

About the author:

Laurie London, a.k.a. The Process Doc, brings over 25 years of experience to her clients' business needs. Laurie is a trained and certified Information Mapper with years of experience creating effective Operations Manuals.

Her expertise has been built through affiliations with diverse venues, structures, systems, and people, including world renowned companies such as Bose ® Corporation, Williams-Sonoma, The Sharper Image, and Neiman Marcus. Laurie was also a sole proprietor of both a design and manufacturing company and a specialty boutique

Prior to joining Dynamic Experiences Group, Laurie served as Bose Corporation's Retail Operations Manager. She was responsible for developing, aligning, and documenting business processes that today – 100+ stores later – remain the foundation for the retail division's operational excellence.

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Got Process?

Creating Order from Chaos

Tools for the Experience Series

Good businesses match what they sell to what their customers want. Great businesses empower their people to respond to what their customers need. Clearly defined and well documented processes can make all the difference.

A company's processes define precisely how it will move its strategy and vision to its desired results. What differentiates a company are not only its product and/or services, but *how* its business is conducted on a daily basis. If we want employees to perform to the standards we envision and expect, we must provide them with specific direction on how to do so. A clear, concise Operations Manual does just this. It supports consistent performance while enabling management and team to deliver or exceed expected results. Employee ownership and pride in a job well done has rewards too numerous to mention.

Accurate process roadmaps rely upon the knowledge and experience of subject matter experts. Both industry knowledge and retail expertise are needed for concise operational direction. We find that a team approach works well. Business owners, or in a corporate structure, department managers, provide industry knowledge while DEG brings the retail experience, perspective, and mapping skills necessary to appropriately capture operational detail. This approach to creating content ensures accurate information, process alignment, and feasibility of execution.

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Operations without Complications

We are committed to streamlining process detail and simplifying its implementation using a three-phase approach.

1. Discovery Phase:

We partner with you and your subject matter experts to understand and align your business practices.

We adapt our approach to suit each client's convenience, budget and timeline.

2. Content Development Phase:

We analyze and organize data to produce a content draft for client review and approval. Formats used are determined by the nature of the material being addressed. They include but are not limited to:

- Text
- Forms
- Checklists
- Images

3. Presentation Phase:

We deliver final process documentation in a format that assures maximum accessibility and ease of use.

- Hard copy (binder, folder, etc)
- Electronic version (intranet postings, downloadable forms, and checklists, etc.)

Elements of Success

In order to capture a company's processes and procedures in an effective Operations Manual, documentation must have the following elements:

- Content Relevancy
- Accessibility
- Format
- Structure

Content Relevancy: If you want employees to successfully deliver expected results, provide them with relevant information. Useful process roadmaps:

- capture and isolate pertinent information within each specific topic
- reflect only the details that are absolutely essential to its successful completion
- minimize 'information overload' so that an employee can focus on the job at hand

Accessibility: Information must not only be relevant, it must be accessible. This does not just refer to where the manual is kept, but how quickly specific detail can be located. Accessible information enables employees to:

- execute job responsibilities to expected standards
- confidently make smart decisions in a timely manner
- make decisions that positively impact a company's image

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- make decisions that reflect favorably on a company's profitability

Structure and Format: The structure and format of an Operations Manual are critical to making it both relevant and accessible. Appropriate structure and format:

- groups like subjects and processes together in a logical fashion
- ensures process detail is written and formatted so that it is quick to read and easy to follow
- easily accommodates new processes as well as the updates which are inevitable in today's ever changing business climate

The Method – Information Mapping

What is the best method for creating a user friendly structure and format?

We've determined, after diligent research, that Information Mapping® is far and away the best vehicle for process documentation. Here's why.

Information Mapping is a research based approach to the analysis, organization, and visual presentation of information. It is based on principles designed to organize information so that is easy to:

- access
- understand
- remember
- scan
- retrieve

Additionally, Information Mapped documentation lends itself to updates. Because of its modular structure, discrete units of information can easily be deleted or replaced with minimal disruption to the rest of the document.

The Information Mapped example on the next page illustrates the method. You will notice the format; blocks of information, labeled on the left, with an expanse of white space in between each block. The formatting is certainly a factor in Information Mapping®. However, it is the applied mapping principles of what content is in each block that best facilitates relevancy and accessibility.

So, Do You Got Process?

To summarize, the question is not whether you've got process. If you're in business, it's a given. The question you might ask is; how does your company communicate its direction so that desired results are achieved, the customer experience is positive, and employees take pride in a job well done? If you'd like, we can make it a reality.

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Emergency Store Closing

Overview Severe weather or other unusual circumstances may require a store to close before its scheduled time.

Who determines when to close? The Manager on Duty (MOD) collects all available information to determine whether the store should close before its scheduled time. Two factors to considered are:

- employee safety
 - mall management directives
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Whom to contact If a store closes before its scheduled time, the MOD is to inform the:

- District Manager via pager or “Urgent” voice mail
 - Systems Coordinator at 1-800-444-4444, ext. 909
 - Sales Audit at 1-800-444-4444, ext. 877 and
 - Manager of Loss Prevention at 1-800-444-4444, ext. 345
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MOD responsibilities The responsibilities of the MOD are to:

- contact any scheduled employee who will not need to come to work
 - contact all above members of the Corporate team
 - contact Store Manager, and
 - complete all closing procedures before leaving the store.
-

Payroll In the event of an emergency store closing:

- all employees who have arrived at work will be paid a minimum of four (4) hours or the amount of hours actually worked, whichever is greater, and
 - any employee who is scheduled to work, but not needed, will have the option to use vacation time or to take the hours as unpaid.
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Sales quota Sales quota will not be adjusted in the event of an emergency closing.