

Annual Strategy Execution Process Checklist for Division Directors/Managers

Annual Planning Period:

- Generally, one fiscal year, beginning in July, corresponding to the budget cycle.
- Start developing annual strategy execution plans in March/April for the following fiscal year, i.e., after the legislative session which can affect priorities and budgets.
- Annual plans should be drafted, reviewed, revised and approved by the end of June.

How Many SE Plans Should Be Drafted Within a Division/Region/Bureau/Operating Group?

- This is entirely up to the division director. You could have one annual plan for the division with action items from the different operating groups, or you could allow each operating group to draft its own annual plan, or generate annual plans at the deputy director level, the bureau level, etc.

Who Should Draft SE Plans?

- The people who are tasked with carrying out the annual plan should draft the annual plan. Self-directed teams who are empowered with how to carry out a task tend to have much greater buy in to successfully completing that task.

What Constitutes an Action Item?

- Action items should be projects related to improving something in the division/region/bureau or operating group. The improvement could be performance around a measure, or some task designed to move the division/region/bureau or operating group forward in some way. Action items should NOT be regular ongoing administrative tasks.

How Many Annual Action Items Should the Division/Region/Bureau/Operating Group Have?

- This will vary by division/region/bureau or operating group size and other factors; but in general, more than a dozen *high priority* action items in one year may be too many. Most organizations try to focus on only a handful of *the most critical few* action items in one year strategy execution plans.
- **Joint Action Items:** At least some action items should be JOINT with other operating groups, divisions, departments or external organizations. If an operating group does not have joint action items, it's probably a red flag that that group is too inward looking and silo-ed. As a rule of thumb, about 50 percent of action items should probably be joint. Division directors/managers should monitor this ratio when reviewing annual SE Plans.

Annual Planning Cycle:

- **March/April—Annual Plan Production:** Preliminary drafts of SE Plans should be produced.

- **May—Annual Plan Presentations to Division Management:** Teams drafting SE Plans within the division/region/bureau/operating group should present their plans to division management. Division directors provide feedback to the SE Plan team(s) on revisions needed in their draft plans.
- **June—Annual Plan Approval:** Teams make revisions in their annual plan per division management and submit the plan to division management. Division management approves the final draft of the plan. Teams are empowered to execute the plan.
- **End of September Quarterly Meeting:** Division management and SE Plan teams meet and review progress as of the end of FY Q1. Tweaks and revisions in the annual plan may need to be made in consultation with division management.
- **End of December Quarterly Meeting:** Division management and SE Plan teams meet and review progress as of the end of FY Q2. Tweaks and revisions in the annual plan may need to be made in consultation with division management.
- **End of March Quarterly Meeting:** Division management and SE Plan teams meet and review progress as of the end of FY Q3. Tweaks and revisions in the annual plan may need to be made in consultation with division management.
- **End of June Quarterly/Annual Meeting:** Division management and SE Plan teams meet and review progress as of the end of FY Q4 and at the end of the fiscal year and planning period.
- **Ongoing:** Division management checks in with the team occasionally. Teams reach out to division management to clear unanticipated obstacles, as needed. Otherwise, teams are empowered to execute the plan as they see fit without ongoing oversight from division management.

Who Should Be Invited to Plan Presentation and Quarterly Meetings?

- This is entirely up to the division director. Options would include divisional management and the lead executive managing an annual SE Plan; or divisional management and the entire team which produced an annual SE Plan. Inviting all operating groups in the division to sit in on the presentations of all the annual plans in the division can be an effective means to assure cross-functional integration and alignment of tasks.

What Would Be an Appropriate Quarterly Milestone Measure for Action Items?

- Quarterly milestone measures are either 1) **data stream related** (i.e., increasing, decreasing or sustaining an ongoing level of performance, like reducing the average monthly number of resident falls in a facility, or reducing the division’s vacancy rate) or 2) **completion related** (i.e., accomplishing a task or part of a task, like opening a new health office, or drafting an implementation plan for expanding 5-2-1-0 programs in schools.)
- Milestones should indicate achievements, not activities, and should be measurable. So “work on implementation plan” as a quarterly milestone would not be ideal—not measurable, not a goal.