



PLANNING FROM OUTCOMES BACKWARD

Purpose

To clarify the end outcome I want so I create a game plan to accomplish it in the most focused and effective way possible.

Why Bother?

In business as usual, we typically plan for projects, create goals and organize our meetings based on the tasks we want to “get done” or topics we want to discuss. We focus our energy and attention on the minute details rather than the big picture. We create strategies and actions before we’re clear about the end game we want to achieve.

The cost of this approach is that it can seem like we’re busy accomplishing things or covering a lot of topics. However, it’s likely we are spinning our wheels rather than taking action that gets us to the results we really want. We waste our time, other’s time and find ourselves dissatisfied with the productivity of our projects and the value of our meetings.

Whether it’s the beginning of a meeting, strategic planning or setting goals, if we begin with our desired outcome, we focus on what we really want. We clarify what we’ll “have” by the end of the initiative or meeting. This fuels our emotional engagement and focuses us on creating strategies that will most effectively get us there.

How To Use

- **For a project:** The simplest place to begin is to imagine yourself at the end, successful and satisfied with the result. Ask, “What do we have now that this is complete?”
- **For a meeting:** Open an meeting by sharing the end result you want to have when the meeting is finished. For example, “By the end of this meeting we will each have: More confidence in X product, Alignment on a decision about X initiative and Next actions for getting on the ground with X topic.”

TIPS

- When you or your team is stuck spinning its wheels, ask, “What is the outcome we want from this conversation/meeting?”
- Use the outcome as a compass - check in with it on the journey (as you’re conducting a meeting and working towards goals).
- Use the sentence starter, “By the end of ____, we will have ____.”

WHEN TO USE

- When planning a meeting.
- When setting goals.
- When planning for and opening a conversation.



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Example: Meeting Outcomes & Agenda

Outcomes:

By the end of our meeting, our group will have:

- A decision about X project
- Better understanding of X product so we are more confident to coach our sales teams
- At least 3 next actions for getting on the ground with X product in dealerships
- An experience of teamwork as a result of using Courageous Conversation skills

Agenda:

1. Set Intent & Content of the Meeting
 - Review Outcomes
 - Reminder: Use our Breakthrough Conversation Skills for maximum effectiveness and teamwork
2. Red Dot
3. X Project: Making a clear decision for a go/no go
 - Discussion of current reality
 - Explore what's possible if we do move forward
 - Face the impact if we don't move forward
 - Yes, No, Yes with Considerations
4. X Product
 - Report from X (person) on the pro's/con's of X product
 - Clarifying questions & answers
 - Recommendations for use of product in dealerships
 - Next Actions (note who, what, by when)
5. Complete the Meeting
 - Review of Next Actions and/or Clear Agreements
 - Appreciation
6. Red Dot

Example: Project Goal

Outcome: By end of year, our employees are trained on our new customer service software. (75% of our employees will pass the proficiency exam.)

Strategies: Create a communication plan for buy-in, an incentive program for perfect test scores and a peer-mentoring program.