



## Process flowcharts

**Definition of Process.** *Any activity or series of activities, that transforms inputs into outputs, utilising resources and being subject to particular controls. (from the Quality toolkit 1996)*

All organisations establish and follow processes, from the more everyday tasks such as ordering stationary to longer-term activities such as developing a new service, strategic planning or performance improvement.

How you define, document, communicate and manage your processes can have major implications on your results. Efficient processes can save you money (thus improving key performance results), reduce your environmental impact (improving society results), improve internal communication and staff moral (improving people results) and improve customer service (improving customer results).

There is potentially a great deal of work you can do to improve your processes. One of the first activities you can do is to clearly define your key processes. Using flow charts can help with this.

They will need to know how that process works and why it works. Processes will need to be reviewed regularly as certain factors change.

### Process Flowcharts

Flowcharts can be used to formalise a process. They show the sequence of steps, decisions that need to be made and alternative routes that can be followed. Symbols are given to the different functions, for example, action and decision. The basic symbols are given below. You can use other symbols to make the flowchart more descriptive.

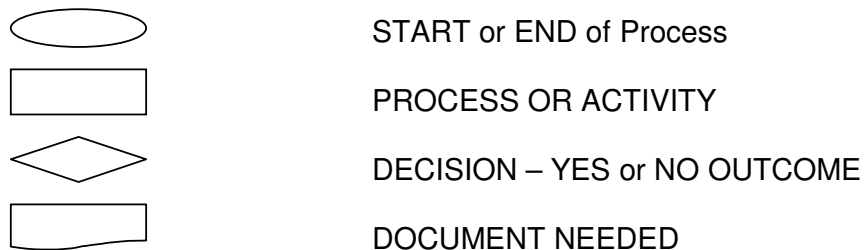
Process flowcharts can help to ensure that all staff and volunteers understand a process, have a sense of ownership of it and play their part in its successful completion. For this reason, it is more effective if the people involved in each process are involved in the flow-charting session.

If you choose to involve a group, it is a good idea to use post-it notes or cards and flipchart paper so that you can move them around and agree as a group on the correct sequence.

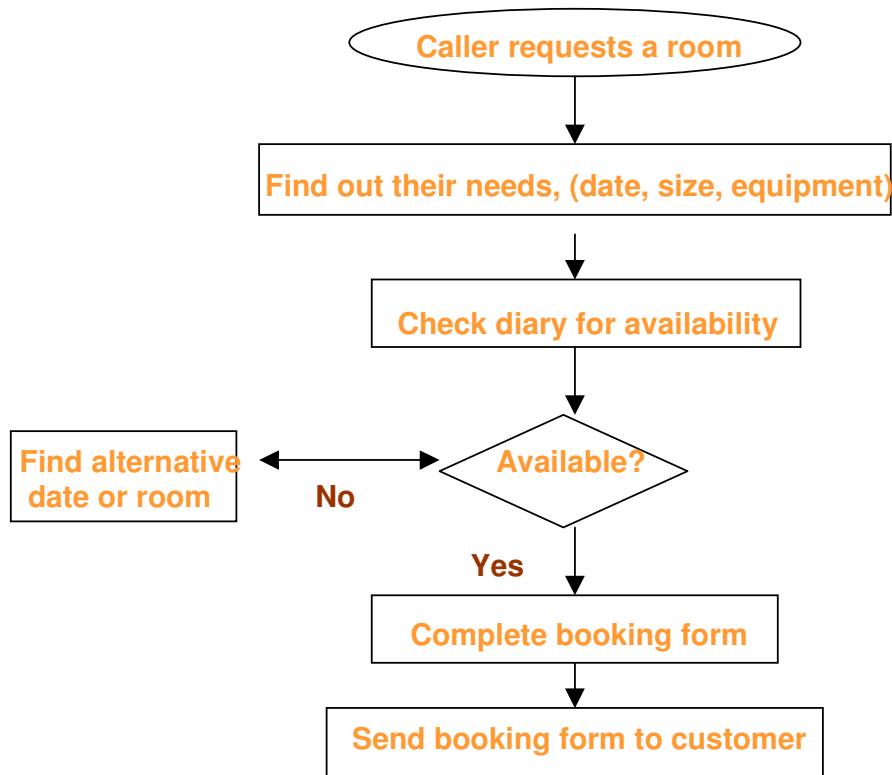
## Key steps to the process

1. Identify the process to be charted, agree a start and a stop position.
2. Write down all of the key stages of the process on cards or post it notes.
3. Put these in sequential order to represent the process
4. Identify key decision points, alternative routes, key communication points and links to key documents required.
5. Test it out
6. Identify how the process can be improved
7. Produce a final version

## The following symbols could be used.



## An example - Taking room booking by phone



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