Jess Monnier

CSD-380 Assignment 2.2

23 August 2025

Value Stream Mapping

In chapter 6 of the DevOps Handbook, the authors put forward an experience that occurred at Nordstrom in which value stream mapping led to an application that many people at the company thought would have to be entirely replaced being made much more usable with only minor changes. The application was used to register new salespeople for store product lines, which was important for allowing them to track sales commissions, enable vendor rebates, and more. However, the registration form could only be completed on a computer in the back office, requiring managers to leave the floor to accomplish the task. Additionally, it had a field for an employee number, which at that point in the process was not yet assigned.

Initially, the folks at Nordstrom did not realized that the fix could be as simple as moving the employee number field to a step later in the process (downstream) and adapting the application to work on an iPad so that managers could complete it without leaving the floor. They were only able to come to this conclusion because they gathered everyone involved in the value stream, from business partners to managers to developers and the “mainframe team,” for a workshop in which they hashed out the process as it existed at the time and any problems they noted with that process. They were so successful that other business leaders took note and came to them with similar problems from their own organizations hoping to find the solution with a similar “experiment.”

The main takeaways from the case study and the chapter as a whole seem to be:

* Value stream mapping should include anyone with any stake in the process of providing the desired value to the customer.
* The mapping should be accomplished via a multi-day workshop in which participants are completely freed up from other duties and obligations so that they can really focus on the process.
* The value stream mapping process should allow teams to really understand what the other teams do and their own team’s impact on the value stream as a whole.
* Multiple passes of mapping may be required, starting with high-level parts of the process and working down into the details with later passes.