Logic Model

Learn how to clearly define and articulate how your venture will use its resources to make an impact (also known as your theory of change).

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Quick Overview

The logic model defines a plan that is consistent, chronological, linear and important. It answers the following questions:

1. Inputs: What resources do you need in order to do your work?
2. Activities: What are the key activities that will drive your impact?
3. Outputs: What would you measure to evaluate your impact?
4. Outcomes: How do you hope conditions will change over time as a result of the work?
5. Impact: What key change is this work driving towards?

What is this tool exactly?

The logic model, theory of change, or intended impact model is used by social impact leaders internally to increase the effectiveness of their work, and externally to increase their accountability to stakeholders outside the organization. The logic model makes a set of claims about how the project will do its work that are consistent, chronological, linear, and important. The logic model does that by describing, on one page moving from left to right, a venture or project's inputs, key activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. This tool is a great basis for an annual report, funding proposal, or idea pitch.

Who should be involved?

Use this framework internally as a basis for project effectiveness. Members of the venture responsible for setting the organizational agenda, and assessing its mission-alignment, should drive this effort. Include those responsible for evaluating your efforts to ensure that you measure what matters. To stay accountable to your plans, share your vision with a broad set of stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, and donors.

How long should it take to complete?

If you are using this tool on your own, it may take you 20 minutes. If you are using it to assess or develop a strategic plan, it could take a few hours to a few weeks.

Where can I learn more?

1. In "The Power of Theories of Change," Paul Brest shares a developmental approach to creating and evaluating theories of change. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Spring 2010.
2. In "Six Theory of Change Pitfalls to Avoid," Matthew Forti offers great ideas to get started, and to maximize the usefulness of this tool. Stanford Social Innovation Review. 2012.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
All organizations require staff, equipment, funds, space, institutional partners. Use the first column to convey the comprehensive needs and something specific about the venture: What skills, behaviors, beliefs, or motivations must staff have? What is special equipment or space is needed?	*Each item should begin with a verb and be a main driver of the project's social impact or financial sustainability.*	*Each item should be a unit count, something you would measure. The Outputs section aligns closely with a performance scorecard, which is a great place to actually fill in the numbers and show how the venture is doing.*	*Each item represents changes in conditions that stem from the outputs and activities. One way to signal this to the reader is by beginning outcome statements with words like "Increasing," "Improving," and "Decreasing."*	*Instead of bullets, this section should feature one concise sentence or statement that describes the change in the world that your venture is aiming at.*

Logic Model Framework

Create a bulleted list under each heading to describe how your project or venture will move from idea to action to impact using the questions outlined above to guide you. This will lead to a depiction of your logic model that is specific, concise, and prioritized from top to bottom. A well-written logic model will feel sensible, plausible, and inevitable. The logic model should be articulated such that a reader understands that given a clear set of resources, you have the credibility and knowledge to enact this theory.

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Check out how this tool helped Cafe Momentum build a restaurant that helps recently incarcerated youth find jobs and training. CSIS Studio shares their story, along with other case videos, tools, and insights from social entrepreneurs and innovator.

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Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Donors funding the cost of facilities — Grant money funding the program and staff costs — Staff to facilitate curriculums, trainings, and give support — Mentors to add extra support to interns and give new experiences — Restaurant w/ Kitchen — Restaurant Patrons	Restaurant Training Curriculum: Teaching job skills during hours of employment and during family meal — Community Center for tutoring, schooling, and counseling — and a safe place to hang out — Case management to provide counseling, and referrals for resources needed	# of interns who complete their internship — Average total # hours of restaurant training each intern receives — Average total # hours of life skills each intern receives — Average total # hours of health counseling each intern receives — Total $ earned / intern — Total # hours interns worked at Cafe Momentum	More at-risk youth: - report increased confidence while working through restaurant rotations & life skills courses - experience stable housing following the internship - enroll in trade school or college following their internship - achieve gainful employment coming out of the Cafe Momentum internship Increasing % of at-risk youth: - Maintain employment 1 year post-internship - Remain out of jail 1 year post-internship	Cafe Momentum transforms young lives by equipping our community's most at-risk youth with life skills, education, and employment opportunities to help them experience increased stability at home, increased employment, decreased recidivism, and increased ambition. This helps them move past the present, create goals for the future, and achieve their full potential.
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