

Plan-Do-Study-Act

Test your change ideas.

The Model for Improvement uses Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles to test changes on a small scale.

Each change idea should be tested individually, allowing time to collect data before, during and after each test, to determine whether an improvement has been made. Different ideas are often tried successively via different PDSA cycles to achieve your desired outcome.

PDSA cycles are composed of four key stages, outlined in the table below.

PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a plan to test the change. ▶ State the objective of the test. ▶ Make a prediction about what you think will happen. ▶ Think: Who? What? When? Where? What data?
DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Try out the test on a small scale. ▶ Document problems and unexpected observations. ▶ Complete the test.
STUDY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Set aside time to analyse the data. ▶ Compare the data to your predictions. ▶ Summarise and reflect on what was learned.
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Refine the change, based on what was learned from the test. ▶ Determine what modifications should be made. Prepare a plan for the next test.

The end result of a PDSA cycle will be to either:

- adopt the change
- adapt the change and do another PDSA or
- abandon the change and do another PDSA.

Plan-Do-Study-Act template

Gathering all your change ideas.

Write or type in the the template below.

PLAN	
What are you going to test?	Where will you test it?
Where will you test it?	Who will do what?
What do you predict will happen?	When will it start/end?
DO	
What happened when you tested it?	
Was it done properly?	
What did you observe?	
STUDY	
What are your reflections on it?	What is the data telling you?
What is feedback from others?	Why do you think certain things happened?
Were there any surprises?	
ACT – agree whether you are going to:	
ADAPT: modify the idea and do another PDSA cycle to see if it can be better.	ABANDON: stop the idea all together because it is not working.
ADOPT: test the idea out wider because you think it is the best possible version.	

PDSA was introduced by Walter Shewart in the 1920s

'Just do it' vs PDSA

Do you really need to do a PDSA cycle or can you 'just do it'?

Is it a simple, well understood idea which is straightforward?

Is it something that's been solved before (root cause is known)?

Are you confident the way you want to do it is the best possible approach?

Does it require low effort (eg a quick win)?

Does it require minimal input from other stakeholders?

Is the risk of it not 'helping' low?

Consider using a 'just do it' approach

Do you have a few possible suggestions for how to do the change idea?

Are you not sure about what the best version could be?

Do you feel like you need to test it and learn in practice before fully embedding it?

Do you need input from other stakeholders?

Do you need to get some feedback from others on how it works in practice?

Does it require some planning and understanding from others?

Consider using a PDSA approach