William Sparks

Foreword by Alison Smith
co-founder of InsideNGO

Improve organizational workflow in 5 steps

Process Mapping

Road Trip
Acclaim for Process Mapping Road Trip

Survey Comments from Workshop Participants

Very practical, well presented, easy to understand, able to communicate to team and put to work right away.

Dynamic and interesting presenter.

**Very poignant topic for most, if not all, organizations.**

Extremely well done!
Polished, engaging and very worthwhile.

**This is a 10.**

Very engaging and user friendly presentation.

Very informative.

**It will help me improve business processes.**

One of the best sessions I attended during the conference!
This was similar to a TED talk.

Very useful! I'll use these tips in my work life.

**I appreciated how practical this was.**

Very good session and instructor was super.

Excellent, clear, practical presentation.
He's a great, dynamic presenter.

Great examples and context.
Very much applicable to my current work.

Feel I can go do a process mapping exercise.

His tips, tricks and nuances around the RACI model were extremely timely for me.

Very helpful steps.
Learned how to create a work flow.

Excellent, engaging, interesting, motivating.

Great content, presentation.

Clear to understand presentation. Great presenter.

Great instructor. Very engaging.

Ideas very applicable to work.

Very engaging and informational session.
It's my favorite session so far.

Great tips and easy to follow steps.

Awesome sauce!
Process Mapping Road Trip

*Improve organizational workflow in five steps*

William Sparks
“Progress isn’t made by early risers. It’s made by lazy men trying to find easier ways to do something.”

~Robert A. Heinlein

“What would you say you do here?”

~Bob Slydell, Office Space
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About the Author

Winner of the Dr. J.P. London Award for Promoting Ethical Behavior, William Sparks has over twenty years of management and international development experience in building organizational capacity throughout Africa, Asia, South America, and Europe.

He co-developed the AchieVe Performance Management System, which was selected as an Innovation finalist in the HR Leadership Awards. His international work included the creation of Sell More For More, a capacity development program for cooperative organizations in the least developed countries. Launched in Rwanda, Sell More For More has since expanded to over ten countries. The program was named by InterAction and IFAD as a Best Practice for international development.

A dynamic public speaker, William routinely conducts workshops on improving organizational performance. This book is based on a highly acclaimed session presented annually at the global InsideNGO Conference, which also awarded him the Operational Excellence Award for his contributions over the years in developing international NGOs.

He currently serves as Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at ACDI/VOCA (www.acdivoca.org), an international organization building social and economic opportunities in over 40 countries. William earned his Masters of Science in Organization Development from Pepperdine University.

For relaxation, William is an ultra-marathon runner who runs every morning in whichever country he finds himself that day.
Foreword

You just never know where life will lead you. When a group of us in our twenties founded InsideNGO almost forty years ago, our idea was to bring NGOs together to share experiences, gain knowledge, and learn from each other. Our hope was to help each other out and thereby benefit our organizations all of whom were seeking to make the world a better place for those less fortunate, underprivileged, or just simply in need. InsideNGO created a venue for NGOs to learn together and to pay it forward.

The book in your hand is an example of just that.

Whether or not you work at an NGO, organizations struggle with getting things done. We have processes that convert limited resources into work valued by society, and these processes create the unique DNA of each organization.

As I have watched InsideNGO grow into an association of 350 organizations, I have witnessed the complexity of our organizations increase dramatically. Ever-increasing government regulations, a growing emphasis on measuring impact, a renewed focus on the triple bottom line, and a push for a shared value proposition that includes partnerships with all types of organizations: private sector firms, government agencies, research universities, and non-profit organizations, are pressures we all experience. Work is becoming more complex. With it, processes stretch across departments, time zones, and even organizational boundaries.
So it is timely that William has shared his approach to process mapping. He has been a favorite presenter at our Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. for several years as well as at workshops both in the United States and overseas. His sessions, particularly his workshop on process mapping, receive the highest of ratings. He has a unique and humorous way of breaking down complex topics into memorable and easy frameworks. His analogy of process mapping as a family road trip is one such example. It is a journey that I trust you will enjoy.

Recently, William was awarded the InsideNGO Operational Excellence Award. This is an honor we do not give lightly. Through work in his own organization and his contributions to the NGO community through InsideNGO, he continues to share his insights. While I couldn’t have predicted when we began that I would be writing these words almost forty years later, I have always known that the power of people working together would produce meaningful results.

Let your road trip into process mapping begin. Improve those processes that define your organization. Let’s make the world an even better place…together.

Alison Smith
Westport, Connecticut
Introduction

We’re going on a road trip!

It seems that a common part of American life is the road trip. In fact, the American Automobile Association reports that one in four Americans will take a road trip of five hours or more each year. That’s a lot of traffic out on the roads. Yet, we hope that our road trip will be smooth, without incident, and that we will arrive at our destination safe and sound, right?

So it is the same for our workflow. We don’t want to see traffic jams in our organizational processes. We don’t want to see people having to take workaround detours because our roads are jammed and inefficient. Each time someone in your organization takes a ride on one of your processes, what kind of road trip will it be?

Workflow mapping. Process improvement. This is a critical skill set for leaders in today’s complex organizations. So many processes cut across multiple departments, several locations, and – for some organizations – many countries. Often, there isn’t a clear owner of the entire process. That’s where you come in. Being able to facilitate a collective exercise in systematically mapping a workflow and improving it will help you to lead change in the organization.

Further, mapping and improving a workflow will save your organization money in two ways. First, of course, there are the efficiencies and benefits gained within the improved workflow itself. More outputs in less time at higher quality benefits the organization. You’ll also help your organization save money by helping management avoid poor decisions such as a reorganization, new vendor, new system, or any other large scale response. As the processes become more complex and cut across many areas, these are common reactions. However, you can bypass this by taking the time to map and improve the process.
And, improving inefficient workflows will help your organization stay focused on its mission. Your organization will be able to stay focused on serving your clients. That’s the strength that comes from improving a workflow.

Well, what are we waiting for? The open road calls. In five easy steps, you’ll be on your way to mapping a workflow, improving a process, and leading your organization to better results.