# OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

The eight stages you need to know in order to manage operations within your organisation effectively.

Managing your operations is important to ensure that you are carrying out the right activities, with sufficient resources and at the right time to achieve your objectives.

Operations management focuses on how you combine resources and activities to produce outputs and outcomes, which you can then monitor and evaluate by comparing them with the performance indicators you have set. Through making these comparisons you can see which aspects of your operations work well and which need to change.

Sound operations management provides reassurance to funders, staff, volunteers and everyone else with an interest in your organisation that you are working effectively.

The eight stages to managing operations are shown below. It can also be useful to view operations management as an input/output diagram.

## 1. Develop clear objectives and measures of performance

Setting objectives is a prerequisite of managing operations. As you develop the organisation's objectives, consider how you will measure your success and develop appropriate performance indicators.

## 2. Map the activities necessary to achieve objectives

Having set your direction, map the activities which you need to undertake to achieve your objectives. If you need to undertake a range of activities, check that they are all contributing to your objectives. If not, consider changes or stopping them altogether.

## 3. Identify the resources required

With a clear picture of what the organisation should be doing, you can identify the resources (time, money and skills) required. For each activity, list the resources needed, including things such as finance, venues, equipment, skills and time (see the financial management and you and your team sections for more information).

## 4. Define responsibility for each activity

Whilst managing the operations of your organisation requires one person to be responsible for monitoring and co-ordinating the entire process, you also need to have named individuals responsible for each activity. These individuals will ensure that their activity is completed on time and to the agreed standard.

## 5. Sequence the activities

Think about the order in which activities need to happen:

- are there some things which have to come before others?
- are there some activities which can be happening at the same time?

Having taken an overall view of the sequence of activities, you can plan how you will manage busy or quiet times.

A [Gantt chart](#) is a useful tool for sequencing activities.

## 6. Implement and manage the overall operation

Operations management requires one person to hold overall responsibility for the entire process, ensuring that activities are implemented and keeping to deadlines and that there is communication and co-ordination across them all.

## 7. Evaluate progress against the objectives

At different stages in the process and at the end you will want to check if you have achieved your objectives. Find out more about [monitoring and evaluation](#).

## 8. Learning from evaluation

It is likely that your evaluation will highlight areas where improvements could be made and changes need to be implemented. Use this information to adjust your work and develop a cycle of learning.

## Providing evidence of your achievements

Throughout all the stages of managing and evaluating operations, keep records of meetings, plans and reports. Also keep evidence of performance indicators, monitoring information, and evaluations as well as changes you have made as a result of

evaluations. This will help everyone look back and understand what decisions were made and why.

It will also be important if you are applying for funding, or if your organisation is looking to use [PQASSO](#) or other quality assurance systems.

## Useful links

- [Volresource](#) contains free briefings, guidance and information on all aspects of charity management.
- [Charities Evaluation Services](#) has free guidance on monitoring and evaluation.