

Illawarra Small Business Assistance

HELPFUL HINT – WHENEVER YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT, DRAW UP AN ACTION PLAN

Exactly what do you need to do to put an action plan into place?

How do you ensure that you really have covered everything? Would anyone else know where you'd got to with the project if you were unexpectedly off sick for a few days? And are you quite clear about when you need to start if everything is to be done and dusted by the deadline?

An Action Plan is a simple list of all of the tasks that you need to carry out to achieve an objective. It differs from a "to do list" in that it focuses on the achievement of a single objective.

Wherever you want to achieve something significant, draw up an Action Plan. This helps you think about what you need to do to achieve the task, so that you can get help where you need it, involve key people and monitor progress.

To draw up an Action Plan, simply list the tasks (action steps) that you need to carry out to achieve your objective, in the order that you need to complete them. This is very simple, but is still very useful!

Tip:

A useful mnemonic that you can use to help you check that you've remembered all the tasks that might be needed to meet your GOAL is **SCHEMES**. This stands for:

- Space
- Cash
- Helpers/people
- Equipment
- Materials
- Expertise
- Systems

You may not need all of them to meet some objectives; a small internal project to streamline the format of your team's reports, for example, only requires "people", "expertise" and "systems".

Maintain the concept of **GOALS, Objectives and Action Steps**. The GOAL is the overriding issue for achievement. Objectives will be devised to underpin the goal and for each appropriate objective there will be range of Action Steps for implementation.

It is recommended that no more than **7 Objectives** be identified to underpin the achievement of a GOAL – these can be related to SCHEMES.

GOAL:
Objective 1.

Action	ByWhom	By When

Keep the Action Plan well located and visible to all as you carry out the work and update it as you go along with any additional activities that come up.

If you think you'll be trying to achieve a similar objective again, revise your Action Plan after the work is complete, by changing anything that could have gone better. Perhaps you could have avoided a last-minute panic if you'd alerted a supplier in advance about when and approximately what size of order you would be placing. Or maybe colleagues would have been able to follow up on the impact of your newsletter on clients if you have communicated with them about when it would be hitting clients' desks.

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