



Workplace Satisfaction Project Action Tools

Action is about moving forward, about dealing with problems. Every team, park, or office must be action-oriented in the sense that it must be willing to recognize and discuss its challenges, and then positively do something to mitigate them. If action is not taken when indicated, the resource or value in question will inevitably suffer. Action often fails to occur when the options are complex and there seems no clear way forward, and/or when there is limited tolerance for risk; these are challenging conditions, under which a strong manager will find a way through while a lesser manager will dither, delay, or refuse to accept risk.

There is a direct correlation between the way organizations address 'action' and their organizational health/growth. Organizations which identify problems early, take calculated risks to address them, and act decisively are far healthier than those which do not.

- All action begins with recognizing problems and opportunities. Time and attention must be paid proactively to the changing world around us, or else opportunities will be missed, and problems will not be seen until they are imminent and difficult. Employees who spend all their time addressing issues of the moment, and not enough time looking carefully around them, often fail to see those problems or opportunities until it's too late – or not at all.
- Once identified, problems and opportunities must be given appropriate weight and consideration. Depending on the scope of the issue, managers may choose to consider the issue themselves – but when appropriate, it is more successful to involve affected employees in the deliberation and decision-making processes.
- Action must be appropriately timely in accordance with the known information. Overly-hasty action is action taken before a reasonable amount of available information is obtained, whereas action may fail altogether if it is delayed in an effort to wait for a single clear path to emerge.
- The best action plans are transparent and easily communicated. Employees will not support or defend an action if they do not understand it.
- All action involves risk, to a greater or lesser degree. It should be mitigated but cannot be eliminated entirely. Healthy organizations do not avoid or fear risk, they accept its necessity and use it wisely.
- All employees should promote a culture of informed risk-taking, open-mindedness to innovation and new solutions, and embrace the concept that it is “ok to fail”, as long as failure involves learning and growth.
- Recognizing and discussing a problem with employees provides for positive morale. However, talking at length about a problem without taking any decisive action on it tends to drop morale below baseline levels. Employees tend to have little patience with inaction, and derisively refer to such speaking-without-acting as “lip service”, which is a primary cause of poor morale.
- At times when it is difficult to see a positive solution to a problem, open-mindedness to innovation and willingness to embrace change are significant assets.
- Risk may be mitigated through proactive, multi-faceted investigation of the problem, which often reveals more relevant and timely information upon which to base the decision.
- Action is best taken when intentionally directed toward an employee's, team's, or office's unique strengths.

- Prior to engaging in action, teams, parks, and offices should have a strong understanding of their commitments and priorities, and a common understanding that not every arising 'problem' need to be accepted or addressed. In a world of limited time and resources, it's simply the case that not all problems can be tackled.
- Only a team that has a strong knowledge of its operational foundations, strengths, and liabilities will be able to accurately gauge the relative weight of a new problem.
- All employees should feel empowered to assist in the problem/opportunity identification process, and their input or feedback should be valued as an asset to the problem-solving process.
- Teams are often more creative, effective, and efficient than individuals when it comes to assessing and addressing problems, as they bring a variety of perspectives and solutions.
- Promises made must be acted upon. A promise made, and then broken, is a huge detractor to morale. o Specific

