

6.6: Process Flowcharting

Any process improvement initiative will always begin with mapping out a visual representation of the current process. This is necessary so that all members of the team have a clear understanding of how current process is working. All of the steps and flows need to be identified and laid out in the proper sequence. It is important that the correct stakeholders are involved in this activity!

There are many different types of flowcharts, and many different software applications that can assist with this activity. Most practitioners tend to prefer using a large roll of paper on the wall where the group can collaborate rather than using a computer projected onto a screen. It is important to go out into the workplace and walk the process before beginning this task. This is a very standard activity that takes place in organizations around the globe. As an Operations Manager, there is a high likelihood that you will become involved in this at some point in your career. To map a process, a standard set of symbols are used. There are many different symbols, it is best not to get too caught up in all of them. The standard symbols include:






Symbol	Meaning
	Start / Stop
	Operation
	Decision
	Storage
	Flow

Figure 6.6.1: Flow chart symbols

For example:

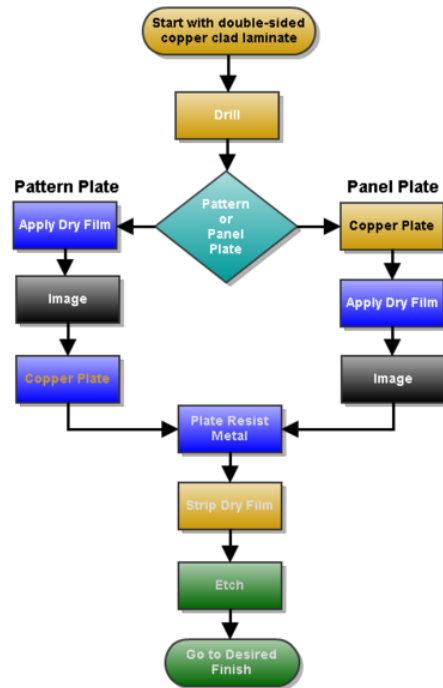


Figure 6.6.2: A typical flow chart

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