

After Action Learning Log

Use the method

Turn a completed job, meeting, or experiment into a useful change for the next attempt. Use this soon after the work while the evidence is accessible. The output separates expected results, observed results, contributing conditions, and a tested improvement.

- 1. Choose one event.** Record the work, dates, intended result, and people who can explain what happened. Keep the review narrow enough to finish.
- 2. Compare expectation and result.** Write what was supposed to happen and what actually happened. Use records or direct observations; mark recollections that need confirmation.
- 3. Identify contributing conditions.** Ask what helped and what got in the way. Separate evidence from explanations that are still hypotheses.
- 4. Choose a repeatable lesson.** State a condition and an action: "When this happens, do this because..." Avoid generic advice such as "communicate better."
- 5. Assign one improvement.** Choose a small change, an owner, a due date, and a way to tell whether it worked. Preserve practices that already produced good results.
- 6. Check the next attempt.** Compare the next result with the prior event. Keep, revise, or discard the improvement based on what happened.

Worked example

Illustrative event: a report was due Friday and arrived Monday. Expected: approved customer inputs by Tuesday and a Friday delivery. Observed: inputs arrived Thursday; review was scheduled for Friday after the delay was already known.

Evidence: intake checklist and dated emails. Hypothesis: the customer misunderstood which files were needed. Confirm that explanation rather than treating it as a fact.

Lesson: when inputs are required for scheduling, send a named input list and confirm completeness before committing the delivery slot. Improvement owner: coordinator; due: before the next job.

Next test: the next two jobs use the input list. Record whether inputs arrive complete and whether the planned delivery date is achieved; change the checklist if the same omission remains.

Before you put it to work

- ☐ The review distinguishes observation from hypothesis.
- ☐ A lesson names a situation and a practical action.
- ☐ One improvement has an owner and a test.
- ☐ The next attempt is checked before claiming success.

If the problem keeps returning

If the same lesson appears in every review, move it into the operating process. Add a checklist step, handoff rule, or training practice and assign someone to check that it is being used.

Connect the tools

Use BO-06 for unresolved issues and BO-03 to embed the lesson in a procedure.

First use

Use the worksheet on the next page for one real task. Complete the decision fields, name the person responsible, and choose a review date. Duplicate the worksheet when you need another record.

Working worksheet

Name or team _____ Date _____

Event and expected result

Work reviewed, dates, participants, and original commitment.

Observed result and evidence

What happened, differences from plan, and records supporting it.

What helped

Specific practice or condition worth repeating.

Complete and review

What hindered

Observed condition, proposed explanation, and confirmation needed.

Lesson and improvement

When to apply it, action, owner, due date, and success measure.

Next attempt result

Test event, evidence, result, and keep or revise decision.

Review after use

What evidence confirms the explanation? _____

What useful practice should continue? _____

Did the improvement change the next result? _____

Which operating document now needs updating? _____

Next action _____ Owner _____ Due _____