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**PICTURE THE FUTURE: A VISUAL, TEAM APPROACH TO ORGANISATIONAL
REDESIGN**

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Abstract:

Process mapping can be boring and laborious. This article explores a tool for graphically representing processes in an easily understandable format. The SeeMap® tool uses stick on symbols, e.g. islands, houses, roads etc to represent departments, data flow and effectiveness of delivery of information. In the process of clarifying information flows, a facilitator can use the tool to help a group envision business, organisational and technology changes.



Why use Maps?

There is value in pictures to explore, create and communicate. Pictures provide a common language and avoid misunderstandings often caused with diverse interpretations of words: a picture is worth a 1000 words. Research has shown that colorful visual images have a higher impact on the effectiveness of communication and retention of information than the written or spoken word. Actively involving people in the creation of those visual images adds to their ability to see new possibilities and explore new ideas. Using the imagery of map building – with islands, houses, roads and other easily recognizable symbols - as a facilitation tool produces all of these benefits.

A pictorial process mapping method, using the this tool, makes it easy to actively involve people who have different perspectives, motivations and professional or national languages. They work together to create their own organizational designs that will meet their specific needs. Participants come to appreciate others' viewpoints, build on each other's knowledge, and jointly plan actions to which they can all commit. Mapping provides a common language; the method encourages participants to share their knowledge and put it into an easily communicable form.

Last but not least, the process of building maps encourages an open sharing of knowledge and experience in pursuit of a common understanding and shared vision. People who work together to resolve a business or organizational problem or to envision a desired future state find that the mapping activity brings them closer as a working team – even when non-traditional team members such as customers or suppliers are involved in the activity. This enhanced team work results from the focus on a real issue as well as the impact of a visual tool that allows people to physically build and show their knowledge and ideas to others. The ensuing discussion, decision-

making, and action taking are accompanied by an increased appreciation for the contributions of all concerned.

The Power of Maps

A map made using materials is a metaphor for the complex realities of a business operation. This metaphor helps map builders take just enough distance from the daily reality to inspire them to think creatively. The power of this particular type of pictorial process mapping lies in the unique mix of features described below. It is

- VISUAL, showing complexity in an easily understood pictorial format;
- PARTICIPATORY, utilizing knowledge and experience of all participants;
- CREATIVE, employing the whole brain and both hands in searching for the unexpected;
- SYSTEMIC/HOLISTIC, capturing perceptions and viewpoints for exploration, rather than analysis;
- TEAM ORIENTED, building consensual working relationships;
- UNIQUE and UNUSUAL, energizing participants to tackle their challenges with enthusiasm;
- TIME EFFECTIVE, using 2 days to build a cohesive team and produce actionable results.

A Different Approach

The approach complements the expertise of consultants and the wide variety of methods and tools available to facilitators. This has allowed consultants and facilitators working in quite different domains to use it successfully with their clients. The modular flexibility of the approach allows it to support a broad range of change initiatives – all involving some type of organisational redesign, for example:

- goal alignment after a merger or acquisition
- introduction of a new product line



- investment decisions for new technology
- creation of a more efficient supply chain
- training and education based on real-time experience
- breaking down cultural, language, and functional barriers to effective work relationships
- creation of a business process to support e-Business opportunities.

A major use of the tool and method is to help clients design more effective organizational responses to business process change requirements.

The approach employing SeeMap® materials consists of a set of printed materials that participants use to build pictorial process maps showing the current situation as well as future scenarios. A typical work session focuses on a burning business issue, is sponsored by a senior manager, has twelve or more participants with relevant knowledge, is guided by an experienced facilitator and lasts 2 days. There are many variations on this 2-day model. For example, the tool itself can be used in a 3-hour meeting to develop a common understanding of a current situation or to create a shared vision for the future of a business process or other set of working relationships. It can be incorporated into a planning or design meeting of several days where this is only one of the tools used to gain consensus on a way forward.

Involvement Techniques

The technique used involves mapping out the current process within the organisation and brings together people with varying levels of expertise and status. This highlights the areas within a process which may seem to be efficient, but when described by the staff carrying out those functions contribute towards a poor process.

Issues and problems can now be identified with the process and suggestions for improvement shared with other team members.

Building the proposed new process allows all the improvements identified and those good aspects from the original one to be incorporated in the new map. This can then be taken forward, refined and implemented into the organisation.

Distinguishing Factors

This tool integrates well with almost all facilitation techniques and visualisation tools. It can be used in conjunction with more special purpose modeling tools and tools for very detailed structured analysis.

This pictorial process mapping is like a fresh wind that blows away the boredom and frustration of traditionally run meetings with their formal interactions and lengthy decision making processes. It uses a playful process to pursue serious goals. This novel approach radically changes the way people work together.

Pictorial process mapping creates an atmosphere that encourages people to share ideas and concerns and stimulates them to look for breakthrough solutions.

This technique also energizes people, stimulates their creativity and makes them feel positive about the future.

The simple, intuitive method is effective with group sizes from 9 to 220 participants. In its 15-year history, the method has been used in most industries plus the public sector and with organizations of all sizes around the world.

Benefits to Facilitators

In only two days you help a client group achieve actionable results. You also create a window on their change initiatives that can show the way to multiple consulting/facilitating opportunities. More specifically the approach benefits the consultant/facilitator in the following ways:



- Your clients will be very clear about their business direction and requirements. This gives you a firm basis for offering your services in direct support of critical business initiatives.
- Agreement and commitment to a course of action is reached in a very short time.
- The outcomes of a work session can be clearly and easily communicated to others. This helps to connect planning and implementation phases of a change project.
- The same tool can be used in all parts of an organization (from boardroom to shop floor). This makes it possible to link all activities to a shared vision and direction.
- Hidden and contentious issues are brought to the surface in a productive way.
- The map building process allows you to observe group interactions and provide feedback.
- You can easily fit the tool or method into your own consulting methodologies and service offerings.

Reference

In "The Next Common Sense: Mastering Corporate Complexity through Coherence"
Michael Lissack and Johan Roos in a chapter called "Use Landscape Images" argue that
landscapes are powerful images of an organization.

"Contrast the usefulness of the landscape image to the usual 2 x2 matrix drawn by consultants, or those nice bubble charts drawn by the business press. It is much easier to tell a meaningful story based on a landscape. Our minds can more readily create pictures of landscapes than such terms as "key success factors" and "value chain...Take advantage of our natural propensity to think in landscape terms. Landscape images align with today's world - just look at the ascendancy of the landscape motif in numerous book titles, articles, conferences, and media events."

Because these materials are pictorial, one can build maps that are at the same time landscapes. The map-aspect provides the discipline necessary to represent an ordered interaction of the various business processes, while the landscape-aspect introduces a coherence that is easy to communicate and remember.

The Presenters

Chris Perks is a Senior Management Consultant working for Barclays Bank Plc, which is a leading financial institution based in the UK but operating on a Global basis. Chris's area of expertise is project and programme management along with extensive experience in workshop facilitation.

Chris has been facilitating workshops for several years, delivering to staff at all levels ranging from strategy to team building sessions. He has presented to all levels within Barclays Bank and has recently presented a session on Graphical Facilitation to the June European Facilitators User Group in Poole, UK. One of Chris's roles is to train new consultants in the basics of workshop facilitation using a variety of techniques, i.e. pin-boarding, SeeMap® and graphical facilitation.

Martin Cleator is a Principal Consultant in Change Management, also within Barclays. Whilst Martin's expertise is predominantly within change management, he also has extensive experience in assisting clients on many business issues, including strategic planning, process re-engineering and organisational design.

Martin has facilitated businesses, teams and individuals within Barclays at all levels up to the main board and also has a thriving freelance practise, with clients in many sectors of industry including technology (software development), power industry (nuclear power), leisure (motor



sport), media and health (hospital management). Martin is an accredited assessor for the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and is a Master Practitioner of NLP.