

How2guide: Identifying the Outputs

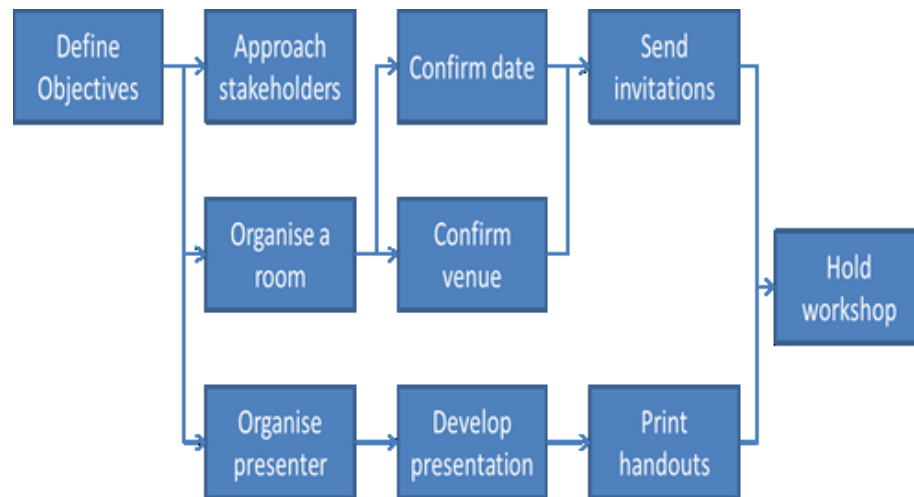
Introduction	When do you use this guide
The development of an effective plan should start with understanding what will need to be created. There is a danger that the project team moves too quickly in producing plans which focus too much on detail rather than the high level view of the journey. By using a graphical representation it will make communications with non technical stakeholders easier and provide a valuable input into identifying the milestones and control points for the project. It is important to focus on what the end result is for your project. By focusing too much on delivering assets the overall effect of what the project needs to achieve can be lost. Most initiatives will be to deliver change, so the starting point for identifying what will be needed is POTI (P) Process – the work that has to be done to deliver the end service after project handover. (O) Organisation – the people and departments (internal and external) needed to undertake the work after the delivery of products/capability – not the project organisation. (T) Technology – the IT, accommodation and any other assets used to do the job, e.g. vehicles. Think ‘infrastructure’. (I) Management Information – the reporting that will be used to manage the quality and performance of the service – i.e. KPIs in the business.	This work will normally be undertaken in tandem with or before the development of the requirements. The Define stage will be the point where the high level identification of what will be changed and what the project or programme will need to produce will be undertaken. The first step will be to identify the main outcomes which will show the principle outputs. From that a high level view of milestones and a sequence of events that will be required can be developed. Whether you are working on a programme or a standalone project, the POTI model will be very helpful POTI can assist with checking the scope of the change that the project will deliver. Some aspects may need to be in scope of the project as project tasks, so you can see gaps in the structure of requirements. Furthermore, it can be of use for the Project Board, in particular the Senior User, to validate that all aspects of POTI will be addressed; else the implementation into service may fail. Beware of making too many assumptions about the current state. Take time to find out how things work at the moment so that the gap to be filled by the project outputs is fully scoped and understood. This guide covers • Outcome identification • Output identification

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Outcome mapping

Gathering the key expectations from stakeholders and mapping them together is a really useful technique for helping to increase understanding of what will be required. This is done by gathering the information, perhaps by running a workshop and using post it notes to help order the outcomes which are identified during this activity.

For a project to run a project management course, the simple sequence of events would look like this. The sequence/product flow/activity models are



simple diagrammatic illustrations of what needs to be achieved, gives an overview of how the requirements fit into the larger scheme of things and how the objectives will be met by the project.

As we develop our plans, we will become more specific about whether it is a product, activity, output or outcome that is being mapped. However at this stage we just want to illustrate at a very high level what has to happen.

There are three key elements to the plan. The objective needs to be set before anything can happen. This is followed by: finding a room; inviting the stakeholders and organising a presenter. As you can see some lead to other activities whilst others are an end in themselves.

This kind of relationship diagram can be very helpful for explaining the project to people less familiar with project management and communicating the plan rather than using the complexities of Gantt charts and other more formal project management tools.

Output mapping

Once the outcomes have been identified they can be broken down into the component parts to start to identify what the project will need to create.

A breakdown structure is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. These are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an aid to studying and organising information, solving problems, making decisions, and writing.

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The first step is to identify the main outcomes that are required, these can then be broken down into the component parts that will be required to achieve the outcome.

In general terms, these component parts can normally be broken down under the following headings.

Organisation This is a very broad grouping that covers the organisation around which the change will be delivered, it would normally include changes to • Internal staff structures and grades • Competency and skills that will be needed • Existing suppliers who support the service delivery • Reward mechanisms for the people involved In this simple example, it only extends to the facilitator and the people who will be involved in the organisation of the events	Technology There tends to be too much focus on this topic as it tends to be more tangible. Technology is in the broadest sense, so it is the assets that will be created or changed. This can include: • Media technology • ICT • Accommodation and Buildings • Manufacturing equipment • Tools of any sort In this simple case study, it only extends to the accommodation and the facilities the workshop will need.
Processes These are the procedures and the ways of working that are used to get things done or deliver the service. As part of the project they may need to be created or changed. They come in many formats and are often not undocumented and informal, so the first task may be to identify and document them. For this workshop, the main processes that will need to be created are venue booking, delegate booking and training materials development.	Information This is the performance data that will be used to manage the new outcomes. This normally relates to: • Financial performance • Quality of service performance, which often includes supply chain • Efficiency of resources which is related to people Often these don't currently exist but are part of the value of the outcome. In this simple project, it would be information about attendance, achievement of objectives and satisfaction surveys.

Against these heading many outputs can be identified that will need to be created to achieve the outcomes that were initially defined.

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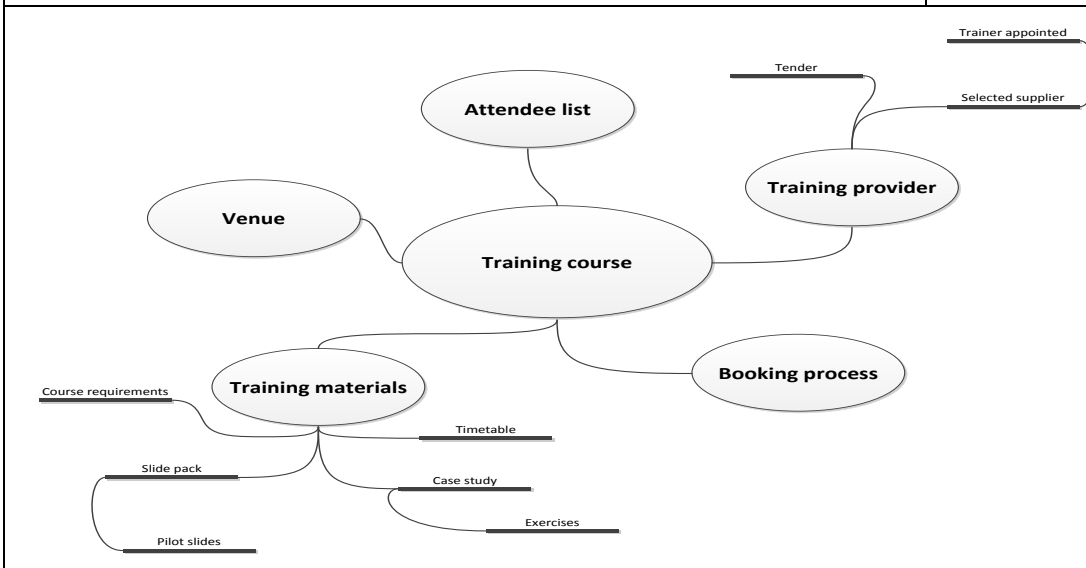
The Technique- Mind Mapping

Technique Overview

A Mind Map is a diagram used to visibly show and link information. A Mind Map focuses on a main heading/focal point to which associated words, techniques and concepts are added. The main focal point usually takes a central role with paramount links/categories linked closely. Lesser categories linked to paramount categories radiate outwards still relate to the central idea; however their links are not as important. Mind Maps can be used for problem solving, outlining designs, visualising processes, representing structures and outlining relationships

Concept

The mind mapping technique presents ideas in a radial, graphical, non-linear manner encourages a brainstorming approach to planning and organisational tasks. Though the branches of a mind map represent hierarchical tree structures, their radial arrangement disrupts the prioritising of concepts typically associated with hierarchies presented with more linear visual cues. This orientation towards brainstorming encourages users to enumerate and connect concepts without a tendency to begin within a particular conceptual framework.



This is an example of a mind map for creating the training course.

It randomly captures the things that need to be sorted out by using the headings identified earlier to shape the thinking. In a workshop, post-it notes can be issued to create the map. If you are doing it as an individual then MS Visio has mind map software or you could simply use MS PowerPoint shapes to achieve the same effect.

It can build up over a period as more thoughts and ideas are generated and it provides the basis for identifying what the major changes will be and the elements that may contribute to it.