

**4 DEVELOP**

Develop action plans and outbriefs

# Develop Action Plans and Out-briefs



*Assessment to Solutions*

## Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs

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## **Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs**

The climate assessment process involves five distinct phases: Prepare, Conduct, Interpret, Develop, and Execute. Phase 4, "Develop", primarily focuses on the development of the action plan and commander's assessment out-brief to the organizational members. Therefore, this guide is aimed in assisting commanders in establishing the action planning team, and providing guidance to commanders and action planning team members in the development of the action plan and the commander's out-brief to the organization.

### **Establishing the Action Planning Team**

Developing action plans involves establishing an action planning team. Some factors that drive the selection of the action planning team include the level of assessment, type of organization, and rank and workforce structure to name a few. Key members commanders may consider as part of the action planning team include the key unit leadership (military/civilian) who provide operational strategic expertise. Additionally, including a diverse population of junior members (military/civilian) provides the commander with information pertaining to the day-to-day challenges junior personnel face in accomplishing the mission. Other key subject matter experts (SME) the commander may want to include in the action planning team include equal opportunity advisors, equal employment opportunity specialist/managers, sexual assault response coordinators, victim advocates, legal advisors, inspector generals, and chaplains. These SMEs receive professional training to assist organizations in conducting assessments and developing viable strategies that support action planning.

### **Developing the Action Plan**

Developing the action plan begins with identifying the problems that were validated during triangulation in Phase 3 "Interpret". Then each problem must be further defined to understand root causes of issues and what the desired end-state is for each problem. Subsequently, the assessment action planning team moves into developing and analyzing courses of actions. During the analysis, the action planning team focuses on identifying and bridging gaps that lead to the selection of courses of action (COAs) that mitigate and support overcoming identified problems. Next, the team starts the challenging task of developing the action plan that will be presented to the commander for approval and implementation. Once the commander approves the action plan, it is highly recommended for the commander to out-brief the organization on the assessment findings and on the action plan that targets the findings. Finally, once implementation begins, the commander should develop a process to evaluate the implementation of the action plan and hold responsible agencies accountable.

### **Identify the Problem**

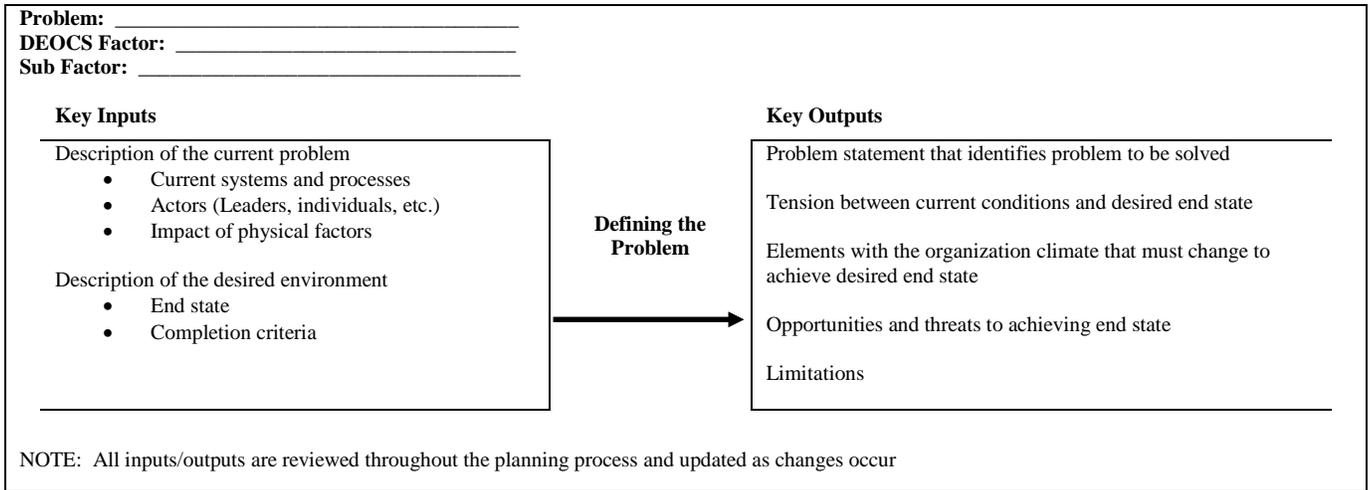
Once the action planning team has been established, the team should start by looking at the validated concerns using the triangulated data discussed in the Phase 3 guide and identify the problems. Then determine what needs to be acted on to reconcile the differences between existing and desired conditions.

### **Define the Problem**

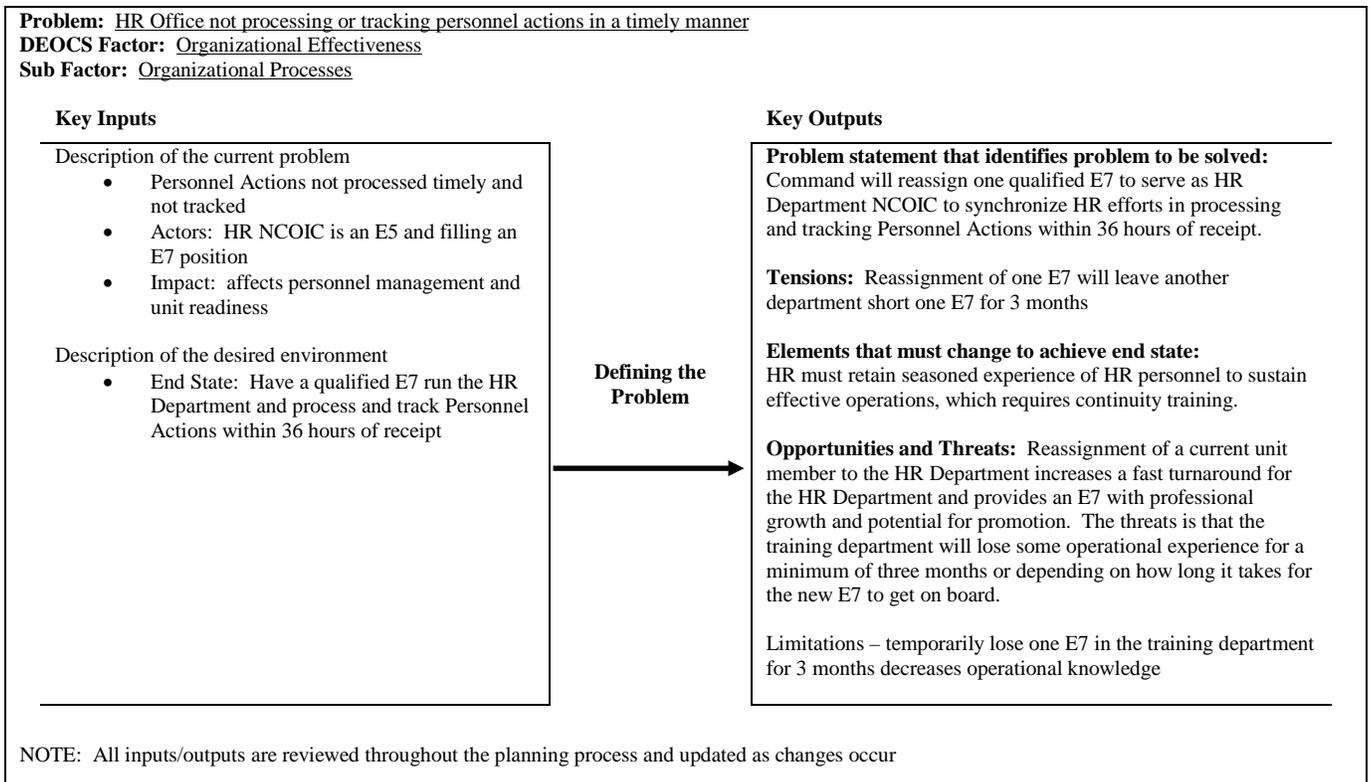
Defining the problem is essential to solving the problem. It involves understanding and isolating the root causes of the issues. Defining the problem includes identifying potential contributing factors to the problem that may include people, systems and processes, and physical factors that may be creating the problem. Additionally, it includes identifying tensions created between these contributing factors and defining what must change in order to achieve the desired

## Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs

end state. Clearly defining the problem for each validated concern provides many opportunities for the action planning team. Below is a diagram that is aligned with the DEOCS and is one example that can assist the action planning team in defining the problem.



### EXAMPLE



### Develop Courses of Action

Next, the action planning team should develop COAs. Courses of actions support in the resolution of the problem. Therefore, identify the actions required to resolve each problem and include all team member's opinions and ideas.

## Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs

### EXAMPLE

Problem: HR Office not processing or tracking personnel actions in a timely manner	
Courses of Action	
1	Reassign Training Department E7 to the HR Department within three days.
2	Assigned inbound E7 to the Training Department.
3	Have IT Department develop a database to track all Personnel Actions that can be used by all HR sections in subordinate units within next 30 days
4	Develop and conduct HR training for all HR personnel. Conduct first training session within next 45 days and quarterly thereafter
5	Conduct HR brief with all units on a monthly basis beginning within 7 days.
6	Process all current Personnel Actions within the next 48 hours
7	Process all future Personnel Actions within 36 hours of receipt
8	Develop temporary Personnel Actions tracking log until IT Department implements database beginning now

### Analyze Courses of Action

Next, analyze the COAs and identify intended and unintended consequences, resources, constraints, and advantages and disadvantages of each course of action. Determine if COAs are realistic. Finally, determine if gaps exist.

COA 1: Reassign Training Department E7 to the HR Department within three days.	
Analysis	
Consequences	Loss of one E7 in the Training Department potentially degrades training operational experience; however, improves HR operational processes that improve HR support to the command improving unit readiness
Resources	Require experienced personnel to conduct workforce analysis of current workforce population and inbound population
Constraints	No constraints at this time
Advantages	Reassignment of one current unit E7 increases the integration into the HR Department since the E7 has knowledge of the organization and can quickly turn the HR Departments concerns into positive actions. Since the Training Department is efficient, this provides an E6 the opportunity to move into an E7 position. This provides promotion potential for the E7 and E6.
Disadvantages	The unit does not receive another E7 for three months and the Training Department will be short one person.
Recommendation	Move the Training Room Department E7 to the HR Department and reassign the inbound E7 to the Training Department.

## Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs

### Define the Gap



The gap can be defined between your organizations Actual Performance (AP), (your organization's current status) and your Desired End-state (DE) (where you want to be). Doing this helps ensure that mitigation strategies are identified to bridge the gap to ensure courses of actions implemented are effective and support the desired end state. For example, in the above example the HR Department currently does not have an E7 assigned to run the HR Department. This creates a gap in the knowledge to effectively run the HR Department, which has created the inability of HR to track personnel actions (performance) and consequently affects unit personnel readiness (end-state). Therefore, the action planning team must determine how to bridge this gap and influence the end-state.

### Bridging the Gap



The development of effective COAs should take into consideration mitigation strategies that bridge the gap and prevent failure of courses of action. Now, this does not mean that COAs will not require adjustments once implemented. An example of bridging the gap using the previous example to bridge the E7 vacancy gap in the HR Department requires conducting a workforce analysis to determine if any qualified personnel exists to fill the gap. In conducting the workforce analysis, it is determined that a qualified E7 in the Training Department is qualified to run the HR Department. The assessment also shows that the Training Department has personnel that can run the department for three months until a newly inbound E7 arrives to assume duties in the Training Department. In this situation, if the bridge is not gapped immediately, some of the unintended consequences might result in military personnel making decisions to exit the military due to failed support with personnel actions from the HR Department, which affects deployment readiness.

## Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs

### Select Courses of Action

Next, select the best COAs that support the organization's assessment. When selecting the best COAs, think about the future. How will each COA impact tomorrow, next week and the next year? How will COAs impact the people of the organization? Is the value of the COA worth the effort to implement? Does the organization have the resources or does the organization have to reach out to outside entities for support? Who has the authority to make the decision to implement the COA? The answers to these questions should drive the team's decision in selecting what COAs to recommend to the commander for implementation.

### Develop Action Plan

The next step is for the assessment team to develop the action plan using the selected COAs. Start by prioritizing every concern from the most important to least important and determine how long you anticipate it will take to resolve each issue. Articulate the requirements, establish a timeline, and clearly identify what resources are required for each solution to reach the goal. Identify the action and describe the specific tasks that need to be completed. Then identify actions required to address the issue and agencies responsible for carrying out actions to resolve the problem. The below chart provides an example to organize tasks and prepare the action plan.

#### EXAMPLE

<b>ABC Command Climate Assessment Action Plan</b>							
<b>Effective: 17 Aug 20xx</b>							
Action Step Number	Description of Issue/Concern/Problem	Steps / Actions to Address Issue	Responsible Agency(ies)	Anticipated Completion (Day/Month or "Ongoing")	Days Until Anticipated Completion	Status (Not Started, Ongoing, Complete, Delayed)	Time Till Due
1	Organizational Processes – HR Department does not process or track personnel actions in a timely manner	<u><b>Action 1.1</b></u> Forward/Closeout all late actions w/in 24hrs <u><b>Action 1.2</b></u> Process future actions w/in 36hrs of receipt <u><b>Action 1.3</b></u> IT Dept. develops personnel actions database w/in 2wks <u><b>Action 1.4</b></u> Develop manual personnel actions tracker until automated database is stood up <u><b>Action 1.5</b></u> Reassign Training Dept. E7 to HR Dept. within 3 days <u><b>Action 1.6</b></u> Develop Quarterly HR Training <u><b>Action 1.7</b></u> Develop Standard HR Unit Brief	<b>Overall: XO and HR Dir</b>  HR OIC / NCOIC  HR OIC / NCOIC  IT Director  HR NCOIC  HR OIC  HR NCOIC  HR NCOIC	<u><b>Action 1.1:</b></u> 18 Aug xx  <u><b>Action 1.2:</b></u> 20 Aug xx  <u><b>Action 1.3:</b></u> 1 SEP xx  <u><b>Action 1.4</b></u> 18 Aug XX  <u><b>Action 1.5</b></u> 20 Aug xx  <u><b>Action 1.6</b></u> 1 Sep XX  <u><b>Action 1.7</b></u> 1 Sep XX	14	<b>STARTED</b>	<u><b>Action 1.1:</b></u> <2 Day  <u><b>Action 1.2:</b></u> <4 Days  <u><b>Action 1.3:</b></u> < 2 WEEKS  <u><b>Action 1.4</b></u> <2 Day  <u><b>Action 1.5</b></u> <3 Days  <u><b>Action 1.6</b></u> <2 WEEKS  <u><b>Action 1.6</b></u> <2 WEEKS

## Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs

2	Organizational Processes – unit lack of timely end of tour award submissions	<p><u><b>Action 2.1</b></u> Forward all late awards for action within 48hrs</p> <p><u><b>Action 2.2</b></u> Create 120 day personnel loss tracker</p> <p><u><b>Action 3.3</b></u> Monitor award submissions and 120 day personnel loss roster at weekly staff meeting</p>	Unit Executive Officer and HR Department Officer	<p><u><b>Action 2.1</b></u> 21 Aug xx</p> <p><u><b>Action 2.2</b></u> 21 Aug xx</p> <p><u><b>Action 3.3</b></u> Ongoing beginning on 25 Aug xx</p>	<p><u><b>Action 2.1</b></u> 4 Days</p> <p><u><b>Action 2.2</b></u> 4 Days</p> <p><u><b>Action 3.3</b></u> Ongoing beginning on 25 Aug xx</p>	CONTINUOUS	<p><u><b>Action 2.1</b></u> &lt;5 Days</p> <p><u><b>Action 2.2</b></u> &lt;5 Days</p> <p><u><b>Action 3.3</b></u> Ongoing beginning on 25 Aug xx</p>
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### Implement the Action Plan

Once the commander approves the action plan, it is a good idea for the action planning team and commander to brief the plan to the organization's leadership and responsible agencies. It is imperative that leaders and responsible agencies understand their responsibilities in implementing the action plan. Successful implementation requires the efforts of all organization members.

### Evaluate Action Plan and Enforce Accountability

Finally, once implementation of the action plan occurs, the commander and responsible agencies monitor and evaluate the implementation. Furthermore, when responsible agencies detect problems with implementation, they should develop strategies to overcome problems and make recommendations to the commander. The commander will make the decisions to modify the action plan as needed. Finally, it is imperative that the commander enforce accountability. Enforcing accountability results in positively influencing the command climate and enhances mission readiness.

### Plan the Out-briefs

The final step in Phase 4 is to plan commander's out-brief. It is highly recommended the commander plan for two out-briefs. One out-brief should be to inform the senior commander of the climate assessment findings and to lay out the plan of action to resolve any identified problems. The next briefing should be to the organization. Commanders should share the findings of the assessment and the plan of action to create transparency. When commanders share assessment information with members and change occurs, this increases the trust and honest participation in future assessments. Below are some key points to remember:

When briefing the senior commander:

- Keep in mind that the commander already has the results of your DEOCS.
- Highlight—and explain—similarities and disparities within different sections of the DEOCS report (e.g., lower favorability ratings for a climate factor should correlate with lower agreement with Locally Developed Questions that address the same topic).
- Share your plan of action to highlight what the unit is doing to address assessment findings.
- Request assistance whenever needed.

When preparing to brief the organization

- Put the briefing time and location on the training schedule

## Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs

- Select a location with no distractions and where members feel comfortable
- Schedule enough time to conduct the brief and allow for questions
- Develop your message. Let your organization know there were pointed comments in the report about a specific issue that included recommendations for fixing it
- Be prepared to have thick skin and do not be on the defense (defensive behaviors can shut down your audience and potentially communicate you do not care)
- Thank your organization for their honest feedback and recommendations
- There are three different approaches available to address each recommendation:
  - *Accept the recommendation*, and inform your organization how the Action Plan will target identified problems
  - *Reject the recommendation*. Let them know that, while the recommendation is something that could be done you will not use it, and why
  - *Disqualify the recommendation*. Let them know that a recommendation, while a good idea on its face, is not possible (e.g., not allowed by policy, lack of resources, etc.)

**Tip:** In this step, plan to have EOAs/CCSs present when you brief the climate assessment results and your plan of action. They can intervene any time to clarify questions and help maintain a civil and constructive atmosphere.

Planning and conducting the out-briefs are important contributing factors to being transparent and creating mutual trust with members of the organization, which create buy-in and support for the organization's action plan.

Likewise establishing an effective action planning team results in the development of an effective action plan. Therefore, after completing Phase 4 (Develop), it is time to move to Phase 5 of the process, which is "Execute".

## Developing Action Plans and Out-briefs

### REFERENCES

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (11 August 2011). Joint Publication 5-0: *Joint Operation Planning*.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (17 January 2017). Joint Publication 3-0: *Joint Operations*.

Headquarters, United States Army (17 May 2012). Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, C2: *Mission Command*.