



Value Stream Mapping: How to Visualize Work Flow and Align People for Organizational Transformation: Using Lean Business Practices to Transform Office and Service Environments

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The first of its kind--a Value Stream Mapping book written for those in service and office environments who need to streamline operations

"Value Stream Mapping" is a practical, how-to guide that helps decision-makers improve value stream efficiency in virtually any setting, including construction, energy, financial service, government, healthcare, R&D, retail, and technology. It gives you the tools to address a wider range of important VSM issues than any other such book, including the psychology of change, leadership, creating teams, building consensus, and charter development.

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Davide Tarasconi says

True, there are not many books about value stream mapping out there and the topic itself tends to be regarded as obscure by many, so this is a good start.

There are lots of insights on how to conduct a mapping activity in terms of contents, questions and planning, but not much guidance in how to actually make this supposed 3-day-long event happen.

As a facilitator, Agile coach and consultant I must say that you really need to be an expert facilitator in order to put in practice the teachings of this book in a realistic way.

The hurdles you go through in real life in order to plan, design and facilitate such an intensive retrospective and prospective analysis call for a strong reduction of the scope for this mapping activity: in real life it will be either a shorter event (one day, not three), or less details (it's unlikely to have in the same room all at once all the people that can detail all those numbers), or a more modest goal (mapping a single segment instead of an entire stream).

The book gives you both a great overview and all the details you need in order to use the value stream mapping at its maximum capacity, but I would be happy to be able to apply even a 25% of it in a real-world scenario.

That being said, it is a well written book and a good read also for the inexperienced people. I highlighted many passages, and I believe that as a coach and facilitator it gives you an edge in terms of having an additional tool in your "bag of tricks" – a fundamental one if you really want to implement Lean and Kanban beyond a single team and to the portfolio/strategic level.

Karl Jenkel says

Karen and Mike point out that viewing your organization's value creating processes as Value Streams gives a holistic understanding about how the chain of value-creation is working with the goal to deliver the best value to the organization's customer. This holistic view is needed to achieve the best possible improvements for the customer and the organization likewise rather than optimizing silo-focussed process optimization.

The structure of the book follows the path for conducting Value Stream Mapping activities. Each chapter can be seen as a manual for how to do the next step, what to consider and whom to involve. Since they suggest to conduct the series of events in a short time frame (ideally three days in a row), I would advise to read through the entire book before starting with Value Stream Mapping.

Interesting aspects, which are highlighted throughout the book include

- that Value Stream Mapping as a tool can help to produce immense positive results on holistic improvements

on Value Stream level if all activities are done well prepared and the organization keeps their priorities, focus and discipline to implement and manage the Transformation Plan

- that they discovered that there is a "direct link between results and the degree to which the executive sponsor remains visibly engaged"

Described key success factors include

- Focus on one Value Stream at a time, not all
 - Prepare carefully
 - Socialize the Value Stream Mapping as a methodological tool, the event's working results and especially the Transformation Plan progress
 - Gain consensus from relevant people
 - Conducting regular Plan Review Meetings
-

Tibor Konig says

Ez olyan könyv, amit minden vezetőképésben kötelezővé tennék.

Bob Wallner says

Okay I'll admit it, it's been a long time since I really thought about value stream mapping. Learning to See was one of the first books I read when I started my lean journey. I remember how excited I was learning about the current state and at the aha moment when developing the future state.

Value Stream Mapping (the book) has rekindled that fire! I actually found myself going back to some of my old A3 reports and thinking how much better they could have been if we had future state map to work to.

Allisonperkel says

Lots of great ideas for mapping improvements.

Jonas says

God og enkel bok om kartlegging av verdistrømmer. Boken er svært praktisk rettet!

Chris Davies says

If you dislike those books that tell you what to do in principle but don't tell you how to do it, this book is for you. It goes into explicit and exquisite detail, with examples in the appendices. It's the sort of book for those who have an efficiency problem in their organisation and have the authority to change it, or for consultants hired by those people.

If you're not in either of those two groups of people, this will be of academic interest only. Given that, it is superbly well written and informative. A keeper

Davi Bauer says

Very good introduction about value stream mapping. The book explains how to create the current and the future state, as well as the transformation plan to address the improvements. It's important to note that the value stream mapping is a strategic tool whereas the process-level mapping is a tactical tool. If you already know the basis of value stream mapping I think this book will not bring big news.

Arturo says

This is a great book in the sense that it is very pragmatic and prescriptive. This is what you need if you are a beginner; first you stick to a prescribed process and as you gain insights you can start to tweak it. The book doesn't stop with the prescription however, it also offers multitude of insights which give you context and also allow you to be one step ahead in terms of what behaviours and reactions you can expect from your stakeholders and how to angle your effort to assuage their objections.

The only bit I found lacking for a beginner like myself is the actual mapping itself; the technique, the vocabulary, the symbols etc. That you will have to find somewhere else.

Mark says

I gained a lot from this book. The authors clearly showed how this applies to a larger picture (avoiding the local optimization traps), gave some good techniques, AND included some needed tactics for assuring success which are otherwise easily ignored. For example, great focus was put on who should be part of the cycles (PDSA) for success, including leadership close enough to the work, yet with high enough authority. These are all great, and all were woven together very well. The real lack I saw was some core Lean concepts. This book assumed a traditional command and control environment, which admittedly is more true than not, so I have some forgiveness of that. Yet, for a concept that is so tangential (even overlapping) so heavily with Lean/Agile, etc., I'm disappointed that it was all but absent. However, an astute reader can likely deal with this effectively.

SIDE NOTE FOR SOME: You may be tempted to omit a single person as the values stream monitor. The authors' reasoning [when all are responsible, no one is responsible] in my opinion is missing the real issue. Yet I agree with their conclusion that there must be one person responsible for monitoring. The reason is that no one naturally has a scope of view that encompasses the entire value stream, so one person must have allocated responsibility to have that wide-scope view.)

Overall, a very good education on Value Stream Mapping. Thanks Mike and Karen.

Johanna Ilen says

An excellent, practical book about value stream mapping for anyone who already has some training on lean and value stream mapping, but needs depth and details to help out in implementation of this valuable tool.

Bibhu Ashish says

This was one of those books which can be used for reference in case you are adopting a lean way of working in your organization or in your life. The book gives a high level idea about how to eliminate waste from the work process and deliver value. The concept of waste elimination is nothing new but the authors have given a new method of implementing lean approach from a strategic perspective.

To get the most out of the book it is suggested that the reader should be familiar with the Lean principles. While this book serves to enlighten the reader about what value stream mapping is and how to implement the value stream mapping in the organization, the book looks way too plain and mundane without any path breaking ideas.

To summarize very briefly the book, every organization needs to find out the way they are delivering service or product to customer which can be called as value addition for the customer, then finding out in a structured way the current processes being used to create the products or services, then figuring out the wastes in the current processes and putting in place a transformation plan to eliminate the waste, and finally executing the transformation process. To sustain the transformation process, PDCA(plan, Do, Study, Adjust) process needs to be followed regularly.

In case you are a Lean enthusiast you can read it once, else give it a pass.

Glenn Burnside says

Lots of words but not enough meat

I really thought I'd get more from this, but there wasn't much there. The last section on introducing changes, in particular, was thin. I had been hoping for more prescriptive guidance on how to identify and design value streams, but ultimately this felt like a very heavy-weight set of activities around a very macro-view of an organization's flow. Maybe I'm just not deep enough into this kind of work to "get" what the authors were talking about though.

Karsh K says

Key takeaways

1) The value stream mapping is to be undertaken at macro level and is aimed to help drive strategic improvements (the what not necessarily the how)

2) Really liked the idea of walking the entire value stream in the reverse order from how work typically flows to gain insights.

3) It would have been great if the book provided detailed case study as opposed to condensed examples in the Appendix

Rafael Rosa says

TL;DR

Teaches you about a very useful tool for strategic planning and change, but that's the limit, you need to know Lean principles and how to implement them by yourself, it assumes you got a handle on that, or point you to sources, but that's it. It doesn't diminish the value of the book, but a real implementation will require a lot more research and investment, the execution part at the end of the mapping is the real challenge.

Opinion

The authors propose Value Stream Mapping as a tool to plan and guide strategic changes for a company, the basic methodology consists of a 3-day workshop split into: current state mapping, future state design, coming up with a transformation plan, one day for each. The workshop participants should be high level executives or people with power to approve and oversee the execution of big strategic changes, middle managers that like to talk and do politics but cannot change anything without permission from above aren't welcome. Before the actual mapping starts the organizers need to scope which value stream will be worked on and gather preliminary data that will support the process, then the mapping starts for real.

The current state mapping on day one is pretty self explanatory, but the way it's done is interesting, because it isn't a white-boarding session with people who have no contact with the real work, instead it consists of people "walking the gemba" (visiting where the work is done), seeing and talking with the folks that actually do the work. After that they retreat to a room to draw what they saw, using a specific notation (which is pretty simple) and adding some metrics to it. With the diagram they have a better understanding of the process, their lead time, process time and "quality", and they go back to the gemba to verify if it's accurate. After that the current state should be close enough to reality and people can share a similar understanding of the situation, share it with people that will support the changes and then go to sleep.

On day two they revisit the scope and the current state and discuss what changes should be made to the current state to achieve the pre-defined goals. This might include removing or adding processes, change the way inspections are made, train people in a different way, etc, there's a suggested list of traditional changes but they aren't very prescriptive, because each situation is different. Once the changes are decided upon the group create a future state map that will reflect the value stream after the changes are made, and add the target metrics that they expect with the new flow. They might go back to the gemba to review it and then show the result for supporting collaborators, and that's the end of day two.

On day three they will go back to the future state map and document the list of changes they expect to make, assigning owners, defining timelines but NOT going into details of "how" they will be implemented, the implementation part is up to the people that will actually do the work, the mapping exercise will provide them with the goals and a vision of how their changes will impact the system. After that the mapping exercise is finished.

As the authors say, after the mapping is when the rubber meets the road, and while they have some

prescriptions on how to approach the execution, they are far from prescriptive, they leave it as an exercise for the readers, and that's the "let down" of the book, because the planning part is "simple", if insightful and practical, but I fear that the execution is the real problem. The authors aren't naive and they are aware of this "limitation", and offer some references throughout the book to guide people to learn how to do the rest, but that's it.

The mapping is a good tool, but it's pretty much it, you could use a lot of other planning tools to achieve similar goals, the upside of the book is that they try to persuade the reader to expand their Lean view towards the rest of the organization instead of stopping at the rituals, but they cannot fix things like stupid org charts, disempowered employees, lots of politics and silos, etc. They don't see it as only a tool, but I cannot in good faith say it's more than that.

Read the book to learn the tool and be inspired, but be prepared to research a lot to actually implement it.

Book notes

Value

- * Value stream mapping is a discovery activity
- * Shared understanding of the work, reducing differences in perception, therefore reducing conflicts
- * Consensus building around problems
- * High level abstraction of the work makes it easier to understand
- * High level changes are strategic changes, they more impact than process/tactical ones
- * It's a visual storyboard of how work actually gets done
- * Helps to eliminate waste work and minimize value-enabling work, focusing on value-added work

Limitations

- * Doesn't fix micro-level process problems
- * Focus on strategic changes, if strategy is set its value is limited to understanding
- * The implementation part is left as an exercise to the reader

Observations

- * Lots of references to traditional hierarchical structures
- * Apparently the focus is to use value stream mapping as a tool for highest ranking executives
- * How to identify the value streams? Apparently they assume it's just figuring out what are the requests and move from there, or it's explained on another chapter
- * They also assume that you already know the value proposition of the product and desires of the consumers, they won't help you figure that out
- * How to find the right balance between macro and micro level detail? Apparently the "solution" is to get experience
- * 3 types of work:
 - * Value-adding
 - * Value-enabling (necessary non-value-adding)
 - * Waste (unnecessary non-value-adding)
- * 8 different types of waste
 - * Transport – Moving people, products & information
 - * Inventory – Storing parts, pieces, documentation ahead of requirements
 - * Motion – Bending, turning, reaching, lifting
 - * Waiting – For parts, information, instructions, equipment
 - * Over production – Making more than is IMMEDIATELY required

- * Over processing – Tighter tolerances or higher grade materials than are necessary
 - * Defects – Rework, scrap, incorrect documentation
 - * Skills – Under utilizing capabilities, delegating tasks with inadequate training
 - * Highlighting the systems used in the process and how the information flow across them seems to be a critical part of the mapping process, probably a lot of insights can be gained from this
-