Quick Wins

Idea In Short

Today, consultants are under immense pressure to demonstrate their value straight away. Quick wins are a key tool in helping you do this and they enable you to hit the ground running.

A quick win Quick wins go by many different names, such as low-hanging fruit, no-brainer, and early win.is defined as a new improvement that is visible, contributes to the organization, and can be achieved quickly after starting your new role. Usually, consultants strive to secure quick wins within the first 90 days of starting a new engagement. Quick wins help get you off to a good start by boosting your credibility. Furthermore, early successes can boost your confidence, get people excited, and create value for the client organization. Quick wins are particularly important because your early actions in a new role will have a disproportionate impact on how people perceive you.

Helps earn trust

According to the HBR article titled, The Quick Wins Paradox by Mark E. Van Buren and Todd Safferstone, executives, especially the newly promoted ones that engage Management Consultants, are under pressure to quickly demonstrate their value to their stakeholders. Among the high-performing new leaders, one attribute stood out: a strong focus on results. In fact, most of them had managed to secure a "quick win"—a new and visible contribution to the success of the business made early in their tenure. Those who had achieved a quick win scored on average nearly 20% higher than those who hadn't. This was a forceful but unsurprising finding; management experts often advise newly promoted executives to put points on the board fast. A quick win is a crucial form of reassurance to the leaders' bosses, who hope they have made the right promotion decision; to team members deciding whether to place confidence in their new manager; and to peers trying to determine whether an equal has joined their ranks. As consultants, helping your primary stakeholder achieve quick wins enables trust and sets you up for long-term success. In general, a quick win is a small

victory. It's a small part of a greater goal that you have achieve in a short time.

Drive change

Often, clients engage consultants to drive change. There are several reasons why quick wins make a huge difference when leading change initiatives. Usually, clients have a tendency to look toward a grand vision of the future. However, they need to focus on getting there one step at a time. At each step, you need to be winning. When you win, you need to broadcast that you, as a team, are winning. Leading change requires quick wins to show that it's possible. Even the smallest of successes can prove a point. Quick wins prove that change can happen, no matter how small.

Build momentum

Momentum is crucial in business. If you strive for a long-term vision over months and years, it becomes a drag. To sustain such efforts, you need constant motivation. You need people who really care and keep on pushing. These people are hard to find. To build momentum, you need to cascade the quick wins to energise and keep client stakeholders motivated to push on to the next target. Quick wins demonstrate that they're making a difference. They also allow you a point in time to recognise success.

Garner recognition

Quick wins provide the opportunity for targeted storytelling - an important ongoing aspect of communication during times of change. When one of the elements of the transformation mission is assigned to a team or team member, they must be held accountable. But, more importantly, they must be publicly rewarded when they succeed. This aids in everyone's ability to start really visualizing what winning looks like and what behaviors are needed to achieve the mission‘s success. Then, others begin to change their behavior and the transformation effort slowly begins to take root in the culture.

Identifying Quick Wins

An easy way to identify quick wins is to brainstorm ideas starting and identify milestones before starting an engagement. You can then measure your ideas against the following rules:

- Have an easy-to-understand goal and focused scope. There should be no unclarity regarding what needs to be achieved
- The results build your credibility with your team, boss, or others within the wider client organization
- Success is straightforward to measure. To be a quick win it needs to be obvious that you have achieved the objective
- You need buy-in from key stakeholders. Without this, you could be going after a quick win that is unimportant for the organization or its key stakeholders
- The win must be quick to achieve. It should be possible to achieve the win within 90 days
- Your team must have the capabilities to achieve the quick win.
- The win must add value to i.e., have a positive impact on the client organization

Quick Win Mistakes

Although the concept of obtaining quick wins is straightforward, there are still a number of traps to watch out for:

Trying to do too much

By trying to do too much you can fail to achieve your quick wins and your credibility and confidence will suffer as a consequence. To avoid this, pick two or three of your ideas that deliver the most value with the least amount of risk and focus on these exclusively first. Once these are a success you can move on to try your next most promising ideas.

Focusing on the what and not on the how

When you're new in an engagement, it's not only what you achieve that is important, but also how you achieve it. Suppose you deliver a quick win of value to the organization, but in the process, you alienate most of your team. In this case, your quick win will have backfired. You will in all likelihood have done damage to your credibility.

Not considering the client's business culture

The mistake here is that you target results that are not valued by your client's organizational culture. For example, targeting cost savings may not be appreciated in a very rapidly expanding, cash-rich startup.

Focusing on quick wins that don't build momentum

The quick wins you pick should build up momentum. One way to do this is to pick projects that create positive outcomes for your client.

Summary

A quick win is an improvement that is visible, contributes to the organization, and can be achieved quickly after starting a new role. Quick wins help build your credibility and your confidence when you're new to a role.