

## Top-Down and Deployment Flowcharts

You can use SIPOC maps or I/O maps to map linear processes that don't have a lot of steps. When a process has many steps or substeps, has numerous decision points, and has parallel activities, you might need to use a more detailed flowchart.

In this video, you learn about two types of flowcharts that are commonly used by problem-solving teams: top-down flowcharts and deployment flowcharts. Top-down flowcharts can be used for poorly defined processes and for processes that have many substeps.

Here is a top-down flowchart for a finished-product inspection operation. The operation consists of three primary steps. For each step, there are several substeps.

Deployment (or swim-lane) flowcharts are effective with processes in which materials or information pass through many different functional areas. Here's a simple example, a deployment flowchart for a low-end restaurant.

This flowchart lists the individuals, groups, or areas involved in the process, shows the flow of the process, and identifies who is involved at each step. With this flowchart, you can clearly see areas of responsibility and who does what.

Deployment flowcharts, like more traditional detailed flowcharts, use a variety of symbols to describe the steps in a process. These symbols indicate the type of activity. Here are the most commonly used symbols: Rectangles represent process steps. Diamonds are used for decision points. Long ovals are used for starts and stops.

Connector circles are used to link between flowcharts, and document symbols are used for documentation or paperwork. Here's another example: a deployment flowchart for a New Product Introduction process.

You can see that this process has many steps. It also has several decision points and a lot of handoffs between departments. A flowchart like this can cause you to ask, "Can this process be streamlined or simplified?"