

# Tools for Leading Teams

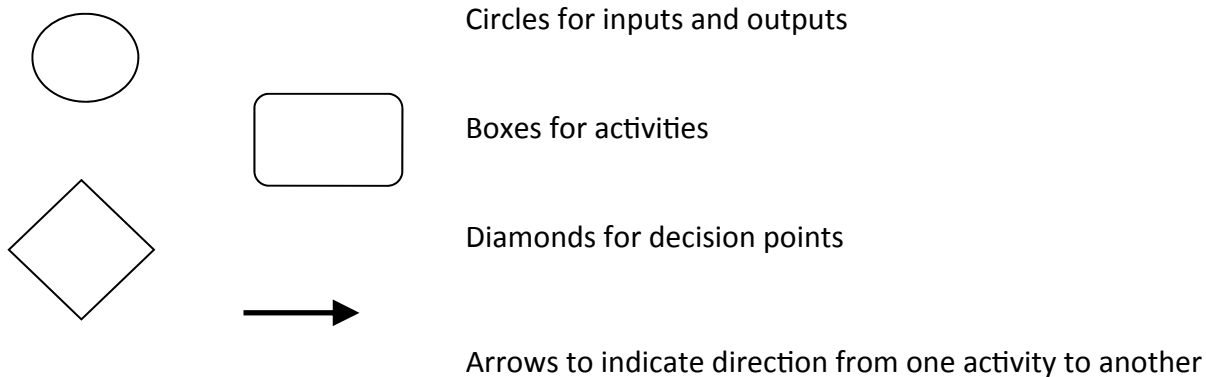
## *Flow Charting for Success*

A flow chart is an illustration of the actual sequence of processes that make up your work. It can be used to describe a current workflow, whether simple or complex, and illuminate opportunities for improvement. Another way to look at a flowchart is as a map that shows the steps of a work process in the sequence in which they occur, or should occur. A flowchart can be a particularly powerful tool when developed in partnership with the people who will need to follow it.

### Flowcharts can be used to:

- Understand what activities go into getting something done.
- See the sequence of activities and events (processes) that make up a job.
- Create a common understanding of how the work should be done.
- Identify opportunities to fix bottlenecks, add missing steps and eliminate unnecessary work.

### Main Elements of a Flowchart

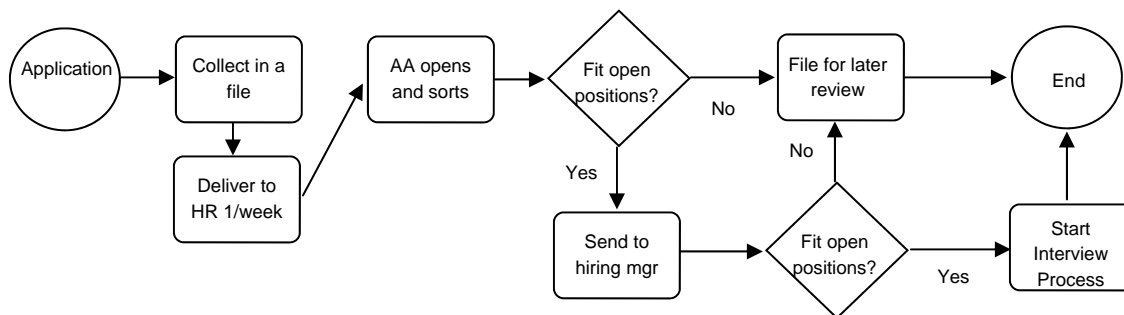


- Flowcharts make sense only when there is a standard flow (or should be a standard flow) to a work process.
- When the process is complex, draw a simple set of sequences first then make additional flow charts to show the details within complex portions of the work.
- Flowcharts can be done from top to bottom or from side to side.
- Post-It Notes® are ideal for rearranging the sequences of processes as you develop the flowchart.
- Flowcharts are an efficient way to document, clarify or communicate processes and procedures to others.

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### Steps

1. Gather a group of people who represent the various parts of the process you wish to describe using the flowchart.
2. Decide where the process begins and ends.
3. Brainstorm the main activities, inputs, outputs, and decision points in the process.
4. Using the proper symbols, arrange the activities, inputs, outputs and decision points in their proper order.
5. Answer the following questions:
  - Where are the bottlenecks?
  - Where can redundant steps be eliminated?
  - Where can we save time?



Note, problems may arise if:

- The flowchart does not represent all parts of the work.
- The level of detail on the flowchart does not fit the work being charted (too much detail or too little detail).
- You use the flowchart to make changes without talking to the people who are affected by the changes.
- You try to use a flowchart where no standard sequence of activities can be identified.