

PLAN-DO-STUDY-ACT (PDSA)

HOW-TO

PDSA stands for Plan, Do, Study, Act—a four-step process that tests a change idea on a small scale to determine whether it leads to improvement. In a PDSA rapid-cycle test, you test one change on a small scale for a short period, use the results to inform additional cycles, compare results to pre-test baseline data, and then make a decision to adopt, adapt, or abandon the change.

Why Use PDSA?

- Minimizes risk and cost: Small-scale tests reduce disruption
- Reduces resistance: It's easier for change teams to try small changes than large ones.
- Speeds up improvement: Avoids lengthy planning cycles.
- Proven effective: NIATx change teams consistently achieve success with this method.

Four Steps to PDSA Rapid-Cycle Testing



Step 1: PLAN the Test

Choose one change to test.

- Decide which team or client group will be involved.
- Establish timeframe for the test.
- Collect baseline data.

Assign roles:

- Data coordinator to track results.
- Staff to carry out the change.

Prepare materials.

Get executive sponsor approval and inform staff.



Step 2: DO the Test

- Implement the plan.
- Check with the team.
- Make note of any issues or adjustments required.
- Collect data consistently. Compare with baseline measures.

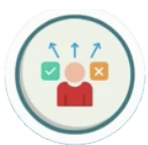


Step 3: STUDY the Results

Review and discuss:

- Did the change lead to an improvement?
- Was the test followed as planned?
- Did the change make things easier for staff and clients?

Record all results and insights.



Step 4: ACT on the Findings

- Adopt the change if it worked well.
- Adapt and re-test if results were mixed.
- Abandon and try a new strategy if it didn't work.