



Review of Activities

Why this tool

Activists know to act. But they may not create the space to reflect. Reflection without action is impotent; but action without reflection is aimless.

This tool gives participants a structured way to review “what they have been up to” – it’s a great intro to sessions on strategy, a simple tool, and a great way to catch themes carrying a group. In a strategy workshop, I will often place this tool early to get a diagnostic read on the issues and struggles in the group.

The task: Create a timeline of activities

Either as a group or individually, have each person write down a list of activities that their group has done. Give a timeframe – for example, “Write down what you have been up to in the past six months.” Tell them it’s not important they have everything, or that dates are precise, but instead about getting a quality list of what have you been doing.

Ask: *When you look at this list, what do you feel?* Oftentimes surprise shows up. People may notice they do more than they believe they do; or less; or that they meander more than they think; or that they have had more accomplishments than they think. Encourage all self-reflection.

Get them in small groups sharing more about their feelings and reactions.

Then ask them to *think more about what are strategy lessons or insights as you reflect on that list?* If you were a historian looking at that list, what would you say about the group’s strategy? What’s smart about what they’re doing? Share with partner(s); then share in the large group.

This is a good time to make a list of insights or engage in a whole group discussion. Weave in the theories of four core strategy elements:

- ▶ **Direction** • Defining a clear and simple long-term goal which is capable of motivating effort;
- ▶ **Concentration (or focus)** • Focusing all resources, efforts and enthusiasm in the agreed direction;
- ▶ **Consistency** • Progressing in the same direction, with the same focus over long periods of time, deviating only when necessary;
- ▶ **Flexibility** • As a successful strategy become more embedded in the organization's culture it tends to become set and increasingly resistant to change. It is therefore vital to maintain a continuous assessment of the various environments and key variables on which the strategy depends and continually review the necessity for revising the agreed strategy.

Invite reflection in their organization. What are strengths? What are areas that you need to develop more?

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With inspiration from Shari Silberstein, Equal Justice USA
Four core strategy elements from author Gordon Pearson*