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Get things done

What?

This tool will help you to get things done. It's time to create an action plan! The action plan is a document that can be used by you and your colleagues, and you can refer to it during your project or during your evaluation phase. It will take you from idea to action and all the way to the finish line.

Time?

At least 60 minutes—it depends on how much time you have spent preparing your project or task.

Why?

It's easy to stop with just an idea and never take it further. An action plan will help you to plan your project strategically and to break down the different parts that need to be done in different phases. You will also get a general view of the project, and be able to distribute responsibility and put up time frames—both short and long term. This general picture will help you to reach your short or long term goals. The action plan can be a part of the project plan, or the business plan, if you are planning on starting a company.

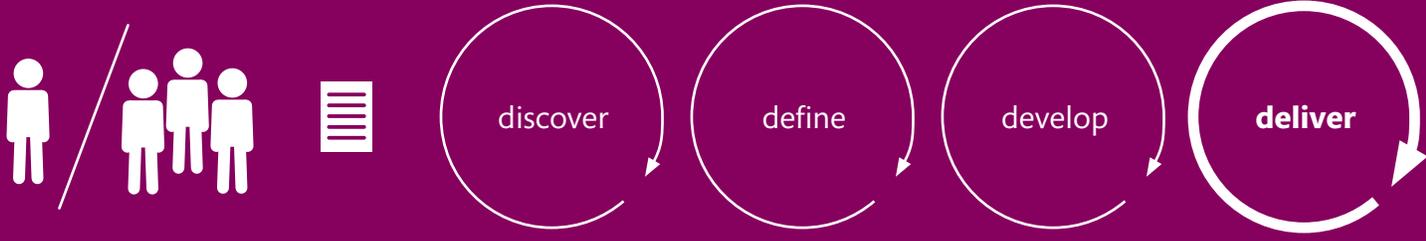
What is needed?

First of all, you need something to start with; perhaps the aim of the project or a challenge you will be working with. Perhaps you want to start with needs or wishes that are connected to your goals. When you create your action plan you can also use other tools like brainstorming as one part of the process.

Each participant needs a worksheet and a pen. If you choose to work in groups, you can use a common worksheet, a whiteboard or a computer.

How?

1. The first step is to start with the aims, needs or challenges you will be working towards/with.
2. The next step is to break the aim apart to find the first thing you need to do to achieve this aim.
3. How should this first thing be done? What actions need to be taken?
4. When should these actions happen? Set fixed time frames, so that you know when these actions should be taken/finished.
5. You will possibly have to divide up responsibility and make one participant responsible for each step. Who is in charge of each step?



Hints!

It is important to point out that you can create an action plan in many different ways, and with different headlines. It depends on the type of project with which you are working. We have made some suggestions on the worksheet, but please remember that these headlines are just suggestions. You are welcome to use other headlines that are better suited for the project goals/aims/needs you started with.

Make sure that the action plan doesn't end up in a drawer somewhere. Put it on the wall of your office or on a common board so that everyone involved can see it and be reminded of what they are supposed to make sure gets done.

Just a word regarding your aims/goals: it can be a good idea to take a closer look at SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attractive/Achievable, Realistic/Relevant and Time-bound) and how they are framed. Smart goals can get half the work with the action plan done.



Read more

We recommend that you search online for project management literature if you're interested in reading more about action plans. There are many examples of suggested structures for action plans. Here is just one example:

Mindtools. (2015). *Action Plans*. Retrieved 2015 from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_04.htm

Worksheet: Get things done

Aims, needs or challenges

How should this be done?
What actions need to be taken?

When should this happen?

Who carries the responsibility?

Example

Aims, needs or challenges

Create a better atmosphere in the working team

How should this be done? What actions need to be taken?

1. Fewer and shorter meetings
2. Organize a kick-off
3. Organize a Christmas party

When should this happen?

1. Right away
2. After the holidays
3. December

Who carries the responsibility?

1. The boss
2. The administrator
3. The organizing committee