

Writing an Action Plan

What is an action plan?

A sequence of steps that must be taken, or activities that must be performed well, for a strategy to succeed. An action plan has three major elements (1) Specific tasks: what will be done and by whom. (2) Time horizon: when will it be done. (3) Resource allocation: what specific funds are available for specific activities. Also called action program.

Read more: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/action-plan.html#ixzz1jMphfiLB>

How to write an action plan:

- Clarify your goal. Can you get a visual picture of the expected outcome? How can you see if you have reached your destination? What makes your goal measurable? What constraints do you have, like the limits on time, money, or other resources.
- Write a list of actions. Write down all actions you may need to take to achieve your goal. At this step focus on generating and writing as many different options and ideas as possible. Take a sheet of paper and write more and more ideas, just as they come to your mind. While you are doing this, try not to judge or analyze.
- Analyze, prioritize, and prune. Look at your list of actions. What are the absolutely necessary and effective steps to achieve your goal? Mark them somehow. After that, what action items can be dropped from in the plan without significant consequences for the outcome. Cross them out.
- Organize your list into a plan. Decide on the order of your action steps. Start from looking at your marked key actions. For each action, what other steps should be completed before that action? Rearrange your actions and ideas into a sequence of ordered action steps. Finally, look at your plan once again. Are there any ways to simplify it even more?
- Monitor the execution of your plan and review the plan regularly. How much have you progressed towards your goal by now? What new information you have got? Use this information to further adjust and optimize your plan.

<http://www.time-management-guide.com/plan.html>

1. Scope out the big picture

- Write a general summary of what you want to accomplish with objectives, budget, time, assumptions, definitions, potential risks and issues that may arise and tie it to a goal. Make sure you write the pros and cons so you know where to focus downstream.

2. Break out the smaller tasks

- More specifically, assign tasks to yourself or a team member pieces of the project that will support how you will achieve your goal. In this assignment make sure to think proactively about the timeline and deadlines of the overall project in terms of allocating resources.

3. Create a list of action steps

- For each task, there should be a list of to-dos ranked in sequential order. Make sure this list can be changed, shared, re-ordered and deleted if there are redundancies.

4. Prioritize relative importance

- Some steps are more important than others. Based on days to deadline, task and action step importance, and number of steps remaining, a master list is generated automatically to guide workflow process.

5. Collaborate and translate

- Effective action plans require clear input and clarification from teammates.

<http://www.plandone.com/node/58>

Drafting the Action Plan

Big Picture: In a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) state the goals. What do you hope to accomplish? What is the expected outcome?

Actions: What tasks or actions will need to be completed? These are the smaller steps that will help you to accomplish the “big picture.” Be sure to create a logical, sequential order. What will happen first, second, etc.? Each step should include a specific, detailed, and concise explanation.

- 1) Briefly list all of the tasks.
- 2) Evaluate the order of the list. Should any steps be eliminated, added, or rearranged?
- 3) Make any necessary changes. Be sure the tasks are in order.
- 4) Expand and explain each step.

Questions to Ponder:

Which facts learned from research can be incorporated?

What will need to be done to accomplish each task? Are there additional, separate steps needed for any task?

What resources are needed for each task?

Who will accomplish each task?

Will the task involve teachers, administrators, students, parents, and/or the community?

How will each task be accomplished?

What's the timeline?

How much time will be required to accomplish each step?

Does each task help accomplish the goal?

What are the potential problems for each task?

How do the tasks connect to the other parts of the “Welcoming New Students” program: Peer Greeters/Buddies, Newsflash, Website, New Student Cohorts, Clubs?

Do you need to work with any other groups to refine your action plan?

Final Draft Rubric

- ___ “Big Picture” opening paragraph
- ___ Steps are in a logical order
- ___ Each step is clearly described with specific details.
- ___ Content reflects and incorporates research
- ___ Group has considered potential pitfalls and planned accordingly
- ___ Supports goals
- ___ Connects to and supports other aspects of the overall plan:
 - Peer Buddies/Greeters, Clubs, New Student Cohorts, Newsflash,
 - Website
- ___ Language Usage/Mechanics