



Managing your Own Business

For an enterprise to succeed, you need to be clear about what needs to be done, when and by whom. To help clarify this you could develop an **operational or implementation plan**.

An operational plan will help you to think through how to put your enterprise into action and can be best achieved through the application of specific techniques and planning methodologies. During the operational planning phase, time, money and workload have to be carefully organised in order that an appropriate plan can be produced that will enable the enterprise objectives to be realised.

Key stages in the implementation/operational planning phase might include:

- 1) Reviewing the enterprise plan to check understanding
- 2) Considering stakeholders and associated roles and responsibilities
- 3) Communicating and building relationships
- 4) Re-assessing risk
- 5) Refining targets and activities including indicators
- 6) Preparing the detailed work plan
- 7) Planning and scheduling the work
- 8) Designing control and reporting systems

In summary, the implementation plan describes the work logic (activity interdependencies) the time logic (activity duration) and the resource logic (types of resources, costs) for the entire enterprise in detail.

A logical and organised approach this is required. The key steps in this process are:

- check everyone understands the enterprise objective
- determine the work involved
- arrange the work
- define roles
- define procedures
- assign tasks

The following sections describe some of the key tools associated with sound implementation planning.

Performance Plans

Most enterprise managers like to develop performance plans for production and sales. **Performance plans** tells us at a glance what should be achieved and when - i.e. the deadlines or delivery points for key products or the sales targets for the end of particular periods. It is a summary statement (or chart) drawing key information from the enterprise planning document already prepared. An example of a performance plan is given below.

Business Forecast	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	End of Year Total
Number of home visits					
Number of repeat bookings					
Income					

The performance plan is a useful tool for enterprise monitoring and evaluation.

Activity Scheduling

A **time schedule** is another example of a performance plan - all enterprises require a time or activity schedule. Charts and diagrams are an effective way of displaying time schedule information.

A **simple list** can be an effective way of presenting an activity plan.

Deadline	Activity
October 2007	Calculate resource requirements
October - December 2007	Procure raw materials
December 2007	Training for workforce
January 2008	Begin production
February 2008	First deliveries

An alternative format is the bar chart which is a diagram showing activities over time. A bar chart has the advantage of letting us see at a glance what happens simultaneously (i.e. the relationship between activities)

A bar chart can be produced by following these steps:

- 1) Break activities into single tasks
- 2) List the task vertically
- 3) Decide how long it will take to complete each task
- 4) Place days, weeks or months along the horizontal axis and draw a line for each task from when it is expected to begin to when it is expected to end.

The effectiveness of a bar chart can be increased by using a colour code for tasks performed by specific people.

Activity	Timing (Week/Month)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6

Developing the Implementation Plan

Once the activities that need to be carried out in order to achieve the enterprise's objectives have been decided, they need to be planned in more detail. To do this well, activities are sometimes broken down into smaller tasks and these tasks are allocated to someone working on the enterprise as their specific responsibility. To be sure that these tasks are completed on time, the enterprise manager may set a time-scale or deadline for each task.

Look at the following enterprise activity. This can be broken down into a number of tasks, allocated to a specific person and given a deadline.

Activity: Develop and schedule promotional campaign		
Tasks	Responsibility	Deadline
1. Design posters	Person A	Start Oct
1. Identify possible outlets for advertising	Person B	Start Oct
1. Negotiate advertising fee with outlet managers	Person B	Mid Oct
1. Distribute poster to outlets	Person B	End Oct
1. Telephone possible clients	Person C	Oct 15
1. Follow up visits to interested clients	Person C	End Oct

The implementation plan not only breaks activities into tasks but also sequences them. Where activities are complex, this will be a useful starting point for working out costs and time requirements.

Learning Activity

You could draw up a simple implementation plan for the start-up phase of your business.