

Step 2: Plan and Organize

HANDOUT: Turning Information Into Action

Groups often spend a lot of time planning – or meeting to plan – without any results. Sometimes, destinations jump into implementation without careful analysis of what the activity will accomplish and for whom. Other places hire consultants to plan for them, only to find out there is little money left for implementing recommendations.

Appropriate planning and organization is essential to any cultural heritage tourism program. This step provides the foundation for keeping on track and measuring success. It also outlines roles and responsibilities, necessary funding and the timetable to accomplish specific tasks. Without planning, an organization or project flounders like a ship without a rudder. It loses purpose, motivation and eventually commitment by its members or audience.

Planning is simply the act or process of making or carrying out plans, specifically the establishment of goals, policies and procedures. The planning process should result in a document that provides guidance and direction, not something that sits on a shelf and collects dust. A plan must articulate the specific steps to accomplish measurable goals and objectives, outline the budget and allocation of funds, identify individuals or groups responsible for each project and a calendar of benchmarks.

Definitions for Consistent Use and Reference:

MISSION – *Why* the organization – or project – exists. A short statement of purpose.

VISION – ideal future image of an organization, project or resource to work toward

GOAL – *What* the organization/project hopes to accomplish

OBJECTIVE – *How* the organization/project intends to accomplish goals.

ACTION STEPS - Specific action steps to accomplish the strategies for each objective, including budget and identification of person/organization responsible

BENCHMARK – the dates to complete major objectives and goals.



Top 10 Do's and Don'ts for Planning:

1. **Do** set a time frame – 3, 5, or 10 years – to accomplish results.
2. **Do** use common language in planning: make sure everyone's using the same definition for goal, objective, action steps.
3. **Do** research in advance. Understand where you are today to know what it will take to reach tomorrow's goals.
4. **Do** be realistic in what can be accomplished, both with existing and proposed human and financial resources.
5. **Don't** limit creativity.
6. **Don't** spend all your resources on planning; make sure you can implement the plan.
7. **Do** create some quick successes to accomplish to keep people energized and motivated.
8. **Do** applaud successes publicly.
9. **Do** learn from failures or disappointments.
10. **Do** be sure to measure, measure, measure.

