



## TIPS

### Mentee Tip of the Month

Track your time for one week to see how you spend it.

### Mentor Tip of the Month

Offer suggestions on ways to evaluate the effectiveness of action plans.

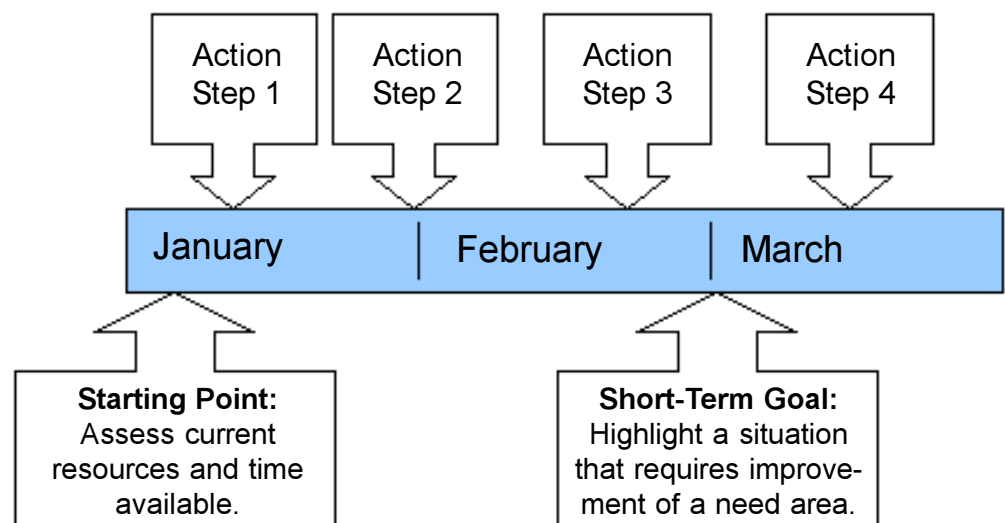
## CREATING PRACTICAL ACTION PLANS

### A 4-step guideline for success.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of mentoring relationships, specific goals and action plans are needed. Last month, we looked at writing effective goals, the basis for which action can then be taken. This month, we concentrate on forming action plans so that goals can be implemented and achieved.

The action planning process moves from general need descriptions to specific time-bound action steps. It also begins with an end result in mind and moves backward to the construction of specific steps to achieve that result.

### Action Planning Process





## CREATING PRACTICAL ACTION PLANS (continued)

### Action Plan Guidelines and Example

1. In general, it is best to focus on only one or two critical issues at a time in mentoring relationships. Quality work on a few critical areas will produce more lasting results than limited work on numerous areas.
2. Select a particular learning need or goal area.  
**Example:** Improve communication.
3. Identify one key result or outcome that would have the most impact on your effectiveness.  
**Example:** Improving my verbal and visual presentation skills.
4. Identify possible activities or projects that fall within time and resource boundaries, and draft a short-term action plan.  
**Example:** If my next critical presentation falls on March 1, a short-term action plan might be:
  - a. *Step 1:* I will study "Effective Presentation Basics" by 1/1.
  - b. *Step 2:* I will implement what I have read when preparing an outline and slides for my next presentation by 2/1.
  - c. *Step 3:* I will meet with my mentor, practice the presentation, and get her feedback by 2/15.
  - d. *Short-Term Goal:* I will revise my presentation based on my mentor's feedback and give the presentation on 3/1 based on what I have learned so far.
  - e. *Step 4:* I will meet with my mentor on 3/15 to debrief and formulate the next action plan.



## CREATING PRACTICAL ACTION PLANS (continued)

Consider these questions when setting goals and short-term action plans:

- What do you hope to achieve within the next 12 months?
- How can you get paid for doing what you love?
- What are your current skill and experience bases?
- What have you done previously to develop yourself?
- How does this development area tie into your job description, strategic initiatives or personal development plan?
- What are some potential benefits of developing yourself in this area?
- Where does this development area fit into your priorities?
- To whom else might your development be important (e.g., your team, department, customers, stakeholders, organization, family)?
- What other areas of your work would be impacted if you were to improve your skills in this area?

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# MASTERFUL MENTORING



Triple Creek's Mentoring Newsletter

October 2004

Creators of Open Mentoring®

## CREATING PRACTICAL ACTION PLANS (continued)

- What resources, people or otherwise, do you have access to that could help you in this development area (e.g., for frequent feedback or encouragement)?
- If you were to break this area down into skills and knowledge, what would be some of the most important aspects of what you want to learn?
- What level of skill do you need in this area (e.g., familiarity, passing a certification, recognition as an exemplary performer, ability to train others)?

(See the September issue of *Masterful Mentoring* for more on goal setting.)

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