

Action Plan

From Problem to Solution: Developing an Action Plan

An action plan is a detailed roadmap that outlines the steps necessary to address the problem you have identified. A well-developed action plan includes a process for collecting and analyzing data to evaluate the effectiveness of a proposed solution.

1. Identify your goals

- ➔ Clearly define the desired outcomes of your research project.
- ➔ When possible, break down your goals into smaller, more manageable objectives.
- ➔ Set SMART goals:



Example:

Reduce the number of food waste incidents in our school cafeteria by 20% within the next month.

2. Develop research questions

- ➔ Develop specific questions that will help you address your problem statement.
- ➔ Ask questions that start with "what" or "how" to explore the details of your objectives.
- ➔ Keep your research questions aligned with your goals/desired outcomes.

Example:

- *What are the most common types of food waste in our cafeteria?*
- *How can we encourage students/staff to change habits that lead to food waste?*
- *What are the costs associated with food waste in our school?*
- *How can we implement a composting program to divert food waste from landfills?*

3. Create a timeline

- ➔ Create a schedule for implementing your action plan.
- ➔ Set deadlines for each step or milestone.
- ➔ Build in flexibility to account for unexpected delays or challenges.

Example:

Month 1	<i>Administer surveys to assess food waste habits. Analyze survey results and identify key areas for improvement.</i>
Month 2	<i>Launch an educational campaign and composting program.</i>
Month 3	<i>Monitor food waste levels and make adjustments to the plan as needed.</i>
Month 4	<i>Evaluate the effectiveness of the food waste reduction strategies.</i>
Month 5	<i>Develop a report for school leaders summarizing findings and recommendations.</i>

4. Assess resources needs

- ➔ Identify the resources needed to implement your action plan, such as time, money, professionals with particular skills or expertise, equipment, etc.

Example:

- *Access to school cafeteria records and data.*
- *2-hour weekly team meetings for research and planning.*
- *1-hour bi-weekly meetings with school leaders and cafeteria staff to obtain support and approval for the educational campaign and composting program.*
- *Access to a university professor with experience in waste reduction campaigns and food composting programs.*
- *\$100 for printing and supplies.*

5. Assign responsibilities

- ➔ Determine who will be responsible for carrying out each task.
- ➔ Assign tasks and responsibilities based on the skills, experience, interests and availability of each team member.

Example:

- ***Project leader:** Develops meeting agendas, coordinates communication with school staff, sends reminders to team members to ensure tasks are completed, etc.*
- ***Data analyst:** Develops survey for students/staff, analyzes data, provides summary of findings to help design educational campaign.*
- ***Researcher:** Meets with professor to learn more about how to develop successful educational campaigns and campaign programs.*
- ***Communicator:** Develops presentations and reports.*



6. Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan

- ➔ Determine how you will track your progress and measure the effectiveness of your solutions.
- ➔ Schedule regular meetings or check-ins to review your progress.

- ➔ Use a project management tool or a simple spreadsheet to track each team member's progress on their assigned tasks.

Example:

Week	Activity	Team Member	Due Date
1	Develop survey to assess food waste habits.	Data analyst	X/X/XXXX
2	Share food waste reduction plan w/ school leaders.	Project Leader	X/X/XXXX