

# Future State Mapping

## What is future state mapping?

Once the current state process map is complete, a future state process map provides teams or individuals with a visual representation of steps in a process after two to three months of improvements. The future state map is different from your ideal state map. Your ideal state map helps you define your ultimate improvement goals, while a future state map provides you with a road map for how to start improving your current process. The goal of your future state map is to develop a process that eliminates obstacles you have identified in your current state map.

## When should I use it?

- Only after creating a current state process map
- When improvements to the process would change how the current process unfolds
- When your current state process has a high percentage (>75%) of non-value added steps

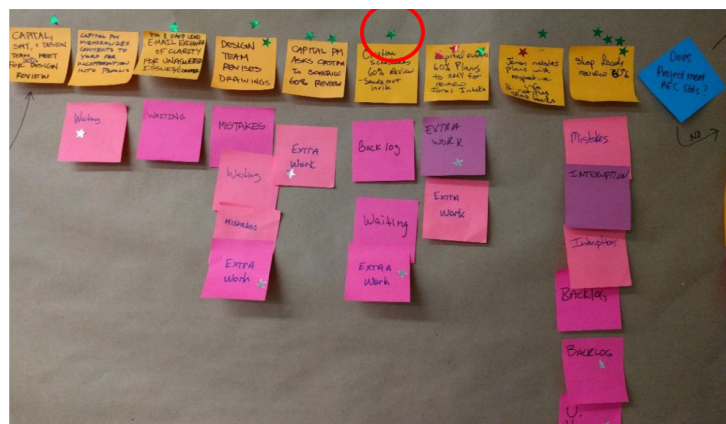
## How do I facilitate or create it?

### 1. Develop your current state process map

Developing your current state process map before the future state map is essential. If you don't have a clear understanding of the current state of your process, it will be very difficult for you to develop a future state process that addresses the issues in your current process. See [Process Mapping Reference Guide](#) for more information.

### 2. Identify the value-added, non-value-added, and legally required steps

Have your team identify the VA, NVA, and LR steps by placing green (VA), red (NVA), and yellow (NVA) colored dots on the process step sticky notes.



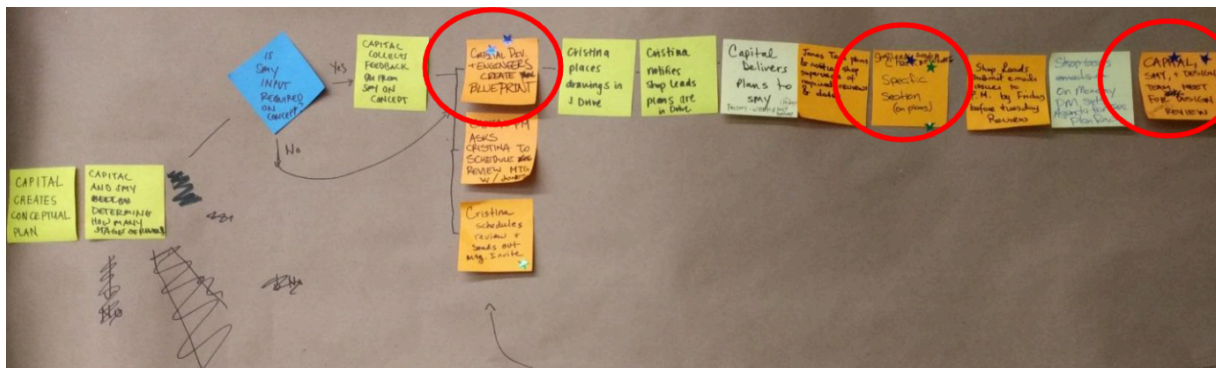
### 3. Post a blank sheet of butcher paper below your current state map

You'll use this paper to make your future state map.

### 4. Take the process step sticky notes that your team identified

Make sure to keep the same sequence of steps that you had in your current state map. Leave the non-value added steps on your current state map. Your new map should have only the value added and legally required steps on it.

- If you want to preserve your current state map for future reference, you can copy the VA and LR steps onto new sticky notes instead.
- Review the VA and LR steps and determine if you can accomplish the tasks in a faster or more efficient way.



### 5. Discuss the goals of future state mapping with your team.

1. It's important that the team feels like they are shifting gears when they start considering the future state of the process. Fresh ideas and clear minds are very important for this step!

- Here are a few helpful phrases to use when discussing future state mapping with your team:
  - “What ideas do we have to create a different future for [insert customer]?”
  - “The future state is about eliminating obstacles and eliminating the concept of sending work downstream before team members are ready for it.”
  - “Our current process is not set up to be able to accommodate the future state right now. Think outside of our current system!”
- If you brainstormed earlier in your improvement project, talk through each brainstormed idea and how to incorporate it into the future state map.
- In addition, you can try using one of these future state visioning exercises to orient your team to future state:
  - **Premortem Exercise:** separate your team into two groups. Have one group spend 10 minutes writing down what it would look like if the project or process they're improving was improved to the perfect state. Feel free to use the questions from the “5 Questions” visioning exercise below to prime your team's thinking. Have the other group spend 10 minutes writing down what it would look like if the project was a dismal failure. Why did this project fail? Have the groups share with one another, and identify common themes.

- **5 Questions for Future State Vision Exercise:** have the group spend 10 minutes writing out their answers to the following questions and sharing their visions with the entire group.
  1. What's the time frame for your future state vision?
  2. Think through your workday or your customer's experience. In your perfect world, what do you see? Who is working on the process? What does the space you're working in look like? What is happening?
  3. What are some of your major accomplishments? What are you most proud of in this future state? What are your "big wins?" Imagine that there was a major feature article written about your success. What does it say?
  4. In the past X years, what is the most significant breakthrough that launched this organization to an entirely new level of wild success? How did it happen? What was different?
  5. How are people working together internally?

## 6. Take ten minutes

Have your team write out their improvement ideas on sticky notes. Before creating your future state map, your team should spend time thinking about how they want to make their process better. Specifically, it's helpful to think about FERCS:

- Fix: fix defects or mistakes in the process
- Eliminate: eliminate waiting and NVA steps
- Rearrange: rearrange or re-sequence process steps
- Combine: combine steps or co-locate operations
- Simplify: simplify everything

## 7. Have the team report their ideas with the rest of the team.

As they share their ideas, have the team members place their idea sticky notes on the future state process map near the process step with which their idea coincides. Once all ideas have been shared, summarize the ideas by sharing the top themes that resulted from the current state, future state and brainstorming exercises. For example, if the theme of "shared responsibility and shared joy" came up, mention it by saying "many of these ideas, and the comments you all have made today center around the idea of shared responsibility and shared joy." Acknowledging these shared themes creates a cohesive environment for future state mapping.

## 8. Circle back to the preliminary future state process map

Read each process sticky note on the future state map out loud, starting with the first step in the process. Ask team members if this is the correct first step in the process, or if another step needs to be added to the map to make the future state process flow more easily. If another step needs to be added to the process, ensure that the project team writes the sticky note for the step. The project team will stay more engaged when they write the steps down on paper themselves. Continue this exercise until the future state map is complete.

## 9. Have the project team review the future state process map

Ask the group if they have any steps that they want to add. Have a team member write any additional steps on sticky notes and place them on the future state map.

## Tips

- Have the project team stand up near the future state map as you facilitate them through the mapping session – this will help keep the project team remain engaged.
- If possible, avoid having any facilitator handwriting on the map, and instead have the project team members write all sticky notes to build team member ownership of the new process (also helps check a common facilitation impulse to impose ideas without team buy-in).
- Spend time orienting the project team to future state thinking – this will help the team get out of their current state mode of thinking and into thinking more about the future.