Fact Sheet

Chicago Process Mapping Project: Improving Crime Solving

Over the last decade, companies in the manufacturing, entertainment, and defense industries have used a tool called "process mapping" to help them describe, analyze, and ultimately improve how their organizations operate. Now, the Chicago Police Department is the first police agency in the country to use this proven technique in a law enforcement setting.

How Does Process Mapping Work?

Today

As-Is Maps

Tomorrow

Should-Be Maps

Future

Could-Be Maps
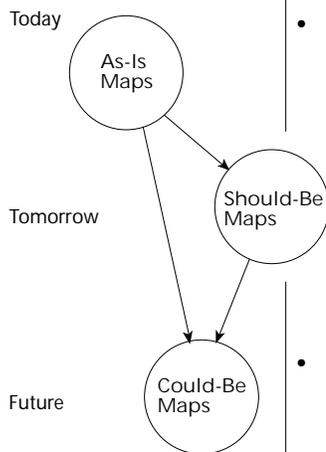
Process mapping involves the development of three different "process maps"—flowcharts that visually depict the series of activities involved in carrying out one of the organization's major functions.

- The *as-is map* describes the process as it is happening today. This map is based on interviews and observations of people actually involved in the process. It is used to diagnose waste, duplication of effort, coordination problems, or breakdowns in the flow of information.

- The *should-be map* makes short-term changes to reduce waste, remove duplication, and improve coordination and flow of information. This map is based on management analysis of the as-is map and suggestions gathered from field personnel during the interview process.

- The *could-be map* describes the ideal process for the future. This map is based on the organization's vision, and highlights the long-term changes that are needed to get there.

How Is the Department Using Process Mapping?

The Department selected "crime solving" as the major function to be mapped in this project because it is so central to our success and is a service the community needs and expects from us. To make the project more manageable, the Department is initially focusing on two crime types: aggravated criminal sexual assault and aggravated battery with a firearm.

The entire process of responding to and investigating these crimes will be analyzed—beginning with the various ways in which the crimes are reported and ending with the possible dispositions of the case. The goal is to describe, accurately and thoroughly, the crime-solving process *as it currently exists* and to look for ways to make it better. Process mapping does *not* look for mistakes or procedural errors on the part of any one individual or unit.

How Is the Project Conducted?

Information for process mapping is gathered primarily through interviews with personnel involved in the process that is being mapped. The information is then verified and clarified through field observations. The objective is to compile information from multiple sets of interviews, conducted by different interviewer teams, and then to identify the major, consistent patterns.

For this project, interviews and observations are being conducted by teams of Department members from the Detective, Youth, Training, and Research and Development Divisions. They are interviewing Department members in Detective Areas 2 and 4, and in Patrol Districts 3, 5, 10, and 11. These districts were selected because they have sufficient levels of criminal activity to make the study thorough and accurate.
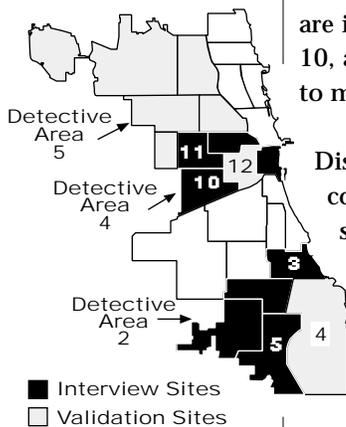
Districts 4 and 12, and Detective Area 5, serve as "validation sites." Preliminary information collected in the other districts and areas will be verified through follow up in these control sites. Information will also be collected from centralized units such as the Communication Operations Section and the Records and Data Systems Divisions.

All interviews are *private, anonymous and voluntary*—no individual names or district identifiers are attached to any process maps. In addition to providing information about how things are done currently (for the as-is map), Department members are being asked their opinions on how things *could be done better*. This feedback is critical for the eventual development of the should-be and could-be maps.

Detective Area 5

Detective Area 4

Detective Area 2

■ Interview Sites
□ Validation Sites

What Are the Benefits?

Process mapping offers many potential benefits to the Department. Two of the most important are to—

- **Increase the clearance rate for crimes.** By mapping the crime-solving process, the Department will be able to identify areas where new work methods or organizational changes might improve our ability to investigate crimes and arrest offenders.

- **Make more widespread and effective use of automation and technology.** Process mapping will identify areas where work processes can be improved through automation and technology, such as automated case reporting.

For More Information

The process mapping project is funded by a grant from the Police Executive Research Forum. Training and technical assistance are provided by Performance Learning Corporation.

For more information, contact:

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