



Swim Lane Diagrams

A swim lane diagram depicts process flow visualized through "swim lanes":

- Lanes represent roles or departments
- Lanes flow left to right chronologically
- Parallel lanes show simultaneous activities
- Arrows represent hand-offs between lanes

Elements in a swim lane diagram:

- Steps shown as boxes ordered chronologically
- Conditional logic shown via decision diamonds
- Cycle time for each step
- Systems associated with steps
- Hand-offs and cross-lane dependencies

Benefits:

- Clarifies roles and responsibilities
- Highlights hand-offs and decision points
- Enables analysis of cycle times and delays
- Identifies wait steps and information lags
- Facilitates root cause analysis of inefficiencies

Guidance on developing swim lane diagrams:

- Involve process owners in development
- Keep high level with major steps only
- Use horizontal lanes for roles, vertical for systems
- Review periodically and update for changes
- Link to detailed procedures as needed

Swim lane diagrams provide a powerful way to visualize the flow of complex cross-functional processes. This enhances understanding, analysis and improvement.