

ITIL® Poster Series #6

Plan, Do, Check, Act

One of the many approaches available to us in improvement activities is the use of the Deming Cycle. W. Edwards Deming is best known for his management philosophy, leading to higher quality, increased productivity, and a more competitive position for the organization. By utilizing the elements of his approach that are applicable for service management, we have the Plan Do Check Act steps that make up the 'Deming Cycle'.

The cycle is now commonly referred to as the PDCA cycle. Let's briefly examine each step.

Plan

Plan what we are going to do.
Identify some potential solutions.

Do

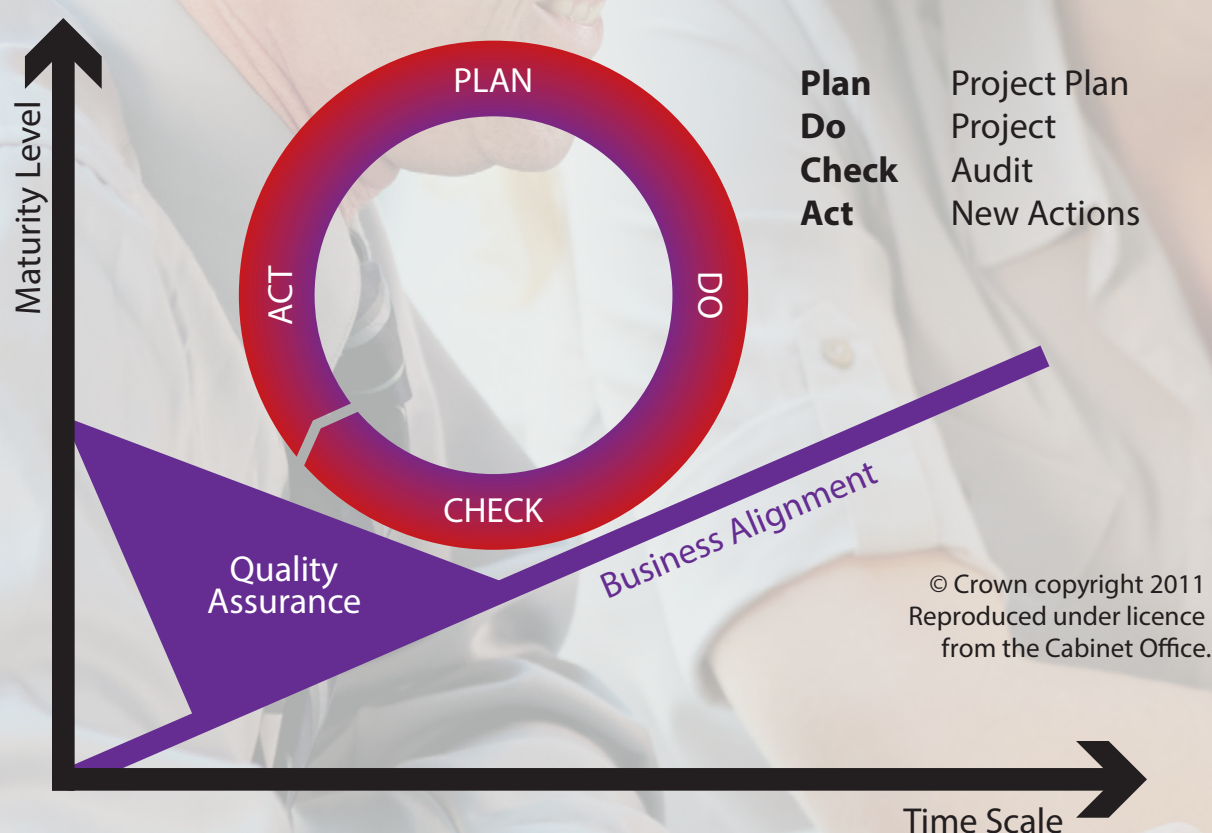
Do try out or test the solutions.

Check

Check to see if you got the effect you hoped for, and no negative consequences.

Act

Act on what you have learned.
Put controls into place so that the issue never comes back again.



Following this comes the Check on the activity that has been carried out. In terms of ongoing improvement this step and the following step Act are used to monitor, measure, review and implement initiatives. At the conclusion of the cycle, there is a consolidation effort, which, as you can see in the diagram, prevents the circle "rolling back down the slope", with improvement initiatives being allowed to lapse. The effort of reaching a target may be considerable, but often the effort required to maintain the achievement is just as great. The PDCA cycle allows you to manage this effectively.

In the plan stage, we are doing exactly that, planning the activity for our improvement. The PDCA cycle is complimentary to the CSI approach and the seven-step improvement process. We will explore the seven-step process later on in this section.

In the remaining stages of the PDCA cycle, we carry out the activity as defined and agreed in the plan. In this, the Do step of the process, it will be important to capture the activity and make updates to the CSI register.

The cycle is underpinned by a process-led approach to its management. This means that defined processes are in place, and the activities are measured for compliance to agreed values, and the outputs are audited to identify improvements.

