Constructing a delivery chain

INTRODUCTION

The delivery chain is the set of actors (people or organizations) and the relationships between them through which a given strategy in your delivery plan will be implemented. It can be used to support planning, identify risks, and solve problems.

The goal of this exercise is to construct a delivery chain, like the example shown on page 5. Once you have constructed the chain, use it to identify future risks and weaknesses, as well as feedback loops. Once complete, the delivery chains should be included in your delivery plan(s), likely as part of the strategy profile.

This exercise should be completed by a small group (no more than 10 people) of people who are knowledgeable about the way the strategy should ideally be implemented.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify the actors involved in your delivery chain
- Create the delivery chain to illustrate how implementation moves through the actors to reach the end user

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Markers
- You will need a large blank space on the wall, upon which you can post and write. You can do this by using a dry erase board, flip chart paper, or EDI's signature "brown paper." However you create this, it needs to be visible to the entire group and easy to change and add to.
- Rather than writing directly on the template you've created, you'll need to use small, repositionable cards. These cards can be just small pieces of paper, index cards or Post-Its, and there are a number of ways to make sure they are repositionable. If on a dry erase board, you could use magnets to hold cards in place, and on other surfaces, you could use sticky tack or spray-on adhesive – whatever won't damage your wall.

TIME

- 60 minutes

OVERALL FACILITATOR NOTES

- There is no template for this exercise, as the chain may take a number of forms, but you will generally want to draw the chain to show implementation as it moves from left to right. An example is provided on page 5 to illustrate what the chain should look like.
- If the overall structure of the delivery chain is evident up front, you might provide guidance (in a light template) to the levels of the chain. For State Education Agencies (SEAs) for example, work often starts at the state, then moves through regional organizations, then districts, schools, and classrooms to students. Setting these frames up front, and even writing them from left to right across the top of your wall space, may help with the identification and sorting of actors.

■ Note that we often think of drawing the chain in one of two ways: drawing the existing chain (as it works now) or drawing the ideal chain (how we are planning for it to work). Because this is a planning exercise, you should generally strive to draw the ideal chain, to show how it should work when the plan is implemented, but keep in mind that "ideal" in this case, doesn't mean perfect, and should represent realistically how the strategy will be implemented.

■ When you are creating the delivery chain in real time, things may get a little messy. You can always have someone take the ideas generated through this discussion and create a cleaner version later – the conversation is the important part for now.

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INSTRUCTIONS

Time	Activity	Facilitator notes	Materials
15 minutes	■ Identify the strategy for which you are constructing the delivery chain ■ Identify the end user of the strategy and the number of those that need to be reached; record those on a card and place on the right side of the wall ■ Identify the objective for that end user and record that on a card and place on the right side of the wall ■ Identify the beginning of the chain; record that on a card and place on the left side of the wall	■ Ask participants to share answers while you record on cards and place on the wall ■ Note that the end user will often be students, but may sometimes be teachers, faculty, parents, the general public, etc. – push the group to think about who the strategy is ultimately supposed to impact ■ Each actor (person or organization) in the chain, including the end user and the beginning of the chain, should be recorded on *one* card ■ Each actor in the chain should also have a number recorded on the card to represent how many of them there are ■ When identifying the objective for the end user, ask participants: What will the end user get out of this strategy? What will be different for them as a result?	■ Cards ■ Markers ■ Wall space
15 minutes	Brainstorm the other key actors or groups involved in the implementation of the strategy; record these on cards and place on the wall in the order of their role in the strategy's implementation from left to right	■ This will be one of the more difficult tasks for the facilitator, as it will involve some trial and error in moving the cards around to try to find the right order ■ In some cases, it may be helpful to start with the end user and work backwards, identifying actors and relationships from there, rather than just brainstorming all actors involved then trying to put them in order	■ Cards ■ Markers ■ Wall space

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Time	Activity	Facilitator notes	Materials
15 minutes	■ Draw the single, most important line of influence between the beginning of the chain and the end user ■ Use arrows to indicate which direction the implementation moves and record notes on the arrows to indicate the action that they represent	■ Ask participants to identify the single, most important line of influence from the beginning of the chain to the end user – this will often be the chain through the actors they identified first ■ An example of the notes to record on arrows: one actor "provides training" to the next, another actor "communicates expectations" to the next	■ Cards ■ Markers ■ Wall space
15 minutes	■ Draw additional arrows connecting secondary actors/groups ■ Record notes on those arrows to indicate the action that they represent	Note that sometimes there won't be a clear connection for a particular actor – in this case, ask the group if that actor should be removed from the chain	■ Cards ■ Markers ■ Wall space

EXAMPLE: COMPLETED DELIVERY CHAIN

Example: Delivery chain

Sample delivery chain: instructional materials

State	Region/ County	District	School	Classroom	Objective
Chief **1**					Teachers will adopt the new, standards-aligned instructional materials and use them to support effective instructional practices

Manage →

Curriculum/ instruction team **1**

— Train and distribute by 9/2011 → Regional centers **15**

— Train and distribute by 5/2012 → Curriculum directors **150**

— Train and distribute by 9/2012 → Principals **1500** — Train and distribute by 9/2013 → Teachers **65,000**

Coaches **400** — Train and distribute by 9/2013 → Teachers **65,000**

Consult ↓

Curriculum committees **150** — Train and Distribute by 9/2013 → Teachers **65,000**

Post by 9/2011 ↓

Website **1** — Market by 9/2012 → Teachers **65,000**