Relationship Mapping
The Continuous Improvement Map
- Relationship Mapping

- Relations in a complex situation don’t necessarily fit into familiar structures such as hierarchies.
- Links can be in any direction and between any pair of items.
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What is a Relationship Map?

- A visual display that shows the relationships between individual items.
- Allows to see and analyze the logical links between the different elements of any situation.
Example:

- Your network of personal and social relations can be represented in a form of map.
Interrelationship Digraph:

- An example of a relationship map.
- Shows the cause and effect relationships involved in a process or problem.
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Uses:

- To understand and organize any type of logical relationships between ideas, factors or issues.
- To show the relations between one or more problems and their causes.
- When solving a problem to identify the ideas of greatest impact for improvement.
- To show relationships and interactions of individuals and teams working together.
- To organize social networks to meet your personal and social goals.
Benefits:

- Helps bring the most important and expensive causes into attention so that you focus your efforts on what really matters.
- Helps when planning to improve relationships among team members to increase morale and productivity.

Helps identify:

- Team communication patterns.
- Indirect influence patterns.
- Frequency of interactions.
- Importance of interactions.
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- Comes after a data collection or an idea-generation exercise.
- Consists of nodes and lines.
- Lines are used to connect related nodes.
- Each node is connected with one or more nodes to denote a direct relationship.
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- Influence relationships can be represented using arrows.
- Arrows should be drawn from the element that influences to the one being influenced.
- If two elements influence each other, the arrow should be drawn to reflect the stronger influence.
- Line thickness can be used to indicate the strength of the relationship.
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Analyze the Situation:

- Connections can be counted once they have been identified.
- The nodes with the most connections are the key elements.
- The nodes that have primarily outgoing arrows indicate potential causes.
- Arrows flowing only away from a node indicate a root cause.
How to Construct a Relationship Map:

- Clearly explain the purpose for constructing the relationship map.
- Brainstorm or collect the problem elements.
- Write them on note cards, then place them on a flipchart.
- Look for causal relationships between each and every element.
- Draw an arrow from each element to the ones it causes or influences.
- Repeat this until all elements have been reviewed.
- Count the number of incoming and outgoing arrows.
- Write the totals beside each element.
- Identify and mark those elements that are likely to be the real causes.
- Plan and implement actions to solve the problem.
Relationship Mapping

Example – Why a Change Initiative has Failed?

**Change Obstacles**
- Paradigms
- A blaming culture
- It may take longer to change
- Change resistance
- Some people will never change

**Planning**
- A vision to change
- Sense of urgency
- Leadership
- A change agent
- A change plan

**Implementation**
- Communicate change vision
- Encourage personal development
- Training at all levels
- Performance management
- Quick wins
- Empowerment

Brainstorming or Affinity Diagram
Example – Why a Change Initiative has Failed?

- Change resistance
- Poor performance management
- Lack of training
- Paradigms
- A change agent is not exist
- Poor management support
- Increased work load
- Poor planning
- Change vision is not communicated
- Poor management

Construct the Diagram
Example – Why a Change Initiative has Failed?

- Increased work load
- Change resistance
- Poor management support
- Poor planning
- A change agent is not exist
- Lack of training
- Change vision is not communicated
- Poor performance management
- Paradigms

Analyze the Diagram


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Example – Examine the Indirect Influence Patterns within a Team:

[Diagram showing relationships between people with names: Sami, Zekaria, Peter, Sara, Nermin, Ali, Chadi, Demir, Emer.]
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Further Information:

- This tool is useful in project management where you identify where relationships may need improving in order for a project to be successful.
- Another variation is the influence diagram which is used to plan or forecast the flow of a process to identify the supporting factors and the potential blockages.