

Productive to the Max

Productivity

Performance

Profitability

Create action plans

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You have a job to do. It usually consists of projects, major or minor. You have deadlines, specific details to include, other people to delegate to and information to include. How do you keep track of all these areas? By creating action plans for everything you do.

Action plans start with a goal. It may be to set up a business plan for your department for the next three years. It could be to plan a large conference or meeting. Perhaps you are required to centralize the filing system for the department.

The following tips will help you use action plans to your advantage.

- Your action plan expresses your goal in terms of specific actions or operations. It states the specific steps that need to be followed to achieve your goal.
- The plan should include a schedule with deadlines (start and finish actions) required to achieve the objective and measurements to ensure the objective is accomplished.
- Action plans should be created with input from the group. Overall goals of the department should be shared with the team and specific steps to each action plan developed in conjunction with each staff member.
- Keep action plans with you at all times and update and revise regularly.
- Retain action plans for future projects. List revisions, changes, ideas and improvements for other similar plans.
- Management will benefit from the use of action plans as a team building tool to create continuity in the department. Managers can keep track through regular meetings with each staff member. This provides an opportunity to assist with difficult areas and to reward staff when the steps are completed properly. It also provides input for performance reviews.

Action plans work best where deadlines are not restrictive and where there is no need for coordination or delegation of many individuals. If your projects grow to another level it will be necessary to incorporate project management skills and software.