



Maps, Mapping and Decision Making

As we entered 2020, most of us were expecting to be bombarded by a multitude of election maps with the states, counties and precincts bearing the blues and reds of their respective political persuasion. This information is interesting to most of us, but crucial to candidates and campaign strategists. Still, none of us could have been prepared for the types of maps that have been informing our seclusion or impacting our decisions during the last few weeks and months.

Instead, we now closely follow the of maps presented during the national and local news broadcasts to help us understand the spread of Covid-19. In the beginning, we followed the world map and the creeping spread of the virus from country to country. Too quickly, the National and State maps showed it arriving in our own backyards. These maps display different types of information but for the most part they all display the number of tests administered, number of tests positive, hospitalizations and, unfortunately, deaths. The ability to map something accurately so that we understand a process or event has always been an important skill.

One of my fondest memories about the 60's was seeing my Dad studying the Standard Oil road map stretched across our dining room table the night before our summer vacations. He would trace possible routes from our town to the location of our R and R with a #2 pencil and then check the mileage chart below to see how many miles that route would take. When he finally discovered which route had the least miles, he would trace the route with his red pen, satisfied that he knew how to reach the destination. Then he would spend about as much time struggling to return the map to its original folds so that it could fit in the glove box of the old Chrysler, ready to guide us into the unknown on the morrow.

Although travel maps and mapping are different in today's world with the innovation of GPS, the process of mapping something to understand it better continues to serve an important and vital function. For all of us, the COVID maps keep the public informed about the crisis. For others, this information is crucial in order to identify 'hot spots' so that materials, medical resources and funding can be rushed to areas with the most need. As the information continues to be collected, authorities can make additional decisions for aid or see that the initial response has abated the crisis. The clear goal is to use the maps to visually recognize the targets and prepare plans of action to remove all traces of Covid-19 from our country.

Having the ability to map something accurately, whether it is a trip, business process or pandemic is key to approaching a problem and implementing a successful solution. The mapping process helps us understand our current situation. The maps help us understand where our biggest issues reside. They help us understand what actions must be taken if we are to overcome those issues.

They help us formulate those actions into working plans with metrics to guide us through the change. As they did for my dad, they can show us the best way to get from where we are to where we want to be.

At OPS, we utilize a Lean mapping tool that helps our clients understand their current situation and discover the issues blocking them from obtaining their desired future state. We work with clients to establish an action plan to achieve that end and work with them to see it through. Without the ability to map a process, it is extremely difficult to know where you are going and how to arrive there with minimized risk or cost.



As Americans, we are confident that we also see our current troubles through as well. If you would like more information on how to transition your organization from where you are to what you know you want to be, contact us at www.opsinc.com or 410-871-0995. We can help!

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