

# Life Maps and Supply Planning Maps

What they have in common: Success



Paul McGuire - Principal, Oliver Wight Americas

Imagine the **possibilities**,  
realize the **potential**.

*I met Janie at college. She was dating my roommate, Fred, who was a total knucklehead. Sound familiar?*

*Our two children are now at college. Tuition runs a bit north of \$100,000 annually. Both kids are stellar students and athletes, so I'm 'okay' with the spending the cash. Janie has a boutique on-line travel business, which is earning more than I do, as Janie reminds me whenever I complain about the kids' tuitions.*

I've recently accepted a role as Vice President of Operations with a very promising consumer packaged goods company in the Pacific Northwest. This company has an incredibly strong pipeline of new products. Brad, the Chief Executive Officer, is worried that their Supply Chain is going to stifle the company's performance.

That's where I come in. I'm the supply guy. I've been part of two fantastic "turn-arounds" in the last 10 years, largely the result of supply improvements, plus a bit of Luck, if the truth be known. More on that coming up.



Today is Sunday morning, and the movers are supposed to show up this week to get us off to the new job and home. I have my weekly golf match in about an hour, and I'm wolfing down a bagel when I see Janie approaching with what I know to be attic "memorabilia" (a.k.a. junk). She wants what we call my "throw" or "go" vote on this stuff. In other words, what stuff are we bringing to the next home and what stuff gets chunked. How do I know?

Well, the identical scenario took place just prior to my first turn-around move. Ten years ago, on a Sunday morning in a different home and kitchen, Janie showed up with the eleventh hour "memorabilia" attic box. I was leaving for the golf course but had 15 minutes to look over a few "obligatory" pieces to keep the peace. First up were a couple high school prom dresses and a pair of cheerleader saddle shoes!

"Go!" I said. Of course, that was the sensible vote! (It's her stuff.)

Next up were several dozen papers that had yellowed.

"Oh! Your Life Maps. Do you want to keep these?" Janie asked.

I can still see the guilty expression on her face. "I threw a Life Map out last night that you left on the counter. It's in the garbage," she said apologetically.

Janie and I got in the habit of calling them Life Maps, because we used them for anything "in life" we wanted to improve upon. I sketched them out for financial goals, career goals, golf goals, etc. I even created a couple for learning Spanish and French. Janie used one for her business, and that has been a great success, as Janie has continually reminded me over the years.

We tape the Life Maps that pertain to our personal lives on the bathroom mirror. I get to review mine for 10 minutes each morning while I shave, and Janie peruses hers for more than 90 minutes. (It's a typical marital ratio, I have been advised.)

One thing we know for sure; Life Maps work. They create awareness in your mind as the items 'spring up' throughout each day. As a result, you accomplish the tasks defined in the map.

I thumbed through the Life Maps Janie retrieved from the attic that Sunday 10 years ago and looked at the Life Map rescued from the garbage. "They're a 'Throw.' No problem," I said. (Another sensible answer, since it was my stuff.)

I had second thoughts as I prepared to leave for golf and retrieved two Life Maps, including the one from the garbage. I placed them on the passenger seat and headed to the golf course.



I arrived at the golf course with about 10 minutes to spare. I used some of the time to study the old, yellowed Life Maps. One was an old golf Life Map I had created, and the other was the map retrieved from the garbage. It was titled Supply Planning Model. The similarities caught my attention.

## The First Turn-Around 10 Years Ago



I remember the first day of work at the first turn-around company. At my staff introductory meeting, the Plant Manager, Bill, gave me information on the company's Supply Planning performance to review. I made a mental note to see Bill first thing tomorrow morning. I also wanted to gauge whether Bill had any bad feelings about reporting to me. He had been with the company for 26 years and was a very solid candidate for the Vice President of Operations position.

When I arrived at Bill's office at 7:00 am the next day, he quickly assured me that he harbored no ill feelings and was happy that someone with fresh perspective was hired for the position. I looked around his office with some awe. The office felt like an Ivy League professor's study space. Books consumed most of the space, making it hard to find a place to sit.

None of the furnishings matched. The upholstered armchairs were worn like 10-year-old leather shoes. The furnishings gave off the same smell as my grandfather's tool shed, and there were noticeable cobwebs where the walls met a yellowing ceiling.

I was impressed with the framed pictures on the wall behind shiny glass. I had seen "celebrity pictures" on office walls in the past, but never before, business planning pioneers Oliver Wight, Joe Orlicky, George Plossl, and Eliyahu Goldratt side by side with Olympic runners Roger Bannister and Steve Prefontaine. A Brown University Diploma and an American Production and Inventory Control Society (Fellow Level) Certificate also graced the walls. Fellow-Level Certifications were awarded for top exam performances, and they are rare.

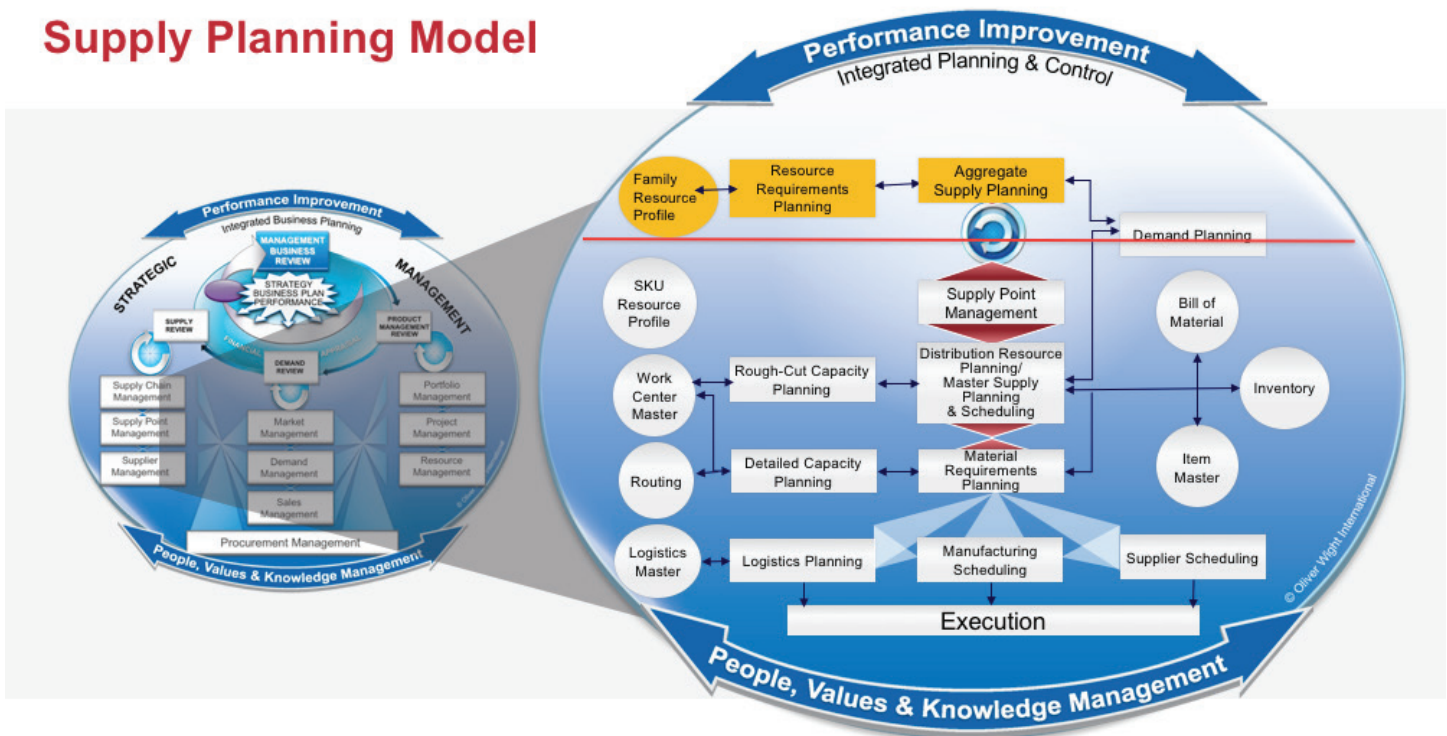
Seeing me looking at the photos of Bannister and Prefontaine, Bill explained that he ran the mile while attending Brown University and said, with pride, that he once came close to running a sub-4-minute mile himself. Bill could read a bit of confusion on my face and reminded me that Bannister was the first guy to ever break the 4-minute mile, and that Prefontaine once held every U.S. record between 2,000 and 10,000 meters, "Oh yeah, I am remembering that now," (I lied.)

Bill obviously admired these men. Maybe he drew inspiration from looking at their photos every day, much like the Life Maps on the bathroom mirror helped keep Janie and me on track.

To get the conversation started with Bill, I pulled the Supply Planning Life Map from my computer bag. I was a bit embarrassed that it had a ketchup stain and possibly smelled faintly of onions.

“Ah! Ollie’s Supply Planning Model,” Bill chuckled as I apologized.

## Supply Planning Model



I kicked the door shut from my sitting position. I think we both knew we were going to be talking for a while. I didn’t realize at the time that this would be a day where luck would strike.



## An Education on What Makes Supply Planning Work

"This is how Ollie's Plumbing Chart has evolved over the past 50 years. You remember the Plumbing Chart?" Bill said. He pulled from his desk the latest Oliver Wight Supply Planning model. I nodded in response. I appreciate the contributions of Oliver "Ollie" Wight and the other planning pioneers, but Bill seems to have intimate knowledge of their contributions.

We discussed the Supply Planning Life Map, and I blab on for about 20 minutes recounting Janie's Life Map story. As I finished, I reached into my computer bag again and took out the Golf Life Map.

"What do you think?" I asked Bill. "Do you see similarities between my Golf Life Map and the Oliver Wight Supply Planning Model?"

Bill laughed. "Of course," he said. "The overall process is called Golf, and you have identified selective components within the process. Only yours is a Golf Map, not a Supply Planning Model or Map as you like to say."

"But isn't the Enterprise Resource Planning system really the process or 90 percent of the process these days? And If you manage the software, you manage the process. Is that not right?" I asked.



Unexpectedly, an unfriendly silence snuffed out the room's former 'Mr. Rogers' ambiance. Bill eyed me over the top rim of his glasses. His reddened face looked almost to be the result of first-degree burns.

I could see Bill was visibly upset, so I gave him a few moments to recover.

In these moments, Bill searched for something on his computer that was attached to two screens. He grabbed the Golf Life Map from the top of his desk and taped it to one of the screens. He then turned the screens so they were facing me. The right screen had the Oliver Wight Business Model, and the left screen the taped golf map.

"We spent millions of dollars on the best software money can buy," Bill began. "If it was 90 percent of the answer for process execution, you wouldn't be here today to get us turned around."

His voice was escalating a bit. "Hell! People don't even use the ERP system; they could never get it to match up to the process. They use Excel!" he shouted.

He lowered the volume of his voice and continued. "My guess is that you are a very good golfer today. Your map is dated 15 years back. The document is well worn, and you still have it and likely still use it. Do I have this about right?"

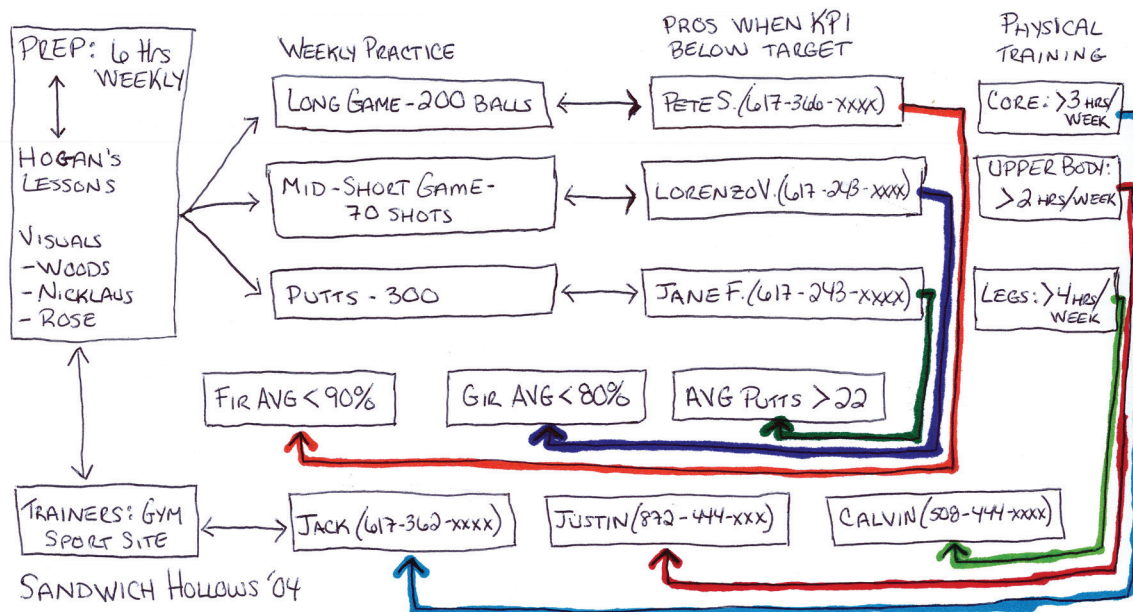
"Yes. I'm a scratch golfer. I have been using that map for the past 15 years," I answered.

Bill continued the cross-examination. "Who executed and owned all the tasks on your golf map?"

Somewhat stumped by the obvious for a second or two, I awkwardly answer, "Me."

Pointing to the Short Game rectangle and relevant key performance indicator, Greens in Regulation, he asked, "What would you do when the KPI went sideways?"

"Practice for hours and see my Pro if I couldn't fix it," I replied.

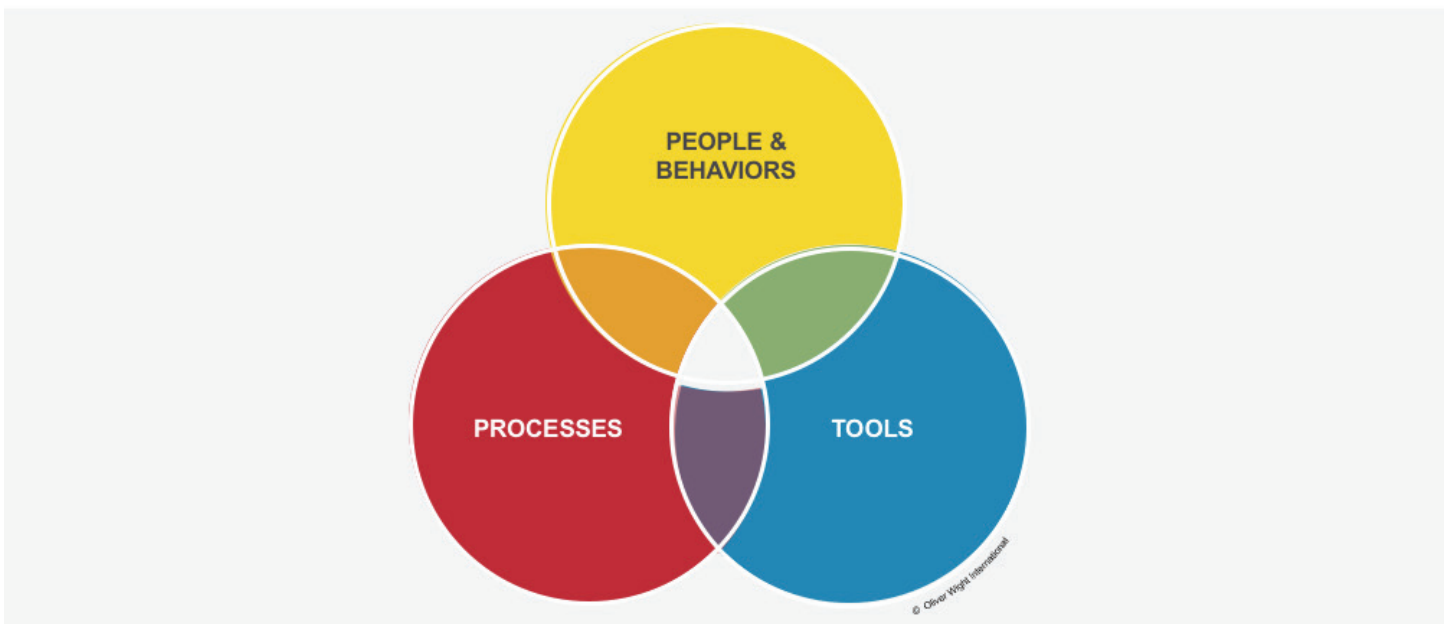


"Results?" Bill asked rhetorically.

"Okay, Bill. I get what you are saying," I replied. "You expect actual names for those responsible for each rectangle and circle in the Oliver Wight Supply Planning Model?"

"You need the right names," he corrected me, as he searched for another image on his computer. Within moments, he pulled up an Oliver Wight image that featured the words, People, Processes, and Tools.

## Key Components of Integration



Bill pointed to the circle labeled People. "These need to be your Process Knowledge Leaders. They not only understand their processes, but they understand the integration of those processes across the entire Supply Planning model. They're leaders, and they are always under the Process hood. They find problems before they become problems," he said.

Then he pointed to the Tools circle. "They also get under the Tool hood. They become the software designers and experts. They get the tools, such as the ERP system, to match up to the process," he said.

Next, he tapped on the Process circle. He explained passionately, "They make sure their direct reports regularly communicate how the process is operating and any threats or risks to the process. All key components are measured against standard expectations. Subpar performances are reported out weekly, including identification of the root causes!"



Now Bill was on a roll with his explanations. “This is why Oliver Wight emphasizes People over Processes and Tools,” he said, nearly shouting. “Without quality people with specific skill sets in each key role, the Processes and Tools pieces don’t get done right!”

“AND YES! When we were operating at Class A levels, we had the owner’s name in each rectangle and circle in the Supply Planning Model. There are only a couple of the original owners left in the company. If we had focused on training their replacements with the skills we were losing rather than replacing them with people who knew the ERP functions well, there is no question we would still be operating at Class A.”

With that last bit of information, we both sat quietly for a few moments. Finally, I got to my feet and thanked Bill for his time and a very informative conversation. He thanked me as well and offered to come by my office whenever needed.

I glanced at my phone. It was nearly 5:30 p.m. Wow, the time flew by!

I went to my office. It looked barren compared to Bill’s digs. I responded to a couple of emails and made it home about 7:00 p.m.

### Janie’s Wisdom

The first thing Janie asked when I entered the house was, “Well, how did the day go?”

Over a couple glasses of wine, I recounted everything Bill said, then asked what she thought about it.

Her wine glass froze in her hand for a moment. She darted her eyes in my direction without turning her head.

“Seriously?” she asked. “How much wine have you had?”





I turned my palms up. "I'm just asking for an opinion," I replied.

Janie started to laugh. "Dude! Did something fall on your head?" she said. "You better hope Bill doesn't win a lottery! Give him the resources he's recommending and let him run the Big Show. That guy knows Life Maps, and we know Life Maps work when you work them!"

She ended this wisdom transfer with a Cash Register ChaChing fist pump, and said, "Let's go to bed."

Janie may never know the full impact of her words. Bill became almost like a private consultant to me during this first turn-around. His position and responsibilities increased substantially, along with his salary.

We followed the Oliver Wight Supply Model to a T. Every rectangle and circle were owned by highly skilled and trained leaders. We spent what seemed like a small fortune on the front end in education and process design, but we got the investment back in spades every month. We never missed the budget. Operational costs fell by 40 percent, and inventory was reduced by 40 percent as well. And we never missed a new product launch.

That was the end of Turn-around #1 for me. I was lucky to have Bill, But there was nothing lucky about the performance improvements. We had knowledgeable leaders who owned each 'rectangle and circle' in the Oliver Wight Supply Model (Map). The results were skill driven. We used the same recipe and had even better results for Turn-around #2. When you can 'knock it down' twice (golf parlance for "holed putts"), using the same map, luck has nothing to do with it.

Now, I'm off for what I'll make sure is Turn-around #3. It's not a "gimmie," but we'll knock it down again. And when I hit all incentives, I'll be making a bit north of Janie!

She won't like that. That will require another Life Map.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Paul McGuire** joined Oliver Wight Americas after more than 30 years in industry. He is a Supply Chain expert with multiple MRP II Class A and SAP implementations to his credit. During his 14 years with Procter & Gamble/Gillette, Paul earned an SAP Master Instructor Level Rating in supply planning. He is credited with designing and developing Gillette's initial Global Supply Planning Metrics Dashboard and leading the Oral-B and Braun APO implementation. Prior to joining Gillette, Paul had re-engineered Instron's Final Assembly process and implemented a similar design at Stanley Tools. Each engagement realized double-digit customer service improvements while reducing inventory levels. In his most recent assignment, he led multiple Sanofi plants to Class A certifications.

Paul began his career as a factory planner and, over the course of 30 years, he has managed supply planning organizations at both director and manager levels. In each assignment, he led process improvement across the business functions that must integrate with supply planning for flawless execution.

Paul has been a requested speaker, trainer, and coach at P&G, Gillette, Stanley Tool, and Sanofi. He has authored countless work documents and is credited with writing MPS for Dummies while at Stanley.

Paul received his BA from Fordham University, PMP from Project Management Institute, and his CPIM from APICS.

## ABOUT OLIVER WIGHT

At Oliver Wight, we believe sustainable business improvement can only be delivered by your own people. So, unlike other consultancy firms, we transfer our knowledge to you; knowledge that comes from nearly 50 years of working with some of the world's best-known companies.

*The Oliver Wight Class A Standard for Business Excellence* is recognized by organizations and industry commentators as the definitive measure of business excellence. We have a long-standing reputation for innovation; we continually challenge the industry status quo, so you get the latest in fresh thinking around core business processes and their integration with people and technology.

Your Oliver Wight partners will coach, guide, and inspire your people to drive change throughout your organization, allowing you to create a culture of continuous improvement and innovation that simply becomes, for you, 'the way we do things.' We call our approach to change management the Proven Path; it's a proven, sustainable approach that will transform your business performance and deliver results straight to the bottom line.



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