



Execute Improvements and Evaluate Progress



Assessment to Solutions

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The climate assessment process involves five distinct phases: Prepare, Conduct, Interpret, Develop, and Execute. This guide is designed to assist commanders in understanding and conducting Phase 5 (Execute) from this five-stage process. Leaders should review this guide as well as the additional guides available to them on the other four phases to gain a full appreciation for the command climate assessment process.

In Phase 3, you should have conducted the survey, interpreted its findings, and validated its results with the other assessment methods. In Phase 4 you developed strategies and plans to address validated concerns. Phase 5 involves executing improvements and evaluating progress.

Determining if your plan is effective

Once you've developed your action plan it is important that you implement it effectively. As you do so, you should also assess if the selected strategies you've employed are working as designed. If you developed a plan of actions and milestones in Phase 4 it will assist you in tracking your planned strategies and their implementation.

So, when will you see positive results? It depends on the depth and scope of the concerns/issues that need addressing. Some areas may be resolved fairly quickly, while others may require an extensive amount of time and energy to accomplish. Changing a few procedures to reduce confusion, improve efficiency, or improve quality of life may be easier to accomplish than changing an organizational culture of mistrust, miscommunication, or poor teamwork/unit cohesion. An important part of this process is to determine the commander's expectations ahead of time.

The commander's expectations will assist in prioritizing the action plan and ensuring that the plan is aligned with the organization's mission. To ensure that the action plan is aligned with the mission of the organization and prioritized based on the commander's expectations, action steps (goals) required to resolve identified issues and concerns must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound (SMART) (Locke & Latham, 1984). Specific refers to identifying the issue and assigning a responsible agency to manage the actions required to resolve the issue. Measurable defines the actions that will be taken to resolve the issue. Achievable identifies responsible agency required to ensure attainable steps are action-oriented. Relevant identifies how the issue detracts from the mission and if the identified issue is relevant to the organization's mission. Time bound defines a realistic timeline to ensure each action step has a positive impact within a specified period.

EXAMPLE:

Organizational Processes – HR does not process or track personnel actions in a timely manner

S	The specific task required to be completed: Process personnel actions in a timely manner
M	Actions required to measure in resolving the issue: Action 1 Forward/ Closeout all late actions within next 24 hours Action 2 Process/Forward actions within 36 hours of receipt Action 3 Develop Database to track actions
A	HR is responsible agency to implement action steps
R	HR actions not completed in a timely manner degrade unit readiness, morale and can decrease retention.
T	Action 1: 18 Aug xx Action 2: 20 Aug xx Action 3: 1 SEP xx

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Once you have developed the action plan based on the commander's expectations, you are ready to implement the plan. As you implement the plan, you should be assessing it. Below is a sample action plan. Ask yourself, are action step timelines being met? Are responsible agencies implementing the plan based on expectations? Do you need to make modifications to the action steps that have not proven to be effective?

ABC Command Climate Assessment Action Plan							
Effective: 17 Aug 20xx							
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 – unit HR office does not process or track personnel actions in a timely manner	<p>Action 1.1 Forward/ Closeout all late actions within 24 hours to HR Department</p> <p>Action 1.2 Process and Forward actions for processing within 36 hours of receipt</p> <p>Action 1.3 Develop Database to track actions</p>	Unit Executive Officer and Unit HR Officer	<p>Action 1.1: 18 Aug xx</p> <p>Action 1.2: 20 Aug</p> <p>Action 1.3: 1 SEP xx</p>	14	STARTED	<p>Action 1.1: <2 Day</p> <p>Action 1.2: <4 Days</p> <p>Action 1.3: < 2 WEEKS</p>
2	Organizational Processes – unit lack of timely end of tour award submissions	<p>Action 2.1 Forward all late awards for action within 48hrs</p> <p>Action 2.2 Create 120 day personnel loss tracker</p> <p>Action 3.3 Monitor award submissions and 120 day personnel loss roster at weekly staff meeting</p>	Unit Executive Officer and HR Department Officer	<p>Action 2.1 21 Aug xx</p> <p>Action 2.2 21 Aug xx</p> <p>Action 3.3 Ongoing beginning on 25 Aug xx</p>	<p>Action 2.1 4 Days</p> <p>Action 2.2 4 Days</p> <p>Action 3.3 Ongoing beginning on 25 Aug xx</p>	CONTINUOUS	<p>Action 2.1 <5 Days</p> <p>Action 2.2 <5 Days</p> <p>Action 3.3 Ongoing beginning on 25 Aug xx</p>

Additionally, conducting status checks through regular meetings or briefings can help keep the plan on track. You should also start to see if the action plan you have employed is making a positive difference in the organization. Below are some of the ways you can identify whether the plan is effective and meets your intent. Some of these methods are the same basic techniques used in Phase 3 but on a smaller scale.

Focus Groups can provide feedback from a group (or groups) of individuals to identify (from their perspective) if items they previously brought to the commander's attention have been addressed or if conditions are improving. Meet with a small select group. Ask questions about the strategies and their impact, and for suggestions to improve or modify the strategies to get the desired results. Additionally, asking individual service members one-on-one questions may be the fastest way to obtain information. Sometimes asking simple questions will provide information about the situation you are trying to address.

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Observations. Leaders, or selected individuals, should carefully observe to see what is going on with the members of their organization. Review the previous concerns and then conduct the observations where/when you might best observe related behaviors. Personally look at your areas of responsibility during times when you are usually not there. You may find additional information which may enlighten you to what is truly going on.

Records and Reports. If the areas you addressed in your action plan are quantifiable and recorded/tracked, you should start to see progress in your regular reports. If your strategies are successful, you would expect to see positive results in these documents. Regular reviews of key statistical data can identify progress. At the same time, watch for drastic changes in other data. Occasionally, an implemented strategy to resolve one concern can cause negative consequences in another, seemingly unrelated area. If you see sudden negative trends, try to identify what is causing it and whether your primary strategy must be modified or adjusted to eliminate the negative impact. You may have very easily addressed a symptom in your initial action plan instead of an underlying issue.

Follow-up surveys can provide an anonymous assessment of the total picture from a large audience. Additionally, surveys may contain fill in the blank responses to clarify items or elaborate on specific topics. However, be cautious of survey burden. Mandatory surveys are already required upon changing command and yearly thereafter. Thus, you should consider other ways to acquire the necessary information, if possible, as you monitor your plan's progress.

*****Note:** All of the above methods above have pros and cons. The strategy you select depends on the time and resources available to you. For more information and "How to" guides on these topics, visit <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>.

Following the below process can assist you as you monitor your plan's implementation:

Determine what you are going to reexamine

Be clear on what you are reevaluating. What are you assessing: people, equipment, processes, materials, the environment, or a combination of areas? Identify how you will examine these areas.

Review Your Strategies

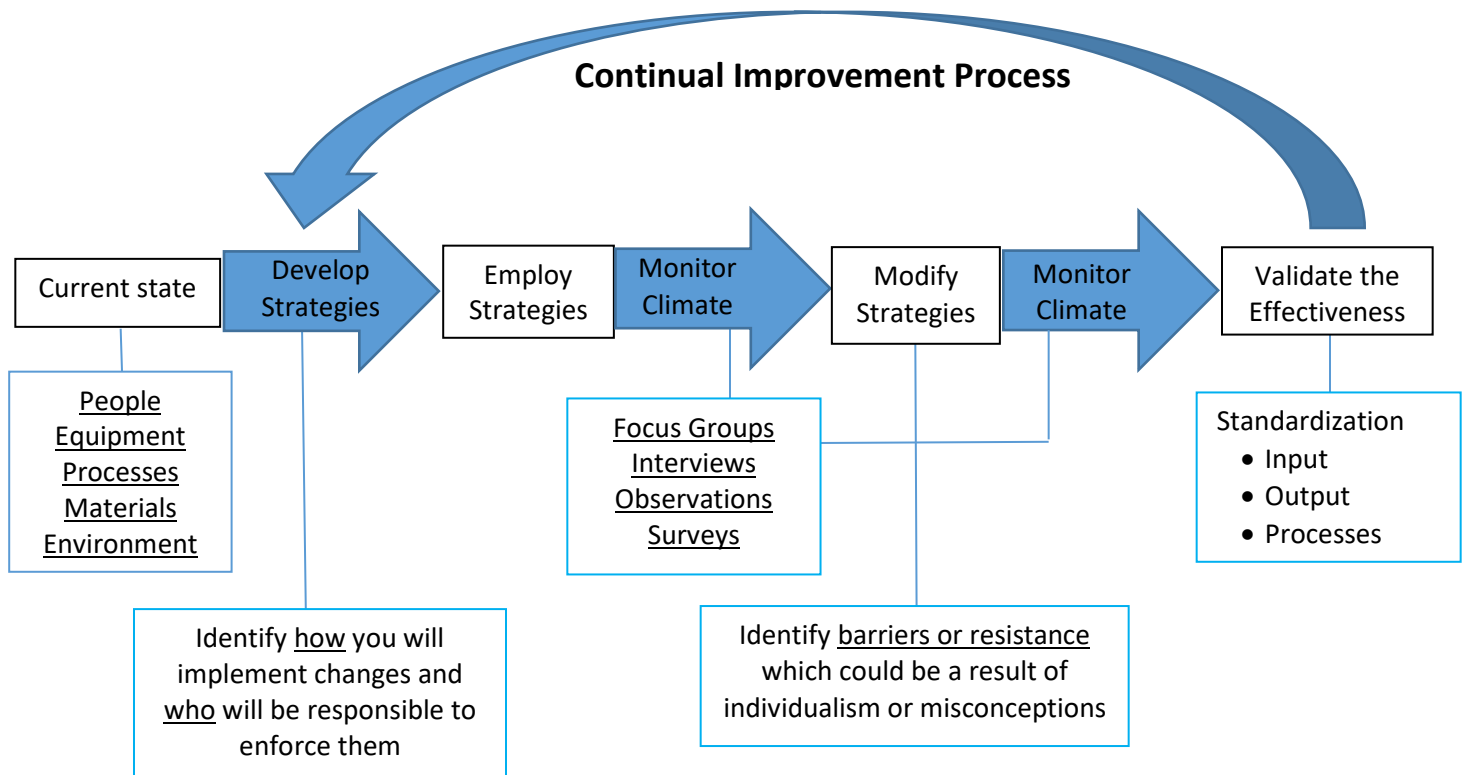
Is each strategy accomplishing what you desired? Is it having a positive impact? Is anything impeding its progress (leader buy-in/support, faulty implementation, untimely application)? Is it causing another issue?

Determine who is responsible to monitor and enforce your changes

As a leader, you cannot be everywhere. Leaders at the lowest level have the greatest ability to mentor, monitor, and enforce your policies as long as they are standardized, understood, supervised and supported from their leadership. When standards are not enforced, changes cannot/will not happen.

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The benefit to conducting a complete Organization Assessment (including creating and modifying/improving your action plan) is to gain a thorough awareness from multiple sources. By knowing exactly where concerns are, you can create and implement a detailed plan of action to improve or sustain a climate. The figure below demonstrates a Continual Improvement Process strategy you can use to implement changes for improving your organization.



As you can tell by the above figure, this process doesn't end. When leaders invest their time and effort into their subordinates and their mission, their members will invest their time and effort into sustaining and improving the organization as a whole.

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REFERENCES

Locke, E. A. & Latham, G. P. (1984). *Goal Setting: A Motivational Technique That Works!* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.