactly what the input is used for in box 'D'

To this point you have filled in the form as you had the 'input' forms from the previous exercise. The next step is to get your team to concisely define the biggest performance issue you have with that 'input' to your process, and to write this in box 'E'. Alongside this in box 'F' state clearly and unambiguously the standard of improvement you need from your supplier process.

It is conceivable that this input may not be one of your major inputs identified in the previous syndicate, although this is very unlikely, but do not be put off by this – complete the form anyway.

Get members of your team to pass these forms to the relevant supplier processes and receive similar ones, if appropriate, from your customers.

Due to the nature of real systems it is entirely possible that you might end up with no forms from your customers, or even be inundated with them. Do not be alarmed – it is all under control (we hope!) As a guide, take no more than 10 minutes over this.

Review the 'Priorities' requested by your customers and clarify any issues. Reconsider your supply 'Priorities' if necessary or challenge surprise items.

Having received(?) your forms from your customer processes, get your team to review these and see whether this knowledge changes your perspective on your own teams priorities. Also take the opportunity to briefly discuss issues with other processes to clarify any surprises that might have arisen.

If your priorities have changed as a result of your customer's demands, don't be alarmed that there is not the opportunity to correct this in the workshop. There will be opportunities for you to address it outside of the workshop.

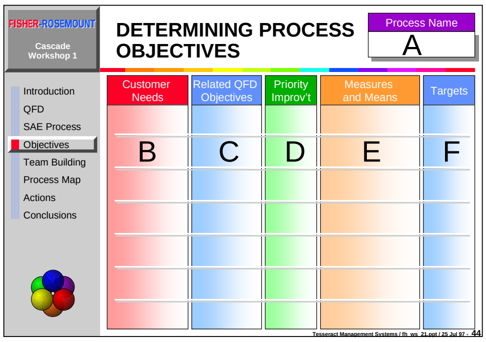
As a guide, take no more than 5 minutes over this.

We will reflect on the outcome of this syndicate exercise as a group, and where there is an obvious concentration of priorities we will use this as an opportunity to consider redirecting resource to address it.

1.3 Defining Local Process Objectives

At the point where we start on this syndicate, each of the process teams should have a very good idea of what is required of them, why, and the issues therein, as a result of all the previous syndicate sessions.

They are also likely to be very tired, and maybe a little depressed by some of the feedback, and it is at this point where they will most need your support. You, unfortunately, cannot afford to be tired or despondent. You will need to have a very clear eye as to what needs to happen and to take your team through it effortlessly and seamlessly. You will need to inspire and motivate them, and throw in all your last reserves of enthusiasm to jolly and cajole them along. You will find this easier and more successful if you are the one to use the flipchart for this session.



To assist you in leading the group through this exercise we would encourage you to reproduce the table shown on the right, on your flipchart, and use it to guide the attention of the group logically through the3 steps of the exercise.

Once again, ensure your group have a clear and full understanding of what they are doing and why. Agree with the group the steps they will need to work through and agree the time to be allocated to each. You should act as time keeper and endeavour to move the group on when it gets bogged down in any area, this is especially important on this last syndicate of the day, at the end of a long week.

The objectives for this session as outlined in section 2.2 are:

- To begin to establish clear objectives (Measures & Targets) for each process.
- To begin to establish local and individual ownership of the top-level and process objectives.

The steps for undertaking this syndicate are outlined below.

You have 90 minutes overall for this session, but there will be plenty of scope to complete it back at base in the period between the two workshops.

Reflect back on the 'Inputs' and 'Priorities' defined by your customers, and look also at the relationships your process has to the Top-Level Objectives.

Initiate the discussion by getting the group to look back at the 'Process Context' diagram and the 'Input' demands of your customers. Ask the team what they see as being the 5-7 most important customer needs of your process. Where the group tends toward too many detailed requirements, ask them if they can logically combine some of those requirements in order to shorten the list to seven or less. Encourage/challenge them to define the whole of what the process does for the business in less than seven clear and distinct 'customer needs' which it serves.

Once the group has arrived at a reasonable set, write them up under column 'B' of your flipchart. Then get your team to compare their conclusions against the column for your process in the top-level QFD. Discuss where these 'needs' are reflected in the defined relationships, and write up your conclusions in column 'C' on your flipchart.

Where the customer 'needs' and the top-level QFD cannot be reconciled, discuss what needs to change, and take an action to ensure that the change is progressed.

Where these customer 'needs' have been requested as our organisation priorities for early improvement, indicate this under column 'D'.

As a guide you should aim to complete this first stage in about 30 minutes.

Use these to define how you might measure your process's performance (focus on c. 3-7 measures to reflect overall performance in key areas)

Determine how you might practically gather data to support regular measurement in these areas.

Having developed the overall picture of what our organisation requires from your process, draw the discussion onto how the process performance in each of these areas might be practically measured – what exactly would you measure to assess the process performance, and how.

Work through each need one at a time, and discuss first the measure, and secondly how it could be achieved. Write your conclusions in column 'E' of your flipchart.

As a guide you should allow yourself 30 minutes for this.

Establish what targets you should pursue in each of these measures, paying particular attention to the 'Priority' improvements your customers have set.

Introduce the need to define clear targets so that the process team can establish a contract with our organisation as a whole, and also have a clearly agreed common goal to pursue as a team.

Explain that much of what our organisation requires of you in terms of targets should be reflected in the paperwork you received earlier in the day.

Use the 'inputs' and 'priorities' sheets to guide you in setting appropriate process targets. Where such guidance is unclear you might ask the team to define the performance level at which they might just about become proud of their achievements in making improvements, and use their response as a basis for discussing what an appropriate target should be. Write your conclusions in column 'F'.

As a guide you should allow yourself 20 minutes for this.

Discuss practical next steps to take this forward.

In the final 10 minutes you might agree with the group exactly how you plan to take this forward. What are the steps necessary to finally decide and implement the measures and targets for your process.

At the end of this retire to the bar for a well earned drink.