Wider Reading Booklet

2025 / 2026

'These wider reading sources will enhance your subject knowledge'

Contents

Setting up a Business (30 Minutes)

Source: Government Website
Available at: https://www.gov.uk/set-up-business/sole-trader.html
Task: Read about setting up a business as advised on the Government website.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:
200-word summary of the content:
Questions: What is a sole trader? When do you need to set up as a sole trader?   What is a limited company?   What is a partnership?   What are your responsibilities if you run your business from home?   What are your responsibilities if you rent somewhere to run your business?
Date completed: _____ **Teacher signature:** _____

PESTLE Analysis (60 Minutes)

Source: CIPD (Human Resource Specialists)
Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/organisational-development/pestle-analysis-factsheet#8000
Task: Read webpage, factsheet and watch the video about PESTLE analysis.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:
200-word summary of the content:
Questions: What does the acronym PESTLE mean?   Why is it important to understand the factors of a PESTLE Analysis?   What are the advantages of a PESTLE analysis?   What are the disadvantages of a PESTLE analysis?
Date completed: _____ **Teacher signature:** _____

Policies and Procedures (45 Minutes)

Source: Workable (HR Specialists)
Available at: https://resources.workable.com/tutorial/the-5-company-policies-you-need-to-have-in-writing#workplace-health-and-safety
Task: Read the below.

The 5 company policies you need to have in writing
A company policy is a guideline and rulebook for employers to establish formal expectations and standards for employee health and safety, accountability, best practices and processes within a company. It's also designed to ensure legal and regulatory compliance whether it's within the company or in external interactions with other companies and clients. Policies are to a company what rules are to the players of a game. They are the framework and constraints within which everyone can strive for individual and collective success. Besides, for anyone who has watched a few kids playing together it's pretty obvious why rules are important. And why it's a good idea to write them down.

Far too many companies, especially small businesses, neglect to get the basics down in writing early enough. There's a tendency to believe that "our company doesn't need them" and that spoken instructions will suffice. As soon as a company starts growing the limits of this approach become obvious. Putting company policies down in writing makes them official. Employees know what the company takes seriously and how they can keep up-to-date with their rights and responsibilities. People work better when they know where they stand. No-one wants to focus on the negative but disputes can and will arise. Having the ground rules established in the clearest and simplest terms helps to limit the damage when they do. And in the instance that disputes lead to court, written policies can be essential in ensuring a swift and fair outcome.

It's not all (or even primarily) about firefighting though. Having the beginnings of a company handbook can help you explain to current and future hires what's special about your company — as the games company Valve have done so well. Still not sure where to get started?
Here's five company policies that you should put in writing today:

1. **Workplace Health and Safety**
   Provisions for occupational safety are a necessity for everyone who owns or runs a business. It's imperative that your employees work within a healthy and safe workplace. Accidents and unsafe conditions can land you in court. If you also count the damage to reputation and loss of faith from employees, complacency when it comes to safety may be the biggest mistake you'll ever make. A written policy shows that you take the matter seriously. This is about more than a few fire extinguishers. A workplace safety policy will help you to think systematically.

2. **Equal Opportunity Policy**
   Being an equal opportunity employer is mandated by law in most countries. This equal opportunity policy prohibits any company from discriminating against employees or job applicants on the basis of a "protected characteristic" (gender, age, race etc.). It is fundamental for non-discrimination, anti-harassment, workplace violence and diversity policies. It can also help your business for two reasons: first, it expands the pool of people from which to choose the best applicant for any job and secondly, it creates a fair environment for employees to co-exist, work and thrive in. Putting it in writing will send the message to everyone that equal opportunity is a reality at your company.

3. **Employee Code of Conduct Policy**

   All employers have expectations from their employees and a straightforward code of conduct can make this clear. Communicating these expectations clearly is a prerequisite for compliance. Even if an employee has the best of intentions and even if some things are simple enough to be expected (like completing job duties), misunderstandings may still occur. One way to keep them to a minimum is to have a written code of conduct that will include important elements like attendance or even use of social media. Rules must be clear and accessible. Employees can consult them whenever they are unsure of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. It also means that when someone's employment has to be terminated there's a proper record in place.

4. **Leave of Absence Policy**

   For various reasons ranging from health issues to vacation plans, employees may occasionally require to be absent from work. Whether it is mandated by law or not, it is always advantageous to let your employees know beforehand what benefits you offer. Different kinds of leave (sick leave, Paid Time Off, maternity leave, parental leave etc.) are separate entities and may require different treatment. Having all this in writing, alongside rules that are necessary to regulate leave taking, is the only way to adequately inform employees.

5. **Employee Disciplinary Action Policy**

   Occasionally problems will arise at work and dealing with them is much easier with a clear disciplinary policy in place. Employees must know how and under what circumstances they will be disciplined. A standardized step-by-step process will help you ensure fair and appropriate treatment, even if you don't formally disclose the entire procedure. It will also show that you are an employer who does not tolerate serious violations but also values remedial actions in the case of minor offences. Take care though to consult a lawyer to ensure that the procedures you have in place are lawful.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:
200-word summary of the content:
Questions: Why are policies and procedures important?   What could be some negative outcomes for a business if policies and procedures were not in place?
Date completed: _____ **Teacher signature:** _____

The 9 Belbin Team Roles (80 Minutes)

Source: Indeed
Available at: https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/belbin-team-roles
Task: Read the below:

The Belbin Team Role Inventory test identifies the behavioural traits of an individual and defines them under a team role. An effective team is usually made up of a mix of people with different, complementary attributes. To get the most out of a team, it's beneficial to understand the skill set of its members and divide up the work accordingly. In this article, we explore the various Belbin team roles, how understanding them can give you certain insights and how they can help you achieve better team working.

What is the Belbin test?
First devised by Raymond Meredith Belbin through study at Henley Management College, the Belbin Team Role Inventory test is a behavioural test to assess how an individual operates in a team environment and their preference for any of the nine team roles identified. The test involves a person's own assessment of their behaviour along with feedback from observers and contrasts how a person sees their behaviour with how it's seen by others.

Belbin makes clear that his test differs from psychometric personality tests like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test. Rather than sort people into a defined personality type, it's designed to score people on how strongly they express traits from the nine team roles. A person can, and often does, express traits from multiple roles.

Using Belbin team roles in the workplace
Even though there are nine Belbin team roles, an effective team can still work with fewer than nine members. Indeed, Belbin himself believes that the optimum team size is four people. Anything beyond this and individuals aren't really working closely enough to constitute a team and are defined rather as a group. What's important is to determine the team objectives in a job and work out what tasks need to be undertaken. You can then discuss the best team roles to use and how and when each can be utilised to tackle these tasks.

Information on which team roles individuals more strongly associate with can also be used to assess how well a team may work together and to help identify the best candidates to fill a role in a team. It's important to try and avoid having a team made up of members with similar styles or behaviours, as such teams can become unbalanced. A balanced team is one with a mix of individuals, with strengths that complement each other and help offset any gaps other people may have in their skill set.

The nine Belbin Team Roles
Through his study, Belbin identified the following nine team roles:
1. The Plant
2. The Monitor Evaluator
3. The Specialist
4. The Resource Investigator
5. The Team Worker
6. The Co-ordinator
7. The Shaper
8. The Implementer
9. The Completer-Finisher

Belbin sub-categorises the nine roles into thinking roles, social roles and action roles:

Thinking roles
Belbin groups the following team roles together as being thinking-oriented:

The Plant
These team members bring about growth and progress, which is why they're called Plants. They're creative, free thinkers who can provide unconventional solutions to a problem. Somewhat different to the typical idea of a good team worker, Plants tend to be introverted and prefer to work alone. However, most teams can accept this as their creative thinking can produce innovative, ground-breaking approaches to achieving objectives. Teams do need to consider that, owing to their introverted nature, Plants may need extra support and patience when it comes to handling both communication and criticism.

The Monitor Evaluator
Strategic, rather than emotional or instinctive in their methods, these rational thinkers prefer a logical approach to problem solving. They like to carefully identify a team's options before coming up with a decisive, objective solution. Their analytical nature means they can be very good at assessing and analysing the ideas that Plants come up with.

Similarly, these individuals tend to prefer working alone, which helps them maintain their objectivity when evaluating the contributions of colleagues. Due to their ability to consistently make effective decisions, it's common to see these individuals in managerial roles. However, they may find it hard to inspire those around them and their evaluations may be viewed by some as being overly critical. Their carefully balanced, strategic approach to problem solving may also mean they can be slow in coming to a final decision.

The Specialist
These individuals bring to a team their in-depth knowledge around a specific area. Though their contribution is narrow in focus, it's usually invaluable. They are normally only brought into a team when their expertise is vital to carrying out a task. These highly focused, disciplined individuals are a great resource, but they tend be narrower in their thinking. They can become excessively focused on technicalities, sometimes overloading teams with information.

Social roles
Belbin groups the following team roles together as being social or people-oriented:

The Resource Investigator
Extroverted and inquisitive by nature, the Resource Investigator is skilled at networking and is the person to go out and explore options, develop contacts and negotiate for resources for the team. Though not necessarily as skilled as some other team members at coming up with their own ideas, they excel at picking up ideas from others to bring back to their team. Resource Investigators have a tendency to be very optimistic and strongly motivated by their initial interest in a project, which may cool over time.

The Team Worker
Extroverted, flexible and perceptive, the Team Workers are the diplomats of the team. They play the key role of ensuring cohesion in the team and making sure everyone is functioning well as a unit. Their flexibility means they're able to communicate well with the different members of a team, and they may often volunteer to assist a teammate with their work if they see they're struggling.

While their commitment to team unity over all else is vital to an effective unit, their avoidance of confrontation and desire to remain neutral in discussions means they may be indecisive in high-pressure situations and reluctant to make any decision that could prove unpopular.

The Co-ordinator

Mature, confident and democratic with a focus on the overall objectives of the team, Co-ordinators often find themselves in management positions taking on the traditional team leader role. Skilled at recognising and nurturing the talent and potential of team members, Co-ordinators handle the delegation of work where necessary and encourage people to contribute to the team effort. They can sometimes have a tendency to delegate too much of their workload, which may lead to issues with other team members.

Action roles

Belbin groups the following team roles together as being action-oriented:

The Shaper

Usually vital to have in every team, these dynamic, passionate extroverts drive the team towards achieving objectives. Their energy ensures the team maintains momentum and focus. Shapers always seem to remain positive whatever the challenge faced and seem to thrive under pressure, meaning that when a deadline is coming up, it's input from Shapers that pushes a team toward success.

Inspirational and decisive with a focus on achieving goals, it's unsurprising that Shapers are often ideal management candidates. However, what some may view as headstrong and driven, others may view as provocative or argumentative. They may struggle to work with less ambitious teammates, which may lead to them inadvertently hurting someone else's feelings.

The Implementer

Disciplined, organised and dependable, Implementers have the skill of turning abstract ideas from team members into concrete, actionable plans. Systematic and task-oriented in their approach, they are invaluable in moving the work of the team forward in a strategic way. However, given the nature of how they approach tasks, Implementers are less flexible and adaptable than other team members. They may be a little slower in responding to change, and require some persuasion to adapt their approach.

The Completer-Finisher

These individuals provide quality assurance and ensure the work of the team is completed to the highest possible standard. Meticulous and detail-oriented, Completer-Finishers scrutinise a team's work for any possible errors no matter how minor. These individuals are likely to be very conscious of deadlines and push the team to ensure all tasks are completed on time. Unsurprisingly, Completer-Finishers are often perfectionists. As such, they may find it hard to delegate any of their work to others and may be anxious and worrying a lot about the team's work.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:

200-word summary of the content:

Questions:
What is the benefit of teamworking?

What is the benefit of having a team with individuals having different supporting roles?

Using Belbin Team Roles model, explain how the different roles support team working within an organisation.

Date completed:

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Teacher signature:

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PDSA Cycle (60 Minutes)

Source: CPD Online College knowledge base
Available at: https://cpdonline.co.uk/knowledge-base/business/pdsa-cycle/
Task: Read the below:

A PDSA cycle is a tool used in the workplace to help implement change. The initials are an acronym that stand for Plan, Do, Study, Act. Each word in the tool signifies a different stage in the cycle; where you would move on to the next step in the process. Its purpose allows changes to business operation to be tested on a small scale, giving time for any amendments to be made, before implementing the tested change across wider departments. This helps organisations to improve their products, processes, or services and learn knowledge and insights about particular stages of their work to improve efficiencies. Like many other organisational tools, such as a PESTLE Analysis, its purpose is to avoid organisational error by ensuring that new ideas are fit for purpose, rather than a hinderance to the business.

The PDSA cycle forms part of an improvement framework, particularly in the healthcare sector. It is based on scientific methods for measuring chances of success. Its science particularly lends itself to the healthcare sector because it promotes evidence-based practice to inform change. Evidence-based practice ensures that the best practice and clinical expertise is always used to ensure that patients' needs are met and valued. The best quality information can be derived from testing something in a real-life setting, making sure that your proposed changes will promote good quality work.

Who created the PDSA cycle?
The PDSA cycle was influenced by Walter Sherwart. Sherwart was an American psychologist, engineer and statistician who worked on improving processes and productivity. Using scientific methods, Sherwart introduced concepts that supported hypothesising by using specification, production and inspection as a cycle to acquire knowledge. The whole concept of the PDSA cycle is based on scientific methods using analysis to draw conclusions and evaluations. It was first called the Sherwart cycle, until an American doctor called Dr Edward Deeming, later used Sherwart's research to create a new version of the cycle. His newer version emphasised interaction between four stages (which are plan, do, study, act), and it was initially known as the Demming cycle. This was used in problem solving and quality control to create better outcomes.

Interaction between the four stages is key because once a hypothesis was tested, the cycle could be repeated to generate more findings and extent knowledge further. It is thought that the more repetition you do of the cycle, the closer you will get towards your goal, desired outcome, or knowledge acquisition. Initially Deeming created the cycle using the acronym "plan, do, check, act (PDCA)". However, he noted that the word "check" suggested that you should hesitate or take no further action afterwards, which he disliked in the cycle. Due to this, he changed the word "check" with the word "study", to provide a more motivating and analytical action.

What happens at each stage of the PDSA cycle?
Plan
Plan the change that is forming the basis of your hypothesis (the thing you want to test). Plan what changes you think will improve your workplace and explain how you will test these clearly so that you remain focussed.

Do
Carry out your study (test the change) on a sample of participants internally, and then externally. Ensure to keep your "do" stage time limited so that you can move on in the cycle.

Study
Collect and analyse your data to determine the success of the change. Identify what worked well and what didn't work so well, to inform your next actions.

Act
Use your analysis from the previous stage to start a new cycle (if required) or implement your change fully if there were no errors.

How does the PDSA cycle work?
The plan, do, study, act cycle works by creating a series of stages for you to work through in the same order as the acronym presents:
- Plan
- Do.
- Study.
- Act.

However, instead of stopping at step four, you go back to step one at the beginning, and repeat the stages. This allows you to make the necessary changes to your testing depending on your findings. This is why the PDSA model is called a cycle. Working through the cycle can be likened to completing a small experiment; whereby you test a hypothesis that you have. This is due to its scientific foundations explained earlier. In science, you create a hypothesis, identify a sample and control group, and conduct the experiment – which is not too dissimilar to what happens during a PDSA cycle. The PDSA model appears to be a simple process, with it only having four stages in the cycle. However, it is important to be disciplined during the work so that you or other team members do not make assumptions about your results. Doing so would compromise the projected changes that you are looking to make, or cause people to have subjective opinions about the prospective changes. This could alter your results, due do the workforce being resistant to change as opposed to the change not being right for the business.

It can be common for people to resist change in the workplace due to the impact it has on the culture, anxiety and morale. By setting clear goals, defining why change needs to happen, and involving colleagues in the testing process, you can help your workforce to feel more positive and valued. Gartner (2020) found that when employees were included in the implementation process, the probability of success was boosted at least 12%.

Creating a PDSA cycle
Before starting a PDSA cycle, it is important to have clear goals established to base your PDSA cycle on. This will help you to stay focussed on the problems of concern during your whole cycle; keeping your testing targeted. There is no size limit to the changes that you may want to test, so even the smallest process tweaks can be tested using this method. Often the small-scale changes lead to the better PDSA cycles taking place, as you don't have the levels of bureaucracy or costs to content with. Testing small workplace changes can often be better received by colleagues and customers because they are not as overwhelming to take on board.

There is no formal paperwork that you have to complete to do a PDSA cycle. However, we advise recording information so that you have an audit record of how change has been implemented (this may be particularly important to the nursing sector). That way if you ever want to build on your changes in the future, you can continue from your last PDSA cycle. The general themes of a PDSA cycle are common in many forms of natural problem solving. You may already be familiar with the methodology or critical thinking required – or perhaps you have previously completed the steps informally in your head without realising. Continue below where we break down the steps in a PDSA cycle. When doing a PDSA cycle, it is a

good idea to first test your hypothesis on internal customers or colleagues before venturing out to test on real life (or external customers). This adds another layer of protection to your organisation so that any major errors can be kept internal to learn from in your next PDSA cycle. The customers that you conduct your PDSA cycle on can provide you with feedback about your proposed change to help make further improvements.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:
200-word summary of the content:
Questions: Why is it important to implement change in an organisation?   Why would an organisation or business use the PDSA cycle?   Why would you use the PDSA cycle internally before applying it externally?
Date completed: _____ **Teacher signature:** _____

Budgeting (60 Minutes)

Source: Indeed
Available at: https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/what-is-budgeting-in-business
Task: Read the below:

A business budget is crucial for understanding the financial standing of an organisation in both the short and long term. Your budget guides important decisions within a business, including resource allocation, staff onboarding and equipment procurement. Building a budget the right way can help influence your spending decisions, so you always have a clear idea of where your money is going. In this article, we explore what is budgeting in business, discover why it's crucial for any business plan and show how you can build one using our simple step-by-step instructions.

What is budgeting in business?
A budget is an estimation of business revenue and expenses over a specified period. Because they're estimations, financial professionals assess and re-evaluate them periodically. Budgeting is the process of looking at an organisation's expected income from the products or services it sells and its expenditure needed to pay for a company's expenses and bills. Within a business, team members use budgets to:

- Set monetary targets and establish financial priorities
- Allocate resources and assign responsibilities to managers and budget holders
- Improve efficiency, motivate staff and monitor performance
- Communicate targets from management to employees

Why is business budgeting important?
A business' equity allows you to grow and expand in the direction you choose, and your budget acts as a map and guide for what's within your means to accomplish. This is because budgets play an integral role in determining your operating costs, ensuring you don't go into debt and assessing your overall business performance. Budgeting can help you:

Set business goals
Budgets provide direction for businesses so they can turn objectives into reality. They help you make informed improvements by considering revenue projections for different time frames and help determine future spending needs. This can then help businesses prioritise which goals to focus on at what time.

Monitor business spending
Budgets can help control and maintain business income and expenditure by determining what costs are most important. This ensures that you invest the right amount at the outset. Budgets give you a clear idea of your finances at all times so you don't stray from your original business goals. Being able to monitor spending carefully can improve your strategy, clarity and business focus.

Anticipate financial issues
Budgeting can help you identify financial issues so you can plan the best way to eliminate them. By accounting for all business costs, you can see your most draining expenses or costs clearly. This ability to evaluate your spending patterns continually can help you refocus your efforts to ensure you're spending money on the right things, and at the right time. This can help you increase profit margins and improve your standing overall.

Make better business decisions
Budgeting can help you gather sound financial information so you can make better decisions for the future. It can help you implement important decisions like eliminating unwanted expenses, increasing staff or purchasing new equipment. If you over-spend in one area of the business, your budget can guide you back to stability by helping you prioritise your other expenditures.

Achieve financial funding
When businesses apply for financial help from institutions like banks or from funding via investors, they often present a thorough budget and detailed business plan. Your budget can help these institutions understand your forecasted spending. This detailed information showcases what the investment may go towards within the business, helping the investor or institution perform an informed evaluation and decision.

Types of business budgets
Within a business budget, there can exist several other smaller budgets that contribute to your overall business plan. These may include departmental budgets or budgets for specific business initiatives. The different types of business budgets can include:

Master budget
All of your other departmental budgets combined form the master budget. The information in a master budget may include departmental financial statements, financial plans and cash forecasts for a determined period. Master budgets are used to help determine the needs of each area of the business so the organisation can achieve its overall goals. Usually, master budgets go through a long process of assessment before they're completed to make sure each area is getting a fair share of the allocation. Once the master budget goes through these revisions, the finance department presents a final budget and allocates the funds to specific business activities.

Cash budget
Your cash flow budget comprises the estimated money that comes in and goes out of a business during a specified period. Create cash flows by using sales forecasts and predictive inferences for production and by reviewing your estimated receivables and payables. Cash flow budgets give businesses a clear understanding of whether they have enough available cash for operations, whether the use of money is productive and whether they're earning a profit or making a loss.

Static budget
A static budget is an estimation of an organisation's expenses and revenue that remains fixed throughout a specific period. Despite any increases or decreases in sales, finance departments use a static budget to benchmark goals you can accomplish separately. It's common to see this type of budget for nonprofit organisations, government bodies or educational institutions that receive a fixed amount of equity to use for their continued prosperity.

Operating budget
A business operating budget highlights an organisation's projected expenses and revenue over a specific period. Operating budgets may include variable costs, fixed costs, non-operating expenses or capital costs to determine if a business is spending according to its overall budget plan. Usually prepared at the beginning of the financial year by management, they continually update operating budgets throughout the fiscal year and sometimes use them to forecast operations for consecutive years.

Labour budget

A business' labour budget helps companies that are planning to take on new employees to achieve their goals. Labour budgets help showcase the physical workforce the business requires to meet its goals so that it can better plan the payroll and other expenses necessary for new employees. Labour budgets can also help businesses allocate expenses for contract and seasonal employees.

Financial budget

A financial budget gives businesses insight into how much capital they require and when they may require it in order to fulfil short- or long-term goals. Financial budgets can include things like business assets, liabilities or stakeholder equity. Accurately determining your financial budget can help you determine the overall health of a business and help you achieve targets in the right way.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:
200-word summary of the content:
Questions: Why is budgeting important?   What could be disadvantages of not budgeting within an organisation?   Why is setting targets an important part of budgeting?
Date completed: _____ **Teacher signature:** _____

Key Performance Indicators (80 Minutes)

Source: Bernard Marr and Co.
Available at: https://bernardmarr.com/how-to-develop-effective-kpis/
Task: Read the below:

Of course Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are important in business. But, when push comes to shove, KPIs are only really useful if you identify the right ones for your business. And they will only deliver mission-critical data if you use the KPIs and analyse what they tell you on a regular basis to inform your decision making. In this article I outline 10 essential steps that will help you do just that. By following these steps, you can ensure your business doesn't fall prey to the common KPI errors companies (both big and small) make.

1. Start with strategy

You should always start with strategy. Without a firm stake in the ground around what your business is seeking to achieve, it's incredibly easy to end up with a dauntingly long list of possible indicators that you feel you could or should measure. Your strategy therefore acts as a starting point for designing appropriate KPIs – but only if it's clear! All too often companies create a 30–40-page strategy document that no one ever reads or understands. A great way around this is to create a simple one-page strategy. This will help you clearly define your objectives, and help you work out what you need to put in place to achieve them.

2. Define the questions you need answers to

Linking your KPIs to your strategy will immediately sharpen your focus and make the relevant KPIs more obvious. Identifying the questions you need answers to will further narrow your focus, because questions give the indicators context. That's why, as well as KPIs, I always advise my clients to think about KPQs: Key Performance Questions. These will help you work out what data you need to gather, and, therefore, which KPIs you'll find most useful. For example, if you plan on executing a simple strategy to increase your income by focusing on the most profitable areas of your business, you could ask "Where are we making profit and which processes are most costly compared to the returns we receive?" Once you are clear on the questions you need to answer, you can make sure that every indicator you subsequently choose or design is relevant not only to your strategy, but also provides the answers to very specific questions that will guide your strategy and inform your decision making.

3. Identify your data needs

Once you know what questions you're trying to answer, you need to define your data needs to establish what KPIs, metrics or data you need in order to answer those questions. In this phase, forget about reality for a moment and consider what information and knowledge you want to have in an ideal world. After all, everything can be measured!

4. Evaluate all existing data

Having worked out your ideal data in the previous step, perform a gap analysis by comparing what data you would ideally like to have with what you already have – that way you can easily see what's missing. Ask yourself what you need to change, tweak or implement to ensure the data collection is completely aligned with the strategy and will fully answer the questions you need answered. And then come up with the right indicators to deliver those objectives. Remember, most companies are full of data. Often KPIs are already being collected for all sorts of different reasons by different divisions and different managers. It makes sense, therefore, to determine whether what you need is already being gathered by someone somewhere in the business, or perhaps it's almost being collected and a few tweaks to the collection process would deliver exactly what you need.

5. Find the right supporting data

KPIs are incredibly powerful in the right hands, but we need to acknowledge that we also have access to vast quantities of supporting data that is every bit as insightful and useful as traditional KPIs. By finding the right supporting data – be it industry information, demographic data, trend statistics, or whatever – you can triangulate and verify your findings.

The datafication of our world, where vast amounts of information are being created and stored every minute, means there is a great deal of supporting data that can potentially provide information that is relevant to your strategy. By finding the right supporting data, you can make much better sense of the world, much more quickly, which helps you make better, faster business decisions.

6. Determine the right measurement methodology and frequency

Knowing what you need is one thing, working out how to access and measure that information is another. Finding the right measurement methodology is critical. Therefore, once you know what information you need to collect, you need to find the right measurement methodology to get it. This is especially true if you have to develop new KPIs or tweak existing ones. It's always preferable to align measurement frequency with how and when the data is used in the organisation, because all data has a "shelf life". This means measurement frequency must be in line with the reporting frequency. If it's not, the data may lose impact and/or relevance. For example, if you collect customer satisfaction data via survey in the summer and report on the findings in the winter, then the findings are already six months out of date.

7. Assign ownership for your KPIs

Effective KPIs require two types of ownership. The first is the ownership of the KPI in terms of its meaning and interpretation. Someone needs to be in charge of looking at the KPI, interpreting its meaning, monitoring how it's changing and deciding what that means for the business. The other ownership refers to the data collection. Sometimes you can automate the process but, more often than not, data collection will require some human interaction. Perhaps certain personnel are involved in transferring data from one database to another, or they have to collect it manually. Again, this ownership needs to be clearly set out and followed through.

8. Ensure KPIs are understood by people within your organisation

It's essential that everyone in your business is aware of what you're trying to achieve, and how you're measuring progress towards those achievements. This is especially important for those who are charged with ownership of the KPIs, but it's also important for people right across the business, at any level. KPIs should form part of the decision-making process for every employee, and everyone should be able to answer the question, "How will what I am doing today affect our KPIs?" You therefore need to ensure everybody understands how the metrics you are gathering are linked to your strategic priorities. This will increase "buy in" – how personally involved and enthusiastic your staff feel about your priorities – and ensure that constant review and improvement are at the heart of everything your people do. If you simply tell everyone that they have to collect a whole heap of extra data from now on without explaining why, you are likely to end up with a very cynical and disengaged workforce!

9. Find the best way to communicate your KPIs

It's always wise to think about how best to communicate your KPIs so their insights are obvious, engaging and apparent to all. So many KPIs are reported in long reports full of numbers or tables, perhaps with a traffic light graphic to indicate urgency. This is not good enough. There is absolutely no point hiding important insights in excessively long reports that no one ever reads. Really effective visualisations clearly illustrate trends and variations in data, and engage the reader. Try to find the right picture for your KPIs

and create an explanation of the insights so that the nuggets of wisdom extracted from the data are clear, unambiguous, accessible and, most importantly ,actionable.

10. Review your KPIs to ensure they help improve performance
If a KPI isn't useful in helping you or others in your business make better decisions, which, in turn, will improve your business's performance, then it's just noise. You therefore need to constantly review the metrics you are measuring to make sure they are genuinely useful and you aren't spending hours (or asking your staff to spend hours) measuring data simply to tick off boxes. Used properly, KPIs provide a vital tool for improving performance, making better business decisions and gaining a competitive advantage. I hope these 10 steps help de-mystify KPIs and provide a simple framework for making KPIs work in your business.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:
200-word summary of the content:
Questions: Why are KPIs important for organisations?   How do KPIs help an organisation monitor performance?   How would you communicate monthly KPIs within an organisation? And why?
Date completed: _____   **Teacher signature:**   _____

Continuous Improvement (60 Minutes)

Source: EON
Available at: https://eonplatform.io//blog/what-is-continuous-improvement-and-why-is-it-important
Task: Read the below:

It's a powerful force that works behind the scenes at the world's most successful companies. Every day, it fosters evolution and innovation. It's continuous improvement (CI), a process that's essential for long-term business success. As the name suggests, continuous improvement (CI) is an ongoing effort to improve products, processes, or services by reducing waste or increasing quality. This continuous effort drives a competitive advantage for organisations that get it right but, as with many things in life, consistency is not easy to achieve. For many, the very mention of continuous improvement brings about an instinctual eye-roll due to some negative past experience with this approach. Many times employees and leaders feel burned by a CI "program" that was forced upon them and only really resulted in a bunch of busy work focused on cleaning up their area or taping up whiteboards.

When a manger/leader has a business outcome to achieve, the last thing they want to feel is that some other department is forcing their process on them and all it is doing is distracting them and their people from hitting their objectives. So, it's critical when learning about and considering introducing continuous improvement to your organisation, that you are clear about what it's real intention is ... to improve the business outcomes. Additionally, continuous improvement is not a "program"! If we introduce CI as a program we immediately set the expectation that it has a start and end date. This is in direct conflict with the cultural change that we are attempting to drive ... making improvement the way we do business. CI should never stop and when it's in effect we will see improvement in a couple of ways.

Bits and Bursts of Improvement
In general, improvement comes in one of two forms for businesses:
- **Incremental:** Occurring slowly, in bits and pieces, over time
- **Breakthrough:** Occurring all at once, in a burst of change

While sudden breakthroughs will occur, the truth is that CI usually happens incrementally over a long period of time. Change isn't easy. Whether your current processes are good or bad, effective or ineffective, they're deep-seated habits for your organisation. Setting this expectation up front allows the organisation to recognize and reward the right behaviour and creates the foundation for true cultural change.

Fuelling the Improvement Engine
You can't talk about continuous improvement without addressing strategy. Without proper alignment of the leadership team and buy-in from the organisation, a true commitment to this process will be difficult, at best. This is why focusing on the business outcomes through effective strategy alignment is so critical. If continuous improvement is introduced as a bunch of tools called Lean, Six Sigma, DMAIC, or others, leaders aren't going to understand the context and see how it will benefit them and their teams. If however you start the conversation around their objectives, and the describe how you and the CI team will help them achieve their objectives, the adoption will be much easier and much more sustainable. Remember, people instinctually want to know "what's in it for me" so be sure to make that question easy to answer. You need to answer this question, in clear language, all the way down through the ranks.

CI SUCCESS STORY: Danaher Corporation
Danaher Corporation, a global manufacturing company, is famous for its ability to do just that. The company uses the Japanese concept of Hoshin Kanri, a seven-step strategic planning method, to monitor

process improvement and provide its employees with strategic objectives. For Danaher, the answer to the question of "why" is found in their official statement of purpose:

It started as an idea for a better way, but like all powerful ideas, it evolved into a passion. It's why at Danaher we view every challenge as an opportunity. And it's the reason we're on a constant quest to make things better — for our customers, our company and the world. Our shared purpose is helping realize life's potential.

CI SUCCESS STORY: Hilton Hotels

Hilton Hotels are well-known for using the Balanced Scorecard method, where top-level themes are developed and then shared at all levels of the organisation. Performance metrics are key to company-wide change. Hilton's desire for continuous innovation and improvement is built into its vision statement:

As the most recognized name in the industry, travellers all over the world have been saying "Take me to the Hilton" for almost a century. And because of our innovative approach to products, amenities and service, Hilton continues to be synonymous with hotel across the globe. Hilton Hotels & Resorts remains the stylish, forward thinking global leader of hospitality.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:

200-word summary of the content:

Questions:

Why is continuous improvement important?

What are the risks if continuous improvement is not part of an organisation's culture?

Date completed:

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Teacher signature:

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SWOT Analysis (45 Minutes)

Source: CIPD (Human Resource Specialists)
Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/organisational-development/swot-analysis-factsheet#gref
Task: Read web page, downloadable factsheet and watch the video on SWOT Analysis.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:
200-word summary of the content:
Questions: What are the benefits to an organisation of undertaking a regular SWOT Analysis?   What can a SWOT Analysis help an organisation realise and prepare for?   What could be the disadvantages of a SWOT Analysis?   How could a SWOT Analysis help to support change within an organisation?
Date completed: _____ **Teacher signature:** _____

Organisational Culture (60 Minutes)

Source: Achievers (industry leaders in employee recognition and engagement)
Available at: https://www.achievers.com/blog/organizational-culture-definition/
Task: Read the below:

A great organisational culture is the key to developing the traits necessary for business success. And you'll see its effects in your bottom line: companies with healthy cultures are 1.5 times more likely to experience revenue growth of 15 percent or more over three years and 2.5 times more likely to experience significant stock growth over the same period. Despite this, only 31 percent of HR leaders believe their organisations have the culture they need to drive future business, and getting there is no easy task — 85 percent of organisations fail in transforming their cultures.

This is a comprehensive guide to making culture a major strength of your organisation, from what culture is and why it's important to a roadmap you can follow to create a culture that delivers results time after time.

What is organisational culture?
Organisational culture is the collection of values, expectations, and practices that guide and inform the actions of all team members. Think of it as the collection of traits that make your company what it is. A great culture exemplifies positive traits that lead to improved performance, while a dysfunctional company culture brings out qualities that can hinder even the most successful organisations. Don't confuse culture with organisational goals or a mission statement, although both can help define it. Culture is created through consistent and authentic behaviours, not press releases or policy documents. You can watch company culture in action when you see how a CEO responds to a crisis, how a team adapts to new customer demands, or how a manager corrects an employee who makes a mistake.

The importance of culture to your company
Organisational culture affects all aspects of your business, from punctuality and tone to contract terms and employee benefits. When workplace culture aligns with your employees, they're more likely to feel more comfortable, supported, and valued. Companies that prioritize culture can also weather difficult times and changes in the business environment and come out stronger. Culture is a key advantage when it comes to attracting talent and outperforming the competition. 77 percent of workers consider a company's culture before applying, and almost half of employees would leave their current job for a lower-paying opportunity at an organisation with a better culture. The culture of an organisation is also one of the top indicators of employee satisfaction and one of the main reasons that almost two-thirds (65%) of employees stay in their job.

Consider Microsoft and Salesforce. Both technology-based companies are world-class performers and admired brands, and both owe this in part to prioritizing culture. Microsoft, known for its cut-throat competitiveness under Steve Balmer, has been positively transformed by Satya Nadella, who took over as CEO of the company in 2014. He embarked on a program to refine the company culture, a process that upended competitiveness in favour of continuous learning. Instead of proving themselves, employees were encouraged to improve themselves. Today Microsoft's market cap flirts with $1 trillion and it is again competing with Apple and Amazon as one of the most valuable companies in the world.

Salesforce puts corporate culture front and centre and has experienced incredible growth throughout its history. Marc Benioff, Salesforce's founder and CEO, established philanthropic cultural norms that have guided the company over the past two decades. All new Salesforce employees spend part of their first day volunteering and receive 56 hours of paid time to volunteer a year. This focus on meaning and mission has

made Salesforce one of the best places to work in America according to Fortune, and it hasn't compromised profits either: Salesforce's stock price has surged year after year at an average of over 26% annually to date.

Qualities of a great organisational culture
Every organisation's culture is different, and it's important to retain what makes your company unique. However, the cultures of high-performing organisations consistently reflect certain qualities that you should seek to cultivate:

• **Alignment** comes when the company's objectives and its employees' motivations are all pulling in the same direction. Exceptional organisations work to build continuous alignment to their vision, purpose, and goals.

• **Appreciation** can take many forms: a public kudos, a note of thanks, or a promotion. A culture of appreciation is one in which all team members frequently provide recognition and thanks for the contributions of others.

• **Trust** is vital to an organisation. With a culture of trust, team members can express themselves and rely on others to have their back when they try something new.

• **Performance** is key, as great companies create a culture that means business. In these companies, talented employees motivate each other to excel, and, as shown above, greater profitability and productivity are the results.

• **Resilience** is a key quality in highly dynamic environments where change is continuous. A resilient culture will teach leaders to watch for and respond to change with ease.

• **Teamwork** encompasses collaboration, communication, and respect between team members. When everyone on the team supports each other, employees will get more done and feel happier while doing it.

• **Integrity**, like trust, is vital to all teams when they rely on each other to make decisions, interpret results, and form partnerships. Honesty and transparency are critical components of this aspect of culture.

• **Innovation** leads organisations to get the most out of available technologies, resources, and markets. A culture of innovation means that you apply creative thinking to all aspects of your business, even your own cultural initiatives.

• **Psychological safety** provides the support employees need to take risks and provide honest feedback. Remember that psychological safety starts at the team level, not the individual level, so managers need to take the lead in creating a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable contributing. Now that you know what a great culture looks like, let's tackle how to build one in your organisation.

Read the remaining part of the article (8 steps to high performing organisational culture) at:
https://www.achievers.com/blog/organizational-culture-definition/

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:

200-word summary of the content:

Questions:

What do you think a good organisational culture look like?

What do you think a bad organisational culture looks like?

How would you improve organisational culture in an organisation?

Date completed:

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Teacher signature:

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Equality and Diversity in The Workplace (60 Minutes)

Source: Digital Perks
Available at: https://www.digitalperks.co.uk/blog/equality-and-diversity-in-the-workplace-what-it-is-and-why-it-is-important
Task: Read the below:

Equality and diversity in the workplace are the most trended topics in HR and management. With changing times and mindsets, the definition of an ideal workplace has changed. Nowadays, an ideal workplace is where talent belonging to varied economic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, and skills, is given equal opportunity and fair treatment. But how should you promote equality and diversity in the workplace?

While this may seem like a goodwill strategy at first, a fair and diverse workplace has a direct impact on the profitability and likeability of an organisation as well. Let us have a look at some findings which prove the importance of diversity, inclusion and equality in an organisation.

- More than 43% of companies with a diverse board of management cited higher profits than their counterparts.
- Companies with a higher diversity quotient have 70% more chances of capturing new markets.
- Inclusive organisations are better equipped to meet their financial goals. They are 120% more likely to meet their set targets.

The aforementioned figures are only a tiny glimpse of the power of being inclusive, equal and diverse in today's time. In this article, we will be exploring the meaning, importance and impact of a diverse and equal workplace.

What Is Equality and Diversity in the Workplace?
To put it in a simpler context, diversity in the workplace refers to having a workforce which differs with each other in terms of race, religion, gender, orientation, age and even, education. Having a diverse workforce signifies a culture of inclusion and a progressive mindset where talent and opportunities walk alongside each other. However, diversity is incomplete without the provision of equality. As an equal opportunity employer, an organisation is expected to treat every individual equally in terms of work opportunity and pay.

Embracing diversity and providing equality goes a long way in promoting a work culture which values talent beyond stereotypes and helps people reach their potential by contributing their best beyond any prejudice. Moreover, an inclusive workplace fosters better productivity and efficiency.

Legal Aspects of Ensuring Equality and Diversity in the Workplace
While these form an important part of the social fabric of a country, legal acts help in their implementation.

In the UK, there are many acts in place which propagate and advocate an equal, diverse and inclusive society. They are –
- **Equality Act, 2010**
- **Sex Discrimination Act**
- **Disability Discrimination Act**
- **Race Relation Act**
- **Human Rights Act**

Although these are legal basis for ensuring companies treat people fairly and equally, it is paramount that a company develops and promotes cultural approach to equality and diversity.

Benefits and Importance of Equality and Diversity in the Workplace

You may be wondering that, albeit the idea sounds great, how that impacts on your company specifically. Among many ways, here are a few:

1. **Helps Adding New Skills to the Team:** As per research in Cloverpop, a diverse team makes better decision 87% of the time. A team consisting of people coming from a different background would always have a variety of skills, mindsets and approach towards work. For example, a woman employee can bring more empathy to the team. Likewise, a new entrant from Gen-Z can bring in better technological understanding. Similarly, people from different ethnicities and regions bring their unique strengths and personal experience to the team. A team that values differences can flourish in all aspects and ensure wholesome growth.

2. **Helps Promoting Innovation:** As per a Deloitte report, diverse organisations show better innovation and creativity in their decision and solutions. A more inclusive and diverse company adapts different viewpoints and can think in 360 degrees. A diverse organisation has voices and thoughts from different backgrounds which get an equal opportunity. As a result, there is a better scope for new learnings and fresh perspectives in every area of business. Let's say you are a part of an advertising company and you have to finalise an artist for your ad jingle. If your team has members from only one ethnicity or age group, you would steer towards similar tunes.

3. **Helps Reaching New Markets:** In today's world, globalisation is the key to long-term success. A diverse team ensures you have the right knowledge to tap into new customer group or geographical markets altogether. A diverse product design team would always conceptualise products with features that can appeal to a larger number of people. Similarly, establishing your business in a new country, say any Asian country, would become simpler if you had an Asian in your core team. Why hire a translator in India if you have a team member whose native language is Hindi? Why hire multilingual tele callers when you have team members well-versed in different languages? Cultural experience matters in internationalisation of a product or service.

4. **Helps in Hiring Best Talent:** It is no secret that talent is the lifeline of an organisation, and an inclusive one has a better chance of hiring better resources. As per reports, around 72% of employees consider inclusion and diversity as an important factor in choosing an employer. Similarly, another research by PWC UK stated that 82% of female millennials give importance to a company's policy on inclusion and diversity while applying for a job. Clearly, a diverse team fosters a better brand reputation for your business.

Wrapping Up

In 2020, societal boundaries have blurred. Therefore, it is important to consider that: An organisation which embraces this fact and promotes a culture of diversity and inclusion has a better chance at sustainable success and conducive work culture. "The business case for diversity is simple," stated Laura Hinton, head of people at PwC UK. "If we want to deliver value for our clients, we need diverse talent, views and thinking that reflects the society in which we work." The future workforce values diversity immensely as the world is only going to become more colourful in terms of race, religion and other such factors. The only way to remain relevant as an employer is to ensure that your employees feel comfortable in their skin and are judged for their talent alone. An equal, fair and inclusive employer is ideal for the upcoming generation who carry their identity on their sleeve. Thus, we conclude by quoting an anonymous genius "The future is intersectional".

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:

200-word summary of the content:

Questions:

What legislation in the UK is there to protect employees from discrimination in the workplace?

What are the disadvantages of not having an inclusive workforce that represents society?

What would you do in a workplace situation if you witnessed an employee saying something discriminatory to another employee?

Date completed:

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Teacher signature:

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Managing People (45 Minutes)

Source: Harvard Business Review
Available at: https://hbr.org/2008/02/how-great-managers-manage-peop-1
Task: Read the below:

The chain of events that leads to strong and sustained business results starts with great managers who defy common management practice at virtually every turn, says Curt Coffman, global practice leader for employee and customer engagement consulting at The Gallup Organisation.

What is the defining contribution of great managers? They boost the engagement levels of the people who work for them. According to Gallup research, only 28% of U.S. employees are engaged, or are actively pursuing top performance on behalf of their organisations, and Gallup studies show that this has a direct impact on the bottom line. Engaged employees lead to engaged customers, who in turn drive a company's growth, long term profitability, and stock price.

So what distinguishes managers who not only retain valuable employees but, by boosting engagement, also extract their full value? According to Coffman, co-author with Marcus Buckingham of First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently (Simon & Schuster, 1999), the answer lies in rejecting conventional wisdom in four core areas of managing people: selection, expectation setting, motivation, and development.

Selection
Most managers select employees according to the skills needed for the role, but great managers select people for their talent. Coffman defines talent as a recurrent pattern of thought, feeling, or behaviour and accounts for the different results produced by those with the same skills and training. Talent is abundant, Coffman observes, yet people whose natural talents fit their role are a rare and valuable commodity.

Consider what differentiates top performing customer service representatives, Coffman notes. All reps in a firm get the same training, but the best take one-third fewer calls than the average to resolve the same complaint. Why? Because they use the phone as a tool of intimacy—they can envision what the customer looks like, what room he is in; they smile and nod even though the customer cannot see what they are doing. Instinctively, their talent leads them to manage each customer relationship in the most effective manner. Great managers resist the temptation to hire people whose skills are a good match for how a job is already configured; instead, they seek those whose talent will redefine how the job is done.

Expectation setting
Conventional wisdom says managers should specify the steps that employees need to take to accomplish a specific task. But great managers define the outcomes they seek and let each person use her individual talent to achieve them. For example, while great managers do not usually mandate steps to be taken, they do provide specific direction when accuracy or safety is involved, or when a company or industry standard is at stake. But even then they don't let the steps obscure the focus on the outcome.

Motivation
Conventional wisdom says that "anybody can be anything they want to be," and thus managers tend to focus on finding and fixing a person's weaknesses. This leads to reviews and development plans that focus on negatives— where the emphasis is on "improving" a person into someone he is not. In contrast, great managers emphasize the development of their subordinates' unique strengths so as to help further their talent, while finding strategies to support their weaknesses. The key here is determining how to take greater advantage of what people already do well.

Development

Conventional managers rate the person and develop the performance; great managers rate the performance and develop the person—they realize that every person is different and should be treated as such. Most companies view promotion as the natural path of progression. But is that always the right course? No, says Coffman, because success in one role is not necessarily an indication of success in another. Consider how many outstanding account representatives fail miserably when they are promoted to sales managers. The ability to sell is entirely distinct from the ability to manage. What's more, promotion removes the high-performing salesperson from the position in which she has been producing substantial value for the company. Great managers seek the right fit for a person's talent, they work to see that he is rewarded for his performance, and they endeavour to ensure that his or her talent is developed through progressively more challenging and meaningful assignments.

Post Reading Record:

General notes on the text:
200-word summary of the content:
Questions: After reading the article, what do you think defines a good manager?   When you manage employees in your future career, what elements of management discussed in the article would you enjoy implementing and why?
Date completed: _____ **Teacher signature:** _____

Complementary Reading

<u>Useful additional reading:</u>

- **CIPD Human Resources website**
  Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/
  (in the search engine, search for HR related business themes, e.g., grievance procedures)

- **T-Level Government website page**
  Available at: https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/students/subjects/management-administration

- **T-Level Management and Administration City and Guilds Specification**
  Available at: https://www.cityandguilds.com/-/media/productdocuments/business_skills/business_admin_and_public_services/8715/centre_documents/8715-technical-qualification-management-and-administration-specification-v1,-d-,1-pdf.ashx

- **BBC Business News (updated daily)**
  Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business
  (Business news stories are a great source to read for enhancing your understanding of management and administration)

- **BBC GCSE Bitesize Business (Edexcel)**
  Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/z98snbk
  (If you did not take Business Studies at GCSE then you may find it useful to read over the GCSE content, this is summarised on the GCSE Bitesize website)

Please contact the Business Studies Department if you have any questions or suggestions regarding this further reading booklet.