**LEARNER GUIDE**

**Employ A Systematic Approach To Achieving Objectives**

Unit Standard 242822

Level 4 Credits 10

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# FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

Formative assessment SO1 AC 1 – 3

Divide into groups

#### Case study 1

You have to develop a community garden at the community centre. The purpose is to get children and unemployed people in the community involved in growing vegetables and fruit.

Select a team leader and as a team, do the following:

Write a statement of general intent specifying the aim, according to identified needs of the project.

Write SMART objectives, making sure that you specify the following measurable parameters: performance outputs, cost, quantity, quality, dimensions, tolerances, deadlines and safety

Make sure that all the team members are involved.

Facilitator instructions

The purpose of the activities in this guide is to give learners exposure in employing a systematic approach to achieving objectives. This means that their first efforts will not be perfect, and that you will have to give assistance to the different groups.

Where possible, groups have to present their work to the rest of the class for discussion

Please note that the efforts of the learners do not have to be perfect, but must show that learners understand the concepts

Formative assessment SO2 AC 1 – 4

Divide into groups

Refer to case study 1 and do the following:

* Develop an action plan
* Develop a task list that includes:
* Time and resource allocations
* The following criteria for success: checkpoints, indicators and contingency plans, methods to avoid potential threats, measuring output from tasks in terms of quality and quantity

Facilitator instructions

The purpose of the activities in this guide is to give learners exposure in employing a systematic approach to achieving objectives. This means that their first efforts will not be perfect, and that you will have to give assistance to the different groups.

Where possible, groups have to present their work to the rest of the class for discussion

Please note that the efforts of the learners do not have to be perfect, but must show that learners understand the concepts

Make sure that all group members participate

Formative assessment SO3 AC 1 - 4

Divide into groups

Refer to case study 1 and your action plan and do the following:

* Delegate tasks to team members
* Allocate resources
* Initiate measuring and checking systems to enable monitoring for compliance with the plan

Facilitator instructions

The purpose of the activities in this guide is to give learners exposure in employing a systematic approach to achieving objectives. This means that their first efforts will not be perfect, and that you will have to give assistance to the different groups.

Where possible, groups have to present their work to the rest of the class for discussion

Please note that the efforts of the learners do not have to be perfect, but must show that learners understand the concepts

Make sure that all group members participate

Formative assessment SO4 AC 1 – 2

Divide into groups

Refer to the previous activities and do the following:

* Decide what monitoring activities and control measures your team will undertake when implementing this action plan
* Think of a couple of things that could go wrong and decide what corrective action to take.

Facilitator instructions

The purpose of the activities in this guide is to give learners exposure in employing a systematic approach to achieving objectives. This means that their first efforts will not be perfect, and that you will have to give assistance to the different groups.

Where possible, groups have to present their work to the rest of the class for discussion

Please note that the efforts of the learners do not have to be perfect, but must show that learners understand the concepts

Make sure that all group members participate

PERSONAL INFORMATION

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NAME** |  |
| **CONTACT ADDRESS** |  |
|  |
| **Code** |  |
| **Telephone (H)** |  |
| **Telephone (W)** |  |
| **Cellular** |  |
| **Learner Number** |  |
| **Identity Number** |  |
|  |
| **EMPLOYER** |  |
| **EMPLOYER CONTACT ADDRESS** |  |
|  |
| **Code** |  |
| **Supervisor Name** |  |
| **Supervisor Contact Address** |  |
|  |
| **Code** |  |
| **Telephone (H)** |  |
| **Telephone (W)** |  |
| **Cellular** |  |

INTRODUCTION

#### Welcome to the learning programme

Follow along in the guide as the training practitioner takes you through the material. Make notes and sketches that will help you to understand and remember what you have learnt. Take notes and share information with your colleagues. Important and relevant information and skills are transferred by sharing!



This learning programme is divided into sections. Each section is preceded by a description of the required outcomes and assessment criteria as contained in the unit standards specified by the South African Qualifications Authority. These descriptions will define what you have to know and be able to do in order to be awarded the credits attached to this learning programme. These credits are regarded as building blocks towards achieving a National Qualification upon successful assessment and can never be taken away from you!

## Structure

### Programme methodology



The programme methodology includes facilitator presentations, readings, individual activities, group discussions and skill application exercises.

Know what you want to get out of the programme from the beginning and start applying your new skills immediately. Participate as much as possible so that the learning will be interactive and stimulating.

The following principles were applied in designing the course:

* Because the course is designed to maximise interactive learning, you are encouraged and required to participate fully during the group exercises
* As a learner you will be presented with numerous problems and will be required to fully apply your mind to finding solutions to problems before being presented with the course presenter’s solutions to the problems
* Through participation and interaction the learners can learn as much from each other as they do from the course presenter
* Although learners attending the course may have varied degrees of experience in the subject matter, the course is designed to ensure that all delegates complete the course with the same level of understanding
* Because reflection forms an important component of adult learning, some learning resources will be followed by a self-assessment which is designed so that the learner will reflect on the material just completed.

This approach to course construction will ensure that learners first apply their minds to finding solutions to problems before the answers are provided, which will then maximise the learning process which is further strengthened by reflecting on the material covered by means of the self-assessments.

#### Different role players in delivery process

* Learner
* Facilitator
* Assessor
* Moderator

### What Learning Material you should have

This learning material has also been designed to provide the learner with a comprehensive reference guide.

It is important that you take responsibility for your own learning process; this includes taking care of your learner material. You should at all times have the following material with you:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learner Guide** | **This learner guide is your valuable possession:**This is your textbook and reference material, which provides you with all the information you will require to meet the exit level outcomes. During contact sessions, your facilitator will use this guide and will facilitate the learning process. During contact sessions a variety of activities will assist you to gain knowledge and skills. Follow along in the guide as the training practitioner takes you through the material. Make notes and sketches that will help you to understand and remember what you have learnt. Take and share information with your colleagues. Important and relevant information and skills are transferred by sharing!This learning programme is divided into sections. Each section is preceded by a description of the required outcomes and assessment criteria as contained in the unit standards specified by the South African Qualifications Authority. These descriptions will define what you have to know and be able to do in order to be awarded the credits attached to this learning programme. These credits are regarded as building blocks towards achieving a National Qualification upon successful assessment and can never be taken away from you! |
| **Formative Assessment Workbook** | The Formative Assessment Workbook supports the Learner Guide and assists you in applying what you have learnt. The formative assessment workbook contains classroom activities that you have to complete in the classroom, during contact sessions either in groups or individually.You are required to complete all activities in the Formative Assessment Workbook. The facilitator will assist, lead and coach you through the process.These activities ensure that you understand the content of the material and that you get an opportunity to test your understanding.  |

### Different types of activities you can expect

To accommodate your learning preferences, a variety of different types of activities are included in the formative and summative assessments. They will assist you to achieve the outcomes (correct results) and should guide you through the learning process, making learning a positive and pleasant experience.



The table below provides you with more information related to the types of activities.

| **Types of Activities** | **Description** | **Purpose** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge Activities** | You are required to complete these activities on your own.  | These activities normally test your understanding and ability to apply the information. |
| **Skills Application Activities** | You need to complete these activities in the workplace  | These activities require you to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the workplace |
| **Natural Occurring Evidence** | You need to collect information and samples of documents from the workplace. | These activities ensure you get the opportunity to learn from experts in the industry.Collecting examples demonstrates how to implement knowledge and skills in a practical way |

### Learner Administration



#### Attendance Register

You are required to sign the Attendance Register every day you attend training sessions facilitated by a facilitator.

#### Programme Evaluation Form

On completion you will be supplied with a “Learning programme Evaluation Form”. You are required to evaluate your experience in attending the programme.

Please complete the form at the end of the programme, as this will assist us in improving our service and programme material. Your assistance is highly appreciated.

### Assessments

The only way to establish whether a learner is competent and has accomplished the specific outcomes is through the assessment process. Assessment involves collecting and interpreting evidence about the learners’ ability to perform a task.

To qualify and receive credits towards your qualification, a registered Assessor will conduct an evaluation and assessment of your portfolio of evidence and competency.

This programme has been aligned to registered unit standards. You will be assessed against the outcomes as stipulated in the unit standard by completing assessments and by compiling a portfolio of evidence that provides proof of your ability to apply the learning to your work situation.



**How will Assessments commence?**

#### Formative Assessments

The assessment process is easy to follow. You will be guided by the Facilitator. Your responsibility is to complete all the activities in the Formative Assessment Workbook and submit it to your facilitator.

#### Summative Assessments

You will be required to complete a series of summative assessments. The Summative Assessment Guide will assist you in identifying the evidence required for final assessment purposes. You will be required to complete these activities on your own time, using real life projects in your workplace or business environment in preparing evidence for your Portfolio of Evidence. Your Facilitator will provide more details in this regard.

To qualify and receive credits towards your qualification, a registered Assessor will conduct an evaluation and assessment of your portfolio of evidence and competency.

### Learner Support

The responsibility of learning rests with you, so be proactive and ask questions and seek assistance and help from your facilitator, if required.



Please remember that this Skills Programme is based on outcomes based education principles which implies the following:

* You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your study, research and workplace time effectively.
* Learning activities are learner driven – make sure you use the Learner Guide and Formative Assessment Workbook in the manner intended, and are familiar with the workplace requirements.
* The Facilitator is there to reasonably assist you during contact, practical and workplace time for this programme – make sure that you have his/her contact details.
* You are responsible for the safekeeping of your completed Formative Assessment Workbook and Workplace Guide
* If you need assistance please contact your facilitator who will gladly assist you.
* If you have any special needs please inform the facilitator

### Learner Expectations

Please prepare the following information. You will then be asked to introduce yourself to the instructor as well as your fellow learners



|  |
| --- |
| Your name:  |
|  |
|  |
| The organisation you represent:  |
|  |
|  |
| Your position in organisation:  |
|  |
|  |
| What do you hope to achieve by attending this course / what are your course expectations? |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

# UNIT STANDARD

#### Unit standard number

242822

#### Unit standard title

Employ a systematic approach to achieving objectives

#### NQF level

4

#### Credits

10

#### Purpose of unit standard

The person completing this Unit Standard should be able to adopt a systematic approach to achieving objectives. This Standard is intended for junior managers of organisations

#### Learning assumed to be in place

Learners should be competent in Communication and Mathematical Literacy at NQF Level 3

#### Unit standard range

* 'Area of responsibility' includes, but is not limited to, cost centre, section, department or team
* 'Junior managers' include, but are not limited to, team leaders, supervisors, foremen and section heads
* 'Standard Operating Procedures' (SOPs) may comprise formal written documents or accepted practices in the organisation
* 'Organisation' includes but is not limited to, workplace, work context, work unit, company, department or section

#### Specific outcomes and assessment criteria

**Specific outcome one:** Identify and develop objectives

**Assessment criteria**

* A statement of general intent is written specifying the aim, according to identified needs
* Measurable parameters are specified to meet the need. Measures include, but are not limited to, performance outputs, cost, quantity, quality, dimensions, tolerances, deadlines and safety
* Involvement of team members is encouraged to refine the objective and the measurable parameters

**Specific outcome two:** Formulate a plan to meet the objective

**Assessment criteria**

* Information is obtained and verified to specify the required tasks to achieve the objectives
* Tasks are sequenced according to priority, and resources allocated
* Time allocations are estimated according to the requirements to achieve objectives
* Criteria for success are established to facilitate monitoring. Criteria for success include, but are not limited to, checkpoints, indicators and contingency plans, avoiding potential threats, that measure output from tasks in terms of quality and quantity
* Contributions from team members are encouraged and decisions are motivated where necessary
* Plans are formulated which are clear, visible and understood by all affected parties

**Specific outcome three:** Implement the plan

**Assessment criteria**

* Team members are delegated tasks according to the plan
* Team members are encouraged to complete their tasks using their own control methods
* Resources are made available according to the plan
* Measuring and checking systems are initiated to enable monitoring for compliance with the plan

**Specific outcome four:** Monitor activities

**Assessment criteria**

* Monitoring activities are initiated to compare actual progress with planned progress. Monitoring occurs from the start to the end of implementation and includes all elements of the plan, as well as the control measures established by team members.
* Corrective action is taken, where necessary, to bring actual results in line with planned results

#### Critical Cross-field Outcomes (CCFO):

* The learner is able to make decisions when allocating resources
* The learner is able to work with others when delegating and monitoring their work
* Learners are able to organise and manage themselves when formulating a plan
* Learners are able to demonstrate their understanding of the world as a set of interrelated systems, when recognising the need to take corrective action, when progress is not according to plan

# OBJECTIVES

#### Specific outcome one

Identify and develop objectives

#### Assessment criteria

* A statement of general intent is written specifying the aim, according to identified needs
* Measurable parameters are specified to meet the need. Measures include, but are not limited to, performance outputs, cost, quantity, quality, dimensions, tolerances, deadlines and safety
* Involvement of team members is encouraged to refine the objective and the measurable parameters

## Introduction

One of the functions of a manager is to plan and setting goals and objectives form part of the planning function of managers.

### Long And Medium Term Plans.

These plans may vary from business to business, depending on the nature of the business. For a motor car manufacturer such as BMW or Nissan, a long term plan might be for 20 years or more while for a boutique that makes and markets clothes, a long term plan may only be for 10 years.

There is no hard and fast rule for the term of a specific plan, but it is generally accepted that a plan which covers five years or more is seen as a long term plan.

**Those plans that cover between one and four years are considered medium term plans and plans for one year or less may be seen as short term plans.**

Long term plans are also called strategic plans and they relate to:

* The general objectives of the organisation
* The corporate mission
* The present and proposed markets of the organisation: which markets do they have at the moment and which markets do they hope to enter
* Growth plans: how much should the business grow in the next 5, 10 or 20 years
* Divestment: which subsidiaries (branches or departments) are not making enough profit and should be sold
* Acquisition or diversification: are there any other product or service lines that could complement the current product lines and are there any other businesses doing the same thing that could be taken over.

Top management consists of the board of directors, the managing director, and the chief executives. They will determine the organisation’s mission, goals and strategies. They will be responsible for the long term planning of the organisation. Top management therefore spend

* Most of their time on strategic planning,
* A reasonable amount of time on management planning and
* Little of their time on operations planning.

Middle management is mainly concerned with

* medium and short term planning: three months to a year, sometimes longer. This planning is called tactical planning.
* organising, activating and controlling so that the work in their department gets done the way it should
* and makes less important decisions following the guidelines set by top management.

### Short Term Plans

Short term plans are based on long and medium term plans. They cover the daily, weekly and monthly activities of the business and the type of business will determine the term for these plans.

* Normally top management will make long term plans, which set out where the business should be in 5, 10, or 15 years.
* These plans are then handed to middle management who will use them as a basis to develop medium term plans: Where should the business be in 1,2 or 3 years in order to achieve the goals of the long term plans, and what should be done in order to achieve these goals and objectives.
* The medium term plans from middle management are then copied to first line managers who are responsible for compiling short term plans: what has to be done on a day-to-day basis to achieve the goals as set out in the medium term plans.

A first line manager must implement the objectives of middle management and see to it that workers who are responsible to them perform satisfactorily.

First line management is also a link between workers and higher levels of management. A first line manager focuses on short term goals: the day-to-day operation of his/her section, weekly and monthly planning so that the job gets done the way it should. This is called operational planning.

Supervisors therefore spend:

* Most of their time on operations planning
* Some time on management planning
* Normally no time on strategic planning, except to pass strategic information on to higher levels of management

## The Planning Process

The planning process can be broken down in the following steps:

### Formulating goals and objectives

* Formulate goals and objectives
* While you formulate goals and objectives, you also set the standards for key performance areas where performance can be monitored continually. Key performance areas are performance areas in businesses that are important and that can be checked on all the time. For example, sales figures can be monitored continually as can production figures.

### First Line Management

Are also called supervisors, foremen or team leaders.

The managerial functions of first line managers revolve around the daily activities of the various departments. They are responsible for short-term planning and for implementing the plans of middle management.

Their main concern is to apply rules and procedures so that maximum productivity takes place. They will provide technical assistance to employees, motivate subordinates and ensure that daily tasks are completed.

First line managers are directly in control of productivity and play a vital role in the relationship between management and employees.

## Setting goals and objectives

Goal: A desired result, purpose, or objective that one strives to attain

Goals help define an organisation, give direction and avoid chaos. Goals can help motivate team members by communicating what the organisation is striving for as well as providing a basis of recognising accomplishments and successes.

Goals are statements describing what an organisation wishes to accomplish - the ends toward which the efforts of everyone in the organisation will be directed

Objectives are derived from the goals and are descriptions of exactly what is to be done: clear and specific statements of measurable tasks that will be accomplished as steps toward reaching goals. They are short term and have deadlines.

### Goals VS objectives

* A Goal is a general outcome statement.
* An Objective spells out clearly and in a way that it can be measured, what the end result should be.

You first decide on a goal that can be achieved, to enable you to focus more accurately on the objective. It would be difficult to develop an objective without some idea of what the goal is.

Therefore, you first decide on the goal. Then you will write SMART objectives, is such a way that it will help everyone who is involved to know what is has to be done. This is why the goal always comes before the objective.

#### Example

* The **Goal**: Improve production in the assembly plant,
* The **Objective**: by 10% before January 15, by upgrading the machinery involved.

The goal is usually only the action or activity. That is, to diet, to stop smoking, to spend more time with the children, to paint the house, or tidy the garage, etc.

These goals are fine for things such as home and sport activities. They do not have enough information to really motivate you to achieve them. That is why we write objectives.

### Setting Objectives

Start with a statement of intent where you specify the aim you want to achieve according to the needs as identified by the goals.

Follow these guidelines to write objectives:

Objectives must always be SMART:

* Specific
* Measurable
* Attainable
* Relevant
* Time bound

#### Specific

Objectives must be specific. Don’t say, “I want to bake more cakes per day,” rather say: “I want to bake 50 cakes per day”.

#### Measurable

You must be able to measure the objective so that you can check if you achieve it. Objectives are something that you can use to control the work that is being done. Did you bake 50 cakes?

Include as many of the following as possible:

* Quality: To SABS standard 1076; without any rejects; as per maintenance schedule rules, etc.
* Quantity: reduce rejects by 5%; tidy up all the scrap; a minimum of six bottles per case, etc.
* Cost/Value: reduce the overheads by 5%; cut the competitors’ price by at least Rl,00 etc.
* Safety: state the level of safe working procedures, e.g. accident free for the entire period of the project
* In the case of production or manufacturing, include tolerances where applicable – how many errors will be allowed, what differences will be allowed in the dimensions, etc. for example, in space travel and weaponolgy tolerances are very small, measured in thousands of seconds or millimetres
* State the performance output required, for example to produce 50 units per day

#### Attainable

You have to set objectives that can be reached. If you set objectives that cannot possibly be reached, you are wasting time and you and your staff will become discouraged. You cannot possibly start baking 1500 cakes per day, if you have been baking 50 cakes per day.

#### Relevant

The objective must be relevant to the specific goal as well as the goals of the business. Don’t set an objective that has no relevance to the goal: “I want to make 45 meat platters per day” has no relevance to baking cakes. If your objectives are not relevant to the goal, you will confuse yourself and your staff.

#### Time

You have to set a date by when you want to achieve the objective. “I want to bake 70 cakes per day by the end of February.” Examples could be: Within the next two weeks; by January 15; before lunch break/stocktaking/home time, etc.

You have to state a time limit, in other words, a deadline, for your objective

### General rules when writing goals and objectives:

* Always write down the goals and objectives. We tend to try and achieve goals once we have written them down.
* You have to make sure that everyone who is going to be involved has to understand the goals and objectives, so always use clear and simple language.
* Test the objectives on someone else first. If they express the slightest hint of doubt, don't argue ‑ fix it!
* Communicate both in writing and verbally, if you can.
* Make sure that the people who have to do the work to achieve the goals understand what is expected of them. Ask the person to repeat in his/her own words what is expected of them. Then you can listen to what they are saying and check if they really understand.

### Tool for writing objectives

Here’s a handy tool to use when writing objectives. Use this format and your objectives should always be SMART.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Target Date | Responsibility |
| What you want done | By when it should be done | Who should do it |
|  |  |  |

## Involve team members

Write you objectives with the support and cooperation of your team members. This way they are able to take ownership of the objectives. To do this, you have to:

* Make sure you set aside enough time.
* Make sure everyone’s ideas are represented. This creates many positive results because people will support and be responsible for what they help create.

By involving team members in the process of identifying and developing objectives, you can expect:

* Greater commitment and motivation among officers and members to help achieve goals.
* Clearer understanding of the goals and the rationale for selecting them
* With everyone's ideas and opinions considered, your goals will represent a group consensus rather than one person's opinion.

#### Steps for Setting Goals & Objectives

* Refer to the goal of the team and brainstorm a list of potential objectives that have to be achieved as a group.
* Prioritise the order of importance of each objective in terms of the standard operating procedures of the organisation
* Develop plans of action for each objective. (Remember there can be several objectives for each goal).
* Move into action and follow through. (Many groups fail to evaluate and revise; thus their goals are never achieved).
* Include a closing statement.

A Standing Operating Procedure: A set of instructions covering those features of operations which lend themselves to a definite or standardized procedure without loss of effectiveness

Standard operating procedures (SOP) are usually contained in an SOP manual. This manual typically describes the standard operating procedures (SOPs) followed for various business processes within an organisation

**Its main objectives are:**

* To systematically record all current business policies, processes and procedures currently followed
* To clearly indicate the flow of actions performed from beginning to end of the process chain
* To inculcate a culture of “CONTROL CONSCIOUSNESS” among process owners and operatives
* To observe shortcomings in these policies, processes and procedures and make suitable recommendations for improvements in the policies, process effectiveness, process efficiency, internal controls and compliance, as applicable, and
* To serve as a basis for disseminating knowledge on the above among employees dealing with the relevant business functions, to enable adequate training to be imparted to concerned personnel with a view to making the business operations person-independent.
* To act as a reference guide for Internal Audit, which assesses the extent to which the SOP is complied with.

**Organization Structure**

This is a macro organization chart showing the hierarchical or reporting relationships in the organization or business unit for which the manual is prepared.

**Summaries of Business Processes**

Each business process (such as procurement, sales and marketing, planning, quality assurance, production, maintenance, etc.) is summarized, and each summary could contain the following information:

* Objectives of the business process
* Micro organization (functional) structure chart
* Duties and responsibilities of each designated person involved in the process
* List of tasks performed
* Summary of Recommendations

The summary of recommended policies and procedures (e. above) lists, for each business process, its risks/shortcomings, and the recommended practice, with its expected benefits. Indicate along with each recommended practice the area of improvement envisaged (Efficiency / Effectiveness / Control / Compliance).

**Detailed Chapters for Each Business Process**

Each business process has a chapter containing the following sections:

* Objectives of the business process
* Summarised Block Diagram of process flow
* Detailed Process Flowchart
* Outputs and inputs of each step in the process to clearly bring out the inter-dependencies between various functional units in the organization and between the organization and its internal and external stakeholders (customers. suppliers, etc.)
* Detailed textual description of process steps in strict logical sequence. The steps would include both computer-based and manual procedures and are to be described precisely and in the correct sequence. The text and the detailed process flowcharts should match.
* The description in e. above should include descriptions of procedures to handle exceptions, i.e., exceptional but anticipated events.
* Internal controls employed in the procedures to ensure that they are correctly and completely executed. Internal controls may be built into computerized business application systems such as ERP systems (like data entry, document preparation or report generation) or may be administrative controls exercised in the non-computer procedures of a business process.
* Recommendations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, control or statutory compliance of policies, processes and procedures which would replace the current policies, processes and procedures if accepted by users (if thought essential, desirable or practical, as applicable) after intensive discussions.
* Exhibits of documents, reports, computer data entry screens, manual registers, etc. that are referred to as inputs to and outputs from specific procedures
* Accounting flow clearly showing which financial accounting general ledger accounts are operated wherever specific business transactions need to be recorded in the books of account.

Formative assessment SO1 AC 1 – 3

# FORMULATE AN ACTION PLAN

#### Specific outcome two

Formulate a plan to meet the objective

#### Assessment criteria

* Information is obtained and verified to specify the required tasks to achieve the objectives
* Tasks are sequenced according to priority, and resources allocated
* Time allocations are estimated according to the requirements to achieve objectives
* Criteria for success are established to facilitate monitoring. Criteria for success include, but are not limited to, checkpoints, indicators and contingency plans, avoiding potential threats, that measure output from tasks in terms of quality and quantity
* Contributions from team members are encouraged and decisions are motivated where necessary
* Plans are formulated which are clear, visible and understood by all affected parties

## The Action Plan

Once you have written down your goals and objectives you have to develop plans for the realisation of the objectives. These plans are called action plans.

In the action plan you must specify and explain clearly WHAT has to be done, WHY it must be done, WHEN it should be done, WHO must do it and HOW it should be done.

An action plan is like a map that you will use to find out if things are being done the way you want it done.

* What is to be done?
* Why must it be done?
* How will it be accomplished?
* What are your resources in terms of people, money and materials?
* Who is responsible for completing each task?
* What is the deadline?
* How will you know when it is accomplished? How will you measure the results?

**Example of an Action Plan:**

* Goal: To improve membership recruitment, retention and involvement.
* An Objective: To develop a committee whose purpose is to increase member involvement to at least 40% by next term.
* How: Brainstorm ideas to increase member involvement. Go over this list and weed out all those ideas that are impractical or impossible to do. Discuss this edited list with the executive board/leadership. Determine which will be done and delegate the final process of setting up this system to one or two executive officers.
* Resources: Members, executive officers, handouts on recruitment, motivation and delegation.
* Deadlines:
* Who: Executive board and consultants
* When: By next term (try to set a specific date if possible)
* Results: Acceptable--membership involvement increases by 40-70%
* Better than Expected--membership involvement increases by more than 70%

See the next page for a template you could use.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal** |  **Objective** | **Completion Date** | **Who will be responsible** | **Action Steps** | **Resources Required** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Gather information

Because the action plan consists of individual tasks that have to be carried out, you will have to develop a task list, and in order to develop a task list, you will need information about the tasks.

There are many resources you can use to help you schedule activities:

* such as technical (subject matter) experts if the tasks are technical in nature
* other employees who have experience of similar projects. For example, if the task involves setting up a computer network, the IT staff will be able to advise you.
* Your own experience and knowledge and the knowledge and skills in the team will also guide you.

Some documents you can look at to help you compile lists of activities and to prioritise these activities:

* Task lists that were completed in the past
* Standard operating procedures will also contain a lot of information about the tasks and referring to this document could assist you to make sure that you list all the tasks
* The quality plan can also give an indication of individual tasks
* Communication plan: contains details of reporting procedures, which can also help you with your scheduling

### Task lists

So, the first step is to determine what has to be done to achieve the objectives. A task list can be used effectively for this step. A task list is a list of tasks that have to be completed, such as chores or steps toward completing a project.

Before you draw up a task list, clarify the tasks: Rather establish upfront what is expected than discover that you have concentrated on peripheral aspects. Questions that you could ask in this regard are:

* What is the purpose of the task or activity?
* What are the measures of success?
* What is exceptional performance?
* What are the priorities and deadlines?
* What resources are available?
* What costs are acceptable?
* How does this relate to other people, action plans and programmes?

#### To draw up a task list:

* Work out what resources you will require: the quality and the type of resources.
* Define each task’s objectives: what do you expect to accomplish with each task?
* Determine performance measures: how should the task be done and how will you know if it has been done according to the performance measures?

**Resources**

A resource is something we use to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Resources usually have limited availability and their use therefore has to be planned. As resources are very useful, we attach some value to them. Resources help to produce goods so they have economic value.

Resources used in business include:

* Minutes/time: the time we have to complete the activities
* Men/people also called human resources.
* Machines: the equipment we use
* Materials: such as raw materials used in production and manufacturing
* Money: without money we will not be able to make use of any of the other resources
* Information

#### Outline

The next step is to develop an outline of the task list. In order to do this, you have to break the tasks down even further:

* Break each task down into sub-tasks and identify all the relevant activities. Here you list the steps required to complete a task.
* Specify the duration or time that should be spent on each step
* Specify the earliest time when a task should start in order for the task to be completed on time.
* Specify the latest time a task should start in order for the task to be completed on time.

#### Prioritise tasks

Once the task list has been drawn up, the next step is to prioritise the tasks: what has to be done first.

* Which tasks have to be completed before another task can start – the sequence in which tasks have to be completed. For example, before you can make a cup of coffee you have to determine whether you have a cup, coffee, milk and sugar. Then you have to switch the kettle on, for without boiling water you cannot make any coffee.
* What specific activities are involved in each task? How difficult will it be to complete? Do you have employees capable of doing this or must you get the assistance of a contractor?
* Identify the tasks most critical for the completion of each stage of the work or project
* How long will it take to complete each task? Establish the sequence of tasks that will best fit the time constraints
* Number each task in order of priority

Sometimes, when we are faced with a large piece of work or project it can seem overwhelming. Where do we make a start? Often, we make a start, but not at the beginning, and then leave key tasks until it is too late and we have a crisis on our hands. On one page we should break down the work into its individual tasks. Start with the major tasks and break them down into smaller tasks until everything that needs to be done has been identified.

#### Procedures

A procedure is a plan of action that indicates the method that must be followed to complete certain activities.

A **standard operating procedure** is a set of instructions that tells the employee what to do, how to do it and what resources should be used to do the work.

If your organisation has a standard operating procedure, consult this when you are allocating and prioritising tasks. If not, make an effort to put together a standard operating procedure.

#### Allocate the tasks

Once the tasks have been prioritised, they have to be allocated to employees to carry out the tasks, in the order that they have been prioritised.

This is usually done by means of a schedule or an action plan. Scheduling of tasks involves telling the supervisors or team leaders:

* what to do or make
* when to do it or make it
* which staff should be used
* and which equipment should be used to carry out these tasks

Before we can schedule and delegate tasks, we have to know:

* What kind of knowledge or expertise is required for each task?
* Who best suites the demands of the task? In other words, who can do the work?

Alongside each individual task we should write down an estimate of how long it will take to complete. Next we should decide on an appropriate deadline for each task. Also include the knowledge and skills required as well as who will be completing the task.

Many tasks can be completed at the same time, while others may have to be performed one after the other. We should be realistic here and allow for delays. It might take us 10 minutes to obtain an item of information from a colleague, but it may take us a week to arrange a meeting with them.

Once we have completed our scheduling, we can set a deadline for the completion of the work.

When you assign tasks to other people, make sure that they know exactly:

* What has to be done
* How it should be done
* When it should be done
* Why it should be done

## Criteria for success

How will you know if tasks have been completed successfully and objectives attained? By establishing criteria against which your team’s work will be measured.

### Checkpoints

When you implement an action plan, you have to follow up regularly to make sure everything is happening the way it should. For example, you could have daily or weekly team meetings to determine progress on individual tasks.

These are called checkpoints. Together with your team, determine checkpoints – how often you are going to check the progress. Note this on the action plan and leave space to track progress and to note completion of tasks.

### SWOT analysis

SWOT is the name given to the analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of an organisation. A SWOT analysis is usually done as part of the strategic planning of an organisation and is used to help determine the goals and objectives of the organisation.

Most of the information used in the SWOT analysis is obtained from marketing and market research. Organisations and businesses use marketing research to keep in touch with the needs and wants of their consumers.

When doing a SWOT analysis, you identify and describe the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the organisation.

Strengths and weaknesses are **internal factors** which affect the business in a positive or negative way. Opportunities and threats are **external** factors in the environment that influence your business.

#### Strengths

* Knowledge of the products and the business. Since your organisation provides the product or service, the employees should have a very good knowledge of the products or services that you provide.
* A good location for your business. The closer you are to your customers, the more convenient it is for them to buy from you.
* Little effective competition. If your business is in a location where there is little competition, it is definitely a strength, since customers would prefer to buy from you, if your location is closer
* A good product or service is always a strength
* A pleasing manner towards customers and potential customers

#### Weaknesses

* Inexperience in the business
* Lack of business skills
* A poor location for the business
* Too much competition
* No demand for the product

#### Opportunities

* These are business opportunities that you can identify. You may identify an opportunity for a product or service that has not been offered before, particularly in the area where your organisation operates. If no one is selling soup in winter in your area and you happen to be in the fast food market, this is an opportunity.
* The sales or marketing personnel may have identified a new product or service for which there is a need. If you are a training company, including HIV/AIDS training in your products is an opportunity, since there is a big need for this kind of training today.
* These may come about through an awareness of the economic situation, such as a high petrol price that creates a need for smaller cars that use less petrol.
* Low interest rates causes people to buy bigger houses, while high interest rates will have the opposite effect.
* Hotels and guest houses are built close to airports and near tourist attractions to make it easier for tourists and travellers to sleep over.

There are many threats to a business, some brought on by the environment, others through a lack of control of the business. The main threats are

#### Threats

* Economic depression. High interest rates results in less spending by consumers.. You need to know this so that you can change your range of products or services to suit the needs of the consumer.
* Population movement away from the location.
* Unemployment poses a threat to a business. If a mine closes down, for example, thousands of people suddenly have less money to spend. This will impact negatively on any business.
* Product depreciation. When consumers stop buying your products, this is a threat to the organisation that has to be identified very quickly. You need to find out what they are buying instead of your products and why they are not buying your products anymore. Businesses that are very vulnerable to this kind of threat are business that are in the catering industry. If you serve bad food to consumers once and it is advertised in the media, your business will suffer. Consumers would go to a competitor to satisfy this need.

Of course, there are many more strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats than those that were listed.

### Contingency plans

Now that you know what the possible threats to the team and also the weaknesses inside the team are, you can take steps to minimise the threat and to address the weaknesses in the team.

Contingency plans are made in order to minimise threats – contingency plans are a second and a third plan of action, in case anything goes wrong.

For example, you have to get to work every day and your first action plan is to drive your car. One morning you get to the car and the car won’t start, or you have a flat tyre and no spare tyre to use. You need a Plan B (a contingency plan) to get to work – take the bus, take a taxi, get a lift from a friend or family member. Without a contingency plan, you will not be able to get to work at all.

The best type of contingency plan is the one that prevents the threat from occurring, in other words make sure that you have a spare tyre that is inflated by checking this every morning or afternoon.

### Indicators

A performance indicator or key performance indicator (KPI) is a measure of performance.

A KPI is a key part of a measurable objective, for example: "Increase Average Revenue per Customer from R10 to R15 by 2012." In this case, 'Average Revenue Per Customer' is the KPI.

In other words, KPIs are determined under each objective and each objective should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited

KPIs should be acceptable, understood, meaningful and measurable. They should not be defined in such a way that their fulfilment would be hampered by factors seen as non-controllable by the individuals responsible. Such KPIs would tend not to be accepted.

You should set numerical targets for each KPI. These may be in terms of:

* A single value
* An upper limit
* A lower limit
* A range of values
* A percentage of a specific quantity/value
* A scheduled date by which a given task is to be completed, etc.

We will use marketing KPIs as examples:

* New customers acquired
* Demographic analysis of individuals (potential customers) applying to become customers, and the levels of approval, rejections, and pending numbers.
* Status of existing customers
* Customers attrition
* Turnover (i.e., Revenue) generated by segments of the customer population.
* Outstanding balances held by segments of customers and terms of payment.
* Collection of bad debts within customer relationships.
* Profitability of customers by demographic segments and segmentation of customers by profitability.

### Measure output from tasks in terms of quality and quantity

You have to be able to prove that you achieved your objectives, in other words that all the tasks have been completed. To do this, you have to know how you will know that you have been successful.

For example, your team has to install toilets in a big leisure time complex – you have to install 1200 toilets in a period of 4 weeks. This means that you have to install 300 toilets a week or 60 toilets a day. If you install more than 60, you are ahead of schedule, if you install 50 you are behind schedule and your team is not meeting its objective.

State this on the action plan, leave space to indicate progress as well as problems that occurred and what steps were taken to bring you back on schedule.

You also have to state quality objectives in terms of outputs that can be measured: for example, install 600 light green porcelain and 600 pink porcelain toilets in 4 weeks, connect the toilets to the correct water pipes and clean up any debris.

This way you will know that if you installed 1200 toilets within 4 weeks, but 250 have not been connected to the correct water pipes, you have not met your quality objectives. Once again, state this on the action plan, leave space to indicate progress as well as problems that occurred and what steps were taken to bring you back on schedule.

### Teamwork

Get your team involved in developing the task lists – they will be doing the work and will be able to make valuable contributions towards the time and resources they will need to complete the tasks and also be able to assist you in developing contingency plans.

When your team is involved in developing the action plan, you also make sure that they know what to do, when to do it, how to do it and what they should use to do it.

Give each team member a copy of the action plan or put the plan where everyone can see it. Give each team member a list of tasks that they have to complete. This way, the action plan will be clear, visible and everyone will understand what is required.

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# IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

#### Specific outcome three

Implement the plan

#### Assessment criteria

* Team members are delegated tasks according to the plan
* Team members are encouraged to complete their tasks using their own control methods
* Resources are made available according to the plan
* Measuring and checking systems are initiated to enable monitoring for compliance with the plan

Plans do not mysteriously activate themselves. You must put the plans into effect.

Planning, no matter how carefully and painstakingly done, is useless and a waste of time without commitment and action.

* This means that you have to start doing the things that must be done according to the action plan, or see that the people who must do it, are doing it.
* Then you have to check on a regular basis whether the tasks in the action plan are still being done and whether they will be finished on time.
* If things are going wrong, you need to know in time so that the problem can be solved.

An action plan is like a map. It helps us work out what we must do to meet our goal.

**In order to implement the action plan you have to do the following**

* you have to delegate tasks to the individual team members
* you have to encourage each team members to complete the tasks using their own control methods
* you have to make resources available so that the team members are able to complete the tasks
* you have to monitor the activities of the team members to make sure that they are complying with the action plan

## Delegation

It is the assignment of authority and responsibility to another person (normally from a manager to a subordinate) to carry out specific activities.

#### Use the following principles to delegate successfully:

* Clearly articulate the desired outcome. Begin with the end in mind and specify the desired results.
* Clearly identify constraints and boundaries. Where are the lines of authority, responsibility and accountability? Should the person:
* Wait to be told what to do?
* Ask what to do?
* Recommend what should be done, and then act?
* Act, and then report results immediately?
* Initiate action, and then report periodically?
* Where possible, include people in the delegation process. Empower them to decide what tasks are to be delegated to them and when.
* Match the amount of responsibility with the amount of authority. Understand that you can delegate some responsibility, however you can’t delegate away ultimate accountability. The buck stops with you!
* Delegate to the lowest possible organizational level. The people who are closest to the work are best suited for the task, because they have the most intimate knowledge of the detail of everyday work. This also increases workplace efficiency, and helps to develop people.
* Provide adequate support, and be available to answer questions. Ensure the project’s success through ongoing communication and monitoring as well as provision of resources and credit.
* Focus on results. Concern yourself with what is accomplished, rather than detailing how the work should be done: Your way is not necessarily the only or even the best way! Allow the person to control his or her own methods and processes. This facilitates success and trust.
* Avoid “upward delegation”. If there is a problem, don’t allow the person to shift responsibility for the task back to you: ask for recommended solutions; and don’t simply provide an answer.
* Build motivation and commitment. Discuss how success will impact financial rewards, future opportunities, informal recognition, and other desirable consequences. Provide recognition where deserved.
* Establish and maintain control.
* Discuss timelines and deadlines.
* Agree on a schedule of checkpoints at which you’ll review project progress.
* Make adjustments as necessary.
* Take time to review all submitted work.

In thoroughly considering these key points prior to and during the delegation process you will find that you delegate more successfully.

If the delegation process is followed closely, the assigning of a manager’s work to a subordinate through delegation will take place successfully.

### Steps to successful delegation

#### Step One: Assign Functions

The manager assigns tasks and activities relating to the work to a subordinate for implementation and completion. If a manager wants a letter to be typed, he will assign this task to his secretary.

When a task is assigned, the manager must ensure that the employee knows exactly what is required. This is usually done by means of a job description and the identification of critical responsibility functions.

It is not enough for the manager to say: “Type a letter to ABC Company. The secretary has to know the content of the letter, who at ABC Company the letter should be addressed to, when the manager requires the letter and so on. If you want someone to cut your hair, you should be specific regarding the style your require, otherwise the hairdresser might do something that you don’t like and then it does not help to blame the hairdresser – you are to blame.

During step one you do not assign responsibility, step one is regarded as training. You are monitoring the employee’s work in order to ensure that he can do the work on his own. Once he has shown you that he can do the work on his own, it is time for step two.

The marketing manager requests another employee to do market research for a new product. First the employee is fully briefed, then the employee approaches one or two customers while the manager monitors what the employee does: how does he approach the customers, how does he ask the questions, etc.

#### Step Two: Assign Authority

The delegation process gives a subordinate the power to act on behalf of management. Once the employee is sure of the specifics of the job that has to be done, you have to give the employee the authority to do the job. If the marketing manager requests another employee to do market research for a new product, the manager must give the researcher full authority to do effective research, once the manager is satisfied that the employee knows what is required and is able to do the job.

It would be pointless to ask someone to do market research and then that person is not allowed to make phone calls, or allowed to phone customers and ask questions. All the authority that is required to do the job must be assigned to the employee.

Authority - formal and legitimate right of a manager to make decisions, issue orders, and allocate resources to achieve organisationally desired outcomes

**Once the authority has been assigned, the manager must abide by decisions the employee makes. This is why the delegation process has to be monitored by the manager all the time, especially during the first two phases.**

#### Step Three: Assign Responsibility

The employee has now been assigned the function, he can do the job and he has been assigned the authority to do the job. The manager monitors the progress of the employee, because the job has been assigned and with the authority certain rights have been assigned. Now it is time to assign responsibility as well. Responsibility places an obligation on the employee to complete the tasks as required within the specified time limits. Failure to do so, will reflect badly on the employee.

Responsibility - duty to perform the task or activity an employee has been assigned

In other words, responsibility is the obligation the employee has to carry out the instructions – the work becomes the employee’s responsibility.

#### Step Four: Creating Accountability

Accountability is the obligation of the manager and the employee to ensure that the instruction is carried out with satisfactory achievement of goals – the work must be done in such a manner that the goals of the organisation are achieved.

Accountability - the fact that the people with authority and responsibility are subject to reporting and justifying task outcomes to those above them in the chain of command

## Make Resources Available

You have to make resources available so that the team members are able to complete the tasks

You cannot expect team members to complete tasks successfully without the necessary resources. These resources include:

* the time to do their work properly
* material to do the work
* equipment and machinery
* the knowledge and skills necessary
* assistance and team support

Refer to the action plan when you allocate resources.

## Monitor team activities

You have to monitor the activities of the team members to make sure that they are complying with the action plan. This was also taken up in the action plan. Hold regulars meetings with team members to discuss progress, any problems experienced and to confirm that tasks will be completed in time.

Tools you could use to monitor the activities of your team include:

### Preparation Control Chart

The Preparation Control Chart prepares you and your team for possible mishaps or unplanned changes to an action plan. The Preparation Control Chart lists the possibilities of what could go wrong in and provides alternative methods or ways to resolve these issues if, and as they occur. This chart improves the opportunity for timely and well-executed responses to new circumstances and conditions affecting a project's agenda. In other words, this is a method of managing risks and threats.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Critical Success Factors** | **Risks / Possible Problem Areas** | **Solutions and Action Plans** |
| Supply of labour | Lack of unskilled labourLabour unrest | Pre-employment skills testing Skills TrainingIR training for managers and supervisors |
| Safety | InjuriesAccidents | Safety trainingSafety officer/s employed |
| Supply of materials | Raw materials not availableCash Flow | Purchasing dept. to source at least 3 supplies for each item requiredOrders to be placed in advanceCash flow budget to be compiledAll debtors to be collected timeously |

### Events Control Chart

The Events Control Chart lays out a broad picture of completed tasks or activities as they take place and monitors progress by comparing **actual** completion dates with **planned** completion dates. This chart provides an informative summary of a project's progress and indicates whether planned completion dates for specified tasks are on target or whether any such tasks require extra time.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity No.** | **Scheduled date** | **Anticipated date** | **Achieved date** | **Notes** |
| 1 | 1.2.2001 | - | 1.3.2001 | Delays on signing the lease for the premises |
| 2 | 7.2.2001 | 26.2.2001 | 15.3.2001 | Signing off a layout plan for new offices delayed because of inability to get the decision makers together |
| 3 | 1.4.2001 | 1.5.2001 | 1.6.2001 | Move into new offices |

### Resource and cost planning

A team manager is continuously challenged to implement an action plan within the determined time, resources, costs, and quality. Resource planning may be defined as forecasting the resources, both human and material, that are necessary to implement the plan successfully. The resource planning is performed within the predetermined time and budget factors.

Resource planning is connected with all activities. Changing resource availability affects the duration of the activity. The important issues to consider when planning resources are as follows:

* Determining the resources available inside and outside the organisation
* Anticipation for absenteeism, sickness, etc. (often 25%)
* Multiskilled staff / Interchangeability
* Availability of resources during certain time periods (public holidays, seasons, market supply and demand, etc)
* Changing resource allocations, prioritisation of critical activities, increasing / reducing resource availability to meet deadlines / costs (incentives, overtime, work-shifts, subcontracting)
* Use of resource bar-charts and histograms for visual display and easy monitoring

**An example of a resource bar chart is presented below:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task or activity**3 | **Resource type** | **Week****1** | **Week** **2** | **Week** **3** | **Week** **4** | **Week** **5** |
| 100 | Equipment |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1012 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 102 | Engineer |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1034 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 104 | Transport  |  |  |  |  |  |
| … |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Budget control chart

The Budget Control Chart compares the progress of actual costs with estimated costs. This chart is used to keep relevant costs in line with what can be afforded and warns management of possible price or cost escalations which may require a readjustment in the overall budget or a change in task priorities.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Milestone No.** | **Budgeted Cost** | **Anticipated Cost** | **Actual Cost** | **Notes** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

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# MONITOR ACTIVITIES

#### Specific outcome four

Monitor activities

#### Assessment criteria

* Monitoring activities are initiated to compare actual progress with planned progress. Monitoring occurs from the start to the end of implementation and includes all elements of the plan, as well as the control measures established by team members.
* Corrective action is taken, where necessary, to bring actual results in line with planned results

## Introduction

Monitoring forms part of the control function of a manager.

**When an action plan is monitored it means that you have to monitor from the beginning to the end of the action plan.**

The purpose of monitoring activities is to compare actual progress with planned progress. If you do this you will immediately see where and when problems occur. This will enable you to take corrective action in time in order to bring actual results in line with the planned results.

When you developed the action plan you also determined the control measures that will apply, for example, daily or weekly meetings, a line of communication that will in enable team members to bring problems to your attention, checkpoints, quality and quantity dimensions, key performance indicators and tolerances.

Now you need to implement these control measures. When problems occur you need to take corrective action. It is advisable to involve all the team members in determining the corrective action that should be taken.

For example, if you do not producing the number of units per day that you should be producing you need to find out where the problem lies. It could be that your team members are unable to make use of resources that were allocated to them, as another team is also using the same resource. In this case you could negotiate with the other team for use of the resource when it suits both teams. For example, it could be that the driver was busy making deliveries when you expected him to collect material for you. It should be possible for your team and to the other team to schedule collections and deliveries to suit both teams.

Another example is when your sales team is not making sales targets during a promotional drive. On further investigation you find out that the time you call your customers is inconvenient. In this case you will find out from customers when is the best time to call and then reschedule other team activities around the best times to call customers.

This means that when you develop the action plan, you will have a plan for all the tasks as well as an action plan in for individual tasks. In the action plan for individual tasks you will have space for monitoring activities, including control activities, problems experienced, steps taken to solve the problems, start date for the activities and end date for the activities.

If necessary you will also have to report progress, problems experienced and steps taken to solve problems to your sectional or departmental manager.

## C0068Monitor activities

Monitoring activities ensures that the goal and objectives that were identified and developed are being achieved during the implementation of the action plan. Monitoring **measures** the progress of an action plan as it is implemented and provides an early warning to about potential or developing problems. Monitoring therefore confirms the satisfactory progress of an action plan.

Monitoring should be as simple as possible in order to avoid unrealistic or inadequate measures which may slow or halt the action plan altogether.

Proper monitoring **prepares** your team for corrective action to respond to unplanned events timeously and, by setting efficient performance standards, to respond effectively.

Monitoring methods allow the team to follow the progress of important tasks as they evolve during the implementation of the action plan without having to the entire process before completion in order to evaluate the progress of the project.

Popular monitoring methods include:

* **Observation**of what is happening as the activities get underway on a **random** basis. This involves asking questions to other team members about activities and keeping up-to-date with progress through meetings and updating your charts.
* **Regular review**ofprogress on a periodic basis, for example twice a week. This involves comparing what was planned with what is taking place up to a **point in time**. Reviews should include a definition of the problems encountered and the methods applied to resolve them. Once again, you will use your charts.
* **Scheduled evaluations**confirm whether the standards determined beforehand are being applied after each task is completed. This method compares the **actual** quality of output or performance against the **planned** output or performance. Scheduled evaluations therefore involve interviews with other project team members or beneficiaries of the action plan. After the scheduled evaluation, you will update your charts.

Effective monitoring usually involves a mixture of these approaches in practice and is complemented by the charts described in a previous section. Any method used to check a projects' progress can be described as a monitoring procedure.

You have to monitor all the elements of the plan:

* Measurable parameters such as
* performance outputs,
* cost,
* quantity,
* quality,
* dimensions,
* tolerances,
* deadlines and
* safety
* Criteria for success
* checkpoints,
* indicators
* contingency plans,
* avoiding potential threats,
* measuring output from tasks in terms of quality and quantity

Keeping up-to-date with progress depends on useful and precise information that is relevant to the action plan. In part, good or useful information depends on performance evaluation.

### Evaluating performance

Evaluation complements monitoring by reassessing the action plan as a project progresses. Where necessary, objectives can be modified if an evaluation indicates that the existing objectives are inadequate or inappropriate.

This does not mean that the action plan will have to be stopped but rather that alternatives will have to be considered so that the original or intended goal is ultimately achieved. For example, if during the early process of building a house, monitoring procedures ‑followed by an evaluation ‑ indicate that the original design material is unavailable then alternative design materials will need to be considered and chosen.

Unfortunately, monitoring and evaluation are often seen as administrative tasks that simply become an information gathering exercise. If this data is not understood, becomes too complicated or is irrelevant then an evaluation can be a waste of time. Poor evaluations can lead to ill preparation which can further result in failure.

To avoid this possibility you should be prepared and consider measures for regulating the progress of your action plan.

### Regulating performance

At the outset it is useful to remember that no action plan is always delivered perfectly on time, within the exact budget or complies precisely with set standards. However, a well planned and implemented action plan depends on a number of **regulatory conditions** or measures in case of unexpected conditions. These measures should ensure that the plan has the best possible opportunity to succeed.

Subsequently, when regulating a plan a number of conditions should be kept in mind, namely:

* That the monitoring and evaluating techniques or approaches that are going to be applied be as **simple** as possible and that everyone involved in the project is committed to the techniques to monitor and evaluate.
* That important or relevant types of data required are clearly **identified** beforehand and closely correlated with the task objectives defined in the Project Identification stage, and
* That the collection and evaluation of such information **is not excessive** in terms of financial costs and time.

Examples of how to regulate an action plan:

#### Regulating a quality issue

In the event that quality or standards drop during the implementation phase, for example by shortages in a particular type of material, you will have to consider whether to:

* Continue with the plan,
* Adopt the available alternative materials, and if so,
* Consider how this change could affect the plan’s final outcome.

#### Regulating a time issue

If a plan falls behind schedule you and your team will have to consider whether to:

* Provide additional incentives, such as higher wages for shorter task times completed, or
* Increase the overall budget so that more labour or skills can be hired for the remainder of the project.

#### Regulate a cost issue

In the case where actual expenses become greater than planned expenses you and your team will have to consider whether to:

* Refine the objectives set out (for example building fewer houses than originally planned),
* Include other sources of income (such as increasing the price of houses built for sale afterwards), or
* Obtain more funding (loans and investments).

## Reporting

In order for a manager to effectively manage his/her department, the various sections and teams should report progress regularly. The manager also has to report progress to his/her superiors. How often this reporting takes place, depends on the standard operating procedures of the organisation. Usually, the following reporting takes place:

* Daily production and variances to target by employees to the team leader or supervisor
* Weekly production and variances to target by team leader or supervisor to manager
* Bi-weekly or monthly production and variances to target by manager to top management.

In this computerised age, reports normally take the form of computer printouts, giving details of:

* Production targets per product
* Actual production per product
* Variance reports
* Explanation of variances and corrective action taken

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