USING AI FOR PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Here are 11 practical ways AI can support you at every stage of process improvement.

See the next two pages for prompts.

DISCOVERY PHASE

Uncover key input from stakeholders	Use AI to uncover stakeholder needs and pain points. Upload survey feedback, notes from input sesssions, and emails – and AI will lift out key points.	Saves time in revealing key themes from a large volume of input.
Identify useful measures	Describe the process and project goals to AI, and ask for several current-state process measures worth gathering for analysis.	Keeps data gathering focused on measures most likely to highlight where improvements are needed.
Spot top areas for efficiency gains	Upload the current-state process map, and/or the gathered measures, and prompt AI to identify where the biggest occurrences of process waste are likely happening (e.g., rework, loopbacks, delays, etc.).	Objectively surfaces areas of inefficiency – to confirm the team's thinking or bring attention to process waste they're not seeing.

POSSIBILITY PHASE

Generate ideas for improvement	Give AI the project goals and discoveries, then ask for immediate short-term, and long-term improvements.	Sparks new thinking and prevents blank-page syndrome.
Learn from other institutions	Conduct an AI-powered search to see how other institutions approach the process.	Uncovers innovative ideas and potential best practices.
Sort ideas by impact and effort	Feed improvement ideas into AI, and ask it to categorize by impact and effort.	Prioritizes actions that likely have a high payoff relative to effort.
Refine future-state thinking	Use AI to describe the improved process steps based on selected actions – the output can serve as a draft or as general input when creating a future-state map.	Speeds up thinking through the improved flow – making it easier to build a map of the future state.

ACTION PLANNING PHASE

Identify tasks for implementation	Enter the selected improvement actions, and ask AI to list tasks for development and implementation	Provides an extra perspective to ensure nothing is overlooked.
Create timeline for implementation	Ask AI to build an implementation timeline showing who does what and when.	Creates first-draft plan that can then be refined and finalized.
Address change management	Prompt AI to identify potential barriers to your plan – and to suggest adjustments.	Adds an important and practical look at the issue of change.

IMPLEMENTATION

Review progress	Use AI to prepare questions or focus areas for 30/60/90-day check-ins.	Keeps review discussions focused and actionable.

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Use the following prompts to jump-start your use of AI for process improvement.

Important: For each prompt, upload or paste in any relevant process information (e.g., descriptions, metrics, maps, stakeholder input) so AI has the context it needs.

DISCOVERY PHASE

Uncover key input from stakeholders

- Analyze these comments and summarize the top five themes or concerns.
- Identify the most frequently mentioned stakeholder pain points in this input.
- Group this feedback into categories and suggest a label for each group.
- Identify sentiment trends in these responses, and flag responses showing serious urgent concerns.

Identify useful measures

- Here's a description of our current process and improvement goals. What metrics should we track?
- What 3-5 meaningful measures would best assess this process's effectiveness?
- Based on this process description, what are good leading indicators of performance?
- Suggest performance metrics tied to reducing errors and improving start-to-finish process time.

Spot top areas for efficiency gains

- Review this process map and identify where waste (e.g., delays, rework, handoffs) is likely occurring.
- Here's a list of process steps. Which contribute most to inefficiency?
- Given these time and volume metrics, where should we look first for performance gaps?
- Based on these descriptions, what types of waste may exist in this process?

POSSIBILITY PHASE

Generate ideas for improvement

- Given these issues, what are some short-term improvements we could implement quickly?
- Given these issues, suggest five creative ways to significantly improve this process within a year.
- What low-cost solutions might address the delays we are seeing here?
- Suggest innovative process changes that align with our goals of [insert project goals].

Learn from other institutions

- How are other higher-ed institutions handling [name of process], and which practices stand out?
- Summarize approaches peer institutions use to manage [name of process or specific task].
- What are common strategies in higher education for improving this type of process?
- Provide specific examples of how other organizations have improved this process.

Sort ideas by impact and effort

• Categorize our ideas by high/low impact and high/low effort.

• Create a 2x2 impact-effort grid from these improvement ideas.

• Rank these ideas by how much time they would save if implemented.

• Which ideas are quick wins vs. longer-term investments?

Refine future-state thinking

• Describe the ideal future-state process once these improvements are implemented.

• Based on these selected actions, outline the improved steps of the process.

• Generate a draft future-state map starting from the current pain points.

• What would this process look like with all process waste removed?

ACTION PLANNING PHASE

Develop an action plan

• What are the key steps required to implement these improvement ideas?

• Create a task list for developing and rolling out this new process.

• For each improvement idea, list the key activities needed to implement it.

• Assign roles and responsibilities for each task in this improvement plan.

Create a timeline for implementation

• Develop an x-week implementation timeline from these tasks. (Set x to match the target duration.)

• Create a draft schedule with milestones for rolling out these process changes.

• Generate a simple Gantt-style timeline with key tasks and dependencies.

Address change management

• What resistance might we face when implementing this plan, and how can we address it?

• Suggest 3-5 communication tactics to help staff adopt these changes.

• What are common change management pitfalls, and how can we avoid them?

• How can we best prepare stakeholders for a successful process rollout?

IMPLEMENTATION

Review progress

• Suggest key questions to ask during a 30-day progress review of this improvement effort.

• At a 60-day check-in, what should we look for to ensure implementation is on track?

• Create a discussion guide for a 90-day review focused on results and next steps.

• How can we evaluate whether this change is having the intended effect?