

Workflow: Operational Guidance and Execution

Toolkit 2.1

Planning for Operational Success

target audience

Farm managers and supervisors.

what it is

This toolkit deals with the fundamental elements of planning for operational success. It has been said that success is 10% strategy, and 90% execution and implementation – the point being that success is impossible without execution and implementation. Operational success focuses on the daily work at hand, and operational planning is aimed at setting the operational standards, objectives, practices, processes, and schedules; as well as allocating accountability, while monitoring and controlling. Success comes from operationalising strategic objectives, and operational excellence is the context within which individuals thrive best.



We are talking about how you do things daily; the routines and rituals, the habits and ingrained practices, the consistency and discipline that ultimately produce desired results.

why it is important

“Practice does not make perfect. Practice of perfection makes perfect”.

The above saying emphasizes the importance of operational good practice. Implementing and embedding best practice needs to be planned.

Best practice is driven and embedded at the operational level and that is where continuous improvement happens.

“Continuous improvement is management lead, but it is owned by the operational teams and individuals.”

success factors

The success factors regarding planning for operational success are:

1. Defining and documenting all your key processes and activities, and the scheduling (activity over time) of each of them.
2. Setting a standard, i.e. defining what good looks like (benchmarks, targets, measurement).
3. Allocating accountability.
4. Communicating the plan – what, when, how, who.

Often, especially in operations that have been going for years, 1 and 3 are done to some degree, but 2 and 4 are neglected on the assumption that people know how to do things. This can lead to doing more of the same, resulting in much the same performance. Planning for operational success is the opportunity to set (and if necessary, reset) expectations regarding the level of excellence.

It is also your effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) at leading and managing improvement that will show itself most clearly, because it is in the daily operations, habits, tasks, and routines that improvement is demonstrated. It is also at this level where old habits are most entrenched, and where new ones will require the most reinforcement.

execution steps

1. Define / Document Your Key Processes, Activities and Schedule Them – This Handbook will help you check whether your operational plan is comprehensive enough.
 - List all your key operational processes.
 - Look at the success factors of each and ensure that you have included these factors in each of the processes.
 - Allocate time and deadlines to each process.
2. Define Best Practice and Set the Standard
 - Clearly state what “good looks like”.
 - Key processes should be defined using standard operating procedures (SOPs)

1. Allocate Accountability – There should be absolutely no ambiguity or confusion as to who is accountable for a process and the desired outcome.
2. Communicate – Use all the means to your disposal to communicate the standard (what) and who is accountable for achieving it (who). This includes SOPs, visual scoreboards, training, coaching, Gemba walks, and feedback/review sessions.

assessment questions

Please Note: There is no minimum / maximum amount of questions you can add

1.	Have you defined all your key operational processes and tasks?
2.	Have you identified key/critical success factors for each process?
3.	Have you defined the required standard for each key process, task, and success factor? In other words, have you defined what “good looks like” as defined in SOPs?
4.	Has accountability been clearly allocated?
5.	Do you communicate the standard and who is accountable using various methods (SOPs, visual scoreboards, training, Gemba walks, and feedback/review sessions)?

resources

1.	An annual operational planning calendar
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