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Worksheet

The Action Plan Method

Constructing an “action plan” is a method for finding effective ways for archiving your goals. Careful planning will surely take some of your valuable time, but, if done properly, it will pay off in the end.

The following steps are one possibility for drawing up a plan on how to accomplish a specific goal:

1. **Clarify your goal**.
   What exactly to you want to accomplish? What is the expected outcome and why is this outcome important for you? Which constraints do you see (measurements time, deadlines,…)? How will you know that you reached your goal, is it measurable?

2. **Write a list of actions.**
   Write down all the things and actions you can imagine that may be helpful to achieve your goal. Collect all ideas that come to your mind without analyzing or judging them. At this stage, also note unconventional ideas as they might inspire you to come up with solutions you would not think of otherwise.

3. **Analyze and prioritize.**
   Take a look at your list. Mark the steps that are absolutely necessary to reach your goal. Also label the ideas which seem to be promising and effective. Cross out the actions that can be omitted without significant consequences for the outcome. Are there skills you need to acquire to be able to reach your goal? Add the necessary actions to your list.

4. **Organize your list into a plan.**
   Now it's time to bring the actions into a logical order. Start by looking at the marked key actions. What other steps have to be done before that action? Sort your list into a sequence of ordered action steps and fix a realistic schedule. Finally, have a look at your plan once again. Did you miss anything? Are there any ways of simplifying it?

5. **Monitor the execution of your plan and measure your progress.**
   Monitoring your progress towards reaching your goals is important to keep motivated. You also have to check on a regular basis if you have information that helps to optimize your plan. If necessary you have to adjust it to changes within the frame conditions.