



How to Prioritise Actions

Your town team's up and running. You've got a list of skills and resources. You're insured. You've done a SWOT analysis of your area and people are brimming with fabulous ideas. In fact, you've got so many exciting projects on your to-do list that the main trouble is knowing where to start!

If you had the Sultan of Brunei's credit card, and could bend time like Dr Who, you could probably do everything you wanted. But normal people don't have access to all these "time/money" riches. The only solution is to prioritise those actions and projects.

A golden rule here is to look for the actions that will give you the biggest return on your investment. The stuff that's easy (and cheap, possibly) to do AND likely to have a positive impact is the stuff you should do first.

Many ideas will come from people or businesses who are not actively involved and who are not likely to get involved. If you need to start culling ideas, then this is a good place to start. Unless these ideas are very strongly supported by the group, these suggestions should be lower down the priority list.

Sorting your actions out along these lines isn't as hard as it sounds. Try grouping them into a simple matrix like this one below.

Project Matrix

| | Easier to Do | Harder to Do |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Lower Impact | | |
| Higher Impact | First Priority | |

You and your team will have to work out what's "easy to do" (or hard to do) and what might have a "high impact" (or low impact) as it will depend on many factors.

Here's how your matrix might look after a 10 minute pow-wow.

Example Matrix

| | Easier to Do | Harder to Do |
|--------------|---|---|
| Lower Impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a community BBQ, street party, Sundowner, picnic or social event • Write a Facebook post, blog article or newspaper article to get the word out | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try and tackle traffic and parking problems |

| | Easier to Do | Harder to Do |
|---------------|--|--|
| Higher Impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make contact with your local government and councillors to let them know about your team and ask them to collaborate with you • Approach local leaders, businesses and residents and ask them to support or get involved with your team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create markets or a festival • Set up a community garden • Prepare an Action Plan for your team. If you can work with your local government, also involve them and identify what actions they could do to improve your place |

Focus on what you can do, not on what you can't do

There's a whole heap of stuff you shouldn't trouble yourselves with. No, really!

Town teams won't be building new railway lines anytime soon, for example, no matter how good they'd be for a given area! A town team can only do so much. Take on the wrong project and you'll burn out faster than one of those ghastly birthday sparklers you see at kids' parties.

We've learned the hard way just to focus on the things you can do. Use your matrix to make a list of the "easier to do" actions. They can be "higher impact" or "lower impact". Then forget about the other actions for now.

With this list of "easier to do" actions, you're now well placed to get some quick wins under your belt. Quick wins are the secret sauce of victorious town teams. They build trust and confidence within your team. They show traders, locals and even politicians that you're an organisation who "gets after it." Rack up as many as you can!

It's perfectly fine to start with some "easier to do, lower impact" actions when you're at this stage.

Just start on something

Like we said, quick wins are the magic formula. There isn't heaps to it. Just get cracking!

It's better to just have a go. Start small if that's easier. But just start. Have a social BBQ, or a street party, or a social event, or a working bee. You might be surprised with who turns up ... maybe the Sultan of Brunei will bring his credit card!