

Steps in developing the Assessment Action Plan

Once the survey data has been entered into the website, you will be able to access your church's specific survey reports. You will notice three main categories, called "sections," with each "section" having five subcategories, called "units."

Both the sections and units have a score; the score for the sections are the sum of their units. The section with the lowest score is called the "low section," and the section with the highest score is called the "high section." Likewise, the unit with the lowest score is called the "low unit," and the unit with the highest score is called the "high unit."

It is now the work of the Outreach Leadership Team to develop the church's assessment action plan, which will help strengthen the weakest assessed units in each section. The plan needs to have measurable and realistic goals, a definite timetable, as well as any costs associated with its implementation.

After the Outreach Leadership Team has considered the reports and identified the church's weak areas, it can download additional resources on those areas from the Empowered Church website. If you have questions relating to your survey results, you can also post them on the website forum where other churches can offer suggestions and ideas. There are three steps involved in developing the church's assessment action plan.

Step One: Analyze

After the assessment survey results have been analyzed and the lowest units within each section have been identified, the members of the Outreach Leadership Team should determine why those particular units have scored low.

Begin with the section that has scored the lowest and go through all the steps until an action plan has been created for that particular section, then repeat the process for the other two sections.

This can best be done by distributing sticky notes to the members of the Outreach Leadership Team. Each member then writes down possible reasons (one reason per sticky note) for the two lowest scoring units in each section. The sticky notes are then placed on a white board and then arranged into categories based on the reasons listed. The team should then arrange these categories in order of importance.

Step Two: Strategize

This step involves determining possible solutions to strengthen the church's low-scoring areas.

After the “sticky notes” for the low-scoring units have been categorized and have been listed in order of importance, the members of the Outreach Leadership Team should then write down possible solutions on different sticky notes and place them under each relevant category. If there are many categories listed, focus only on the top three to five categories.

The team then discusses the listed solutions and chooses those which are the most viable and feasible in each category.

When choosing solutions to implement, it is important to consider the impact they will have on the church as a whole. Don’t make too many big changes at the same time, as this can destabilize the church and generate resistance to the goals. Inform the members of changes before they take place and explain the benefits of these changes. This will prepare the church and help generate support.

Step Three: Organize

This third step is organizing those chosen solutions into a practical plan that will guide the church through the implementation process. This is called the assessment action plan, and it needs to contain the necessary changes, measurable goals, and a timetable.

Begin your action plan by writing down the necessary changes that need to be made, as well as what you hope those changes will accomplish. Organize these changes in order of importance, beginning with the most important.

You then need to set dates for when the changes need to be implemented and write them down, as well as the names of those who will be responsible for ensuring that these changes take place. Include in the action plan any costs associated with its implementation. If possible, make all of the necessary changes within the next 12 months so that when the next survey is conducted, your church will be able to see how it has improved.

Once you have created an action plan for the section that has scored the lowest, repeat the process and create a plan for the other two sections. When all three action plans have been developed, present these plans to the church elders and board for any needed adjustments and final approval.

A summary of the approved assessment action plan also needs to be presented to the church. It is very important that the Outreach Leadership Team keep the church updated and informed of the implementation of the action plan. Regular bulletin announcements and short comments before the worship service from time to time will help to keep the church engaged and involved.

The Outreach Leadership Team needs to work closely with the church board and congregation in implementing the action plan. For the most part, the implementation will take several months. Even though the Empowered Church program will continue with the next module, the Outreach Leadership Team must ensure that the action plan continues until it is fully implemented.

We also advise that the action plan be implemented in stages. Little changes are easier to organize and are more readily accepted than sudden big changes. Remember, keeping the church informed and updated will go a long way to secure their involvement and support.

The following are the three main sections and the units that fall under each of them.

Evangelism Readiness (section)

- Evangelistic activity and the results (unit)
- Community seminars and events offered by the church (unit)
- Bible studies conducted by the members (unit)
- Evangelism training for members (unit)
- Number of positive contacts church has in the community (unit)

Visitor receptiveness (section)

- Visitor attendance (units)
- Visitor training for members (unit)
- Visitor awareness during the services of the church (unit)
- Number of members inviting friends to church (unit)
- Church visitor follow-up program (unit)

Ministry effectiveness (section)

- Sabbath school (unit)
- Worship service (unit)
- Pray meetings (unit)
- Church socials (unit)
- Discipleship of believers (unit)