DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

A worksheet offering a simple, action-focused process for turning your positive vision for change into reality.

This tool will help you out to:

✓ OUTLINE THE END GOAL YOU ARE WORKING TOWARDS

✓ PRIORITISE THE MAIN STEPS AND TASKS THAT WILL BE REQUIRED

✓ SET OUT A TIMELINE FOR THE CHANGES YOU WILL DELIVER

✓ ALLOCATE RESPONSIBILITY AND RESOURCES SENSIBLY

✓ CHECK PROGRESS AND STAY ON TRACK

ABOUT THIS TOOL

You're committed to making the world a better place, but how will you turn your vision into reality? How will you prepare for the obstacles ahead and keep on track?

It's time to develop a solid action plan.

An action plan describes how you will accomplish your goal and the steps involved. It typically describes:

• What actions will occur

• Who will carry out these actions

• By when they will take place

• What resources will be needed

Developing an action plan will give you a clear direction and provide you with a detailed road map for achieving your goal. It will help you stay more focused, organised and productive. It will also help you co-ordinate the contribution of others and make it easier to track progress.

This worksheet gives you a really simple six-step action planning process and a template you can use to compile your thoughts.

CREATING YOUR ACTION PLAN

Follow these six steps to developing and managing your action plan:

1. Define your goal
2. Outline the tasks
3. Allocate responsibility
4. Set deadlines
5. Identify resources
6. Review progress

1. DEFINE YOUR GOAL

Start by writing down your main goal. Think about the single thing you can do that would most affect the impact you want to have in your community, for society or the environment. Write your goal concisely. It has to be ambitious, compelling, specific, and measurable. The clearer you are about what you want to achieve, the more effective your plan will be.

2. OUTLINE THE TASKS

Once you have identified your end goal, then brainstorm everything you need to do to achieve it. Then organise and prioritise these tasks as much as possible, breaking them down into actionable steps. Make sure that each action is clearly defined and directly related to your goal. If you come across larger and more complex tasks, break them down to smaller ones that are easier to execute and manage. It's important that your entire team is involved in this process.

3. ALLOCATE RESPONSIBILITY

Once you have agreed the actions, you will need to figure out who will take them on. Discuss each action as a group. Ensure that the tasks are understood and attainable. Identify someone to take responsibility for carrying out each. Ensure you consult with the person responsible to understand his or her capacity before deciding on deadlines.

4. SET DEADLINES

For the plan to be effective, you will need to establish a timeframe for completing each task. Assess the requirements and consider the amount of time that will be needed to complete the task. Look at interdependencies between tasks and be realistic about when things can be achieved. It is essential to create a timeline you can reasonably follow in order to maintain consistent progress toward your goal.

5. IDENTIFY RESOURCES

Before you start your project, it's crucial to ensure you have all the necessary resources. Consider each task and the resources needed to complete it, such as money, equipment, people and time. Write down a financial value where money will be required. Identify where resources are currently available and where you will need to acquire them.

6. REVIEW PROGRESS

Finally, your action plan is not something set in stone. As things progress, or circumstances change, you should regularly revisit and make adjustments. You can mark tasks that are completed as done on your final action plan (simply add a column), bringing attention to how you're progressing toward the goal. In some cases tasks may be pending or delayed, in which case you will need to figure out why and find suitable solutions, and then update the action plan accordingly.

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

| GOAL: | | | |

ACTION STEP	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	MILESTONE OR DUE DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED

FURTHER INFORMATION

Thanks for taking the time to check out this guide.

Motivated to learn more? Social Shifters has put together a wide range of practical courses and resources to help you plan, start and grow your project idea.

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