

Process Mapping: Understanding L1 to L3 Process Views

Choosing the Right Level of Detail to Drive Business Performance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Process mapping is one of the most effective techniques organizations use to understand, standardize, optimize, and transform their operations. Whether the objective is improving customer experience, increasing operational efficiency, supporting compliance requirements, or enabling digital transformation, success begins with understanding how work is performed across the organization.

A common misconception is that a single process map can serve every audience and purpose. In reality, organizations require different levels of process visibility depending on the decisions being made. This is where Process Mapping Levels 1 through 3 (L1-L3) become valuable.

Each level offers a different "zoom view" of the business:

Level 1 (L1)

provides a strategic view of business capabilities.

Level 2 (L2)

shows the major workflows that support those capabilities.

Level 3 (L3)

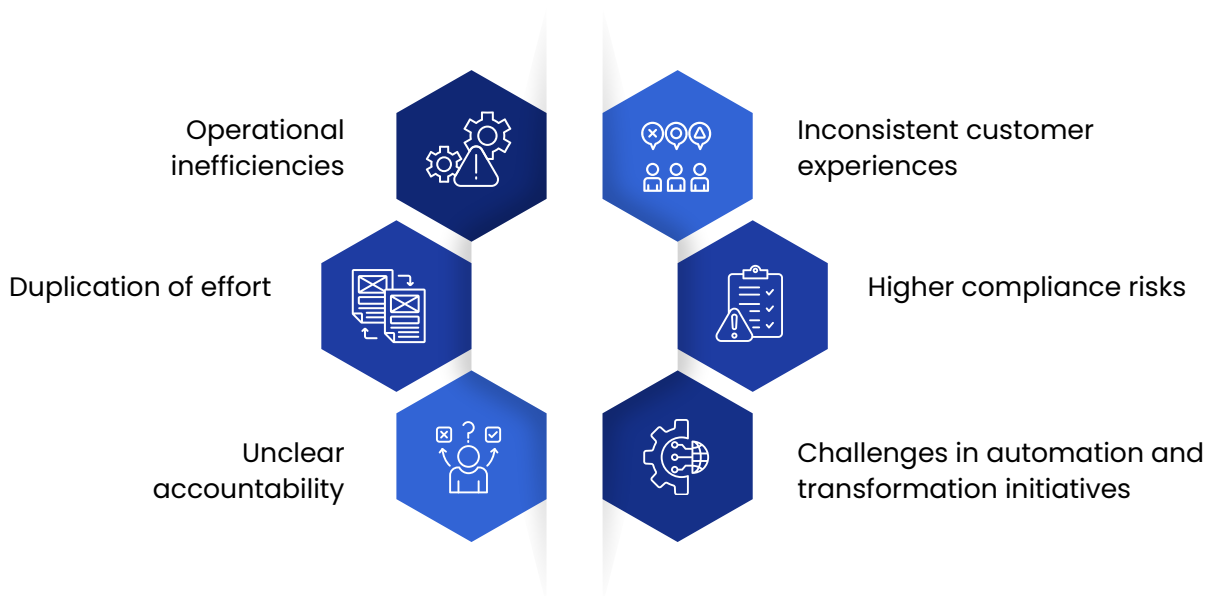
presents the detailed activities, decisions, roles, and system interactions that execute the work.

The goal is not to create the most detailed process map possible. The goal is to provide the right level of information to the right audience at the right time.

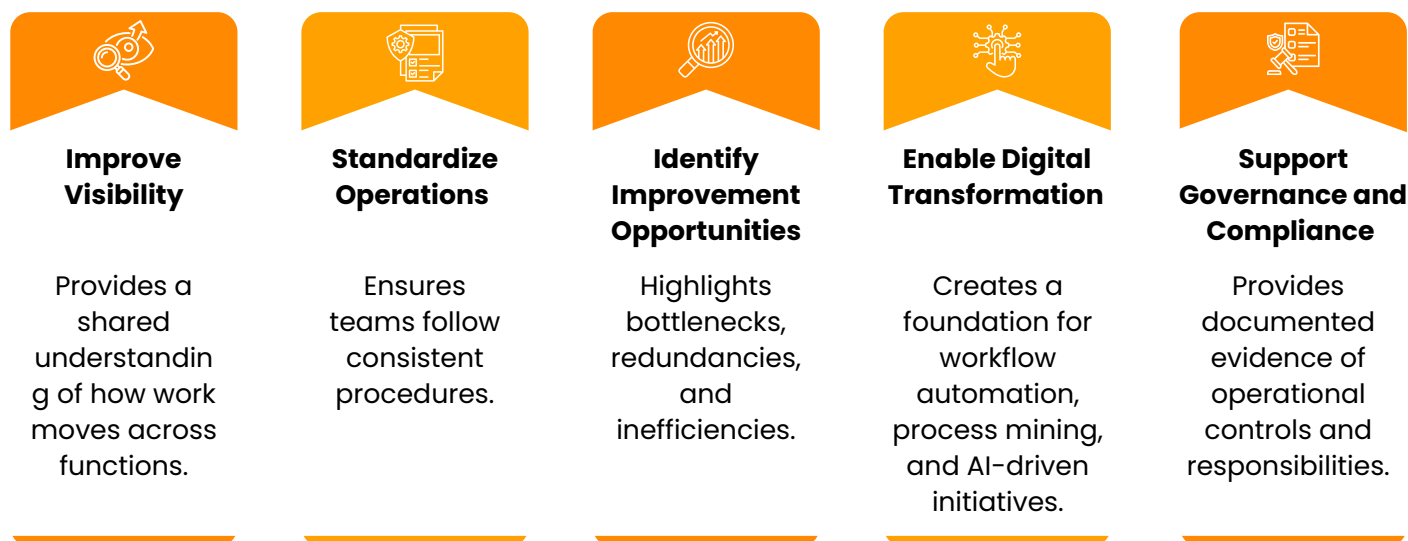
WHY PROCESS MAPPING MATTERS

Organizations today operate in increasingly complex environments. Processes often span multiple teams, technologies, vendors, regulations, and customer touchpoints.

Without clear process visibility, organizations may experience:



Process mapping helps organizations:



UNDERSTANDING THE L1-L3 PROCESS HIERARCHY

Process mapping follows a hierarchical approach where each level builds upon the previous one. Think of it like digital maps:

- L1 is the country view.
- L2 is the city view.
- L3 is the street view.

Each level serves a different purpose and audience.

Level 1 (L1): Enterprise Capability View

	Purpose	L1 provides a high-level representation of what the organization does. It focuses on business capabilities rather than operational details and serves as the foundation for enterprise-wide process architecture.
	Key Characteristics	Strategic level view Focuses on capabilities No detailed activities No decision points No system-level information Minimal operational detail
	Typical Audience	Executive leadership Business unit leaders Strategy teams Enterprise architects
	Questions L1 Helps Answer	▶ What core capabilities does our organization perform? ▶ Which business areas are most critical? ▶ Who owns each capability? ▶ Are there capability gaps?
	Example	For a customer service organization:
	L1 Capability	▶ Handle Customer Support Requests ▶ At this level, the process exists as a single capability without detailed workflows or operational activities.
	Business Value	L1 maps support: Strategic planning Organizational design Capability assessments Business operating model reviews Merger and acquisition initiatives

Level 2 (L2): Business Workflow View

	Purpose	L2 breaks a business capability into its major workflows or subprocesses. It helps organizations understand how work is organized and where responsibilities exist.
	Key Characteristics	Department-level view Identifies major workflows Highlights ownership Shows key handoffs Still avoids detailed activities
	Typical Audience	Functional managers Process owners Transformation teams Business analysts
	Questions L2 Helps Answer	▶ How is this capability organized? ▶ Which teams are involved? ▶ Where do handoffs occur? ▶ Who owns each subprocess?

Level 2 (L2): Business Workflow View

	Example	L1 Capability: Handle Customer Support Requests L2 Decomposition: Capture Ticket Triage Request Resolve or Escalate Close Ticket At this stage, organizations gain visibility into major workflow components without becoming overwhelmed by operational detail.
	Business Value	L2 maps are valuable for: Resource planning Service design Operating model improvements RACI development Functional ownership alignment

Level 3 (L3): Detailed Process View

	Purpose	L3 provides the operational view of how work actually gets completed. This level breaks down an individual L2 process into detailed process steps, decisions, roles, and system interactions. It is the first level that supports detailed analysis, automation, measurement, and process optimization.
	Key Characteristics	Step-by-step workflow Decision points Role responsibilities System interactions Business rules Process logic
	Typical Audience	Process analysts Automation teams Operational managers Auditors Technology teams
	Questions L3 Helps Answer	➤ What happens first? ➤ Who performs each activity? ➤ What decisions are made? ➤ Which systems are involved? ➤ Where are process bottlenecks?
	Example	For the "Triage Request" subprocess: Receive ticket AI model classifies request Confidence score generated Decision point based on confidence threshold Auto-resolution completed or Ticket assigned to human agent The confidence threshold becomes a critical business rule that influences workflow routing. This level of detail cannot be represented in L1 or L2 views.
	Business Value	L3 maps support: Process optimization Robotic Process Automation (RPA) AI implementation Process mining Audit readiness Continuous improvement initiatives

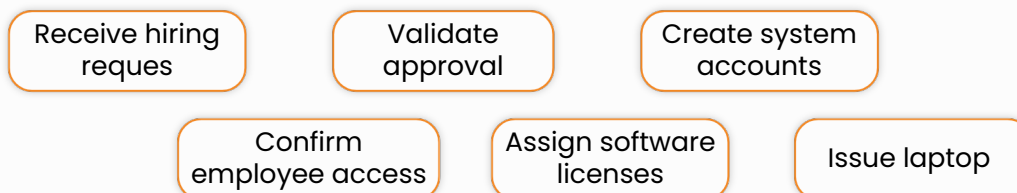
REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

Example 1: Employee Onboarding Process

L1 Employee Onboarding

- L2**
- Pre-Employment Documentation
 - IT Provisioning
 - Orientation
 - Manager Introduction
 - Training Completion

L3 (IT Provisioning)



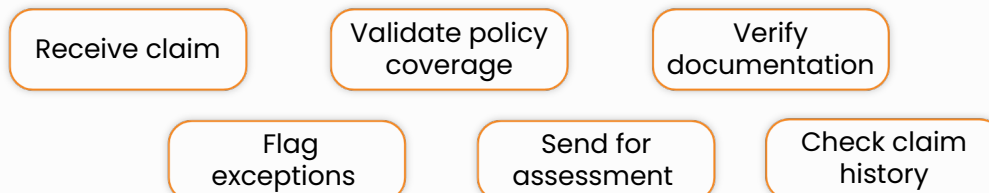
Business Benefit L3 analysis may reveal that delayed manager approvals are causing onboarding bottlenecks rather than technology provisioning itself.

Example 2: Claims Processing in Insurance

L1 Claims Management

- L2**
- Claim Intake
 - Verification
 - Assessment
 - Approval
 - Settlement

L3 (Verification)



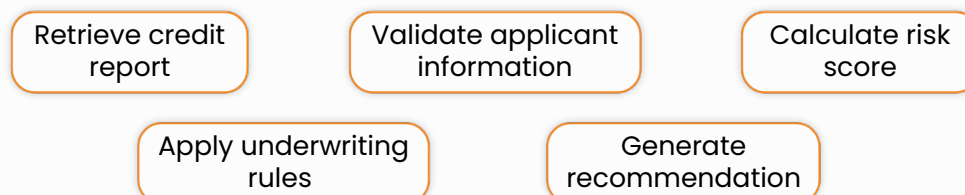
Business Benefit The organization discovers duplicate verification activities being performed by multiple teams, increasing turnaround time.

Example 3: Loan Approval Process

L1 Loan Origination

- L2**
- Application Submission
 - Credit Review
 - Risk Assessment
 - Approval

L3 (Credit Review)



Business Benefit Detailed analysis identifies manual credit checks that can be automated, reducing application processing time by several days.

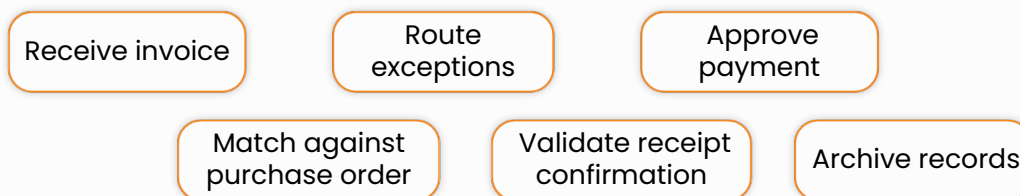
Example 4: Procure-to-Pay Process

L1 Procurement Management

L2

- Requisition
- Purchase Order Creation
- Vendor Fulfillment
- Payment
- Invoice Processing

L3 (Invoice Processing)



Business Benefit L3 mapping uncovers unnecessary approvals creating delays in vendor payments.

COMMON CHALLENGES WITH PROCESS MAPPING

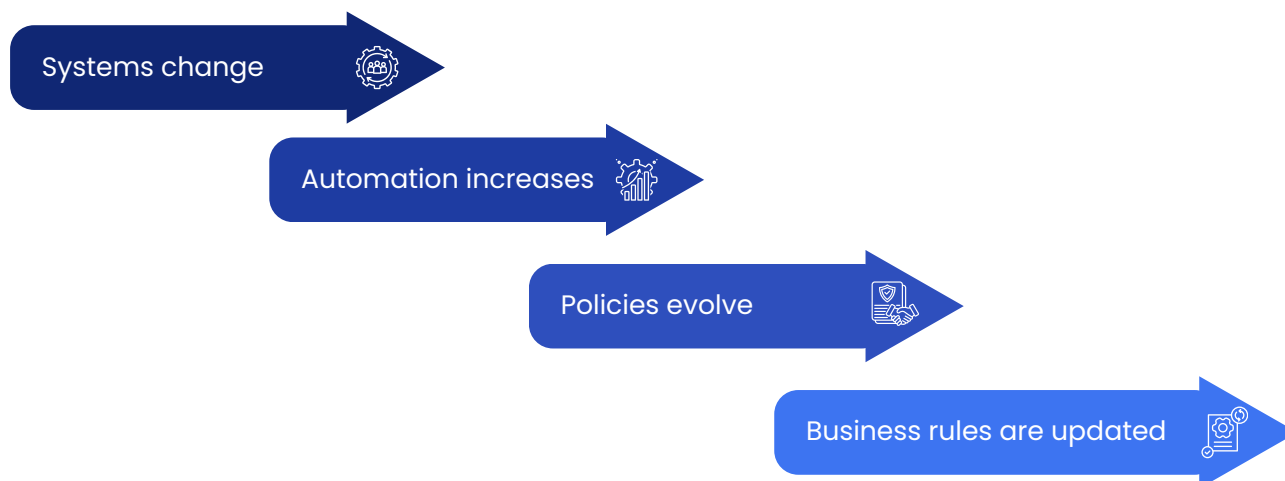
While process maps provide significant value, organizations should be aware of common challenges.

L1 Maps Often Become Static

Leadership teams use them extensively during strategy discussions, but they are often neglected after initial creation because they lack operational detail.

L3 Maps Require Continuous Maintenance

Detailed process maps quickly become outdated as:

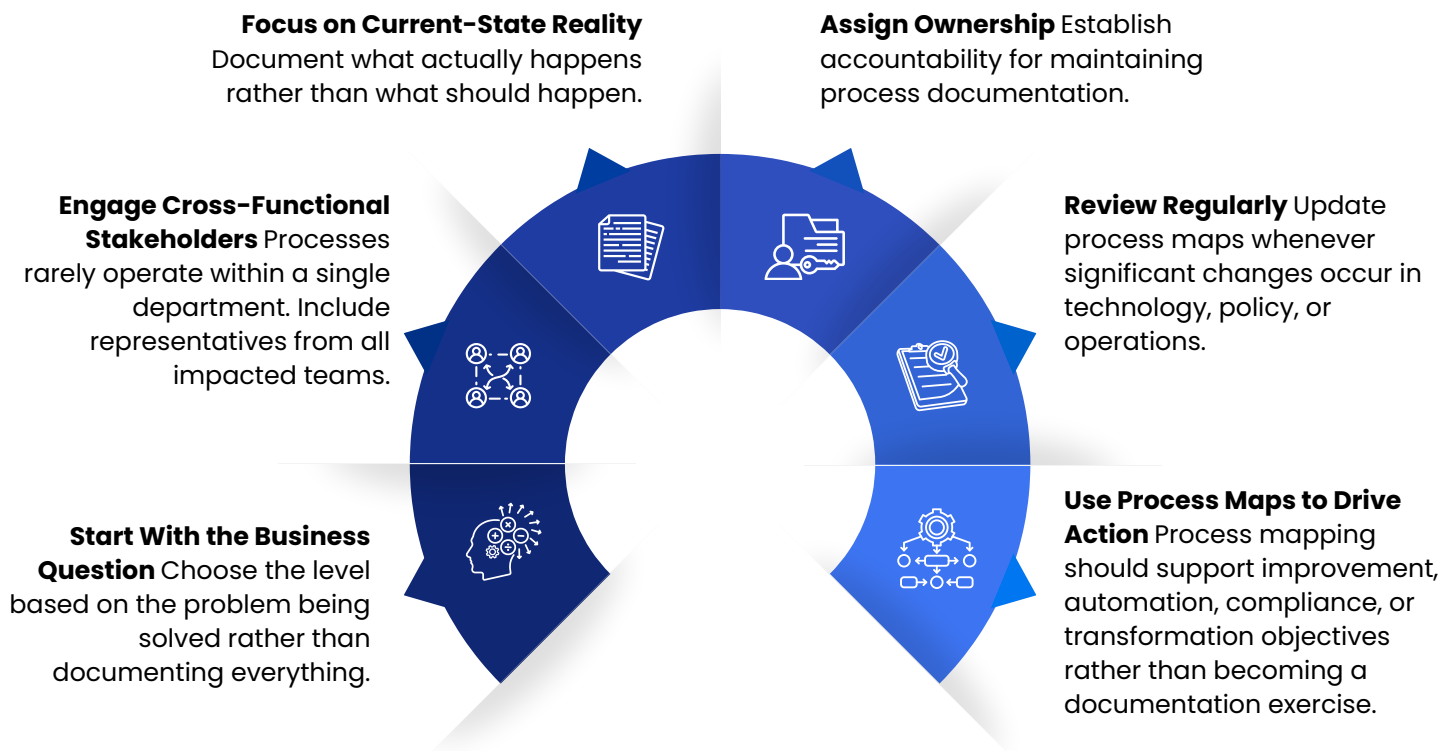


Without ownership and governance, L3 documentation can lose accuracy over time.

Too Much Detail Can Create False Confidence

A detailed process map may look complete while overlooking rare exceptions, policy variations, or edge cases that significantly impact operations. Process documentation should remain a living asset rather than a one-time exercise.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL PROCESS MAPPING



CONCLUSION

L1, L2, and L3 process maps are not competing approaches. They are complementary views of the same business process, each designed to answer a different question.

- › L1 answers: What does the organization do?
- › L2 answers: How is the work organized?
- › L3 answers: How is the work actually performed?

The most effective organizations understand that process mapping is not about creating more documentation. It is about creating the right visibility to support better decisions, stronger governance, operational excellence, and successful business transformation.

As businesses continue to adopt automation, AI, process mining, and digital transformation initiatives, well-structured process maps remain a foundational tool for understanding and improving how work gets done.