Focusing Frameworks

In brief

This document outlines a tool called a Focusing Framework which can be used by Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) partners and teams to focus their thinking and action on achieving accelerating rates of improvement in profit.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the wide range of things that may impact on profit in a beef business. Any tools that help to focus thinking about profit and to set achievable and specific targets, can save time, effort, money and other resources.

Figures 1 and 2 together show how words and diagrams can be combined into Focusing Frameworks to help focus thinking about profit. Use of an equation, with information organised in simple columns, as in Figure 1, can encourage people to focus on important components of profit. Using a flow diagram, as in Figure 2, tends to encourage people to look at a wider range of logical connections between the same elements.

A detailed Beef Profit Focusing Framework is shown on the next page.

Figure 1 A framework for considering key elements affecting profits in a cattle enterprise management system.

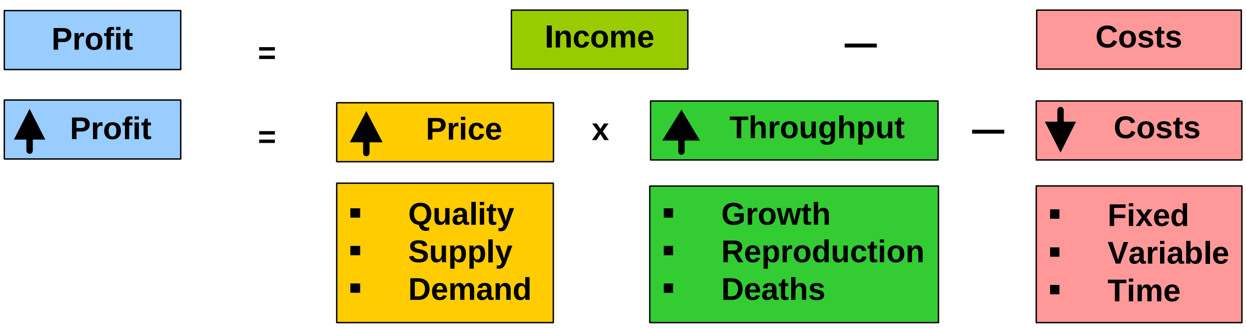
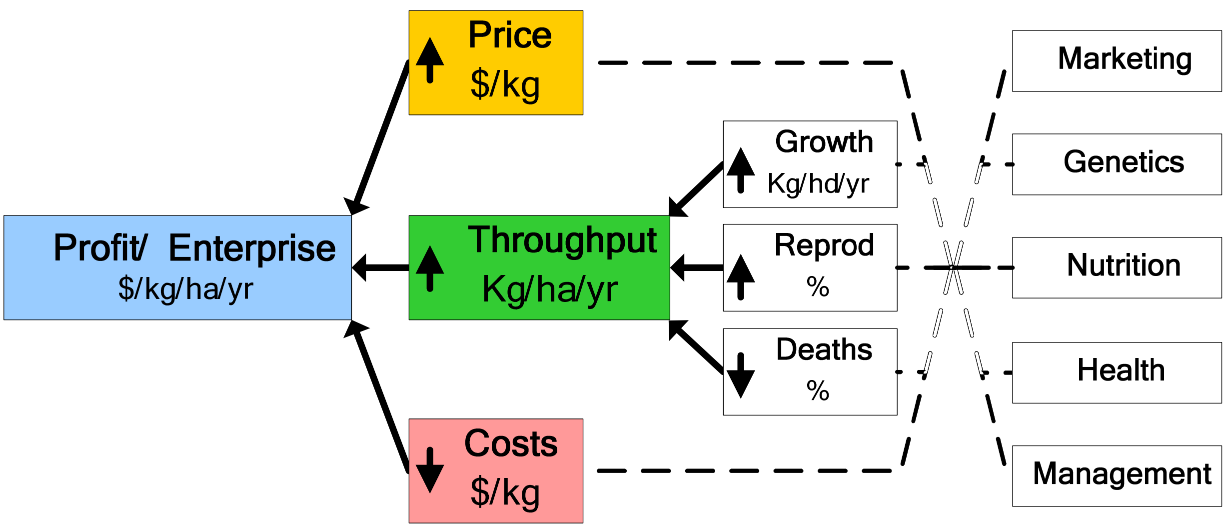


Figure 2 Beef Profit Focusing Framework.



Beef Profit Focusing Framework (incorporating key practices and technologies)

FOCUS	TARGET OUTCOMES	CSFs	KEY COMPONENTS	SUB-COMPONENTS	KEY PRACTICES/TECHNOLOGIES	IMPACT	COST	GROSS MARGIN
Profit ($/kg/ha/yr)	Throughput (kg/ha/yr)	Growth (kg/ha/yr)	Nutrition	Pastures, supplements, growth promotants, forage crops, feedlots				
			Genetics	Cross breeding, bull selection				
			Health	Chronic diseases, internal parasites, external parasites				
		Reproduction (%)	Nutrition	Pastures, legumes, supplements, lactation				
			Genetics	Cross breeding, bull selection				
			Health	Reproductive diseases, internal parasites, external parasites				
		Deaths (%)	Nutrition	Drought, supplements				
			Genetics	Cross breeding, bull selection				
			Health	Acute disease				
	Price ($/kg)	Quality re specifications, assurity of supply, markets & marketing						
	Costs ($/kg)	Nutrition, genetics, health, transport, marketing, other						

The Front End Tool

In brief

The ‘front end’ is the fundamental thinking and logic that gives a concept, project or event clarity by describing the specific intention, context or situation; the issues and needs that the concept, project or event is meeting; the target outcomes and outputs; and relevant values, principles and assumptions.

Whether we are developing a new concept or sharing our thinking with others, we need to have the essential elements that together, create a clear mental picture.

As individuals, our thinking is based on our personal beliefs, perceptions and knowledge and we know that different people with different experiences and perspectives see things differently to us. Without a clear ‘front end’ we can think we have a common mental picture, but in all likelihood we will each have somewhat different mental pictures.

If we are to work together effectively and avoid confusion and frustration, developing a shared ‘front end’ is essential. The ‘front end’ is the most important part of any design, planning or communication process because it enables us as individuals or in groups, to formulate a clear, and shared ‘picture’ to begin working with.

A good ‘front end’ clarifies thinking by describing the intention, context, needs, focus, target outcomes and outputs, and relevant principles and assumptions, in a simple, concise and logical way. It also establishes a shared language by clarifying and defining key terms.

Once you have a ‘front end’ you have a solid basis of thinking and shared understanding from which to move into detailed design and implementation. You also have a concise description of purpose and targets to use in measuring and managing performance.

More detail

The steps to follow when using the Front End Tool are:

Step 1

Describe and write down (on a whiteboard or butchers paper if working as a team) the intention/motivation, context, boundaries and needs of the situation that have given rise to the concept, project or event. Consider and document any values and assumptions that are underpinning the thinking about the intention, context and needs.

Step 2

Draft a ‘Focus’ statement. The ‘Focus’ states concisely what must be achieved to meet the needs and the intention. Also think about and document any values and principles that underpin the Focus. (The SMARTT Focus Tool is useful here).

Step 3

List the key target outcomes that are necessary to achieve the Focus. In most situations there are approximately 3 to 6 key target outcomes for a Focus.

Step 4

List the target outputs that will be produced in achieving the outcomes.

Step 5

Check the logic of the ‘Front End’ by asking: “If we achieve the target outcomes and outputs will we achieve our focus and meet the needs?” Make any improvements that are needed to ensure a logical and shared mental picture.

At every stage check to see what key terms/language you are using, and make sure you have shared definitions for these.

It is important to deal with each step in enough detail to get it ‘good enough’ before moving on to the next. Having each component described ‘enough’ allows an adequate understanding for checking logic and clarity, without going into details which are best determined after a shared mental picture has been established.

SMARTT Focus Tool

In brief

What is focus and why is it important?

Focus is defined as 'A specific area and target outcomes on which to concentrate attention, thinking and action to achieve results'. In a beef business it is easy to be overwhelmed with the pace of business, and the range of things that could be done to impact on profit. Having a specific focus can help to:

- Set boundaries
- Concentrate thinking and action to make a real difference on improving profit
- Stop wasting time and resources doing things that don't make enough of an impact on profit
- Get more effect for effort.

The value of focus is that it provides greater effectiveness and efficiency of both thinking and action. Developing a clear focus can be done simply using the SMARTT Focus Tool.

SMARTT Focus

The acronym SMART has been used in planning and goal setting for many years. In the SMARTT Focus Tool an additional T (Targeted) has been introduced to make it SMARTT which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Targeted, Timelined. Below is an example of an un-SMARTT Focus and the same Focus made SMARTT.

Un-SMARTT Focus:

To enhance the wellbeing of rural families by increasing the capacity of beef producers to continuously improve production systems.

SMARTT Focus:

To enhance the wellbeing of rural families in north Queensland by increasing the capacity of beef producers to continuously improve their production systems to achieve an average of 5% improvements in

- Profit (gross margin)
- Environment (specific KPIs)
- Energy efficiency (specific KPIs)

per year every year.

More detail

The steps to follow in using the tool are shown below. The next page shows a worksheet for documenting the development of a SMARTT focus.

Step 1

Define the area of attention, the need or opportunity, and decide what will fulfil the need.

Step 2

Write a Focus statement. This is a statement that says what the boundaries of the focus are and what will be achieved. It is often useful to start a focus statement with the words 'To achieve ……'.

Step 3

Make the Focus statement SMARTT (Specific, Measurable, Achievable Relevant, Targeted, Timelined) (see the SMARTT example opposite).

Step 4

Develop a list of key principles and assumptions that underpin the Focus.

Step 5

Check that the described SMARTT Focus meets the need adequately i.e. well enough without spending too much time on detail.

Step 6

Negotiate shared understanding and a shared mental model of the Focus by clarifying important concepts, logic and key terms by using conceptual frameworks like focusing frameworks (see Focusing Frameworks in the Beef Profit Partnerships Toolkit).

Step 7

Regularly check the logic and connections between the need, the focus, and the conceptual frameworks, and assess whether the focus is adequate to meet the need.

If you are working by yourself, the SMARTT Focus statement can help you get greater clarity and confidence about what you are trying to achieve. If you are working with others, a SMARTT Focus statement can be more easily shared, negotiated and understood. This enables everyone involved to have a shared understanding of the Focus.

SMARTT Focus Tool

Name: ……………………

Date: ……………………

Specific Need/Opportunity/Intent

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Draft Focus

(A Focus should clearly state what you want to achieve; indicate the boundaries and scale of focus.)

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Could the Focus be made SMARTTer?

Specific? ……………………………………………………………………………

Measurable? ……………………………………………………………………………

Achievable? ……………………………………………………………………………

Relevant? ……………………………………………………………………………

Targeted? ……………………………………………………………………………

Timelined? ……………………………………………………………………………

SMARTTer Focus:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Key Values, Principles and Assumptions Underpinning the Focus:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Check the logical connections between the Need/Opportunity, SMARTT Focus and Principles. Improve and simplify if necessary.

SMARTT Focus Tool

Name: …………………..

Date: ……………………

Specific Need/Opportunity

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Draft Focus

(A Focus should clearly state what you want to achieve; indicate the boundaries and scale of focus.)

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Could the Focus be made SMARTTer?

Specific? ……………………………………………………………………………………

Measurable? ……………………………………………………………………………………

Achievable? ……………………………………………………………………………………

Relevant? ……………………………………………………………………………………

Targeted? ……………………………………………………………………………………

Timelined? ……………………………………………………………………………………

SMARTTer Focus:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Key Values, Principles and Assumptions Underpinning the Focus:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Check the logical connections between the Need/Opportunity, SMARTT Focus and Principles. Improve and simplify if necessary.

Brainstorming

In brief

This document outlines the Brainstorming Tool which can be used in Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) to focus thinking and action on achieving improvements in profit. Brainstorming was designed by Alex Osborn (1938). It enables individuals and teams to generate, in a relatively rapid time period, creative ideas and opportunities about how to achieve a desired outcome.

Brainstorming enables people to:

- Put inhibitions and rules aside with the aim of generating new ideas
- Generate a large number of ideas regardless of their initial worth
- Create new ideas by suspending judgment
- Develop an optimal state of mind for generating new ideas
- In some situations it may be useful to do “inverse”/“negative” brainstorming e.g. brainstorming ideas about how not to achieve improvements in profit.

Preparation for Using Brainstorming

Preparation for using the tool involves:

- Defining the topic (Focus) for generating ideas (e.g. “improving profit”)
- Identifying and inviting the most appropriate people to participate (i.e. people with practical experience; specialists; creative and lateral thinkers; different cultures and genders). The tool is best used with 3 to 15 people (it is difficult to achieve effective participation in groups greater than 15), therefore it may be necessary to split into smaller groups
- Identifying and securing a pleasant venue
- Ensuring each participant has a pen and paper (or cards)
- Ensuring a scribe is equipped to record ideas (on a white board or flipchart) so that all participants can read the ideas. Or ensuring that participants can record their ideas on cards and place the cards on a wall so that all can see the contributions.

AF Osborn 1938, *Applied imagination: the principles and problems of creative problem solving*, 3rd revised edition, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, NY.

More detail

Steps in using the Brainstorming Tool:

Step 1

Explain the context and purpose of the session. Ask if there are questions of clarification.

Step 2

Explain the rules of brainstorming i.e.:

- *Any idea is acceptable - welcome ‘blue sky’ ideas*
- *Do not or comment on or criticize other people's ideas*
- *Record all thoughts*
- *Reduce "dead air" - keep the ideas flowing*
- *Build on other ideas when given the opportunity*
- *Focus on quantity, not quality.*

Ask if there are questions of clarification. If necessary use an example e.g. “ideas for improving tea making and drinking”.

Step 3

Ask participants to start Brainstorming. Participants can contribute their ideas in three ways:

- *Each person contributes one idea at a time to a scribe until all participant’s ideas are recorded*
- *Each person spends 5 minutes (quiet time) to record their own ideas then contributes one idea at a time to a scribe until all participant’s ideas are recorded*
- *Each person writes their ideas on cards and after 10 to 15 minutes places the ideas on a wall so that all so that all participants’ ideas are recorded.*

Step 4

After the list of ideas has been generated, participants review the list to clarify the meaning of all items. Since “quantity, not quality” was emphasized in the generation of the ideas, some items may be expressed in vague terms which need to be clarified.

Step 5

Once all items are understood the list of ideas can be rationalized by combining items that are similar and eliminating duplication, but only with the agreement of all participants.

Step 6

Discuss the results of the brainstorming. Explain the value of the list of ideas and how they will be used. Ask if there are questions of clarification. Thank the participants for their contributions.

Local Best Practices (LBP) Tool

In brief

This document outlines the Local Best Practices (LBP) Tool which can be used by Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) partners and teams focused on achieving improvements in profit.

A practice is a set and sequence of actions to achieve specific outputs or outcomes. The Local Best Practices (LBP) Tool can be used to enable individuals and teams to analyse current practices and design best and better practices.

Using the tool you can:

- Design effective practices to achieve target outcomes and then compare them to current practices, thus establishing benchmarks and identifying opportunities for better practices,
- Or, if no current practices exist, you can use this tool to design and manage best practices.

A recording framework for use with the Local Best Practices Tool is shown over the page.

More detail

Below are the steps to follow when using the Local Best Practices Tool to analyse a situation for opportunities for improvement.

Step 1

Identify and assemble the participants (no more than 15) who are interested in the focus and want to improve profit. Set up a venue so that participants can be seated around the recording framework shown in Figure 1. Set up a whole electronic whiteboard, wall or computer-projected screen with the recording framework.

Step 2

Develop a SMARTT focus, principles and assumptions based on the 'need' (use the SMARTT Focus Tool). Then develop target outcomes and outputs.

Step 3

Ask: 'What are Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for achieving impact on the focus?' or 'What do you have to have to achieve the focus?' Generate a list of CSFs and space them down the column marked Critical Success Factors. Check over your list to ensure that they are all relevant to the focus. CSFs should be stated as outcomes.

Step 4

For each CSF ask: 'To ensure the CSF is in place what is it necessary to do?' Key Practices (KPs) always start with an active verb eg develop, list, negotiate, send etc. List these in the Key Practices (KPs) column for the relevant CSF. In this step you need to distinguish whether you are talking about current practice, current best practice or an opportunity for improved practice. Clarify which you are talking about and note whether items are current, best or opportunities for better practice.

Step 5

Ask: 'To assess the level of achievement of the CSF, what measure of performance will it be necessary to have?' Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be stated as outputs.

Step 6

Record any additional thinking regarding issues, constraints or ideas that has been prompted by the discussion. Use the last column of the framework.

Step 7

Now that you've thought through the practices needed to achieve the focus, ask people to consider opportunities for improving current practices. The clarifications that you made about each Key Practice as current practice, current best practice or an opportunity for improved practice will be useful now. As well as improvements, you may find some completely new practices to implement. List the opportunities on an electronic whiteboard, wall or computer-projected screen where people can easily see both the LBP and the growing list of opportunities.

Step 8

After the meeting, get the framework and list of opportunities typed as soon as possible and send them to participants. If possible, gather people back for a follow-up meeting to finalise agreed 'best practices' and lists of opportunities. Alternatively, this step can be accomplished by email. Ask participants to provide further input on the thinking and practices, and come up with further opportunities for improvement. Document the enhanced set of best practices and opportunities.

Need/Opportunity/Intent

……
……
……
……

Focus

……
……
……
……

Target Outcomes	Target Outputs
1. 2. **3.** etc	1. 2. 3. etc

Principles

-
-
-
-
-
-

Critical Success Factors	Key Practices	Key Performance Indicators	Thinking
1.	• • •	• • •	• • •
2.	• • •	• • •	• • •
3.	• • •	• • •	• • •
4. etc.	• • •	• • •	• • •

Specialist Questioning Technique

In brief

Specialist input can be obtained by numerous methods. The Specialist Questioning Technique is an innovative way for Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) partners and teams to engage effectively with specialists in relation to achieving improvements in profit.

The Specialist Questioning Tool can be effective for obtaining specialist input when analysing a situation. Specialists are needed because, as General Patton so succinctly put it, 'You don't know what you don't know.' But, as he also said, it's important to 'know what you know and what you don't know!'

This technique utilises the concept represented by the equation **(q + p) + Q = L.** That is, questions (**q**) asked by team members of the specialist lead to the specialist contributing some of their knowledge (**p**). This combination of **(q + p)** can lead to the development of new and different questions (**Q**) by both the team members and the specialist and learning (**L**) for all those involved.

Specialist Questioning enables individuals within teams as well as the outside 'specialist' to:

- Formulate questions to improve their understanding of current practices, processes, performance, systems issues, needs, problems and opportunities;
- Formulate new questions and ideas for improving the system;
- Become aware of ideas and opportunities that they do not currently have the knowledge and skills to create;
- Increase the pool of ideas and questions about an issue;
- Challenge their paradigms, perceptions, thinking, decisions, processes and practices;
- Build business relationships with specialists;
- Enable specialists to improve their understanding, ideas and questions about improving current practices, performance and about systems issues, needs, problems and opportunities.

More detail

Ideally, the Specialist Questioning Technique is applied in these steps:

Step 1

- *From the outset specialists (researchers, technologists and other people with specialist knowledge or experience) are involved in a plan to address an issue or an opportunity.*
- *Specialists are asked to think about current practices and processes, and to develop questions about the system that will enable practitioners to think about improving processes and practices.*
- *The questions should stimulate ideas and questions about current practice, processes, issues, problems, opportunities and constraints.*
- *This step is enhanced if the specialist/s is involved in at least one face-to-face session.*

Step 2

- *Practitioners are then asked to think about current practices and processes in the system, and to develop questions and ideas for improving the system (or specific components of the system).*
- *It is often difficult for people to develop questions about issues and opportunities that they may not fully understand — 'You don't know what you don't know'.*
- *Group-based facilitated face-to-face dialogue and discussion enhances this step.*

Step 3

- *Practitioners then communicate with specialists (preferably in a facilitated face-to-face mode) to develop answers to their questions, and to develop thinking, and new ideas and questions about improvement.*

The Specialist Questioning Technique has been successfully conducted using teleconferencing. For more on the use of teleconferencing for the technique please refer to:

O'Dempsey, N, Clark, R & Egerton-Warburton, K 1999, Bestprac – Specialist questioning using teleconferencing, DPI Note, Agdex 430/934, Department of Primary Industries, Brisbane.

Eight Dimensions Tool

In brief

This document outlines the Eight Dimensions Tool which can be used by Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) partners and teams to assess different opportunities to improve profit. While other tools such as Gross Margins and the Impact and Influence Tool can also be used to assess different opportunities, the Eight Dimensions Tool helps assess the opportunities not just in terms of impact on profit, but also in terms of the person or team who will be implementing the opportunity.

The Eight Dimensions

The tool uses eight dimensions to assess opportunities:

- **Benefit** - expected value from implementing the opportunity
- **Cost of not doing** - undesirable consequences if the option is not implemented
- **Ease** - how easy it will be to implement the opportunity
- **Motivation** - enthusiasm for implementing the opportunity
- **Cost** - resources (other than time) needed to implement the opportunity
- **Risk** - likelihood of undesirable consequences as a result of implementing the opportunity
- **Time** - length of time needed to implement the option.
- **Term** - length of time between implementing the opportunity and seeing the benefit

Two versions of the Eight Dimensions Tool are given - the Bar Graph Version and the Pin Wheel Version. The Bar Graph Version is good for quickly assessing whether one opportunity is a 'better' choice than other opportunities. The Pin Wheel Version is good for comparing opportunities and assessing how the chosen opportunities will need to be managed to ensure successful implementation.

When using the Eight Dimensions Tool in groups be careful not to fall into the trap of using 'average' scores to come to a rapid 'group decisions'. The thinking, insights and shared understanding stimulated by discussing broadly differing scores can be very powerful.

More detail

The steps to follow in using the Bar Graph Version of the Eight Dimensions Tool are:

1. *For each opportunity, consider each of the eight criteria and mark your scores for each in the table at the bottom of the graph (1 = low, 10 = high).*
2. *Add up the scores for the 'positive' or 'helping' dimensions and for the 'negative' or 'hindering' dimensions. Write these scores in the bottom row of the table.*
3. *Draw a bar graph to represent the 'positive' and 'negative' dimensions for each opportunity and compare these.*
4. *Consider the graph of your scores. Sometimes it will be obvious which options to implement because you have given them high scores for the positive, or helping, criteria and low scores for the negative, or hindering criteria. At other times it will be less clear.*
5. *After considering the graphs and scores select the opportunity/ies you will take forward to action. If the bar graph doesn't help you to reach a decision, you may find the pinwheel view gives you a different perspective.*
6. *If you need to explain or share your decision with others, such as other people involved in your business, it can be very useful to make a few notes against each criteria to help them understand your assessment and the assumptions you made when doing it.*

The steps to follow in using the Pin Wheel Version of the Eight Dimensions Tool are:

1. *For each opportunity, consider each of the eight criteria and mark your scores for each criteria from 1 to 10 on the 'wheel' (1 = low, 10 = high).*
2. *Join the scores for each opportunity using a different colour or style of line for each one so that you can distinguish between the different options. Include a small legend to show which type of line represents which opportunity.*
3. *Consider the shapes created by joining the scores. Sometimes it will be obvious which options are more likely to be implemented – sometimes not. After considering the shapes created and the implications of these shapes for implementation of the different opportunities, select the opportunity or opportunities you will take forward to action.*
4. *If you need to explain or share your decision with others it can be very useful to make a few notes against each criteria to help them understand your assessment and the assumptions you made when doing it.*

8 Dimensions Tool (Bar Graph Version)

Name: …………………....
Date: ……………………

Opportunity A		Opportunity B	
Scores for +ve dimensions	**Scores for -ve dimensions**	**Scores for +ve dimensions**	**Scores for -ve dimensions**
Benefit	Cost	Benefit	Cost
Cost of not doing	Risk	Cost of not doing	Risk
Ease	Time	Ease	Time
Motivation	Term	Motivation	Term
Total	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**

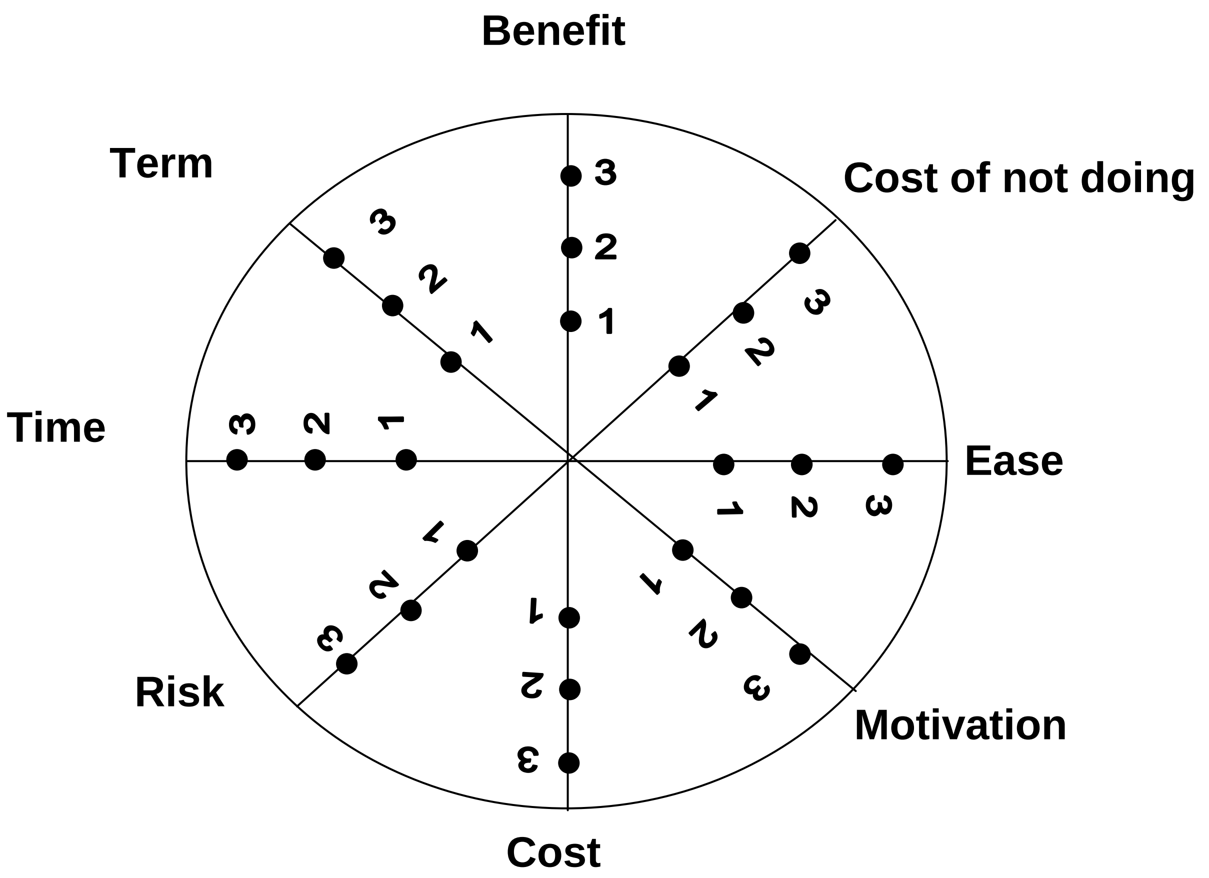
Benefit = Expected value from implementing the opportunity
Cost of not doing = Undesirable consequences if the opportunity is **not** implemented
Ease = How easy it will it be to implement the opportunity
Motivation = Enthusiasm for implementing the opportunity

Cost = Resources (other than time) needed to implement the opportunity
Risk = Likelihood of undesirable consequences as a result of implementing the opportunity
Time = Length of time needed to implement the opportunity
Term = Length of time between implementing the opportunity and seeing the benefit

(3 = high, 1 = low)

8 Dimensions Tool (Pinwheel Version)

Name: …………………....
Date: ……………………



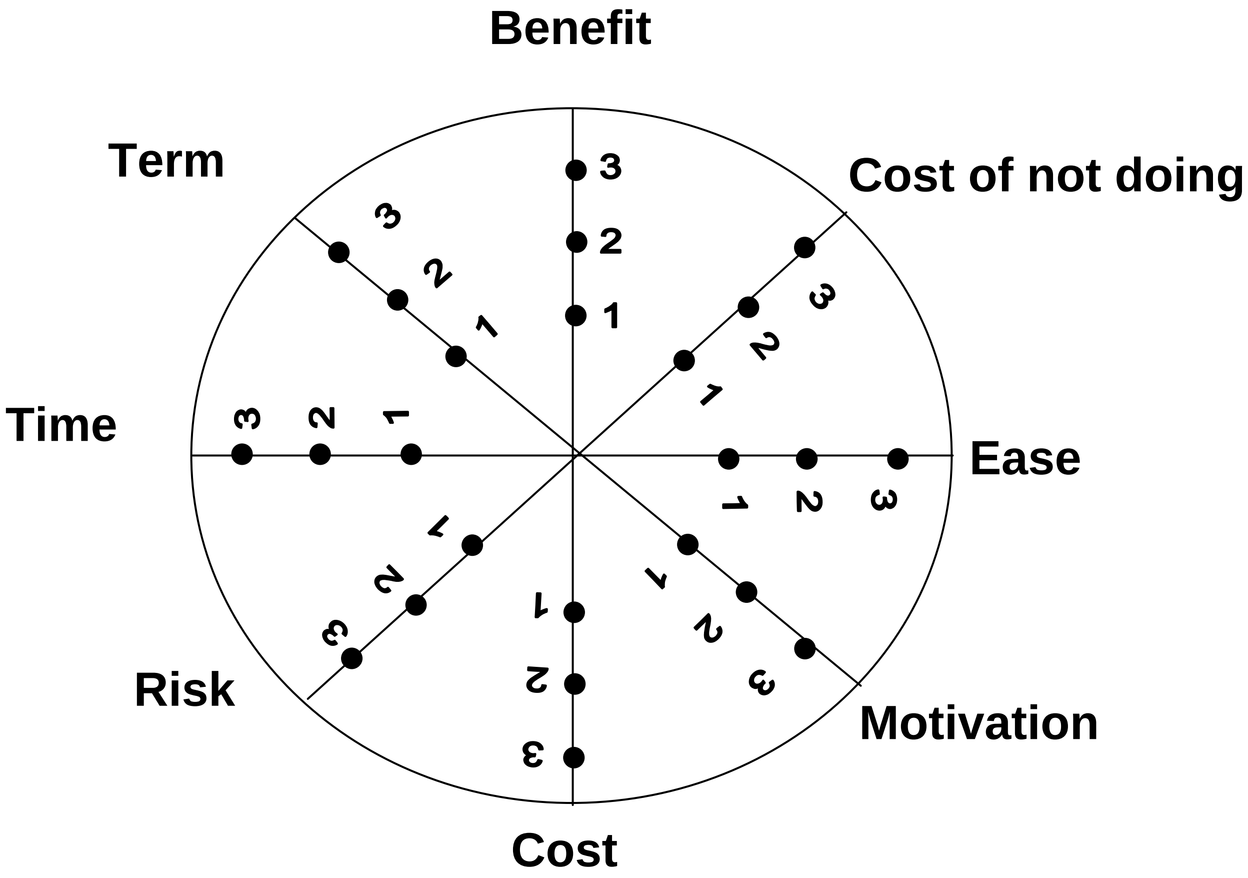
Cost = Resources (other than time) needed to implement the opportunity
Risk = Likelihood of undesirable consequences as a result of implementing the opportunity
Time = Length of time needed to implement the opportunity
Term = Length of time between implementing the opportunity and seeing the benefit

Benefit = Expected value from implementing the opportunity
Cost of not doing = Undesirable consequences if the opportunity is **not** implemented
Ease = How easy it will it be to implement the opportunity
Motivation = Enthusiasm for implementing the opportunity

(3 = high, 1 = low)

8 Dimensions Tool (Pinwheel Version)

Name: …………………....
Date: ……………………



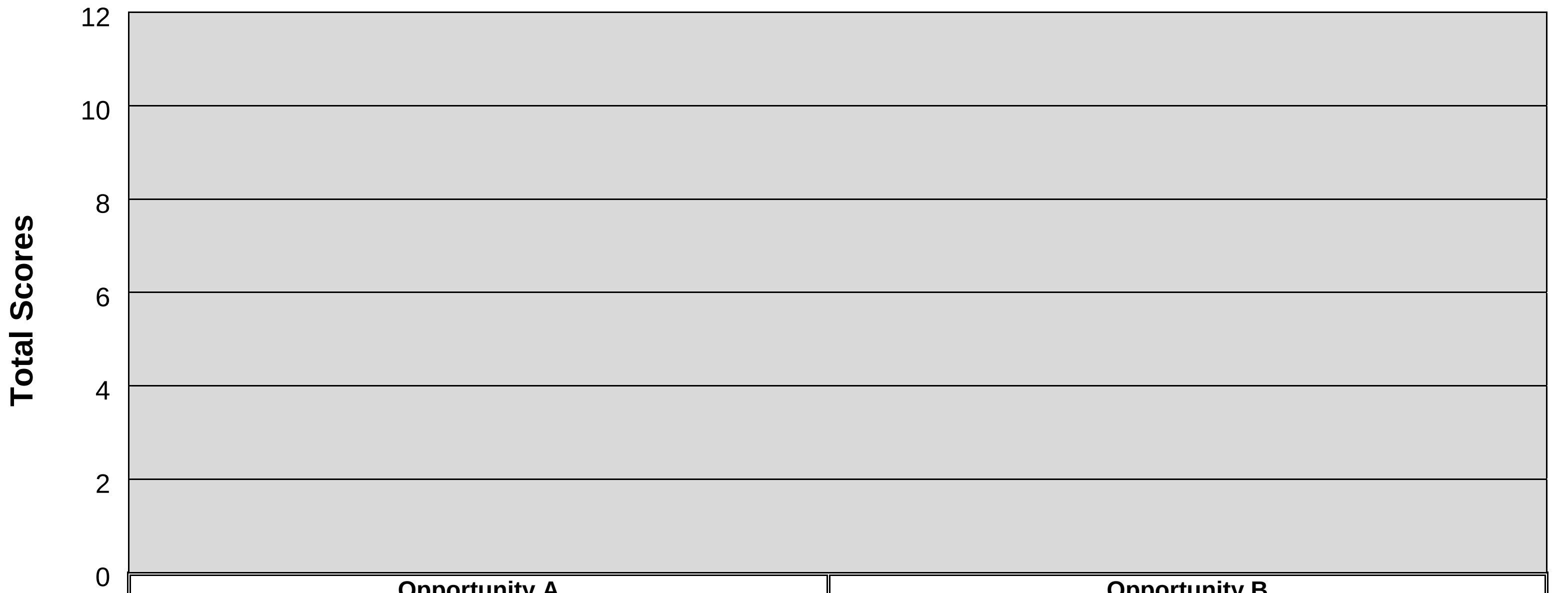
Cost = Resources (other than time) needed to implement the opportunity
Risk = Likelihood of undesirable consequences as a result of implementing the opportunity
Time = Length of time needed to implement the opportunity
Term = Length of time between implementing the opportunity and seeing the benefit

Benefit = Expected value from implementing the opportunity
Cost of not doing = Undesirable consequences if the opportunity is **not** implemented
Ease = How easy it will it be to implement the opportunity
Motivation = Enthusiasm for implementing the opportunity

(3 = high, 1 = low)

8 Dimensions Tool (Bar Graph Version)

Name: …………………...
Date: ……………………



Opportunity A		Opportunity B	
Scores for +ve dimensions	**Scores for -ve dimensions**	**Scores for +ve dimensions**	**Scores for -ve dimensions**
Benefit	Cost	Benefit	Cost
Cost of not doing	Risk	Cost of not doing	Risk
Ease	Time	Ease	Time
Motivation	Term	Motivation	Term
Total	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**

Benefit = Expected value from implementing the opportunity
Cost of not doing = Undesirable consequences if the opportunity is **not** implemented
Ease = How easy it will it be to implement the opportunity
Motivation = Enthusiasm for implementing the opportunity

Cost = Resources (other than time) needed to implement the opportunity
Risk = Likelihood of undesirable consequences as a result of implementing the opportunity
Time = Length of time needed to implement the opportunity
Term = Length of time between implementing the opportunity and seeing the benefit

(3 = high, 1 = low)

Impact and Influence Tool

In brief

This document outlines the Impact and Influence Tool which can be used by Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) partners and teams to assess different opportunities to improve profit.

This tool uses two simple criteria to assess opportunities – 'Impact' and 'Ability to Influence'. The idea behind this tool is that if the option will not have significant impact, it is probably not worth taking forward to action. Additionally, even if the option will have significant impact, if you can't do much about implementing it, then it will be difficult to realise that potential impact.

Aim to choose options that will have significant impact and which you can influence. Leave behind those lower impact options or those that you cannot influence. In some situations it is useful to make a quick assessment of opportunities for 'Impact' and another relevant criteria, such as 'cost' or 'motivation'.

On the following page is a simple grid for assessing opportunities for 'Impact' and 'Ability to Influence'. Beside the grid is a simple scoring sheet where you can record each of the opportunities you need to analyse and your scores for Impact and Influence.

The Impact and Influence Tool can be linked with an electronic spreadsheet to make scoring by a large number of people faster to record, analyse and display.

When using the Impact and Influence Tool in groups be careful not to fall into the trap of using 'average' scores to come to a rapid 'group decision' about the highest priority opportunities.

Often times it is important to see both the spread of scores as well as the average. The thinking, insights and shared understanding stimulated by discussing broadly differing scores can be very powerful.

Similarly, a large group seeing significant commonality of scores can cement commitment to the highest priority opportunities and to not taking action on lower priority ones.

More detail

The steps to follow when using the Impact and Influence Tool are:

Step 1

Write your focus in the space provided on the worksheet.

Step 2

Write the opportunities for action you have developed to achieve this focus in the space provided.

Step 3

For each opportunity, ask: "What level of impact will implementation of this opportunity have on achieving the focus?" Score the level of impact from 0 to 10 (0 = no impact, 5 = some impact, 10 = high impact) and record the scores for each opportunity in the 'Impact' column.

Step 4

For each opportunity, ask: "What is my personal ability to contribute to achieving the opportunity?" When thinking about your ability to influence you may consider such things as your current skills and knowledge, your role in the team/business and your level of influence. Score the level of influence from 0 to 10 (0 = no ability to influence, 5 = some ability to influence, 10 = high ability to influence) and record the scores for each opportunity in the 'Influence' column.

Step 5

Plot your scores for each opportunity on the graph provided. Mark the score for each opportunity with a dot or cross and write the number of the opportunity beside it. It is possible that more than one opportunity will have the same scores. If this happens, record the numbers of all the opportunities with that score beside the dot or cross.

Step 6

Consider the opportunities that fall in the top, right hand quadrant of the graph. That is, those opportunities that have scores of greater than 5 for both 'Impact' and 'Influence'. If there are a lot of opportunities in this quadrant draw another set of 'crosshairs' through 7 or 8 on the graph and consider those options that fall in this further top, right hand quadrant.

Step 7

Identify and highlight those opportunities with high scores for both 'Impact' and 'Influence'.

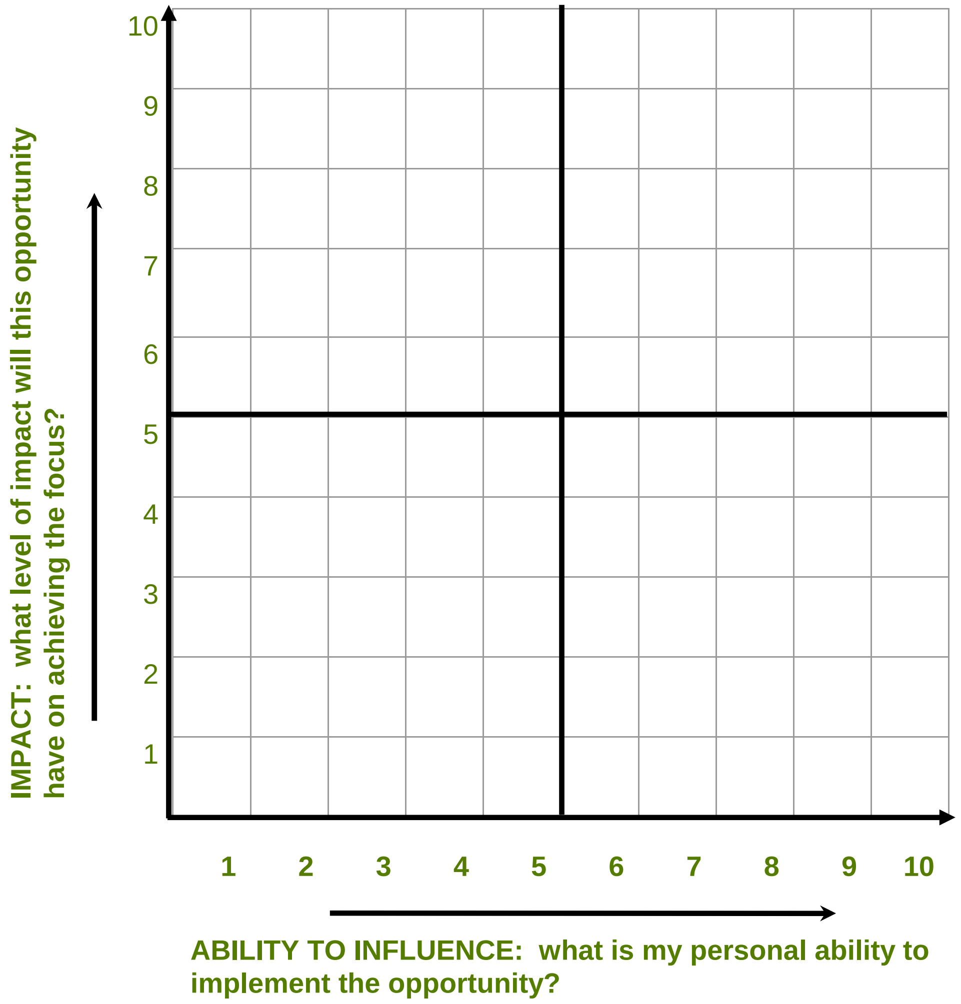
Impact and Influence Tool

Name: ………………………

Date: ………………………

Focus: ……..
……..
……..

No.	Opportunities for Action to Achieve the Focus	Impact	Influence
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

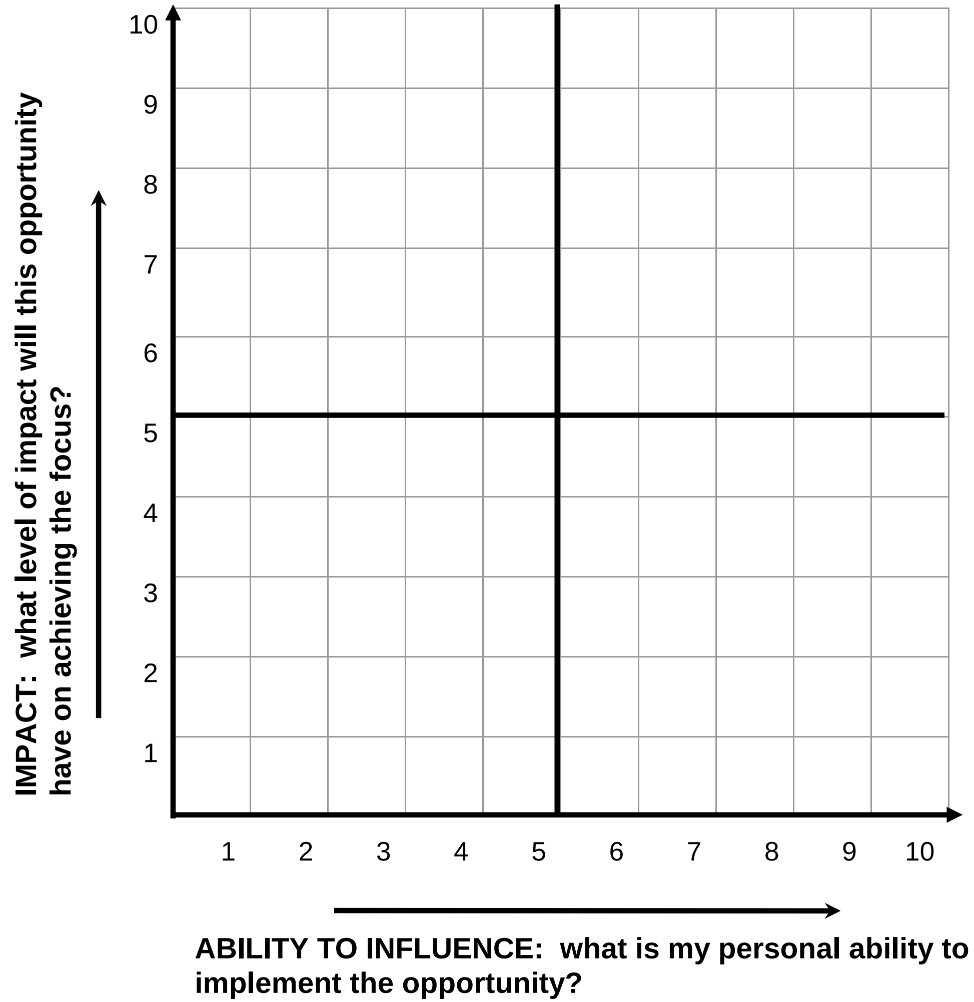


Impact and Influence Tool

Name: ……………………..
Date: ……………………..

Focus: ……..
……..
……..

No.	Opportunities for Action to achieve the Focus	Impact	Influence
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			



Action Design Framework

In brief

This document outlines a tool called an Action Design Framework which can be used in Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) to design high impact action to achieve profit improvement targets.

Note the emphasis on 'designing' action, and not just action planning. The reason action 'design' is emphasised is because if you are aiming to achieve accelerating rates of improvement in profit then you are probably going to have do things differently or do different things to what you currently do. If you want different results you need to do new thinking so that you do different things and therefore get those different results you want.

To help you to do the thinking needed in Action Design, we suggest you use the Action Design Framework. This tool helps you to do fresh thinking and to not jump to thinking about what you will '*do*' too quickly. It helps you to firstly conceive and outline what you need to achieve (your Focus). Then to think about what it is critical to have to achieve your Focus (your Critical Success Factors – CSFs), and how you will know when you have achieved your CSFs (your Key Performance Indicators – KPIs). Then you can think about the detail of what you need to do. In this way you will invest your resources and effort in only those actions that will make a real difference.

Once you are confident with your Focus, CSFs, KPIs and KPs, you can use action planning tools such as PERT diagrams, Gantt charts, timelines, budgeting tools, and roles and responsibilities statements to complete the planning part of a full Action Design.

More detail

The steps to follow when using the Action Design Framework are:

Step 1

Develop a SMARTT Focus to achieve the opportunity you have chosen to take forward to action. Use the SMARTT Focus Tool to help with this.

Step 2

Given the SMARTT Focus think about what it is critical to have to achieve the Focus. These are your Critical Success Factors (CSFs). CSFs are not what you are going to do! Do fresh, new thinking about what it is critical to have. Don't think about what you are going to do yet.

Step 3

For each of the CSFs, think about which are the best performance measures that will enable you to assess the level of achievement of the CSF. These performance measures are your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Step 4

Given your CSFs and KPIs, you can now think about what you need to do. Think about the key practices (KPs) you need to implement to achieve each CSF and hit your KPIs.

Step 5

Check the logical connections between your CSFs, KPIs and KPs, and check your confidence that if you implement the KPs you will achieve your Focus. Improve the logical connections as necessary, until you are confident that implementing your Action Design will achieve the results you need.

The Action Design Framework is shown below.

Action Design Framework

Focus: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………...

CSFs **Critical Success Factors**	**KPIs** **Key Performance Indicators**	**KPs** **Key Practices**
1.	• •	• • •
2.	• •	• • •
3.	• •	• • •
4.	• •	• • •
5.	• •	• • •
6.	• •	• • •

Action Design Framework

Name: …………………………………… Date: ………………...

Focus: ……

……

CSFs Critical Success Factors	KPIs Key Performance Indicators	KPs Key Practices
1.	•	•
2.	•	•
3.	•	•
4.	•	•
5.	•	•
6.	•	•

Performance Management Frameworks

In brief

This document outlines the Performance Management Framework tool which can be used by Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) partners and teams focused on achieving improvements in profit, and to manage BPP projects.

It is widely recognised that the measures of performance used have a strong influence on activities and results (Kaplan & Norton 1992). Measurement drives behaviour and behaviour change. Performance measurement also supports the prioritisation of actions and enables comparing and tracking of performance changes and differences (Francis 1992; Miller 1995; Schumann *et al*. 1995; Kerssens-van Drongelen & Cook 1997).

Because measurement is so valuable in enabling and achieving improvement, a simple, effective measurement system should be designed, using a holistic approach. The measures of performance must align with the purpose of the measurement (Kaplan & Norton 1992), thus the identification of Key Performance Indicators is critical. The adage 'you get what you measure' holds true (Kerssens-van Drongelen & Cook 1997).

In Beef Profit Partnerships projects, Performance Management Frameworks (PMF) can be developed and used to measure, track and manage achievement of outcomes. Importantly, they are also used to recognise and celebrate achievements, and maintain motivation and momentum.

A key aspect in using PMFs is to ensure their regular and frequent use. This means having both short and long term performance targets. The long term targets guide performance, while the shorter term targets i.e. 90-day Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) support performance tracking, motivation and momentum.

More information

Francis, PH 1992, 'Putting quality into R&D process', Research Technology Management, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 16-23.

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Kerssens-van Drongelen, IC & Cook, A 1997, 'Design principles for the development of measurement systems for research and development processes', R&D Management, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 345-357.

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Schumann, PA, Ransley, DL & Prestwood DCL 1995, 'Measuring R&D performance', Research Technology Management, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 45-54.

Smith, DK 1999, Make success measurable: a mindbook-workbook for setting goals and taking action, John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY.

Waldman, DA 1994, "Designing performance management systems for total quality implementation', Journal of Organisational Change Management, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 31-44.

An example of a performance management framework for a Beef Profit Partnerships type project is shown on the next page. This PMF shows 90-day KPIs.

Example Performance Management Framework for a BPP-type project

Sub-Projects	Target Outcome	Target Output	90-Day KPIs	Who
1. Regional Improvement & Innovation teams, networks & partnerships	Beef Improvement and Innovation Networks (BIIN) working in partnership with the BPP project to achieve 5% improvements in profit/year	Six local teams, 18 regional teams, 2 Regional Leadership & Management Teams, and specified partnerships	1. Number of teams per locality per region 2. Average number of members per team 3. Total number of members per region 4. Percentage of attendance of team members 5. Number of partners (other than current BPP teams & staff 6. Number of institutions	
2. Beef Business Improvement and Innovation	Beef Improvement & Innovation Network (BIIN) leaders, members & partners practising & achieving continuous improvement, now & in the future	All members and partners of the BIIN equipped with tools for achieving CI&I	1. No meetings /180 days 2. No of members with targets 3. No of members taking action 4. No members reporting for feedback & support 5. No of trials 6. Improvements to Gross Margins	
3. Improvement of Prices and Marketing	Beef Improvement & Innovation Network members receiving 2% higher prices/year	All BIIN members equipped with CSFs, KPs and KPIs for marketing	1. $/kg LW Average and range 2. $ /kg BM Average and range 3. No. of market types 4. $/kg costs of each market type 5. % deviation from published market price	
4. Improvement of Growth and Throughput	Beef Improvement & Innovation Network members improving average daily gain and throughput by %/year	All BIIN members equipped with CSFs, KPs and KPIs for improving average daily gain and throughput by 2%/year	1. Kg sold / cow/180 days 2. No of cows/180 days 3. Kg sold / ha/180 days	
5. Improvement of Reproduction	Beef Improvement & Innovation Network members improving reproduction performance by 2%/year	All BIIN members equipped with CSFs, KPs and KPIs for improving reproduction performance by 2%/year	1. No. of calves weaned/100 cows mated 2. % of bulls 3. Average and range of age of bulls	
6. Improvement of animal Health	Beef Improvement & Innovation Network members reducing mortality and incidence of disease by 2%	All BIIN members equipped with CSFs, KPs and KPIs for reducing mortality and incidence of disease by 2%/year	1. % deaths/180 days 2. $ spent on drugs/enterprise 3. Vaccination quality scores/enterprise	
7. Decrease in Costs	Beef Improvement & Innovation Network members reduce enterprise costs by 2%	All BIIN members equipped with CSF, KPs and KPIs for reducing enterprise costs by 2 %	1. $/kg/180 days 2. Variable costs as $/enterprise/cow	

Action Monitoring and Support Framework

The Action Design Framework can be modified for use in Action Implementation by the addition of two columns: Action Implemented; and Support Needed. Reporting on Action Implementation shouldn't be hard! Your report is meant to be a straightforward action check, giving you an opportunity to see and share your achievements, and get support. If you haven't taken action in the past 30 days, seek support to identify why not and move forward.

Focus ……….

………..

CSFs Critical Success Factors	**KPIs** Key Performance Indicators	**KAs** Key Actions	**Actions Implemented** What actions have I implemented? What affects are the actions having? Have any blocks or problems arisen?	**Support Needed** What support do I need to keep implementing my plan ?

Observations, Questions, Ideas & Opportunities (OQIO) Tool

The purpose of the Observations, Questions, Ideas and Opportunities (OQIO) tool is to enable individuals and teams to make observations, and create questions and ideas arising from action and results, and to synthesise these into new opportunities for improvement. The tool requires creative and critical thinking, therefore an appropriate environment needs to be created. The worksheet for this tool is on the next page.

Steps for using OQIO with individuals

1. Using the worksheet on the following page, write down the 'Focus'.
2. Answer the question 'What observations can I make about the Focus, the action taken and the results achieved and not achieved?' Record the Observations in the appropriate column in the framework.
3. Answer the question 'What questions can I formulate about the Focus, the action taken and the results achieved and not achieved?' Record the Questions in the appropriate column in the framework.
4. Answer the question 'What ideas can I generate about the Focus, the action taken, the results achieved and not achieved? Record the Ideas in the appropriate column in the framework.
5. Look at the Observations, Questions and Ideas and create and synthesise opportunities for improvement and innovation in the context of the Focus.
6. The assumption is that the OQIO is being used purposefully to develop opportunities for improvement, so two key questions should be considered as the last step in using the tool:
   - How will I action the opportunities?
   - Who needs to be involved in implementing them?

OQIO in a Round Robin (i.e. using OQIO in groups and networks)

1. Set up the venue for the activity by:
   - Writing down the 'Focus' so that it is visible to all participants
   - Establishing one 'station' or multiple 'stations' for each of 'Observations', 'Questions', 'Ideas' and 'Opportunities'.
   - A 'station' consists of butchers' paper stuck on a wall or easel with colour marker pens available and the item written at the top of the sheet.
   - Each 'station' needs to be far enough away from every other 'station' to make sure that people can focus on the 'station' they are visiting without distraction.
   - However, all the 'stations' need to be in the general vicinity of one another to create an atmosphere of energy and connectedness.
2. Divide the group into pairs (or threes at most) and equip each individual with a coloured marker pen.
3. Ask the pairs to stand at a 'station' marked either 'Observations', 'Questions' or 'Ideas' (not 'Opportunities' at this time). Give the pairs 2-5 minutes to think of and record 'Observations' if they are in front of an 'Observations' sheet, or ' Questions' or 'Ideas' as appropriate. After 2-5 minutes ask the pairs to move to a different 'station' and add their 'Observations' or 'Questions' or 'Ideas' to a list started by a previous pair. Reading what is already recorded will stimulate participants thinking and prevent unnecessary duplication. Participants can add comments to those contributions already on the list but may not detract from the intent of what is already written.
4. Once the pairs have recorded their 'Observations' and 'Questions' and 'Ideas' ask them to visit (in pairs) all the 'stations' to read and think about all the contributions recorded by the group. Ask pairs to then move to 'stations' labelled 'Opportunities' and ask them to synthesise (and record) opportunities for improvement and innovation.
5. Enable participants to reflect on the pool of opportunities developed and add more opportunities stimulated by this reflection.

Observations, Questions, Ideas & Opportunities (OQIO)

From: ……………………………

Focus: ……..
……..

Observations	Questions	Ideas	Opportunities

Achievement Stacker

Recognising and acknowledging achievements people have made towards individual, team, project or organisational targets or focuses is critical for motivation and success. However, often people have been so focused on implementing action they can't always see the full range of things they have achieved. Also, seeing all the individual achievements in the one place is a great way to get a sense of the collective achievements of the partnership, team, project or organisation as a whole.

In Continuous Improvement and Innovation (CI&I) we use Achievement Stackers during 180-day sessions. In these sessions people share reports on their actions and improvements, receive support, and create opportunities for further improvement. Another key aspect of 180-day sessions is celebration – celebrating the individual and collective achievements represented in the Achievement Stacker.

When first starting to use Achievement Stackers allow people to contribute whatever they have seen or heard in reports from partners that they feel has value and should be recognised as an achievement.

When people have become more familiar with the tool, you can prompt them to think of the different types of achievements in terms of whether they are:

- New or improved thinking e.g. new concepts
- New or improved tools
- New or improved practices
- New or improved processes
- New or improved technologies
- New or improved products or services
- New or improved systems or strategies
- New or improved policies
- Outputs
- Outcomes

Steps when using the Achievement Stacker

1. Equip people with cards and marker pens.
2. As they are listening to each of their colleagues share their reports about the actions they have taken and the improvements they have achieved, the list the achievements the think the person has achieved, one per card, making a note of the person's or team's name in the corner of the card.
3. After each report, or at a designated time, the achievements are affixed to a large wall space.
4. The achievements can be grouped in several different ways:
   - Similar types of achievements can be grouped together (see list of different types of achievements above),
   - Achievements can be grouped depending on the individual, work unit or project to which they relate.
   - Achievements can be grouped depending on the timeframe in which they were achieved.
5. The completed Achievement Stacker should be recorded. This can be done quickly with a camera, but the data can also prove very useful in other formats.
6. Remember, while recording the achievements is one think, recognising, acknowledging and celebrating the achievements is important for the motivation and momentum need to sustain improvement and innovation.

Inverse Thinking

Inverse Thinking involves thinking about the opposite to what you actually want and need to achieve. This tool:

- Uses the energy created by *yin and yang*
- Can be very challenging but can also be liberating
- Can enable people to break out of the paradigms that surround an issue
- Can enable creative and lateral thinking
- Can provide some amazing insights into the 'real' situation
- Can help people to break free of negativity about the current situation, and start working proactively and positively to improve the situation.

Care needs to taken when setting up for this tool. It is a serious tool, however people may think that due respect is not being given to the issue at hand when it is expressed in the opposite. No disrespect is intended, and this point needs to be emphasised.

People also need to be forewarned that it may become apparent through using Inverse Thinking, that even with all the best intentions, some of the things that are happening in the current situation, are in fact the exact opposite of what is needed to achieve the outcomes that are desired. Again, it needs to be emphasised that no disrespect is intended – this just happens to be one of the advantages and challenges of using Inverse Thinking.

Steps for using Inverse Thinking

1. Decide on a relevant focus for the session and then make it into the 'inverse focus' i.e. a focus that is worded such that it means never achieving the result you actually need to achieve or the opposite of the result you actually need to achieve. For example, if your focus was to reduce the number of road accidents in a geographic location, the focus you would use for the Inverse Thinking session would be: "To increase the number and severity of road accidents in the region."
2. Ask people to think of ideas that would help to achieve the focus (remind them it is ideas to achieve the 'inverse focus'), and get them to write their ideas down.
3. Go around the room getting one idea from each person and record them on a whiteboard or paper for everyone to see. Do not allow discussions about the ideas offered, however do allow points of clarification. Go round the room once.
4. Gather all remaining ideas, and allow 'build-on' and 'spin-off' ideas.
5. Once all the ideas have been gathered, ask the participants if they can see 'categories' of ideas that seem to go together. Do not group all ideas under these categories. The idea is more to get to critical factors that the categories are indicating.
6. Record this smaller number of critical factors which will still be expressed as critical factors to ensure the 'inverse focus' is achieved.
7. Now is the time to turn the focus around again. Express it in terms of what actually needs to be achieved, and then look at the critical factors that were developed. Some of these factors will turn out to be possible "critical failure factors" that need to be removed from the current situation or avoided in any future situation. Others, when turned around, will indicate possible "critical success factors" that will need to be built into or strengthened in the current situation.
8. Record the thinking generated during the Inverse Thinking session, and don't forget to make use of it.

Six Thinking Hats Tool

In brief

This document outlines Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats (de Bono 2000) which can be used by Beef Profit Partnerships (BPP) partners and teams focused on achieving accelerating rates of improvement in profit. As described below, the tool can be used with as few as four people, or with as many as 30 people as long as the venue is adequate.

Purpose of Six Thinking Hats

- To introduce people to the concept of using different modes of thinking and "parallel thinking".
- To enable people to use six different types of thinking to capture and make sense of what they have experienced while taking focused action to achieve accelerating rates of improvement in profit in their businesses.
- To enable people to share their thinking in a stimulating, brisk and disciplined way.

Set up for the session (for more than 6 people)

- Set up areas with tables and chairs that will enable 3 to 5 people to work closely together and to focus on one member of the group writing on a pad.
- Set the areas up with enough space between groups to allow each group to fully concentrate on their own thinking without being unduly disturbed by the other groups. However, it is important to set all the areas up in the one vicinity because the groups will be sharing their thinking. This also helps to create a sense of energy and interest.
- At each area place a writing pad and 2 pens.
- Ask participants to break into groups of 3 to 5 people and to move to the set up areas.
- Ask one participant to act as "scribe/writer" for the group.
- Make sure the descriptions of the different hats are clearly visible to everyone. It is helpful to have the descriptions on pre-prepared slides and at least one copy for each group.

More detail

Especially with people who haven't used the Six Thinking Hats before, it can be very worthwhile to conduct a short "warm-up" exercise. An example warm-up is shown below.

Warm-up Exercise – Spending 6 Months in Hospital

"Our warm-up focus is: spending six months in hospital. I'd like you all to put your Black Hat on and do Black Hat thinking about spending six months in hospital."

"Black Hat thinking is about the logical negatives - what could go wrong – the risks and dangers. Let's do some Black Hat thinking about spending six months in hospital. We have 3 minutes for Black Hat thinking. Scribes please write down everyone's contributions."

During the 3 minutes regularly but subtly repeat the key points of black hat thinking placing most emphasis on logical negatives, and reminding people of the focus. Give people a time warning with one minute to go.

After 3 minutes ask everyone to stop. Then quickly move around the groups asking for one Black Hat contribution from each group. Do this for 2 to 3 rounds so that everyone gets the idea of Black Hat thinking.

Congratulate people on their Black Hat thinking and move on. "Now I want you to take off your Black Hats and put on the Yellow Hat. The Yellow Hat is very different to the Black Hat. It is about logical positives; being optimistic; and constructive. So Yellow Hats on! Three minutes to think about and record some of the logical positives about spending six months in hospital?"

After 3 minutes ask everyone to stop. Then quickly move around the groups asking for one Yellow Hat contribution from each group. Do this for 2 to 3 rounds so that everyone gets the idea of Yellow Hat thinking.

Congratulate people on their Yellow Hat thinking and move on to the last hat in the warm-up exercise. "Now I want you to take off your Yellow Hat and put on the Green Hat. The Green Hat is about creative thinking. Go beyond the obvious and the familiar. Be provocative. Pose searching questions. Strive to think of new ideas. Think outside the square. So Green Hats on! Three minutes to think about and record some Green Hat thinking about spending six months in hospital."

After 3 minutes ask everyone to stop. Then quickly move around the groups asking for one Green Hat contribution from each group. Do this for 2 to 3 rounds so that everyone gets the idea of Green Hat thinking. Congratulate people on their Green Hat thinking and check to see that everyone has got the idea about using different hats.

The introduction to the Six Thinking Hats tool can be supported by a pre-prepared slide presentation. However whether or not a slide presentation is used the following aspects should be covered (wording in inverted commas is suggested only):

- "We will be using Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats tool to help us to think about what we've experienced and achieved, and to think about opportunities for further accelerating rates of improvement in profit."
- "The Six Thinking Hats tool helps us to use six different modes of thinking, and to think in parallel. That is, we all use the same mode of thinking at the same time, and we also get the chance to use each mode."
- "We'll move through the hats quite quickly spending no more than 3 minutes per hat."
- "We'll also be using the hats in a particular sequence that has been specifically designed to support thinking about achieving accelerating rates of improvement in profit".

When everything is set and people have gone through the warm-up exercise on the previous page you are ready for the "serious" focus. Use the steps on the right to conduct the session.

References

de Bono, E 2000, *Six thinking hats*, Penguin, London.

Steps When Using All Six Thinking Hats

Conducted similarly to "warm-up" but with the following differences:

- *Order of hats: Black, Yellow, White, Red, Green, Blue*
- *Rotate around the groups until every contribution has been heard*
- *Remember to keep referring to the Focus*
- *Give more time and emphasis to doing the Green and Blue Hats well.*

The set up for the White, Red and Blue Hats are given below:

***White Hat** – Imitate a computer. What are the facts. Be neutral and objective. If people are having trouble with White Hat thinking give an example. Preferably, listen to the thinking being done in the groups and offer a good example you have heard coming from one of the groups.*

***Red Hat** – Feelings, hunches and intuition. "This is how I feel". There is no need to justify Red Hat thinking. Make sure that people realise that this hat covers the whole range of feelings. You may be hearing a lot of positive feelings come out, or a lot of negative feelings. Assure people that it is possible to have a combination of feelings, like "excited but uncertain".*

***Blue Hat** – The Blue Hat "synthesises" the thinking done in the other hats. It is responsible for overviews, summaries, conclusions. Ensure people have the thinking from the other Hats visible so they can draw on this for their Blue Hat thinking. Encourage people to word their Blue Hat thinking as "opportunities" for improvement and innovation.*

Congratulate people on their participation and thinking and highlight how many contributions have been possible in less than 40 minutes. Collect copies of the thinking generated by each group and assure people the thinking will be included in the outputs of the session.