

After Action Review (AAR)



WHAT IS IT?

An After Action Review (AAR) is a semi-structured, post-job discussion that can help teams extract practical lessons learned from nearly any hands-on experience. They've been in use for 40+ years.

DOES IT WORK?

"The Army's After Action Review (AAR) is arguably one of the most successful organizational learning methods yet devised. Yet, most every corporate effort to graft this truly innovative practice into their culture has failed because, again and again, people reduce the living practice of AAR's to a sterile technique."

*~ Peter Senge, Author of The Fifth Discipline:
The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*

HOW TO USE IT?

As soon as practical after the job is done and the worksite is safe, gather everyone where there are the fewest distractions, then discuss these four questions.



- 1) What did we set out to do in this job?
- 2) What actually happened in this job?
- 3) How did the job happen this way?
- 4) What will we do differently next time?

DON'TS

- Don't skip Qs 1 and 2. Get facts first.
- Don't lecture, preach, speak for the group, blame individuals, use the words "fault," "failure" or "blame," or allow others to do any of the above.
- Don't try to boil the ocean by "trying" to implement every idea from every AAR.



Dos

- Do spend about 80% of your time on the last two questions, (Qs 3 & 4).
- Do let your team do 80%+ of the talking.
- Do AARs immediately after jobs while non-verbal memories are still fresh.
- Do expect your first few AARs to be rough. Like any complex skill, this takes practice. It may take 3-5 AARs to see real results.



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