



Managing the Action Learning Process

Action learning is a group effort that involves solving real problems, focusing on acquired learning, and implementing systems-wide solutions. This checklist contains a list of actions and decisions to complete to successfully put together an effective action learning program in your organization.

Effective Action Learning Checklist

Use the following checklist for putting an effective action learning program together for your organization.

Step 1: Preparing for Action Learning Programs

Orientation for the Organization

- Does everyone understand the nature and purpose of action learning programs?
- Is there agreement on overall objectives for the program?
- Is management committed to the program? Are there champions for the action learning sets?
- Has the program and its objectives been discussed with potential participants and their managers?
- Do managers and participants understand the time factor involved?

Projects

- Do the projects meet the organization's needs as well as provide learning opportunities?
- Are they problems rather than puzzles?
- Are the projects feasible and manageable?
- Will the group have the authority to implement their recommendations? Or will they first need to be presented to higher management for implementation?
- Who will be the client for the group?

Participants

- Have group members been carefully selected (members can be chosen by their managers, self-selected, or by an individual who has a stake in solving the problem)?
- Is there an appropriate member mix to provide fresh perspectives, and knowledge?
- Have set advisors been chosen and trained?

Step 2: Start-Up Workshop

- Has a training workshop been developed that assures that the participants will have:
- Gained an understanding of the basic concepts and mechanics of action learning?
- Agreed with the client on the problem/task?
- Identified resources (contacts) that may be needed?

Step 3: First Set Meetings

- Have set members agreed to adopt action learning processes relative to airspace, asking questions, and reflection?
- Have they agreed on future dates for set meetings and committed to attend regularly?
- Have they identified a place convenient for participants— preferably away from the workplace (to avoid interruptions)?
- Are action learning processes observed at all meetings unless set decides otherwise?

Step 4: Final Wrap-up Meeting

- Has there been a review of the learning?
- Has a systematic analysis of how the learning can be applied to other parts of the organization

occurred?

- Have verbal or written reports been prepared for the clients, managers, and others interested?