Flowcharting

Definition:

- A graphical tool that illustrates the flow of a business process and the relationships between its activities.

Uses:

- To understand and communicate the sequence of activities in a process.
- To identify and analyze problem areas to continuously improve processes.
- To document how to do a particular job.
- To provide a view of how a process should be.

Benefits:

- Provides clarity to a process that appears disordered or complicated.
- Helps revealing areas of inefficiency.
- Helps communicating any changes on the process.
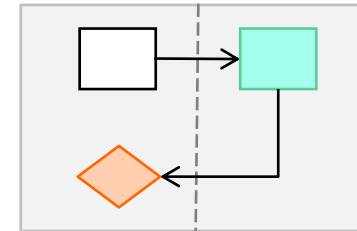- Helps explaining the process to new employees and subcontractors.

Flowchart Types:

Activity Flowchart

Displays the sequence of the activities that make up the process in a way that focuses on what happens.
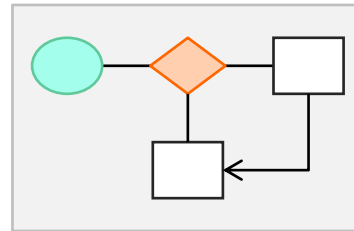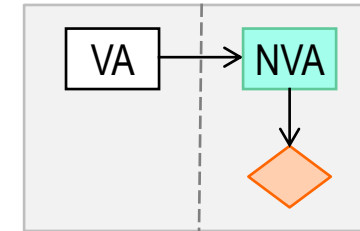

Swimlane Flowchart

Displays the activities to accomplish a process that is cross-functional (focuses on what & who).
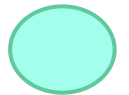

Opportunity Flowchart

Provides a way to analyze and study processes by highlighting the steps that add no value.

Activity

Decision

Start / end

Flow line

How to Construct a Flowchart?

1. With your team, describe the process and your goal.
2. Determine the type of flowchart, the level of detail, and the appropriate scope and boundaries.
3. Identify all major process activities and decisions.
4. Draft the flowchart using the standard set of shapes.
5. Test it to ensure it represents the process accurately.
6. Publish and distribute the completed final version.
7. Identify the areas that hinder the process or add little or no value for further process improvement.

EXAMPLE