

ACTION LEARNING

FACT SHEET

TASMANIAN
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OFFICE

This fact sheet provides general guidance for setting up and managing an action learning set to support resource efficiency projects.

Action learning, or learning by doing, is an approach to individual and organisational learning. Working in small groups known as 'sets', people tackle wicked problems or opportunities and learn with and from each other in their attempts to improve things.

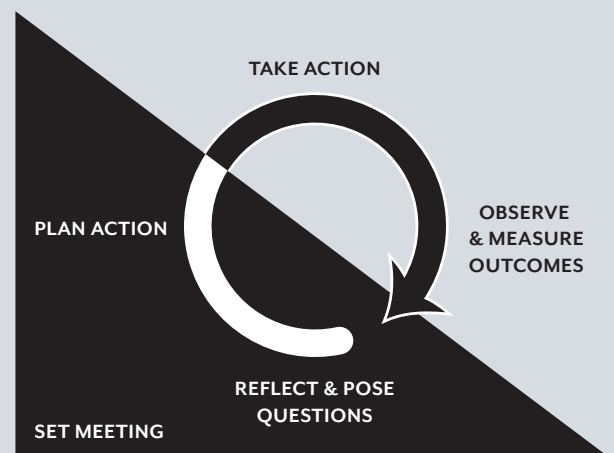
FORMING A SET

Typically, a set comprises between 4 and 6 people, with a practical maximum of 8.

Each set member brings a problem or opportunity that they are seeking to resolve through action learning with the set.

There are a few things to consider when looking for members to join your set:

1. Trust – everyone should feel comfortable to share information about their business; consider any personal and professional conflicts of interest that may arise.
2. Diversity – make sure the set includes people who will challenge your thinking and provide a completely different point of view.
3. Be aware of experts – having an expert as a member of your set may limit your opportunities to explore and learn through experimentation.
4. Equality – In action learning, the skills, knowledge and experience of each set member is considered of equal value.



The set meeting process takes set members through a learning cycle.

PREPARING FOR LEARNING

Before starting regular set meetings, it is helpful to have a clear definition of your problem or opportunity.

It is also helpful to learn a little more about your set members, their skills, experience and work history.

You may want to dedicate your first meeting to getting to know your fellow set members and creating a clear definition of the problem or opportunity you are each working on.

Templates are available on the BALT webpage to help you with these activities:

businessactionlearningtas.com.au/brep-resources

MANAGING SET MEETINGS

During set meetings, each set member has an allocated amount of time to talk about their project. Typically 20-30 minutes. Within their allocated time there are three distinct sections.

1. Reporting on actions

The set member reports back on actions that they committed to at the last meeting, with particular focus on what they have learnt.

2. Questioning by the set

The other set members ask questions to explore the outcomes of actions – whether it was successful or not – to bring out further learning for the individual and the set.

If a set member could not complete their actions, the set may ask questions to get to the root causes of inaction.

The set then helps the set member to work out what to do next.

3. Commit to next action

Towards the end of their allocated time, the set member will commit to their next steps, to be completed before the next meeting, based on the lessons learnt.

The three step process is repeated for each set member. In this way, the set is taken through a continuing cycle of action and reflection.

Questioning is key. The set should refrain from telling any set member what to do. In fact, except for during their allocated time, it is good discipline for set members to only make statements in response to a direct question.

At the end of each set meeting, the set should reflect on how the meeting went and what might be done differently next time to make it better.

Keeping to time is very important for an effective action learning set meeting. Ground Rules for set member behaviour and time-keeping should be established before you start.



Karina Damberg of Red Brick Road Cider presenting at the BREP Review Forum, December 2019.

CONDUCT A REVIEW

When the set is established, it's a good idea to commit to a specific period for the set to operate and agree on a date to stop and reflect on the outcomes achieved. The set may decide to continue or conclude. Some set members may want to introduce a new problem or opportunity, some may want to continue with their current project, and some may wish to withdraw.

Reviewing the program is important to celebrate the achievements and share the learning with a wider cohort, where possible.

The BREP Review Forum was held in December 2019. Each set member presented a short slide presentation. These presentations have been captured in case studies and are available on the Tasmanian Climate Change Office website: www.climatechange.tas.gov.au.

The Business Resource Efficiency Program (BREP) is delivered by Business Action Learning Tasmania (BALT) in partnership with the Tasmanian government.

For more information about BREP

Visit www.climatechange.tas.gov.au or businessactionlearningtas.com.au/brep

For more information about this fact sheet

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