

Box 8-1. Questions to Ask About the Planning Component

Consider strategic planning for environmental improvement as you ask the following questions (Reference 8-1). These questions are designed to ask "how" so that you can compare your organization's performance to others.

How does your organization

- Use information from the environmental management system in other organizational planning initiatives?
- Consider the long-term environmental impact of the business on its quest for sustainability?
- Anticipate and mediate external environmental impacts?
- Include employees in environmental planning?
- Involve vendors, suppliers, customers, and others?

Consider formal action planning as you ask these questions:

How are

- Formal action plans developed to support process analysis and improvement (P2) efforts?
- Employees included in the development of action plans?
- Suppliers, vendors, customers, and other interested parties included in the development of action plans?
- Action plans assessed and improved on from year to year?

To determine if your P2 program fosters integration and implementation with other organizational programs, ask these questions:

How are:

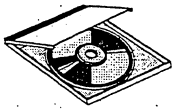
- Action plans implemented, tracked, modified (for continual improvement), and communicated to all interested parties?
- The action plans linked to the strategic planning process of the organization?
- Resources aligned to support improvement (P2) efforts?
- All the results from the programs disseminated to support organizational learning and improvement of the environmental management process?
- Environmental management processes formally maintained and improved?

The quality-based P2 approach and the EMS approach require written action plans. The EMS-based approach requires environmental management programs (EMPs) as written action plans. These documents are used to track progress made during the year on all scheduled P2 projects and activities. They are auditable by independent third parties. The Systems Approach tools help gather the information needed for comprehensive action plans. At the end of the year, it is possible to perform a "lessons learned" review of each of the action plans or EMPs and a decision can be reached on what to do in the following year.

strategic planning

action planning

*integration and implementation
with other organizational
programs*



Many P2 practitioners currently use prioritization tools. One limitation, however, is that they begin with a finite set of potential solutions to choose from because they have not used a method such as brainwriting to generate sufficient alternatives. An example of the prioritization of the alternatives generated in the previous step may be found in Figure 4-8. You may note that alternatives can be grouped in different combinations during the bubble-up/bubble-down procedure. Other examples of the use of bubble-up/bubble-down can be found on the CD-ROM.

A formal action plan should be prepared for every P2 activity that is planned for each year of a P2 program.

Action Planning

Finally, a formal action plan should be prepared for every P2 activity that is planned for each year of a P2 program (Reference 4-8). In the rush to implement, P2 practitioners should not overlook the need to formalize their action plans. Each action plan should list the P2 alternative that will be implemented and show the sequence of steps necessary to implement the alternative. The person responsible for ensuring that each step is completed should be indicated in the action plan. Performance of that step must have some recognizable goal that must be reached. A metric should be devised to measure the progress toward meeting that goal and to provide a time frame for reaching the goal or completing that step. Finally, an indication of the resources required to reach the goal should be included in the formal action plan.



A sample form for use as an action plan is shown in Figure 4-7. Some action plan examples can be found on the CD-ROM that accompanies this *Guide*.

When P2 programs are audited on an annual basis, the auditor can select action plans and confirm that the work indicated actually has taken place. Periodic assessments of P2 program status depend on information like this to serve as the basis for measuring progress.

ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:		Date:			
Action	Responsible Person	Performance	Monitoring Technique	Completion Deadline	Resources Needed
1					
2					
3					
4					

Figure 4-9. Example of an Action Plan.