

AFTER ACTION REVIEW

Review and reflect for future learning

After Action Review is a method that supports participatory reflection and review of completed actions to improve performance and solutions in the future. Guided by a facilitator, participants jointly review what happened in a given situation, compare it to what was supposed to happen, discuss why it occurred as it did, and identify insights and learning for the future. Openness, honesty, and commitment to learning are here required to take full advantage of the method.

Purpose: Knowledge construction

Group size:
< 20, 21 - 50

Duration:
30 min - 1 hour

Multilanguage fit: no

Level of interaction:
high

USE THIS METHOD:

- Induce accurate reflection on the learning process.
 - Generate objective evaluations free from personal criticism.
 - Reformulate experience to give a clear and cohesive picture and reiterate lessons learned.
 - Decide on actions that will apply the learning in the near future.
 - Set the stage for Phase 3 of the blended learning approach by either facilitating an online learning activity or reviewing results during the face-to-face training.
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THE SPACE HERE
CAN BE FILLED
WITH YOUR
NOTES



STEPS TO APPLY THE METHOD: _____

Preparation

1. Define the objective of this learning activity, the topic, and the action to be reviewed.
2. Define the number of participants required to take part in the session.
 - Evaluate whether the number of participants is manageable by one facilitator (variation 1) or more facilitators (variation 2).
3. Define the tool that you will use and familiarize yourself with its functionalities.
 - Design and prepare the online space for the learning activity. If more facilitators join the session, create breakout rooms.
4. Brief participants on the purpose of the learning activity and the action to be reviewed.
 - Clarify that the learning activity is a non-judgemental process that intends to capture facts.
5. Explain the procedure of the learning activity:
 - Variation 1: Participants work jointly with the facilitator.
 - Variation 2: Participants are divided into groups according to the number of participants and available facilitators. Parallel sessions are held.
 - Participants are asked questions to review a specific action plan by focusing on facts. Then, they compare the plan and the reality to be able to identify and discuss successes and shortfalls. Finally, participants generate action plans to improve performance in the future.
 - Facilitator documents key points during the session.

Delivery

1. Start the learning activity:
 - If variation 1: go to step 8.
 - If variation 2: Divide groups according to the number of participants and available facilitators, and distribute them into breaking rooms.
2. Present the questions one at a time in the most logical sequence, allowing enough time for reflection.

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- Document all key points. If possible make them available for everyone in your group to see while holding the session. For example, you can use a whiteboard, or share your screen while writing on a document or a slide.
- 3. Encourage participants to share collaborative reflections.
 - First question: what was supposed to happen?
 - The first question creates a common understanding of the goals of the learning activity being reviewed.
 - Second Question: what actually happened?
 - The second question deals with the actual results and outcomes of the activities.
 - Third question: Why was there a difference? (between plan and reality).
 - The third question unearths the causes of the end result in order to understand the consequences of actions, decisions, and influential factors.
 - Fourth question: What was learned from this?
 - The fourth question elicits ideas and insights on what to do next. This will generate a series of action items that would lead to more positive results in the future and reinforce change.
 - Note: Close the session when the participants have exhausted all their insights and answered all probing questions.
- 4. Debrief and invite comments or questions to evaluate participants' learning (variation 1) or open a final discussion with all participants (variation 2).
 - For both variations, share the recorded notes with your participants after the session for future reference.

Recommendations:

- Try applying this method immediately after the learning activity or project has occurred to ensure that the experience is fresh in participants' memories.
 - When facing hesitant reactions from participants, try asking everyone to individually express both a positive and negative thought in writing and instruct participants to post their insights for everyone to discuss later in the session.
 - Build this method into regular learning or operational routines to ensure a constant flow of productive feedback.
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