

Texas Children's Hospital Improves Patient Care While Reducing Healthcare Costs

SmartDraw is the Process Mapping Tool of Choice



Texas Children's Hospital, located in Houston, Texas, is a not-for-profit organization with a mission to create a healthier future for children and women throughout the community. Consistently ranked among the top children's hospitals in the nation, Texas Children's Hospital (TCH) employs more than 14,000.

Texas Children's Business Process Transformation (BPT) group's goal is to improve patient care while reducing healthcare costs. With just 14 employees, the BPT group makes extensive use of training to help different departments learn how to re-engineer complex processes.

"The business process transformation group provides lean six sigma training and mentoring to everyone in the organization that is interested," says Melanie Lowther, Director of BPT. "We add value by teaching new process improvement concepts and methodologies to employees as well as by sharing TCH best practices. We measure our success by the number of people signing up for our classes, and by the number completing certifications. Our value is validated by receiving invitations from executive leadership to participate in each major TCH improvement initiative."

Melinda Carter, BPT Engineer, adds, "I'm the leader for the lean six sigma training program and, as such, I develop the curriculum. The first step in improving a process is to document and understand that process. That makes the creation of a visual representation of complex processes a core tool for the BPT group."

TCH's existing tools for this – Visio, MS Office, and even Post-it® Notes– had proven too difficult to use and the output from all, while accurate, was not as professional as TCH wanted. "People would come through training, and it would take them forever to get comfortable using Visio," says Melinda. "Many of them never achieved the comfort level with Visio that we expect with them. With SmartDraw, they catch on much faster, it's so intuitive and easy to use, and it looks a lot nicer. You don't have to do as much to manipulate it."

This was especially crucial because the BPT group has its greatest effect by training others within the organization on how to achieve BPT. The lack of a visualization tool that was easy to learn and use was hampering the BPT group's progress.

What TCH needed was a tool that could handle extremely complex process diagrams, yet was easy to learn and simple to use. The answer came with an innovative alternative to Visio and the tools in MS Office, SmartDraw. "Everyone on the BPT team uses SmartDraw for process mapping, it's our go to tool and makes everything easy and clear. It's user-friendly and acts like a road map as you work on going from your current state to your future state," says Melinda.

Like many big changes, SmartDraw started small. The BPT group decided to offer SmartDraw, which has more than 4,500 templates that make it easy to create more than 70 different kinds of diagrams, as an alternative to Visio. Users could choose which tool they preferred to use.

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“SmartDraw’s growth has been viral and sustained,” says Melinda, “because it is intuitive, has so many uses, and produces professional – actually pretty – diagrams.”

Melanie adds, “Over time SmartDraw has become the process mapping tool of choice for every department. They were not required to use it; they can choose Visio if they like. That said, every single department now uses SmartDraw for every major project.” In addition, usage spread from process maps to other visuals in SmartDraw like timelines, facility layouts, organizational charts, meeting agendas, network diagrams, value stream maps, and certificates.

TCH’s BPT group has come to rely on SmartDraw to help them on their mission to continually improve healthcare. “We encourage everyone to go with SmartDraw,” says Melanie. “It’s more intuitive and easier to grasp and use. In fact, we have a lot of people that come back after the training and comment that they continue to use it for a variety of different things.”

Healthcare is something that touches every one of us. The mission of Texas Children’s Hospital is to improve patient care while reducing cost. SmartDraw has helped TCH with that mission, a mission that ultimately benefits all of us.

About SmartDraw

SmartDraw enables business professionals to easily and automatically create more than 70 types of common business diagrams, including flowcharts, project charts, mind maps, org charts, timelines and charts. SmartDraw is used by more than half of the Fortune 500, and thousands of law firms, police departments, health systems and private enterprises of all sizes. Founded in 1994, SmartDraw is privately-held, with headquarters in The Woodlands, Texas. For more information or to download a free trial of SmartDraw, please visit www.SmartDraw.com

About Texas Children’s Hospital

Texas Children’s Hospital, located in Houston, Texas, is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to create a healthier future for children and women throughout our global community by leading in patient care, education and research. We are proud to be consistently ranked among the top children’s hospitals in the nation. www.texaschildrens.org

