



Planning to Achieve Your Purpose

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It is widely recognised that success is more likely with a plan.

You wouldn't go on a big overseas holiday without planning it properly, because you'd risk all sorts of problems happening! The same applies to running our organisations – you are far more likely to achieve what you set out to do if you have a plan in place.

The APIE Planning Model is a simple, easy Planning Cycle model that you can apply to any type of planning.

A = Assess: Where are we now? Where do we want to be in the future?

A simple way to answer the 'Now' question is to do a SWOT analysis – have a brainstorming session and list all the organisation's Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (I also like to add Risks as another area for the brainstorming session). The 'Future' question is answered by your organisation's Statement of Purposes, and Values/Vision/Mission.

P = Plan: This is the 'What' and the 'How', that takes us from the 'Now' to the 'Future'.

'What' exactly are we going to do – Our Goals? When expressing your goals, write them as SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-lined.

'How' are we going to do it – the specific steps/actions that will need to take place to achieve the goals.

'Who' will do each step – assign responsibility or its likely no one will do it. 'When' will each step be completed – have a deadline and it is more likely to get done.

I = Implement: Now that you have your detailed plan in place, get on with it!

Don't let your plan be filed away and forgotten about – keep checking in with it at your monthly meetings – it needs to be a 'Living' document.

E = Evaluate: Coming up to the end of the planning cycle (in many cases this will be 12 months) look back on your progress against your plan (SMART goals make this step easier). Did we achieve what we set out to? If not, why not? Do we need to change something going into the next cycle so that we do achieve what we set out to do?

This step then triggers off the next APIE cycle where we (Re-) Assess...Plan...Implement... Evaluate.

Remember: Planning is an ongoing process – it is a Journey, not a Destination.