

Creating an implementation plan

An important element of effective strategy implementation is the creation of an implementation plan. This acts as a roadmap from where you are now to where you want to be in the future.

Step 1: Agree the core strategic aims.

1. What is the broad strategic direction?
2. What is the timeframe for achieving this?
3. What are the broad sets of actions required to achieve the strategy?

Step 2: Identify key action(s) for each core strategic aim

- What are the shorter term key actions that need to be taken in order to fulfil the core strategic aims?
- What order or priority do these steps need be taken?
- When these are completed, will the strategic aim be realised?

Step 3: Identify measure(s) for each key action

- What information do I need to identify whether I have been successful in carrying out this key action?
- What will be the key performance indicators for each action?
- How will we ascertain the relative success, or degree of completion, for each of the key actions?
- When will we measure each action?

Step 4: Set objective(s) for key action

The objectives are closely linked to the measures. While identifying the measures lets you know what information you require, the objectives state exactly what is to be achieved and when. They should follow the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound). For some key actions these objectives will simply be the completion of a particular task by a particular date, such as the first objective in the table below. For others the objectives will be a numerical metric, such as the second objective in the table below.

Step 5: Allocate owners

An individual should hold overall responsibility for each key action. This helps to maintain accountability for the completion of the actions. The owner is not necessarily responsible for carrying out all the actions, but is responsible for making sure that they are carried out.

Step 6: Allocate resources

The implementation plan should highlight the requirement for additional resources resulting from new strategies. They will fall into three categories:

- People resources (the number of people needed and their key skills, knowledge and behaviour requirements).
- Physical resources (real estate, equipment, etc.).
- Financial resources (capital expenditure, cash required, etc.).
- Do you have all the resources needed?
- Where are the gaps in the resource need?

Step 7: Communicate the plan

Once the plan has been finalised and agreed by those involved, a plan needs to be constructed for effective communication to all stakeholders.

Different stakeholders will have different needs and information requirements that should be taken into consideration before communicating the plan. By identifying these needs upfront you can plan how and when you will communicate to all the interested parties.

Step 8. Continuously review and update

The successful implementation of a strategy does not end with the production of an implementation plan. As with any type of forward planning, initial assumptions made during the original formulation of the strategy may prove to be inaccurate and the competitive environment can change. Successful organisations continuously monitor their actual performance against the plan and are prepared to make adjustments.



