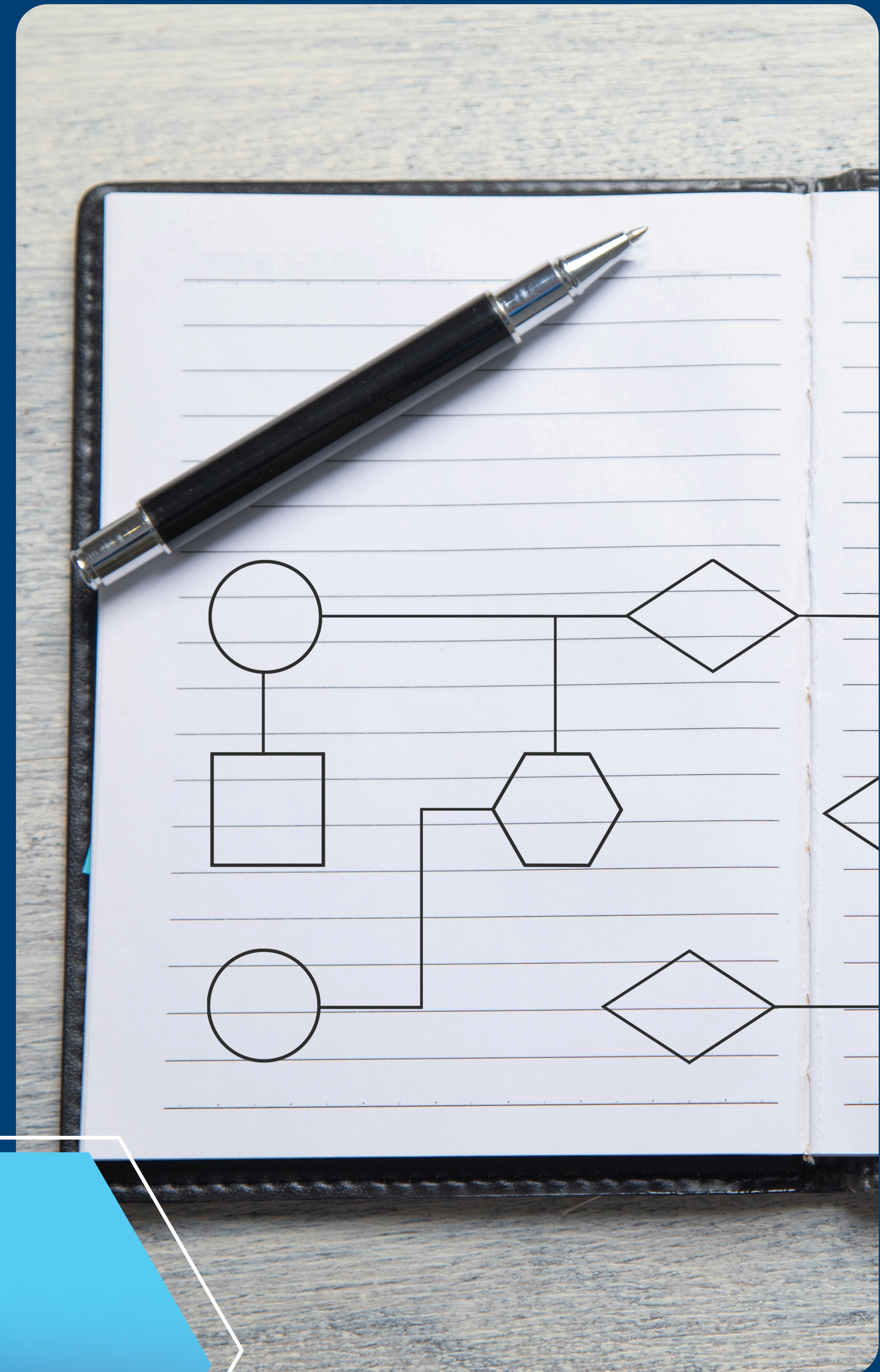


THE 2026 PROCESS & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLAYBOOK

What's Working, What's Not, and
Where to Focus Now



Executive Summary

Most organizations aren't struggling with knowing what to improve. They're struggling with how to make it stick.

APQC's latest research across **150+** process and performance professionals reveals a clear pattern:

- ▶ Priorities are stabilizing
- ▶ Investments are increasing
- ▶ But impact is inconsistent

**PROCESS
MANAGEMENT** 94%
&
**CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT** 89%

remain the top focus areas in 2026—but organizations are still facing persistent execution gaps.

The Takeaway:

This isn't a strategy problem. It's a system and culture problem.

The Big Shift



Over the past few years, process and performance management has evolved:

- ▶ From **functional optimization** → to **end-to-end thinking**
- ▶ From **projects** → to **continuous improvement systems**
- ▶ From **tools** → to **culture and behavior change**

Organizations are increasingly focused on:

- ▶ **Connecting work across the value chain**
- ▶ **Embedding improvement into daily operations**
- ▶ **Aligning process work to business outcomes**

But most aren't there yet.

Top Priorities for 2026

What organizations say they're focused on

94%

Process
Management

89%

Continuous
Improvement

76%

Data and
measurement

At a more tactical level, three themes dominate:

1 End-to-end process visibility

- #1 priority year over year
- Driven by need for better customer experience and scalability

2 Process-thinking culture

- Shift from siloed functions → value stream thinking
- Emphasis on shared ownership

3 Process Maturity

- Moving from ad hoc → structured, governed systems

INSIGHT:

Organizations know **what good looks like**. Execution is the barrier.

Where Organizations are Struggling

The top challenges reveal the real story

PROCESS MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

31% Defining and mapping end-to-end processes

30% Moving to a process-thinking culture

29% Improving maturity

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CHALLENGES

51% Building a continuous improvement culture

46% Systematically identifying opportunities

34% Aligning efforts across the organization

WHAT THIS MEANS:

- ▶ The hardest problems are not technical, they are organizational and cultural

The Hidden Gap

Organizations are investing—but not integrating



82%

are investing in digital tools and technologies

But most report only **partial integration across functions**

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Organizations are layering technology onto **immature process systems**.

At the same time:

- ▶ Many BPM teams are still relatively new
- ▶ Most are seen as only **“somewhat effective”**

KPI Reality Check

What gets measured—and what doesn't

**MOST
ORGANIZATIONS
RELY HEAVILY ON:**



74%
Financial
Results

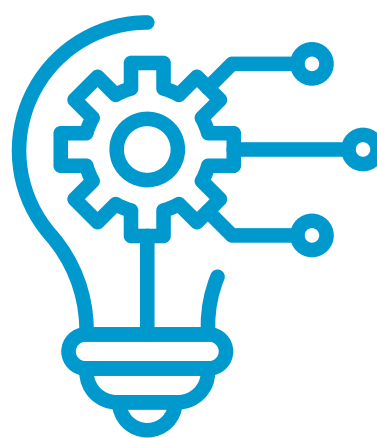


66%
Margins



54%
Customer
Satisfaction

**BUT THEY OFTEN
UNDER-MEASURE:**



Innovation



Idea
Quality



Long-term
value drivers

At the same time:

- ▶ KPIs are not consistently used in decision-making
- ▶ Many organizations use them only “**some of the time**”

INSIGHT:

Organizations are measuring outcomes—but not always using them to drive action.

What High-Performing Organizations Do Differently

Based on research, leading organizations focus on:

1

CULTURE OVER COMPLIANCE

They embed:

- ▶ Process thinking
- ▶ Continuous improvement
- ▶ Data-driven decisions

2

END-TO-END OWNERSHIP

They move from:

- ▶ “Process team owns the process” to “The business owns the process”

3

PORTFOLIO-BASED PRIORITIZATION

They:

- ▶ Evaluate initiatives by value, risk, and impact
- ▶ Manage improvement like a portfolio

4

MEASUREMENT THAT DRIVES DECISIONS

They:

- ▶ Align KPI's to strategy
- ▶ Use data in real time —not just reporting



What This Means For You

Based on research, leading organizations focus on:

IF YOU'RE LIKE MOST ORGANIZATIONS, YOU ARE LIKELY:

- ✓ Investing in process and digital tools
- ✓ Running improvement initiatives
- ✓ Tracking performance

BUT STILL STRUGGLING WITH:

- ✗ Alignment across functions
- ✗ Sustained improvement
- ✗ Turning data into decisions



The opportunity is not to do more.

It's to connect what you're already doing.

Want the Full Picture?

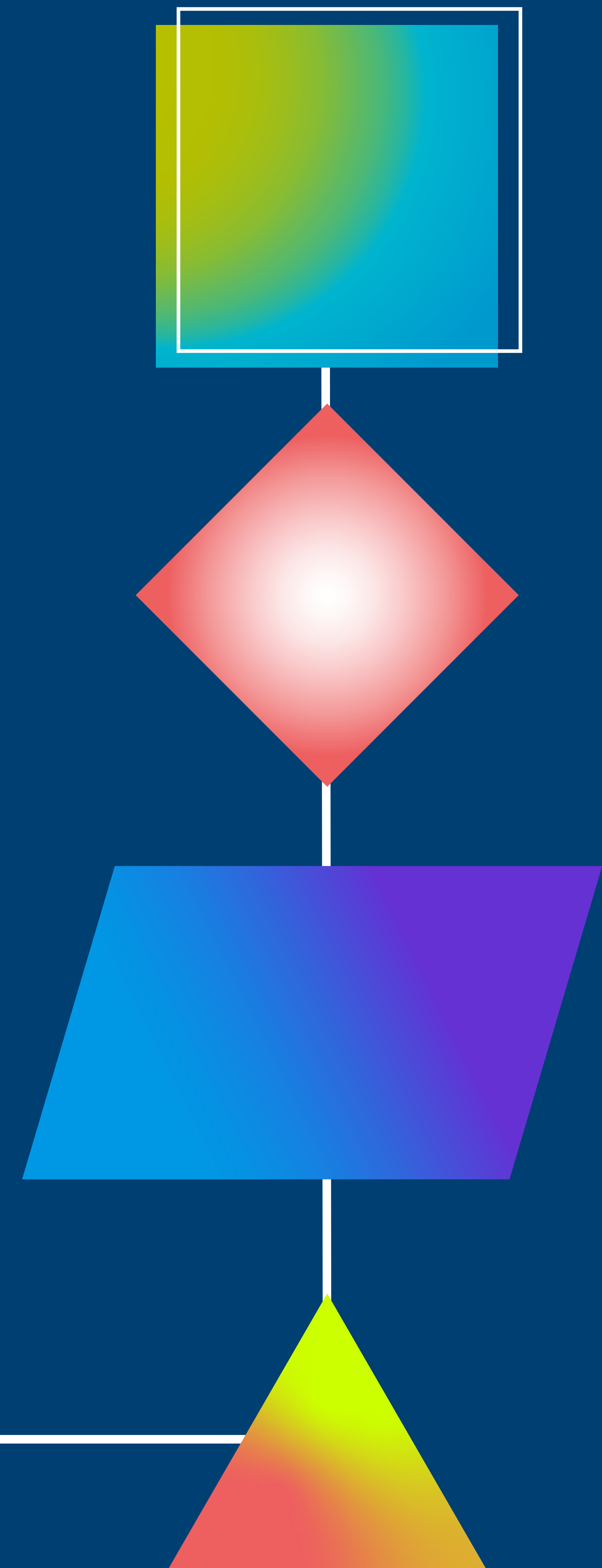
This playbook highlights just a portion of the findings.

Explore the full **2026 Process and Performance Management Research Collection**, including:

- ▶ The complete survey report
- ▶ KPI benchmarks and measurement guidance
- ▶ Practical tools and implementation resources
- ▶ Additional insights across process, performance, and digital transformation



[Click here](#) or scan the QR code to access the full research collection



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