

After Action Reviews

A key element to sustaining learning is by adopting a mindset for experimentation, iteration and mastery. People and teams need coaching and guidance in their learning process.

Conducting after action reviews (or debriefings) is a central activity of any learning organization. On the individual level, an after-action review creates a continual learning process and can effectively replace or at least augment the yearly performance management process. On the team level, it is a great way to get the group talking, sharing, and improving. The recommendation is to use this process at the end of each project or designated period of time. If conducted with a team, it is important to give each person the opportunity to share their thoughts on each of the steps.

Reflection and Discussion

Start with the experiences of the team members. Dig for pivotal moments and decision points.

- What was our goal?
- Did we achieve the goal?
- What were the moments that mattered?
- What did you see, hear, and feel at these moments?

Identify patterns of behavior:

- What actions and behaviors did we utilize that worked?
- What actions and behaviors did not work?
- How was our strategy effective? Not effective?
- Knowing what we know now, what would we do differently?

Explore core values and motivations:

- How were our actions aligned with our core values?
What were the motivations behind our decisions?
- What assumptions did we make that were limiting?
- Knowing what we know now, what assumptions do we need to change?

Introduce new models, frameworks and skills:



- What new lens can you introduce to the group to view the issue?
- What new skills does the team need that will help them fill the gaps?

Practice Skills, strategize and plan for action:

- Find innovative ways to bring the skills to life
- Work as a team to discuss applications and approaches

Move to Action:

- Apply insights and skills
- Make it evidence-based
- Seek feedback