

## The Process of Providing

When starting in business, it's useful to consider a) the process of creating a business, which we covered in *The "Creating" Process* and b) the process of providing, which we'll look at now.

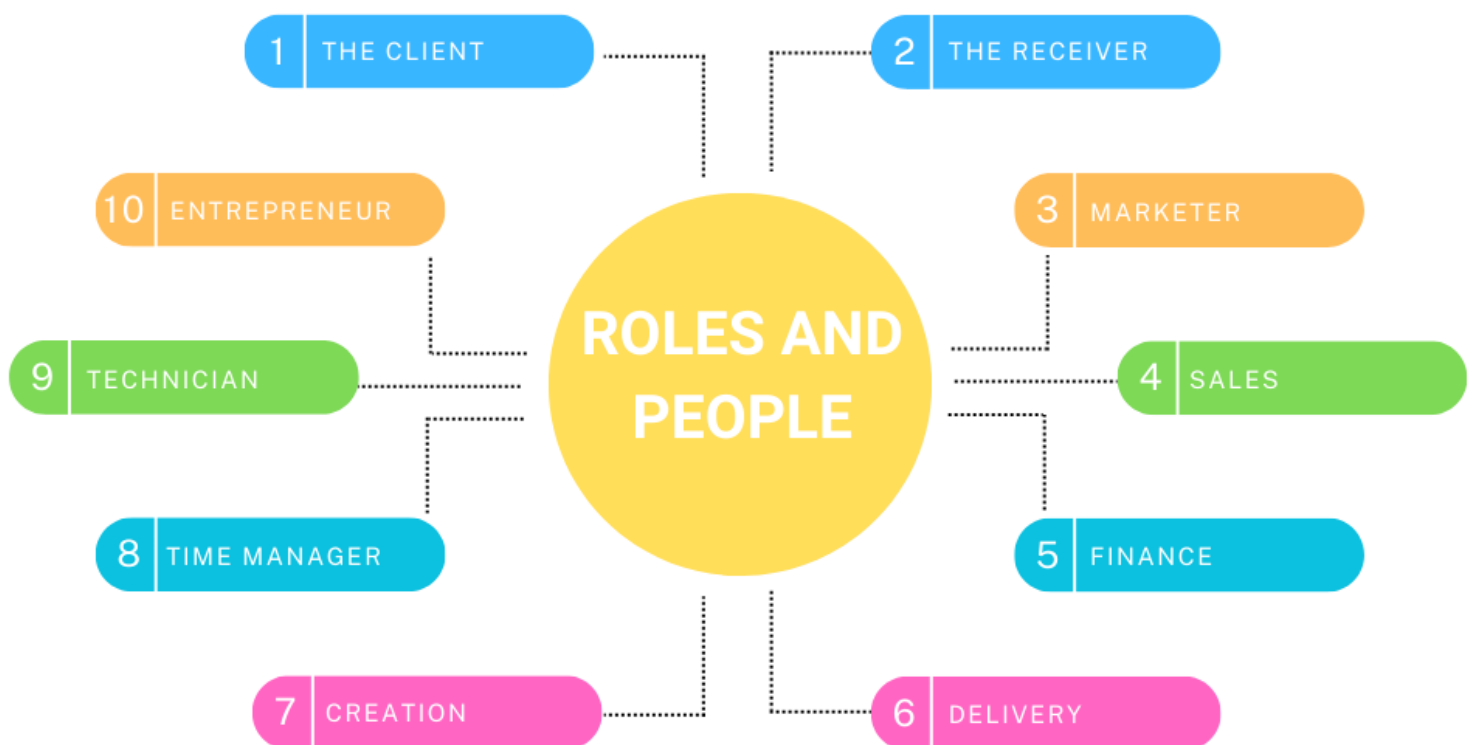
*The Process of Providing* is what I call the steps taken to bring the service or product from the initial stage, which may be when the client makes an enquiry or a purchase, to providing what they want. What I call *The Process of Providing* sometimes gets called a *Business Process Map* or *Business Process Mapping*.

It is useful to lay out *The Process of Providing* as soon as possible because it helps uncover what is needed, what may go wrong, what must go very right, and where is best to start. Once *The Process of Providing* is created, look at each step in the process, ask what can be measured and tracked, and create data points based on what can be gathered.

Let's build *The Process of Providing* together. But first, let's recap who is involved in your service from the first step to providing the service or product to the client.

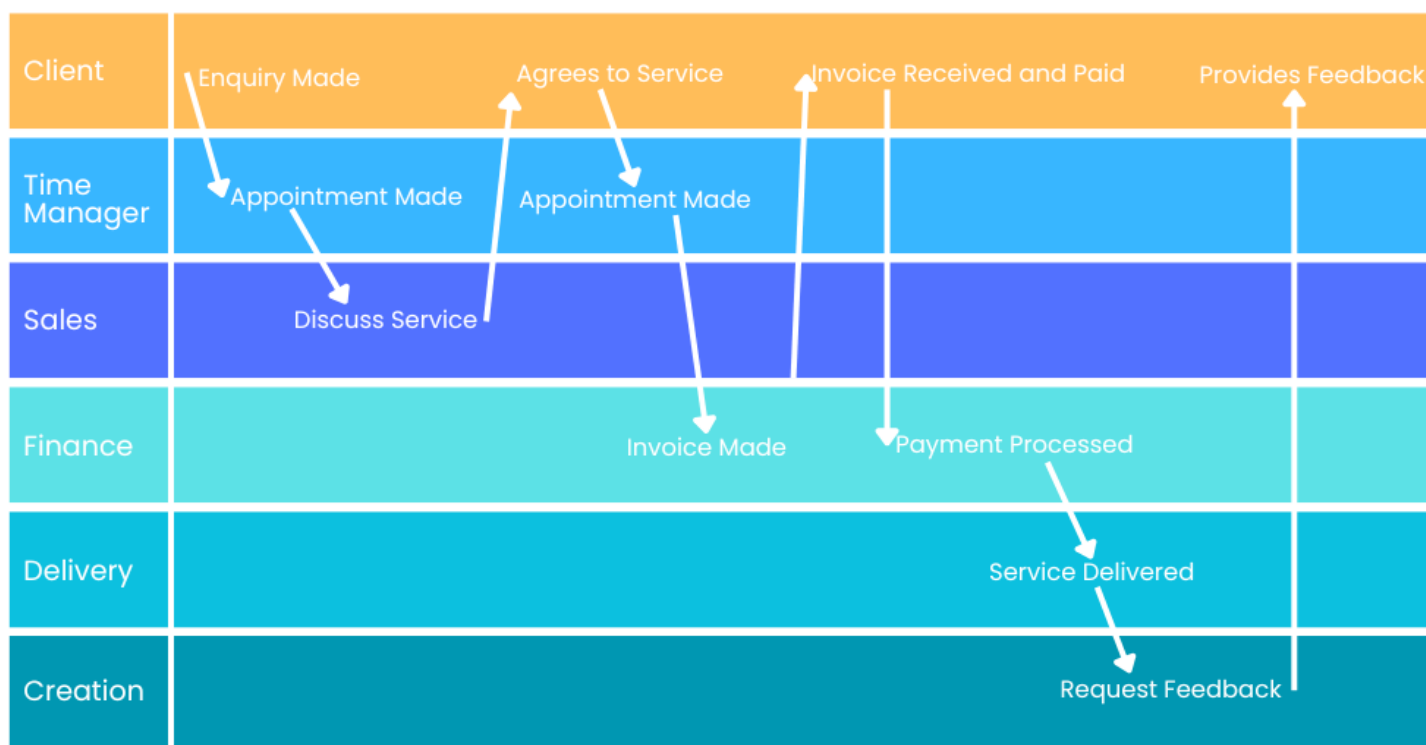
Your business involves the client, the receiver (of the service or product), marketer, sales, finance, value delivery, value creation, time manager, technician and entrepreneur.

## Who is involved in the service?



Let's take a very simple business transaction – for the sake of example, we'll use a business owner who works alone, which means they complete all tasks and parts in the business themselves, and they sell their time by providing a service online.

# Process of Providing



Above, *The Process of Providing* is laid out very simply and ideally...

1. The process starts as the client makes an enquiry.
2. Next the business owner must behave like a time manager and book an appointment to talk about the service with the client.
3. Once the appointment is made, the business owner uses their sales skills to discuss the service and help the client decide if the service is right for them.
4. In an ideal world, the client agrees then and there that the service is right for them.

5. This means that an appointment will be made to provide the service at a later date. At this point, the business owner must act as time manager again.
6. Once an appointment to deliver the service is made, the business owner must organise finances and create an invoice.
7. At this stage, the client who is responsible for paying the invoice. Should the client not pay the invoice within the agreed time, the business owner will start a detour in the process in order to follow up the payment.
8. Once the invoice is paid, the business owner organises the finances by processing the payment.
9. The business owner now sits down to deliver the service to the client, which may or may not involve the client being present. Delivering the service likely involves the business owner's technical skills.
10. After the service has been delivered, the business owner is interested to know how the service and process can be improved. The business owner considers value creation again and will ask the client for feedback.
11. Ideally, the client will take the time to provide feedback.

12. The feedback will begin the start of another process – *The Process of Improving Value*.

Mapping out all possible steps (best and worst case scenario) and the people who are required to complete each step is an effective way to plan for all eventualities and to gather data. In order to gather data about the business, each step in *The Process of Providing* must be tracked and managed. Try to gather as much data as possible by asking measurable questions. Below are *The Process of Providing* steps once more including some (but not all) questions that can be asked about each step...

1. The process starts as the client makes an enquiry.

- How many enquiries are made each day/week/month/quarter?
- What are the enquires about?
- Who makes the enquires?
- In what way are enquires made?
- What are clients looking to learn, achieve from their enquiry?
- How long does it take for the enquires to receive a response?

2. Next the business owner must behave like a time manager and book an appointment to talk about the service with the client.

- How many enquiries develop into a meeting to talk about the service?
- How much time passes between the enquiry made and an appointment?
- How many of the appointments that are booked take place?

How many clients do not attend their appointments?

3. Once the appointment is made, the business owner uses their sales skills by discussing the service and helping the client decide if the service is right for them.

- What types of questions are asked during the appointment?
- What types of doubts about the service do clients have?
- How long on average does the discussion take?

4. In an ideal world, the client agrees that the service is right for them.

- How long does it take the client to agree that the service is right for them?
- How many appointments to talk about the service conclude with a sale?

5. This means that an appointment will be made to deliver the service at a later date. At this point, the business owner must act as time manager again.

- How much time passes between the appointment to talk about the service and the appointment to deliver the service?

6. Once an appointment is made, the business owner must organise finances and create an invoice.

- How long does it take to organise the finance and create the invoice?
- How much time passes between the appointment to deliver the service being made and the invoice being made?

7. At this stage, the client who is responsible for paying the invoice. Should the client not pay the invoice in the agreed time, the business owner will start a detour in *The Process of Providing* in order to collect the payment.

- How long does it take for the client to pay the invoice?
- How often do payment follow ups happen?
- How many follow ups are sent?
- How often do payments get pulled from the system (the process ends)?

8. Once the invoice is paid, the business owner organises the finances by processing the payment.

- How long does it take to organise the finance and process the invoice?

9. The business owner now sits down to deliver the service to the client, which may or may not involve the client being present. Delivering the service likely involves the business owner's technical skills.

- How long does it take the business owner to complete the service?
- How many times can the business owner deliver the service per day/week/month/quarter?
- How many times on average does the client engage with the service?

10. After the service has been delivered, the business owner is interested to know how the service and process of providing can be improved. The business owner considers value creation again and will ask the client for feedback.

- How much time passes before the business owner requests feedback?



- What method of requesting feedback gets the best response rate?
11. Ideally, the client will take the time to provide feedback.
- How many clients respond to feedback?
  - How long does it take for clients to respond to feedback, if they do?
12. The feedback will begin the start of another process – *The Process of Improving Value*.
- How much of the feedback is taken on board?
  - How much of the feedback contributes to changes made?

By knowing what working process, *The Process of Providing*, you can know if what your way of providing your service to your client is working well or not, and where the process falls short.

This *Process of Providing* laid out above is very simple but serves demonstration well. This process may take a day from start to finish, or it may take over a year (which also needs to be tracked)!

It is interesting to lay out a *Process of Providing* including all possible detours, contingencies, policies initiated and more. The process may include many people and many, many steps!

*Process Mapping* doesn't stop at providing the service. There's nothing stopping a business owner from creating a process map for marketing alone, sales alone, delivery alone or more. We could create a process map for each and every element and eventuality of the business (although since the creating of a business is not a linear process, this task may be impossible to lay out realistically).

Take the time to understand your process, ask questions and track data to know the ins and outs of your business.