

Sustainability Decision Guide

Directions:

This is a resource to help leaders or teams determine if the interventions and changes they are making are sustainable. This guide will help identify why interventions may not be sustainable, and therefore need to be reconsidered. Use this guide at any point during a Performance Improvement Project (PIP), ideally when strategies have been found that appear to be successful and consideration is being given to adopting them broadly within the organization. The more questions that can be answered as “yes,” the higher the likelihood of sustainability.

Systems

Has the change been defined in terms of how it fits with the overall organizational mission, vision and strategic plan?

Are there policies and procedures written in support of the change?

Are those who need to carry out the new actions up to date with the information they need to be successful?

Have the organization’s systems been revised to encourage the new action? How are staff members reminded to carry out the new actions? Are you monitoring that the new actions are being carried out and is staff being supported in their ability to carry out the new actions?

Are there system barriers that prevent the new action from occurring? Are there certain identifiable parts of the system that pose a roadblock to doing things in the new way?

Are there incentives or rewards for people who do not adopt the new action that need to be addressed or removed?

Has the change been integrated into new employee orientation and training?

People

Has strong leadership support for the change been established? Has the leadership communicated a clear and convincing message about the change and its purpose? Are multiple levels of leadership engaged (e.g., board of directors, administrator, and department managers)? Is the leadership vocal and visible in its support? How will the leadership continue to promote the change and encourage staff to stick with it over time?

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People (continued)

Have roles and responsibilities for carrying out new actions been clearly defined and assigned?

Are the people responsible for carrying out the change equipped to manage it? Do staff members have the appropriate skills and knowledge to successfully undertake any new actions required? Have training needs been addressed? Is additional or differently trained staff required?

Are there champions for the change who are actively modeling the desired actions? Are there informal or natural leaders among the staff who could be encouraged to act as role models? Are there members of your staff exhibiting clear resistance to the change that should be addressed?

Environment

Is the organization ready to take on this change? What issues in the workplace culture should be addressed before the change can be expected to become permanent? Is the reason given for the change in line with the values and attitudes of the staff?

Has adequate funding (if applicable) been budgeted to support the change?

Have resources (equipment, materials, staff time, information) been made available? What additional resources would help to encourage the new actions to take place?

Are there things that can be done to the physical environment that make it unavoidable to do things in the new way (e.g., automation of processes; removal of certain objects necessary to do things the previous way)?

Measurement

Has ongoing periodic measurement and review been scheduled to ensure the new action has been adopted and is performed consistently?

Are indicators/measures chosen that tie directly to the new action? Can the indicator/measure distinguish the performance of different work groups (e.g., by unit, department, shift)? Are some work units carrying out the change more successfully than others?

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Measurement (continued)

Can certain indicators/measures be reviewed more frequently (even daily) by staff to show incremental changes, which can serve as a reminder for the new action and provide encouragement and reinforcement?

Does measurement point to any changes in procedure that should be made to help facilitate the change?