

A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL PRODUCTION

I first used the TOC tool to achieve Ambitious Targets (ATT) on a workshop production where the resultant reduction in my stress and the success of the venture encouraged me to try it again. I do not teach Drama as a course but have directed 22 productions in 10 years as extra-murals. Thus I appreciate the time-saving, stress-reducing impact of this TOC strategic planning tool very much. During the whole process, the ATT is on the wall of my office so that everyone can monitor where we are in the production and what has to be done next. Our latest major production with a cast of 80 students played to a large number of people and netted a large amount of much-needed funds. I will never run a project of any type without the use of the ATT again. By starting with detailed obstacles to the target, we are assured of not overlooking something which frequently happens if you start with action steps. A few of our obstacles read:

- We do not have a script
- We do not have a choreographer
- We do not have a musical director
- We do not have someone in charge of lighting
- We do not have special effects
- We do not have a cast We have not held auditions
- We do not have an orchestra
- We have not informed parents about the production
- The script may not be suited to York conditions.
- We do not have tickets
- The score may not suit our orchestra
- We have not sorted out copyright arrangements
- We do not have a programme
- The auditorium is not ready
- We do not have decor

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We detailed this list into 80 obstacles and came up with 67 Intermediate Objectives (IOs) to address these obstacles. Some IOs overcame multiple obstacles The list of Intermediate Objectives for the production (cast of 80) read as follows:

- We have a sound-script
- We have the necessary sound equipment
- We have someone in charge of decor
- We have the necessary backdrops
- We have the necessary set
- We have someone in charge of props
- We have the necessary props
- We have someone in charge of costumes
- We have the necessary costumes
- We have someone in charge of make-up
- We have people to do the make-up
- We have the necessary make-up
- Safety standards have been met
- We have someone in charge of publicity
- We have a printed, glossy programme
- We have advertised in the newspaper
- We have a poster
- We have a production team
- We have decided on a musical
- Legal aspects have been taken care of
- We have a musical director
- We have a choreographer
- We have a director
- We have a script
- We have adapted the script
- We have dates for the play
- We have a rehearsal schedule
- We have run auditions
- We have a cast
- We have identified the necessary special effects
- We have a person in charge of special effects
- We have organised the special effects
- We have an orchestra
- The music has been orchestrated
- The orchestra has been rehearsed
- We have a lighting crew
- We have a lighting-script
- We have suitable lighting
- We have a sound crew

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- We have posters displayed in town
- We have advertised on the radio
- We have organised the foyer
- We have printed tickets
- Staff tickets are organised
- We have a booking-office
- We have personnel for the booking-office
- We have a front-of-house
- We have ushers
- Refreshments are organised
- We have someone in charge of catering for the Gala Evening
- We have someone in charge of decor for the Gala Evening
- The cast are well-rehearsed
- We have someone in charge of finances
- We have sent a letter to parents
- We have informed the cast about holiday rehearsals
- We have built the extension to the stage
- We have cleaned the hall
- We have a stage-manager
- We have a backstage crew
- The crew are well-rehearsed
- We have someone in control in the dressing-room area
- We have a seating-plan
- Seats are laid out according to the plan
- Rows are numbered according to the plan
- We have garnered support from local schools
- We have advertised in our school

We then sequenced this list according to which needed to be done before others could be achieved and which ones could be done in parallel. Thus, we had a very concrete plan and one which gave us confidence. Not only did we have a far less stressful and far more successful event but now we also have a strategic plan which we can adapt for future productions-- always making sure that we have identified any different obstacles relative to unique circumstances. In this way, the TOC process is very dynamic.