

GETTING THINGS DONE

Thinks ahead, planning and delegating work and leading change effectively



A Planning Cycle

To get things done effectively, you need a structure which supports your process and your goals. You will often have more than one project you are managing at any one time so it is easy to lose focus, or impetus, or for things to fall off your to do list. 'Planning' implies the beginning of a process but, in reality, a manager is continually planning their next steps as they go.

Think first: What problem are we addressing?

- What is the goal?
- Resources required – time, people, budget.
- Time line – key deliverables and dates. Often it is useful to work backwards from the end goal; otherwise, everything gets squashed into the last phase and you run out of time.
- Do some assessment before you begin. A SWOT analysis can be helpful: identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This helps you identify pinch points, and to think about whether this is the best way to achieve your goal, or whether there might be better alternatives.
- Adjust initial plans to take account of SWOT results.

Implementation phase:

- Agreements in place.
- Roles and responsibilities clarified – delegation.
- Needs identified.
- Overall planning agreed. Deliverables agreed: who, what and when. Review dates and monitoring processes established, especially communication channels.
- Work starts.

Regular agreed review meetings to identify issues and provide support.

Include how you will keep in touch with the project as part of your own workflow: it is easy to lose touch, especially if you have delegated most of the process.

Be prepared to change course and make adjustments as circumstances change. Make as many re-iterations as required.

Deliver the project/goal.

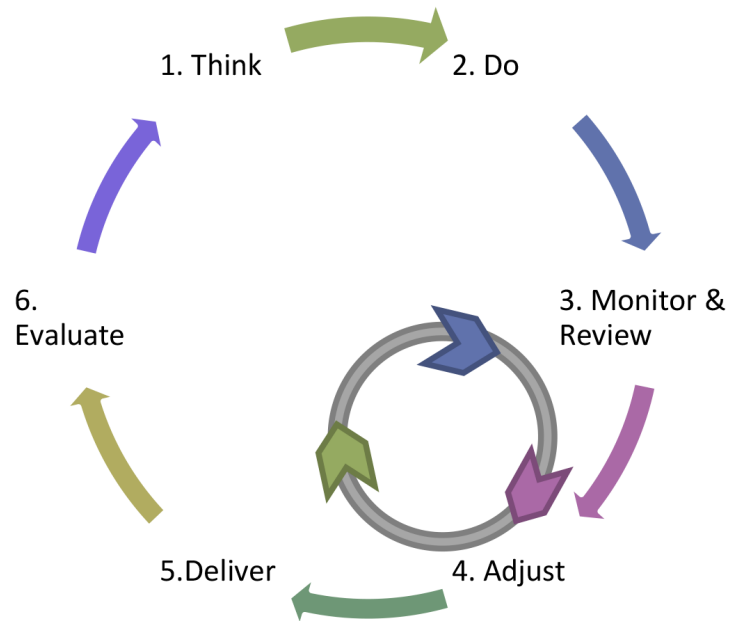
Evaluate the process. What is the learning? Celebrate as appropriate.

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Thinks strategically, taking an open and long-term view of possibilities

Communication

At each stage of the process, whether it is a small project or a large one, it is important to consider what communication is required. Judging how and how much is a matter of leadership style, the individuals involved, and the complexity of the project and time efficiency. The important question is, 'Is this communication contributing to the successful outcome of the project – and how?' If you can't answer this question clearly, then maybe something else is required. Too much communicating can get in the way of a successful outcome as often as not communicating enough. It is worth including communication as one of the aspects of the evaluation; you need feedback to hone your management skills.



ACTIVITY

Use the planning process to structure a) your day's or week's to do list or b) a small project you are working on at work. What effect has this process had on your efficiency or your effectiveness?

What were the key communication points in your process? How often did you simply need reminding what needed to be done next? When did you need support to keep going? How did you get it?

What would you do differently next time?



Complete the Reflection sheet