

BLOCK DIAGRAM

What it is:

A block diagram is a specialized, high-level type of flowchart. Its highly structured form presents a quick overview of major process steps and key process participants, as well as the relationships and interfaces involved.

When to use it:

A block diagram is a useful tool both in designing new processes and in improving existing processes. In both cases the block diagram provides a quick, high-level view of the work and may rapidly lead to process points of interest. Because of its high-level perspective, it may not offer the level of detail required for more comprehensive planning or analysis. Team members who construct a block diagram must have a clear understanding of how the process operates.

How to use it:

Identify the process. Define the start point and finish point for the process to be examined.

Identify the key process participants. Identify all key individuals or work groups that participate in the process. Include customers or suppliers if those entities actually participate in process operations.

Outline the diagram. Create a large box to contain the process actions. Subdivide the box into vertical columns, with one column for each of the key process participants.

Label the diagram. Above the diagram write in the name of the process being examined and the date. Label each column within the diagram with the name of a participant. (It's usually best to list the participants in roughly their order of involvement in the process.)

Indicate input and output. Just outside the top left corner of the block diagram list the input that activates the process. Just outside the bottom right corner of the diagram list the output that ends the process.

Identify each major step of the process. For each step, succinctly describe the activity, place it in a small box, and locate the box in the appropriate column of the individual or work group that performs that activity. Connect the boxes with arrows to show the sequence of activities.

Verify accuracy. Consult with representatives of all participant groups to verify that the process accurately reflects current process operation.

Block Diagram Example

Customer Complaint Resolution

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