

Boost Results and Happiness with Proper Planning



Introduction

There are two types of personalities in our society: Type A and Type B.

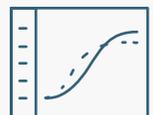
This theory proposes that a Type A individual is outgoing, ambitious, rigidly organized, highly status-conscious, sensitive, impatient, anxious, proactive, and concerned with time management. The Type B individual, on the other hand, is a stark contrast to the Type A.

There are no right or wrong personalities when it comes to individuals. However, when we apply the same personality theory to organizations, the common assumption is that organizations are more likely to be in the Type A category even if they are a fun and flexible company.

The reason being, there are at least three common traits of the Type A personality that are vital to organizations — concern for time management, rigid organization, and a strong orientation for achievements. When we put them into context, here is what it looks like in an organization:

- Concern for time management (proper time tracking)
- Rigid organization (effective planning)
- Strong orientation for achievements (well managed finances)

Since we've already covered [the importance of time tracking](#), let's look at why planning is essential.



A goal without a plan is just a wish...

A famous quote by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

There's also an old saying that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. This certainly holds true in our daily business endeavors and in our personal lives, even if it's a cliché.

Consider setting out on a weekend drive to the countryside without first planning your trip. For instance, deciding on your ultimate destination, finding a map, checking weather and road conditions, estimating the amount of time it's going to take to get there, and how many stops you'll likely need or want to take along the way.

Unexpected events such as delays due to road work or other reasons can, and most likely will, require you to deviate from any anticipated plan. It usually helps if you have some ideas about what will happen if roadblocks or other delays impede your course.

Even if you decide to go on an impromptu, spontaneous weekend drive, that goal without a plan is still just a wish that may or may not come true.

What if you run out of gas in the middle of nowhere?

Well, the good news is, there are plans and there are **plans**.



**“Plans are of
little importance,
but planning
is essential.”**

—Winston Churchill

Plans vs. Planning

While plans are missions you need to carry out, planning is preparation. And preparation is important, if not crucial.

Let's assume you were to go on a mountain mission, would you embark on the journey without any preparation?

Chances are, you wouldn't.

Your plan is to hike the mountain, but it is hard to see it through without planning. This is because proper planning includes:

- Knowing what is needed for the hike, from food to equipment to clothes.
- Going on training hikes to understand our strengths and limits.
- Understanding what works best for your body in order to complete the hike without overexerting the body into exhaustion.
- Having a backup plan if something goes wrong during the hike. It saves lives!

Even though projects are usually not a matter of life and death, the same mentality applies to planning in a team before commencing any project or mission. Proper planning will enable the team to function at its optimal level for two main reasons:



1. On an individual level — each member is able to develop themselves based on the awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in order to move forward. What works best for an individual may not work for the other.



2. On a collective level — Aligning expectations among all team members allows them to be mentally well prepared and equipped for the mission ahead, as well as to be clear of the direction the team is heading towards.

The functionality of a team does not lie solely on one person. It depends on the strengths of each individual in the team to make it a better experience for everyone. It is, however, upon the team lead to ensure and help team members reach their full potential.

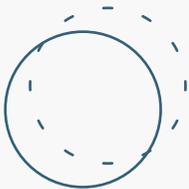
Planning is important, if not crucial, in teams in order to achieve that.

Too much of anything is bad. Balance is key.

There are plenty of reasons why bona fide plans can and do fail. The good news is that they can be easily addressed preemptively, which can help you reduce the likelihood of a nuclear meltdown.

Let's take a look at seven possible reasons why plans fail:

1. Unrealistic goals or lack of focus and resources



Plans must be focused and include a manageable, clearly defined number of goals, objectives, and programs. Adequate resources to accomplish those goals and objectives outlined in the plan must be adequately allocated.

For example, effective communication methodologies enable project teams and organizations to increase quality, scope, and success. When planning a project, the scope must be comprehensive, detailed, and preferably, communicated to the entire organization to lay the foundation for its success.

Implementing a holistic planning process, building a realistic business direction for the future, and employing effective communication channels among teams greatly improves the chances for successful implementation of your strategy.

2. Overly complex plans



We all know someone who tends to overplan, right down to the tiniest detail. They write pages and pages of text, mix in complex, overly detailed charts and diagrams, and create a schedule with so many contingencies and restrictions that it becomes virtually impossible to follow or implement.

If plans can't be effectively communicated because of their complexity, then it is even more difficult for team members to carry them out as intended.

3. Significantly inaccurate financial estimates

Is cost estimating an art or science?

All too often, plans are executed with little more than a general estimation of what sort of resources are needed. For example, the further along a project is allowed to proceed without adequate financial controls and checks in place, the higher the overall costs involved which can have a negative impact on customer satisfaction and your perceived reliability.

That spells immediate trouble.

4. Plans are based on insufficient data

If plans are based on wrong assumptions due to insufficient or misunderstood data, they are pretty much heading for disaster. That would be equivalent to going on that weekend drive to the countryside despite numerous storm warnings.

If there is no Plan B, C, D, and so on in place and no means with which to easily modify the plan before it gets out of control, then it definitely needed a larger scale of damage control, which can be extremely costly. Not to mention, it might even cause a dent in the dynamics of a team.

5. Inflexible or undefined team roles and responsibilities

Often times, managers or team leads are the main drivers of the plans while team members are expected to be the primary executioners.

For example, they're handed a project plan, and informed that their performance will be measured based on how well the project delivers against that designated plan. If they question the assumptions, estimates, or the general approach set forth in the plan, they're instructed to "just get on with it," as expectations have already been set.

Guess who will likely be blamed if plans fails?

While it's imperative that everyone involved understands from the outset what their work is, how it fits into the picture as a whole, and to whom they will be reporting, it's also important that there be mechanisms by which their feedback is factored into the planning processes, particularly as changes in plans require.

6. Staffing requirements are not fully understood



Resources are crucial to get things moving forward.

Resource planning is an essential part of the planning process. If not carefully implemented, incorrect assumptions and estimates made regarding human resource requirements (number, role, skill, and timing perspective) can impact the execution of any plans, and costs.

After all, plans depend on the resources who deliver them. Data and information is crucial both at the planning stages to monitor the availability of resources and to make any necessary course corrections.

7. Inflexible to changes

Experience tells us that simply because a plan has been implemented and everyone has agreed to it doesn't mean that all will go as expected. It's never a good thing when the scope of a plan changes and can usually be avoided through proper planning.

However, being adaptable and having a "Plan B" in case something does happen along the way is imperative to help attain the overall goal.

Whether or not you are big on planning, it is still an essential process to drive your teams to greater height. But it still needs to be flexible enough that the people involved can react to changes along the way. As Leo Tolstoy so elegantly states in the *The Journal of Leo Tolstoy*:

"No matter what the work you are doing, be always ready to drop it. And plan it, so as to be able to leave it."



“No matter what the work you are doing, be always ready to drop it. And plan it, so as to be able to leave it.”

—Leo Tolstoy

Do more without the burnout

Having plans is to make a commitment towards achieving a goal or a milestone. However, that level of commitment can also mean a burnout in a team, especially when plans fail and you find yourself without a contingency plan.

Mending a burnout is probably harder than mending a heartbreak. Its impact on both our mental and physical health can go a long way. Yet most people choose to power through a burnout, because that is what is expected of us, isn't it?

A burnout can be easily avoided with proper planning. It also lowers the risks of additional, unforeseeable costs and work overload. The best part of it all?

You get to keep your team members healthy and happy!

We say that our customers always come first. While that is true, the wellbeing of your team members is equally important too — if not more. Without your team members, you'll eventually lose your customers as well.

Here's an equation:

Boost in team members' happiness = dollars and cents

If your team members' satisfaction doesn't come to mind, you may want to think again.

And again.

And think harder.



There are few things in the work environment that have a more direct impact on the organization's overall performance than morale. Your team members' satisfaction ranks the highest on that list.

When your team members believe that you care about their total quality of life, it is almost guaranteed that they are instantly more engaged, motivated, and productive.

Embrace the power of planning to show you care about their quality of life.

Proper planning helps simplify collaboration and communication. It also ensures that workloads are allocated fairly which can make life easier for them and boost productivity.



Happy team members stick around, meaning you don't experience costly turnover.



Customer satisfaction is achievable, because happy team members have a better overall attitude and are willing to go the extra mile to meet customers' needs.



Proper planning means proper preparation and avoidable burnout, which will result in happier team members.

Conclusion

Considering there are so many reasons plans can fail, one might wonder why ever bother planning at all.

For one, mapping out a plan before embarking onto its implementation has plenty of benefits. It allows for a better understanding of objectives and their alignment with the broader organizational goals. Planning also helps identify and take into account any impediments that exist in reaching those objectives.

It doesn't even have to be tedious work.

There are more than a dozen of tools in the market to make planning as easy as ABC, even for the ones who really dislike planning.

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