

## Step 9: Decide how to measure success

### Decide upfront how you will measure the success of your project, and get benchmarks right away.

Soon after you select the business problem you will attempt to solve with your project (See Step #1), you will need to decide how you will measure whether or not your effort was a success. If you can get a jump-start on this, you will be glad you did.

For example, if you want to measure how much your new and very clear instructions reduce the number of businesses that send in incorrect tax payments due to miscalculations, you will need a benchmark. Your organization may already have a system in place that tracks how many of the payments are wrong each month.

In this case, the people who process the incoming payments may record each time they have to send the incorrect ones to the Wrong Payment Calculation Section. Currently, they may send 1000 each month. Your goal is to reduce that benchmark number. If you do, you can extrapolate how much staff time has been saved, which may translate into dollars saved or better use of staff time. But this can happen only if you have your benchmark in place.

People who have spent time with you on your plain language project will appreciate it if your team can show top management your project made a difference. Management, in turn, will appreciate it if they can tell customers or citizens that they have saved them money or reduce a hassle factor. If you are fortunate enough to get an undisputed performance measure, it won't be difficult to get support for more projects.

### Resources

Much more information is available about performance measures. Here is a selection of resources that will help you get started:

- A [simple list of potential performance measures](#) for different types of business/organizations.
- A [list of books and links](#).