**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**{What is it? How do you do it?}**

**2021**

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**Introduction**

This document is intended to provide the reader with information about strategic planning. It is organized into three sections to help the reader better understanding what strategic planning it is about and how is done. We have also provided a sample plan for your review. The complexity of your plan will depend upon the size and complexity of your organization. Smaller organizations may not need a complex plan while larger and/or more complex organizations may require more time, people and other resources to develop and implement their plan.

Section one of this document will cover the “What” and “Why” of strategic planning. This section answers the questions:

* What is strategic planning?
* Why should a state agency get involved in the strategic planning process?

Section two will address the “How” of strategic planning. This section will walk you through the steps in strategic planning and answer such questions as:

* What are the strategic planning Steps?
* Who should be involved in the planning process?
* How detailed does the strategic plan have to be?
* I’ve heard a strategic plan has something called a purpose statement, vision and mission. Is that true? How do I create them?
* How will I know if our plan is successful?

Section three will provide a sample strategic plan for those organizations without a plan. The internet is an excellent source for examples of strategic plans and planning. Those state organizations with an existing strategic plan should continue working with their existing plan and need not make adjustments unless the plan is missing one or more of the basic strategic planning steps identified in this document.

Ok! Now that you know what to expect from this document, let’s get started.

Sometimes, the thought of putting together a strategic plan can leave you feeling anxious and confused.

As stated earlier, strategic planning will take time and effort. How much time and effort depends on the size and complexity of your organization. However, the process can be made easier with good planning and patience. The time and effort put into developing an effective strategic plan will save you time and effort in the coming years. It will also provide organizational focus.

Where do you want your organization to be a year from now? What about five years from now? If you don’t care, there is no need to plan. But if being the best you can be is important then you need to plan.

The process of identifying where you want to be and deciding what you must do to get there is known as **strategic planning**. And it's important for any organization. Without a clear picture of where you want to be your path will be rocky. There will be indecisiveness, second guessing and heading off into directions that you don't want to pursue.

Many books and articles describe how best to do strategic planning, and many go to much greater lengths than this document will. However, our purpose here is to present the fundamental steps that must be taken in the strategic planning process.

**Section 1: The “What” of Strategic Planning**

What is strategic planning? A generally acceptable definition of strategic planning is as follows:

“Strategic planning is the process by which members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future.” [Pfeiffer, Goodstein, Nolan, 1986] and [Rothwell, 1989]

Strategic planning is also “a process of defining the values, purpose, vision, mission, goals and objectives of an organization. Through the planning process, a jurisdiction or agency identifies the outcomes it wants to achieve through its programs and the specific means by which it intends to achieve these outcomes.”

Strategic Planning can be:

* A process for setting future directions
* A means to reduce risk
* A vehicle for training managers and direct supports
* A process for making strategic decisions
* A way to develop consensus among managers and direct supports
* A means to develop a written long-range plan.

A sound strategic plan will:

* Serve as a framework for decisions or for securing support/approval.
* Provide a basis for more detailed planning.
* Explain the business to others in order to inform, motivate & involve.
* Assist benchmarking & performance monitoring.
* Stimulate change and become a building block for the next plan.

Most of us know that planning is a way of looking toward the future and deciding what the organization will do in the future. **Strategic planning** is a disciplined effort to produce decisions and actions that guide and shape what the organization is, what it does, and why it does it (Bryson, 1995). Both strategic planning and long-range planning cover several years. However, strategic planning requires the organization to examine what it is and the environment in which it is working. Strategic planning also helps the organization to focus its attention on the crucial issues and challenges. It, therefore, helps the organization's leaders decide what to do about those issues and challenges.

In short, as a result of a strategic planning process, an organization will have a clearer idea of what it is, what it does, and what challenges it faces. If it follows the plan, it will also enjoy enhanced performance and responsiveness to its environment. (Source: Western Michigan University)

**Why Should Departments and Agencies Plan Strategically?**

 **So your organization doesn’t end up like this!**

**OOP’s!**

Also, planning strategically can help your department or agency:

* Improve the confidence of our citizens or customers in the capability of government
* Improve Program/Service effectiveness and management accountability by focusing on **RESULTS**
* Enable managers to improve service by developing a plan to meet objectives and providing information on program results & service quality
* Improve effectiveness and efficiency of government agency operations

**Section 2: The “How” of Strategic Planning**

# Getting Started

# Each organization needs to decide for itself when the time is right for a strategic plan. It is sometimes easier to describe when the time is not right than when it is. For example, when the roof has blown off the building, an organization should replace it, not start strategic planning. The organization should get its crisis resolved, preferably by acting strategically, and then begin planning. Something less than a "roof-blown-off" crisis, however, usually prompts organizations to begin strategic planning. Some organizations find the loss of a significant funding source or, conversely, the opportunity to obtain a new source of funds, an impetus to plan. Other organizations recognize that their clients are changing and, therefore, they ought to prepare for these changes. And so on. There are as many reasons for starting a strategic planning process as there are profit and nonprofit organizations.

After deciding to engage in strategic planning, the organization should take the following initial steps:

* **List some of the main issues that face the organization**. This need not be a complete list, nor does it have to be fully organized. However, knowing some of the concerns of the organization will help those who will be asked to be involved in planning to prepare.
* **Decide when the plan should be adopted.** Developing and drafting a plan will take a few weeks to a few months depending upon the size and complexity of your organization. The organization should set a future executive meeting to be the target date for adopting the plan.
* **Set aside some time for the planning process**. Those who will be involved in planning should agree to take time for the planning process. This could involve a few hours a week for several weeks or months. The plan writer, of course, will spend more time than others as s/he will be preparing a document that represents decisions made at planning meetings. It is recommended that the total time frame from starting the planning process to adopting the plan not stretch out for more than three months for a small organization. Large organizations could take six months to a year.
* **Decide if a facilitator would be helpful**. Some organizations find that an individual who is not directly involved with the organization's regular work can help them with their planning process.
* **Decide who should be involved and how they should be involved in planning**. See page 10 for suggestions about the major roles.
* **Find a place for the planning meetings to occur**. It is often helpful to meet someplace other than the standard meeting location for the organization because a different setting can help members of the group step out of their usual patterns. If the planning is held at your own facility it is easier for others to interrupt your planning session and pull planning participants away from the planning session. The planning location should be comfortable, include tables or other surfaces for participants to write, and have room to move around. Having the ability to provide refreshments for planning participants is also needed. Some organizations use large sheets of paper to record ideas, so having a planning location that permits hanging paper (using masking tape or other non-destructive adhesive) on the walls is ideal.

There are a number of steps in the strategic planning process. It is recommended you complete each step. Some organizations choose to by-pass steps in hopes of reducing the planning time. We recommend you follow all the steps in the appropriate sequence. Although some steps can be time consuming and consensus can be difficult to obtain, the end result is a plan that has support from planning group members and other stakeholders. The recommended steps in the strategic planning process are as follows:

1. Participant Selection
2. Core Ideology [Core Values & Purpose development]
3. Vision and Mission development
4. Goals and Objectives– Big Hairy Audacious Goals [BHAG’s]
5. Performance Audit - Review of Organizational Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats [SWOT]
6. Gap Analysis - Review information gathered from the SWOT and compare the results to your stated goals and objectives.
7. Contingency Planning – Worst and best case scenarios.
8. Integrated Functional Plans – Action Steps/Detailed Plans
9. Implementation Considerations
10. Monitoring And Evaluation

**Note:** An environmental scanning process that includes the SWOT should take place throughout the strategic planning process. This means you are continually gathering data throughout the planning process to help you make decisions.

**How do I gather data and where do I get it from?**

Data can be gathered from several sources using various methods. Several data sources for you to consider are as follows:

* **The annual/bi-annual budget**. What is your budget for this year? What is your budget for the second year of the biennium? How much funding is in each class code and how is that funding used? What are the options for transferring funding from one code to another, if possible? Do you understand all available options for use of a particular funding code? Do all the planning team members know what the budget is and how it is used? If not, they should be brought up to date regarding the budget. It is difficult to plan when you don’t know or understand the budget status and process. Are there other funding sources such as grants, registration fees, federal funds, tuitions, etc., that you have access to? What was your budget for the past four years and how was the money spent?
* **Legislative mandates, agency rules, regulations and policies**. What are your legislative mandates? What are your federal mandates? What are your existing agency rules, regulations and policies? Are the rules, regulations and policies helping you to get where you need to be? Are planning team members familiar with the mandates etc.? Be sure to have planning team members review mandates, rules etc. This information will be crucial to the planning process.
* **Previous Plans**. Do you have access to previous strategic plans or other organizational plans? If you do, use them to give you a sense of what was attempted in the past.
* **Stakeholder input.**  Successful strategic plans seek input from internal and external stakeholders. Stakeholders include agency personnel [at all levels], citizens, those who fund your programs/services, board members, other organizations affected by your programs/services. Stakeholder input can be gathered in various ways. Two of the more popular and effective ways to gather stakeholder input are surveys and focus groups.
* **Surveys.** Your planning team can develop a survey to be distributed to stakeholders. You can appoint a few members of the planning team to develop the survey. You’ll need to decide whether the survey sent to internal stakeholders will be the same survey you send to external stakeholders or will components of the survey need to be different for each group. What will the survey look like? What questions will you ask that provide you with the information you need to make decisions? How many questions will you ask? What will be the deadline for returning the survey? Who will be responsible for receiving and tabulating the results of the survey and reporting the results to the planning team?
* **Focus Groups.** Another popular and effective method for gathering stakeholder input is the use of focus groups. This method is regularly used in the private sector. What is a focus Group? Let’s look at a couple of definitions.

“A small group selected from a wider population and sampled, as by open discussion, for its members' opinions about or emotional response to a particular subject or area, used especially in market research or political analysis.”

“A form of market research in which a small group of people is gathered to engage in controlled discussions and interviews in order to elicit opinions about particular products or services, candidates or issues, etc.” The above definitions taken from “Your Dictionary.com”.

An internal stakeholder focus group is an excellent way to gather thoughts and feelings about what works well and what is not working well within the organization. However, it may be difficult for employees to honestly share their thoughts and feelings because of fear of reprisal from other organizational members or fear of being ostracized by the organization. If you use internal focus groups to gather information the participants should be volunteers. Volunteers are less likely to fear reprisal or being ostracized. However, an all volunteer focus group, as opposed to a randomly selected group, may present problems of organizational bias. At no time should the organization require employee participation with a focus group. A neutral un-biased facilitator should be used to lead the internal focus group. This may require a facilitator external to the organization.

An external stakeholder focus group is less concerned with reprisal and being ostracized. Citizens, board members, funding agents, other government agency representatives and external stakeholders are generally happy to “tell you what they think” about what your organization does and how you do it. All these groups are affected by what you do and the processes you use. Input from these people is paramount. Focus group questions should be prepared in advance and the same questions should be asked of each focus group. Focus group facilitators should take care to capture all the responses and may need additional assistance to capture group responses. If you use a focus group [s] to capture organizational information, be sure to:

* Reserve a large enough room to handle the group size
* Set aside enough time for people to adequately discuss and answer each question
* Have appropriate and adequate material to capture responses [e.g. flip chart paper, markers, tape or computerized equipment]
* Have refreshments for participants
* Assign someone to type a summary report for the planning team.

**Important Note:** Survey and focus group questions should help your organization gather information for your SWOT analysis. The SWOT means Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Your questions should seek information regarding stakeholder thoughts and feelings about your organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for growth and/or improvement, and threats your organization will face in attempting to meet its’ goals and objectives. The results of this information gathering will help planners in their decision-making process.

**Participant Selection**

Careful consideration needs to be given to selecting strategic planning participants. Many people may want to participate in the process during the beginning stages. However, during the initial stages of strategic planning you may want to select the “vital few” needed for successful planning. As the plan progresses, particularly when you reach action step planning, you will want to involve more people. Keep in mind you will be involving numerous people by seeking their thoughts and feelings regarding the organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats [SWOT] analysis.

Typically, in larger state agencies, the executive staff is involved in the strategic planning process. This generally includes the commissioner or agency director, assistant directors, division heads and human resource director. These professionals are involved from the beginning to the end of the process and should be in attendance at all planning sessions. When a planning member misses a planning session it often requires planners to take significant time at the next meeting to update that missing member. Also, the missing planning member may not agree with all the decisions made at the previous meeting leading to confusion and discord. Other employees may be asked to participate for a specific piece of the plan because of their subject matter expertise or experience in a particular field. If the agency is subject to oversight from a board, several boards, or other external groups it is advantageous to involve members of the boards and groups in the planning process. It is unrealistic to assume these individuals can or should attend every planning session. It is realistic to seek their input through the surveys and/or focus groups. This provides them with the opportunity to give your organization feedback on issues important to them. You may also find it helpful to share your plan with the boards and groups asking them to look for potential problem areas within the plan. This is your opportunity to seek their support of your plan. Another option is to ask the board or group to designate one member to represent them on the planning team.

Small state agencies, such as commissions or boards, should involve all commission or board members in the planning process. Other individuals may be called upon for a specific planning session because of their subject matter expertise and/or experience.

It is **highly** recommended state agencies [small and large] seek an independent facilitator to assist them in the planning process. Lack of an independent facilitator can increase planning time three to four-fold and increase the chances of dissention within the organization. The Division of Personnel, Bureau of Education and Training, can provide you with experienced facilitators or put you in touch with private vendors who can perform this function for you. You can also seek facilitators from other state agencies.

**Survey/Focus Group Question Development**

Once you have selected your planning team members and determined planning dates you are ready for your first planning meeting. Prior to this meeting all planning members should have received budgetary information, copies of applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and applicable professional standards. Planning team members should make themselves familiar with this information as it is crucial to the planning process.

Now you are ready to develop your survey and/or focus group questions. Planning team members can brainstorm possible questions for the survey or focus group or assign the task to one or more team members who will develop the questions and bring them to the group for discussion and approval.

**Core Values Development**

Once you have selected you planning team members and determined how you will seek stakeholder input you will develop the organization’s core values. Core values are those vital few values that all members of the organization are expected to use, live by and demonstrate on a daily basis while executing their work responsibilities. “Core Values are the essential and enduring tenets of an organization. A small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification; they have intrinsic value and importance to those inside the organization.” James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras – Harvard Business Review 1996. Core values are so fundamental and deeply held that they will change seldom, if ever, and must stand the test of time. Some examples of organizational core values are as follows:

**Disney** – Imagination and wholesomeness, no cynicism, nurturing and promulgation of “wholesome American values”, creativity, dreams, imagination, fanatical attention to consistency and detail, and preservation and control of the Disney magic.

**Sony Corporation** - Elevation of the Japanese culture and national status, being a pioneer-not following others, doing the impossible, encouraging individual ability and creativity.

**Merck Corporation** - Corporate social responsibility, unequivocal excellence in all aspects of the company, science-based innovation, honesty and integrity, profit, but profit from work that benefits humanity.

**State of New Hampshire Workforce Development** – Performance excellence, flexibility, diversity, integrity, dedication, empowerment. See section three page 57 of this document for definitions of the core values.

**International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions** -

1. the endorsement of the principles of freedom of access to information, ideas and works of imagination and freedom of expression embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
2. the belief that people, communities and organizations need universal and equitable access to information, ideas and works of imagination for their social, educational, cultural, democratic and economic well-being
3. the conviction that delivery of high-quality library and information services helps guarantee that access
4. the commitment to enable all Members of the Federation to engage in, and benefit from, its activities without regard to citizenship, disability, ethnic origin, gender, geographical location, language, political philosophy, race or religion.

**California Department of Finance –** Integrity, Expertise, Teamwork, Respect, Problem Solving. The following definitions are provided for the core value Integrity:

**Adherence to Code of Values or Responsibilities** — We consistently adhere to our duty to execute the mission and responsibilities of Finance while advancing the goals of the Administration.

**Credibility (The quality of inspiring belief)**

* Consistently demonstrate your commitment to the Department of Finance, the Administration, and the state.
* Consistently provide accurate information and sound analyses.
* Execute audit work with independence and objectivity, both in fact and appearance.
* Do not cover ignorance with overreaching statements and guesses. If you don’t know the answer to a question, say so — and then go find the answer.
* Deliver what you promise and be careful about promising something you can’t deliver.

**Confidentiality (Being faithful to an entrusted confidence or ensuring controlled access to information whose unauthorized disclosure would not be in the best interests of the state)**

* Be alert, sensitive to, and clear about what information you are not at liberty to pass on. For example, policy and funding options under active review, some information pertaining to pending litigation, pending audit findings and other issues sometimes are not to be conveyed outside the Department except by specifically authorized persons or at specifically designated times. Maintaining this confidentiality is vital to the integrity of Finance’s role.
* Remember that personnel matters often are confidential as well.
* When asked directly for information that is confidential, say that you are not at liberty to provide the information.
* Be careful about who might be in earshot when you are discussing confidential information.

**Organizational “Purpose” Development**

“The best and most dedicated people are ultimately volunteers, for they have the opportunity to do something else with their lives. Confronted with an increasingly mobile society, cynicism about corporate life, organizations more than ever need to have a clear understanding of their purpose in order to make work meaningful to attract, motivate and retain outstanding people.” [ Peter Drucker, Leadership Guru]

Perhaps this quote, more than others, exemplifies the importance of having an organizational purpose for your government agency. The organization’s “Purpose Statement”:

* Is the organization’s reason for being
* Is people’s idealistic motivation for doing the organization’s work
* Captures the soul of the organization
* Should last 100 years

**Note:** You may complete a goal or strategy but you can not fulfill a purpose.

When developing an organizational purpose statement it is helpful to keep in mind the second bullet point from above “people’s idealistic motivation for doing the organization’s work.” People want to know **why** they are doing the work. What is the purpose or point of the work? In past generations the why of the work may not have been as important. Knowing what to do and how to do it was enough. But the baby-boomer generation changed that by asking the question “Why”? Now, the children of the baby-boomer generation are asking the same question and expect an answer. This is particularly true for those graduating from college. They want to know that their work means something. The organization’s purpose statement goes a long way towards providing an answer to the why question. The following are sample purpose statements from the private sector. Note that each of the corporations will be working towards their purpose for many years to come.

* **3M:** To solve unsolved problems innovatively
* **Cargill:** To improve the standard of living around the world
* **Fannie Mae:** To strengthen the social fabric by continually democratizing home ownership
* **Walt Disney**: To make people happy
* **Mary Kay Cosmetics:** To give unlimited opportunity
* **Merck:** To preserve and improve human life
* **Lost Arrow Corporation:** To be a role model and a tool for social change:
* **Nike:** To experience the emotion of competition, winning , and crushing competitors
* **Sony:** To experience the joy of advancing and applying technology for the benefit of the public
* **Wal-Mart:** To give ordinary folk the chance to buy the same things as rich people
* **Telecare Corporation:** To help people with mental impairments realize their full potential

**The following are sample purpose statements from government entities:**

**Australian Government, Department of Finance and Deregulation:** "We provide high quality, strategic policy and financial advice to support government decision-making and improved Australian Government financial management. We deliver professional support services to our Ministers, Parliamentarians and their staff, and the Government as a whole."

**North Carolina, Public Sector Attorneys:** The Government and Public Sector section encourages the participation of government and public sector lawyers in the North Carolina Bar Association and works to develop programs and services that will be of value to government attorneys.

**How does my organization develop a purpose statement?**

 It is recommended that you seek a facilitator from outside your organization to help with the strategic planning process, if possible. If it is not possible for your organization to secure an outside facilitator, the following steps can be used to help your organization develop its’ purpose statement.

1. Planning group members should review existing state and federal laws pertaining to their agency. What does the law [s] require your organization to do or accomplish? Your planning group should also review state and federal/national standards that pertain to your organization and profession. What are you required to do to maintain professional standards. Planning group members should know and understand these laws and standards.
2. At a planning meeting ask each planning member to write a draft purpose statement to be shared with the group. After completing the draft purpose statement each planning team member should re-write their purpose statement on large flip-chart paper using magic markers and tape the statement on the wall of the meeting room. Everyone’s statement is posted and team members take turns reading their statement explaining why they believe their statement is appropriate for the organization. At this point, other team members may ask questions to clarify their understanding of the team members’ draft purpose statement. However, no comments should be made regarding whether or not team members agree or disagree with the statement. Questions should be only for clarification purposes. Once each member of the team has had the opportunity to explain their draft purpose statement the planning team is divided into sub-groups of three or four people. Each sub-group is responsible for developing one purpose statement from the three or four member purpose statements. Each sub-group should be given a time limit of forty-five minutes to complete their work. At the completion of the time limit each sub-group presents their purpose statement to the planning team. Once the two or three sub-groups have presented their draft purpose statements the planning team works to develop one purpose statement by selecting key words or phrases from each of the draft statements that the team feels is appropriate for their organizational purpose statement. The final step is to “word-smith” the chosen words into a viable purpose statement.

**Organizational “Vision” Development**

“Visioning is a deep voyage into the heart and soul of an organization. Visioning is looking at the big picture and attempting to foresee the future. Visioning was designed to appeal to both the mind and spirit, and to involve employees in the exciting process of creating the future within a successful organization. The essence of successful organizational visioning is the commitment to rethinking and reviewing the organization. The process empowers members and the organization to achieve and reach its full potential.”

Peter Drucker, leadership guru, stated “The best way to predict the future is to create it.” Unlike prior methods of organizational planning, visioning begins with the future, not the present; it focuses on the end-state, not the means of getting there. The description of that ideal end-state is called a vision.

The following are sample vision statements taken from the private sector and government entities.

**Delta Dental, New Hampshire:** To be the premier dental benefits provider.

**Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island:** As active members of the community, we share a vision that all children, youth and families reach their fullest potential in a safe and nurturing environment.

**City of Richmond, Indiana:** The City of Richmond intends to be a premier Midwestern city recognized for its superior business environment, focus on education, culture and historically rich neighborhoods. Richmond will be a well-planned city, valued by its citizens for its economically vibrant and aesthetically pleasing sustainable environment. The city of Richmond and its citizens will commit to a high standard of community planning as evidenced through their involvement and participation in decision making for proper growth and development. The City of Richmond values and preserves the beauty of its natural and architectural resources and shall promote smart growth through its sustainable development philosophy.

**Electronic Government Vision Statement, Montana:** Montana’s electronic government initiative will make state government more accessible and responsive to the public, businesses, and other government entities through direct, electronic access to government information and services.

**Orange County Corrections Department, Orange County, Florida:** We envision a professional and culturally diverse corrections organization that sets the standard for excellence in public safety and service to the community achieved through sound correctional practices, inmate/offender programs and health care, and community partnerships.

**City of Albuquerque, New Mexico:** Albuquerque is a thriving high desert community of distinctive cultures coming together to create a sustainable future.

**City of Farmville, Virginia:** In the year 2020, Farmville has created a public and private environment recognized as a destination of choice for individuals and families in search of high quality recreational activities, personal growth opportunities, and lifestyle services. Farmville’s success in creating this environment is the result of its leadership role in forging progressive partnerships with its stakeholders in the community and the region. To create an overall sense of wellbeing and pride of residence, Farmville’s strong governmental leadership encourages public participation and is aggressively responsive to the needs of its citizens. Farmville is “open for business” and receptive to innovation, yet mindful of the responsibility to preserve its historic and natural resources for future generations. We are the hub of economic activity in the region, while maintaining our identity as a diverse academic village, a center for culture, and a family-friendly town.

**eGovernment Vision, Oakland County, Michigan:** To create a technology-enabled community by which all residents, businesses, governments and employees can access relevant government information value added services at any time and from anywhere.

**How does my organization develop a vision statement?**

State agencies and boards that do not already have a written vision statement should follow the procedure outlined under “How does my organization develop a purpose statement” on page 16.

**Organizational “Mission”**

Your organization’s mission statement is a clear but brief statement specifying the organization’s primary focus or thrust for the next four to five years. It should be easily understood by all personnel and serve as energy source/rallying point for the members of the organization. Mission statements can be used as a template for making decisions. In other words, administrators can ask the question “Is what we are doing or propose to do consistent with our mission?” If the answer is “No” then we must ask the questions “Why are we doing it?” or “Why are we thinking of doing it?”

The following are sample mission statements from both the private and public sector.

**Delta Dental, New Hampshire**: It is our mission to be the leading force in the dental prepayment marketplace by offering quality, versatile and affordable dental programs to benefit our purchasers, subscribers and participating member dentists.

**Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island**: It is the mission of DCYF to assist families with their primary responsibility to raise their children to become productive members of society. We recognize our obligations to promote, safeguard and protect the overall well-being of culturally diverse children, youth and families and the communities in which they live through a partnership with families, communities and government.

**Orange County Corrections Department, Orange County, Florida**: The Mission of the Orange County Corrections Department is to protect the public by operating safe, secure incarceration facilities, which maintain the health and well being of the inmates, in addition to providing effective and meaningful supervision of offenders in the community.

**Maine State Board of Education**: The Mission of the State Board of Education is to provide statewide leadership by advocating, promoting and improving educational policy and life-long learning for all Maine citizens.  In particular in this rapidly changing 21st century, we are concerned that graduates of the Maine Pk-12 public school system have the skills and knowledge to be college ready, career ready, and citizenship ready.  The Board offers direction to the Executive and Legislative branches of state government; thus, fulfilling its statutory requirement.

**Pennsylvania Department of General Services:** The mission of the Department of General Services is to provide high quality services at a good price to support the operation of state government. As the state’s purchaser of commodities and services, the manager of capital expenditures for buildings, and the entity that maintains and protects our facilities, it is imperative that we make cost-effective service our primary mission. In addition, we will work to make government more friendly for its users, expand opportunity for minority and women-owned businesses, and reduce operating costs for the agencies of state government that we support.

**How does my organization develop a mission statement?**

State agencies and boards that do not already have a written mission statement should follow the procedure outlined under “How does my organization develop a purpose statement” on page 16.

**Organizational “Goals and Objectives” Development**

Many people tell us that goals and objectives are confusing. They are not sure of the difference between a goal, objective or an action step. This difficulty is understandable when you read some of the poorly written goals and objectives that can be found throughout resources such as the internet. There are some basics concerning goals and objectives that can be helpful to the writer. In this section we will attempt to provide the reader with some of the basics regarding writing goals and objectives.

**Why do we need to identify goals and objectives?**

Plans and actions based on clear goals and objectives are more likely to succeed in meeting the organization’s needs.

Goals, by definition, are outcome statements that define what an organization is trying to accomplish. Try to think of each goal as a large umbrella with several spokes coming out from the center. The umbrella itself is a goal. Now think of each spoke as an objective. Without the specifics of the objectives the very general goal could not be accomplished; just as an umbrella cannot be put up or down without the spokes.

Goals are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve in your organization. They are usually long-term and represent the large issues or problems you want to address like “protect public health and safety”.

Objectives define strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified goals. Unlike goals, objectives are specific, measurable, and have a defined completion date. They are more specific and outline the “who, what, when, where, and how” of reaching the goals. Objectives are developed to help achieve goals by dividing them into manageable components. For example, “eliminate flood damage” would be a goal. A supporting objective could be “adopt a zoning ordinance prohibiting new development in the floodplain.” This objective would need a date of completion, a person responsible for implementation and specific actions steps outlining what needs to be accomplished in order to adopt the zoning ordinance.

By definition objectives are described as being precise, time-based, and have measurable actions that support the completion of a goal. Objectives must:

* Relate directly to the goal
* Be clear, concise, and understandable
* Be stated in terms of results
* Begin with an action verb
* Specify a date for accomplishment
* Be measurable

**What are the differences between goals and objectives?**

Goals are broad objectives are narrow.

Goals are general intentions; objectives are precise.

Goals are intangible; objectives are tangible.

Goals are abstract; objectives are concrete.

Goals can’t be validated as is; objectives can be validated.

Example: A goal could be “to know about the human body.”

The objective might be “the learner will be able to name **all** of he bones in the human body as stated in the medical textbook “The Human Body”.

All objectives should be **SMART.**

S – Specific

M – Measurable

A – Attainable

R – Realistic

T – Time-bound

Remember, objectives are important because they are the measureable factors by which the success or failure of one’s service, product, project or program is decided. From these objectives strategies [sometimes referred to as action steps] are developed with specific roles and responsibilities.

Examples of objectives:

* To have a 75% customer satisfaction rating on reference requests by xx date.
* By the end of FY xx 50% of all employees will be trained in at least three computer application programs that support the mission of the department.
* By December 31, 20xx all users of the Lexis-Nexis system will have received online database search training.
* By July 1, 2009 all state agencies and boards will have a written strategic plan that includes a viable workforce development plan.

**What are Action Steps/Plans and how are they developed?**

Action steps [sometimes referred to as strategies] are an outline of how you will accomplish a specific objective. Below you will find four examples of goals with accompanying objectives and action steps. Each example provides a slightly different format. Like the examples below, your organization should choose a format that works best for its’ mission and purposes.

**Point Pleasant Middle School Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps**

**Goal 1:** The percentage of students scoring at mastery or above in

reading/language arts will increase annually.

**Objective 1.1** The percentage of students scoring at mastery or above in the

ALL subgroup will increase a minimum of 3% annually.

**Action Steps:**

• Teachers will utilize CSO checklist.

• IEP's are written to according to grade level CSO'S.

• The principal will monitor lesson plans.

• Teachers will receive training in implementing a standards based curriculum.

• Survey parents for input regarding suggested programs to strengthen the

parent-child relationship.

• Initiate student led conferences to provide an opportunity to showcase student

achievement through portfolios and work samples.

• Establish a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).

• Utilize the county K-12 Literacy Plan.

• Design lessons according to the prioritized CSO's.

• Review and revise prioritization annually to reflect Westest data.

• Principal will provide walkthrough reflections.

• Principals will monitor for DI implementation.

**University of Missouri**

**Strategic Goal 2:**

Maintain a strong focus on student learning and achievement for

undergraduate, graduate and professional students to strengthen the national reputation of UMR.

**Objectives:**

- Conduct a multi-dimensional evaluation of student performance that verifies the ability of students to perform as a professional in their discipline, including their ability to communicate their ideas both orally and in writing, and that contains elements that can be compared to national standards. (Student Learning and Achievement 2:2.1, 2:2.2 and 2:3.3)

- Develop a learner-centered environment that promotes the improvement of learning, team work and personal development of undergraduate, graduate and professional students. (Student Learning and Achievement 1:1.3 and 1:1.5)

- Create a sense of community among students, faculty and staff. (Student Learning and Achievement 1:1.3 and 3:3.2)

- Strengthen the learning connection between students and faculty through collaborative learning experiences, improved academic advising and faculty-peer mentoring. (Student Learning and Achievement 1:1.3)

- Adopt the Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education. (Student Learning and Achievement 1:1.1)

**Action Steps:**

1. Improve existing and create new learning communities where faculty, staff and students can collaborate to enhance learning and achievement.
2. Evaluate the Learning Enhancement Across the Discipline (LEAD) Centers.
3. Create learning centers in core required courses in as many disciplines as possible.
4. Implement summer bridge programs to enhance the preparation for incoming freshman in chemistry, math and student success skills.

**Goal / Objectives / Strategies [Action Steps] Worksheet**

**(Sample)**

**Goal:** John Doe School will improve the overall educational experience for its youth and reduce later involvement with the juvenile justice system by having 95% of its third grade students reading at or above grade level by school year 2007-2008.

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| **Objective** | **Strategy/****Action Step** | **Resources Needed** | **Personnel Responsible** | **Time Line** | **Evaluation** |
| Increase enrollment to include 30 more students80% of students will improve literacy skills | Hire after-school tutorPromote school and encourage enrollment in local newspaperRefer 30 students to after-school tutoringTutor students two days per week | Personnel, budget, and Human Resource Dept.Teacher, PrincipalStudents, Teachers, and ParentsTextbooks, and other instructional materials | PrincipalPrincipalAfter-School DirectorAfter School Tutors | June 2007 – July 2007July 2007 – August 2007August 2007 – September 2007August 2007– May 2008 | 100% Positions FilledNewspaper adCounting of the number of referral forms turned inAttendance Logs, S.T.A.R. reading assessment tool |

**Iowa University Extension Program - Examples of Goals, Objectives and Strategies/Action Plans**

Below are goals, objectives and action plans (strategies) for AgVA. Note how the action plans accomplish the objectives and the objectives accomplish the goals.  The goals support the fulfillment of the vision and mission.

**Goal 1:** Build a team of local farmers interested in business development.
**Objective:**  Create a team of ten farmers by February 1.
**Action Plan:** Identify twenty farm leaders in the area.  List them in order of qualifications with most qualified first.  Contact them in order of listing until ten have accepted

**Goal 2:** Recruit experienced and reliable consultants.
**Objective:** Identify and retain legal, accounting and industry consultants by March 1.
**Action Plan:** Talk to Prairie Ethanol, Peterson Organics and Valley Bio-Diesel about who their consultants are, select a small group to interview and hire an attorney, an accountant and an industry consultant.

**Goal 3:** Identify and analyze market opportunities for possible business ventures.
**Objective:** Conduct market scanning activities to identify three potential market opportunities by June 1.
**Action Plan:** Contract with an industry consultant (goal 2) to conduct an industry scan.

**Goal 4:** Build a membership base
**Objective:** Have 500 members by August 1.
**Action Plan:** Conduct 10 membership meetings at specified locations on the following dates in June and July.

**Performance Audit – Review of Organizational Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats {SWOT}**

After goal and objective development and prior to strategy/action step development your planning team should review the data gathered from the SWOT. All the data should be shared with team members and the leader should facilitate a discussion as to the interpretation of the data. It is important for planning team members to honestly share their thoughts and feelings regarding the data/information gathered during the SWOT analysis.

**Gap Analysis – Compare SWOT analysis information with draft goals and objectives**

After reviewing the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats the planning team will review their draft goals and objectives to determine if modifications are needed. For example, the information gathered during the SWOT analysis may indicate a particular goal or objective is inappropriate or not needed. It may indicate a need for more objectives under a particular goal. The SWOT review will aid the planning team in determining whether or not their plan is realistic and it will set the ground work for establishing functional action steps. For each goal and objective the planning team should determine how large of a gap exists between the present status and the intended future status. For each goal and objective the planning team will decide if it is possible to close the gap [or at least make significant progress towards closing the gap] between what presents exists and where you want to be in the future. If it is possible to close the gap the goal and/or objective will remain as part of the plan. If it is not possible to close the gap the planning team will may decide to eliminate the goal and/or objective.

**Contingency Planning – Worst and Best Case Scenarios**

After completing the gap analysis the planning team would typically develop a contingency plan. The planning team would develop a contingency plan by brainstorming response to the following questions.

* What is the worst thing that could happen in the environment which might make it necessary to rethink organizational strategy? What should your organization do if this worst case situation comes true?
* What is the best thing that could happen in the environment which might make it necessary to rethink organizational strategy? What should your organization do if this best case situation comes true?

**Integrated Functional Plans – Action Steps**

It is now time to develop specific action steps for each objective. This should be a detailed plan listing dates of completion, responsible individual for completing the action step, resources needed to complete the action step, and a measurement for success. In larger organizations this level of detailed planning is left to those who will be responsible for “making it happen”. The planning team usually delegates action planning to supervisors/administrators and their staff to draft a plan for executive staff review.

**Implementation Considerations**

At this point, the planning team members will ask themselves “What changes or modifications to the organization must we make in order for this plan to be successful?” Changes or modifications may include changes in the organizational structure [Who reports to whom for what?]. In order for the plan to be successful will the organization need to change, add or delete policies, procedures etc.? What training will staff need to have in order for them to successfully meet the new goals and objectives? What training will leaders need to effectively lead personnel in meeting the mission, goals and objectives? How will we reward employees for reaching goals and objectives?

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Effective monitoring and evaluation is important to the success of the strategic plan. Planning team members will develop monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure the success of their plan. It is important to regularly [annually at a minimum] review the plan and make appropriate modifications due to environmental factors.

**Short Cut**

     The following was taken from Bryson, J. M. (1995). Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Where do you want your organization to be a year from now? Five years? If you don’t care there is no need to plan. But if being the best you can be is important then you need to plan.

The process of identifying where you want to be and deciding what you must do to get there is known as **strategic planning**. And it's as important for any organization. Without a clear picture of where you want to be your path will be rocky. There will be indecisiveness, second guessing and heading off into directions that you don't want to pursue.

Many books and articles describe how best to do strategic planning, and many go to much greater lengths than this workshop will. However, our purpose here is to present the fundamental steps that must be taken in the strategic planning process.

We will cover the steps of planning.

You will do an analysis of your organization.

You will create a road map to the future for your organization or work group.

**What is Strategic Planning?**

Most of us know that planning is a way of looking toward the future and deciding what the organization will do in the future. **Strategic planning** is a disciplined effort to produce decisions and actions that guide and shape what the organization is, what it does, and why it does it (Bryson, 1995). Both strategic planning and long range planning cover several years. However, strategic planning requires the organization to examine what it is and the environment in which it is working. Strategic planning also helps the organization to focus its attention on the crucial issues and challenges. It, therefore, helps the organization's leaders decide what to do about those issues and challenges.

In short, as a result of a strategic planning process, an organization will have a clearer idea of what it is, what it does, and what challenges it faces. If it follows the plan, it will also enjoy enhanced performance and responsiveness to its environment. (source Western Michigan University)

**Who should be involved?**

Each organization must carefully decide who should be involved in strategic planning. There are several key roles to be played in a strategic planning process including

* **Planning Process Champion**. This is usually a key player. The Commissioner, Director or chief officer of your organization. The person must be someone who believes in strategic planning and will help keep the process on track. This person does not have to be an expert in strategic planning, but s/he should be someone respected by staff members.
* **Plan Writer**. Someone must assemble the planning group's decisions into a cohesive document. This person takes notes during planning meetings and uses them to prepare a plan, often in the form of several drafts for review by the entire planning group. Writing the plan, however, is more than simply compiling a record of planning meetings. The plan writer must also insert options and next logical steps into the drafts at each stage of the planning process.
* **Planning Process Facilitator**. This person may be from outside the organization, though this role also can be played by a member of the organization who may have some skill in the area of group facilitation. The facilitator's main responsibility is to plan each meeting's agenda and to ensure the group stays on track.
* **Planning Team**. The planning team's members are those who are most directly involved in laying out the issues and options for the future of the organization. This might be the entire board of directors plus the executive director. It might also be a committee of the board plus the executive director. Key staff beyond the executive director may also be involved. It might also include one (or more) representatives of people served by the organization. What is important to remember is to ensure that the people who are fairly representative of and respected by the organization's leadership are included on the planning team.
* **Staff**. Staff members, particularly the director, have expertise and information that should be tapped during the planning process. Representation should be from all levels of the organization. Since they will be the ones who will carry out the plan on a day-to-day basis, they should be informed and, to whatever extent is appropriate for the organization, involved.
* **Clients**. Those who benefit from the organization's services are sometimes involved in the planning process. Each organization makes its own choices about whether to include clients on the planning team or whether to consult them in some other way
* (**Board members**) For non-profits members of the board of directors would be included.

# Getting Started

Each organization needs to decide for itself when the time is right for a strategic plan. It is sometimes easier to describe when the time is not right than when it is. For example, when the roof has blown off the building, an organization should replace it, not start strategic planning. The organization should get its crisis resolved, preferably by acting strategically, and then begin planning. Something less than a "roof-blown-off" crisis, however, usually prompts organizations to begin strategic planning. Some organizations find the loss of a significant funding source or, conversely, the opportunity to obtain a new source of funds, an impetus to plan. Other organizations recognize that their clients are changing and, therefore, they ought to prepare for these changes. And so on. There are as many reasons for starting a strategic planning process as there are nonprofit organizations.

After deciding to engage in strategic planning, the organization should take the following initial steps:

* **List some of the main issues that face the organization**. This need not be a complete list, nor does it have to be fully organized. However, knowing some of the concerns of the organization will help those who will be asked to be involved in planning to prepare.
* **Decide when the plan should be adopted.** Developing and drafting a plan will take a few weeks to a few months. The organization should set a future board meeting to be the target date for adopting the plan.
* **Set aside some time for the planning process**. Those who will be involved in planning should agree to take time for the planning process. This could involve a few hours a week for three to four weeks or it could involve a single day or weekend. The plan writer, of course, will spend more time than others as s/he will be preparing a document that represents decisions made at planning meetings. I recommend that the total time frame from starting the planning process to adopting the plan not stretch out for more than three months for a small organization.
* **Decide if a facilitator would be helpful**. Some organizations find that an individual who is not directly involved with the organization's regular work can help them with their planning process.
* **Decide who should be involved and how they should be involved in planning**. See the list on page 3 for suggestions about the major roles.
* **Find a place for the planning meetings to occur**. It is often helpful to meet someplace other than the standard meeting location for the organization because a different setting can help members of the group step out of their usual patterns. The planning location should be comfortable, include tables or other surfaces for participants to write, and have room to move around. Having the ability to provide refreshments for planning participants is also needed. Some organizations use large sheets of paper to record ideas, so having a planning location that permits hanging paper (using masking tape or other nondestructive adhesive) on the walls is ideal.

**Steps in the Strategic Planning Process**

**The following outline of steps is a suggestion only**. Each organization will need to decide what works and what doesn't. Suggested methods for completing each step and an approximate time frame for each are included as well.

**Step 1: Mission Review (approximate time required: 30 - 45 minutes)**

Nearly every organization these days has a mission statement. It is helpful to periodically review the mission and to change it if necessary. An organization's mission is its reason for being, its purpose, or its social justification for existing. Just stating the organization's mission isn't enough. Clarifying the organization's purpose helps eliminate a great deal of unnecessary conflict and helps channel the organization's discussions and activity.

**Suggested Method**. Before the meeting begins, write the mission statement on an easel pad. Post the paper on the wall or an easel where everyone can see it. Ask someone in the group to read the mission aloud. Identify words or phrases that stand out and circle them. Then discuss each of the questions listed below, and write summarized responses to each on separate large sheets of paper. This is usually best done with the whole group participating.

The classic planning process begins by writing a mission statement. I recommend instead that the planning team members simply start by reviewing the mission statement, including asking the following questions to help them understand the mission better:

* Who are we? If the organization were walking down the street and someone asked who it was, what would the answer be? Distinguish what it is and what it does.
* In general, what are the basic social or political issues the organization exists to meet or what are the basic social or political problems the organization exists to address? This is the basic social justification for the organization's existence.
* What, in general, does the organization do to recognize, anticipate, and respond to those needs or problems? How does the organization find out about them and decide what to do?
* Who are the key stakeholders1 for the organization, and how should we respond to them? How do we find out what they want from the organization?
* What are the organization's philosophy, its values, and its culture?
* What makes the organization unique or distinctive; that is, what gives the organization its competitive advantage?

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Stakeholders are people and other organizations for whom your organization matters. They are the people and organizations that hold your organizations accountable. They include, for example, funding entities, the landlord for the building, those who select members of the board of directors, clients or their representatives, and staff.

**Step 2: Organizational Mandates (approximate time required: 15 - 30 minutes)**

Formal mandates are those required by a funding or authorizing group. If these mandates are not met, the organization may face serious sanctions including (possibly) the inability to operate. Informal mandates are those expectations that may remain unspoken. Often the expectations of clients or staff are informal in nature. Mandates include both those things an organization is required to do as well as those things it is required not to do. A simple way to state this is to ask the question-what are we supposed to do, and who requires it of us? A similar question could be asked about informal mandates-how can we find out what stakeholders expect of us?

**Suggested Method**. Post a large sheet of easel pad paper on the wall. Have the group leader ask the question "What are we supposed to do?" and explain the concept of mandates briefly. For a few minutes, have the members brainstorm some of the key mandates. After brainstorming, have the group review the initial list and mark the ones that are formal mandates with an "F" and the informal mandates with an "I." Have the group then review the list one more time to identify who or what group mandates each item.

Following this, briefly review the mission statement to determine if the list of mandates suggests any gaps in the mission statement. Are there expectations that are not fairly represented in the mission statement? Do not take time now to rewrite the mission, but have someone make notes of any potential gaps

**Step 3: "Back to the Future" (approximate time required: 45 - 60 minutes)**

In planning we usually assume we are thinking only of the future. However, the organization's past is a source of much information about what has been effective and what has not. It is highly useful for the planning team to look backward for the same number of years it is expecting to plan into the future. For example, if the planning horizon is five years into the future, then look back over the previous five years.

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| **Suggested Method**. Tape four large sheets of easel pad paper together (this should provide a sheet of about 4 x 5 feet). Using a strip of masking tape, mark a line horizontally across the middle of the large 4 x 5 foot sheet. Across the top of the sheet, write the years (e.g., 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005). Give each participant a pad of 4 x 6 inch Post-it notes and a pen or marker. Have the facilitator or leader then give instructions to the group to think about all of the organization's "highs" or "lows" that occurred in the past five years. Have each participant write silently, noting each event or incident on a separate Post-it. Be sure to mark the year on each Post-it. After a few minutes of writing, have the leader instruct the members of the group to start posting their notes on the sheet at the appropriate place along the line. The organization's "highs" go above the line, and the "lows" go below the line. The height of the Post-it notes above or below the line indicates just how high the "high" was or how low the "low" was. |

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Once the group members have completed this task, review the items. Usually the leader reads these aloud, perhaps asking for clarification on each.

Have the group discuss the items and look for themes among them. On a separate large easel pad sheet, note the themes. They might include funding levels (obtaining grants or losing them), arrival or departure of certain leaders, successful or unsuccessful management of crises. Asking questions like the following can help clarify some of the issues:

* What opportunities has the organization had? How has the organization responded to these opportunities (taken advantage of them? unable to take advantage of them? ignored them?)
* What threats has the organization had to deal with during this time period? Which were handled successfully, which unsuccessfully, and which were ignored?
* What strengths did the organization rely on to deal with threats or opportunities? Which strengths did the organization ignore?
* What weaknesses has the organization had in dealing with threats and opportunities? What has the organization done about them?

**Step 4: Envisioning the Future (approximate time required: 15 - 45 minutes)**

At this stage, it is helpful to start looking briefly into the future of the organization. This is an exercise requiring imagination, not necessarily "practical" ideas. However, this kind of exercise can often result in some of the best ideas for an organization's future-along with some of the wackiest!

**Suggested Method**. Have the group's leader ask each member to imagine s/he has a friend who has been deeply involved in the organization, but who has left the area and lost touch with the organization. However, five years later, this friend writes to the member and asks the member about the organization. The member writes back to his/her friend, describing in great detail what the organization is doing. The member describes the activities and programs, the clients, the organization's finances, and its staff and board. In short, the member describes what is happening. Have each member be as specific as possible and have them write it down on the notepads, but do not have the members talk to one another. Spend about five minutes on this.

Then divide into groups of three to five people and gather around easels or large sheets of paper with the notes and draft letters to the friends who have "left." Have members write their comments on the large sheet of paper and discuss them among themselves. They may want to list some of the common elements on each large sheet of paper as well as identify some of the unique or interesting ideas. Spend about 10 - 15 minutes in small groups.

Have the group leader then use a "master" sheet of paper and ask the first group to read its first item. Have the other groups that have similar item(s) cross them off their lists. Have the leader then put it on the "master" list of common ideas. Keep going around the room in the same manner. By the end, there should be a list of ideas that are common to two or more of the groups.

Next, have the group leader hand out five to eight sticky dots per person. Have the group members then vote on the items they like best by putting one dot on each item they like. They may vote on the "master" list or on the items remaining on the original sheets. The items receiving the most votes become higher priority items for the group to consider when planning.

**Step 5: SWOT (approximate time required: 60 - 120 minutes; this step, however, can take considerably longer to research thoroughly)**

"SWOT" (pronounced swat) stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This is a key part of strategic planning because it examines the organization itself and the external and future environment of the organization. Strengths and weaknesses refer to the organization itself-they are akin to assets and liabilities. They are current, that is, they exist now. Opportunities and threats exist outside the organization and/or they refer to the future.

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| **Brainstorming Guidelines** |
| * try to get as many ideas out quickly
* hitchhike-generate or spin off on another idea
* do not criticize, either through comments or body language
* do not "justify" or explain
* have the mindset that there are no "bad" ideas
 |

 | **Suggested Method**. One way to get information about these quickly is to brainstorm. The leader should remind participants that brainstorming means not making judgments because those will come later. Participants should just speak what is on their minds, piggybacking on something someone else might have said earlier. There will be time later to screen out some of the duplicates, and even the "dumb" ideas.If the group is small (about 10-12 people), this can be done by brainstorming on each item one at a time (strengths, weaknesses, then opportunities, and finally threats). Have the leader write the items on sheets of easel pad paper as they are brainstormed. |

If the group is large (more than 12 people), divide the group into four smaller groups. Give each small group a sheet of easel pad paper, and assign each group a name (e.g., group #1 , group #2).

Assign a SWOT item (e.g., group #1 works on strengths, and so on) to each small group. Have the members of the group brainstorm on their item for about 15 minutes. Then have the leader announce to the groups that they should rotate to another item. So group #1 would brainstorm about weaknesses, group #2 would brainstorm about opportunities, and so on. Have each group spend another five minutes on that item and add or alter what is already on the previous group's easel pad paper. Have them spend five minutes working on the easel pad paper. Then have them rotate again, and yet again until all participants have reviewed all four SWOT items.

After the SWOT items have all been listed, have the group as a whole discuss them, add more information, and clarify them. Have someone take careful notes at this point to ensure careful records of the information that comes out of this part of the process.

Finally, give 12 dots to each person, three each for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Have the individuals use the dots to vote on the three most important or most serious S, W, O, or T. Following the voting, have the group further discuss the results. It is likely as well that additional information will be needed, including some research to fully understand the specifics of some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats. Have one or more people assigned to conduct this research outside the organization's meetings and bring the results back to the group for further discussion. This research might include asking stakeholders in the organization about their opinions.

**Step 6: Planning Themes (approximate time required: 30 - 60 minutes)**

One of the first steps the organization should have taken in deciding to plan was listing some of the issues around which to plan (p. 3). At this point in the planning process, the planning team will synthesize information from its earlier steps in planning and combine it with the issues or themes identified at the outset. This will form the basis for developing specific steps and tasks to implement the plan.

**Suggested Method**. In Step 4, Envisioning the Future, the planning team dreamed about the future and voted on the most important options to be considered. Once again, using the easel pad paper, list the items in descending order from the "envisioning the future" list. Next, review the SWOT analysis to identify the most important opportunities and strengths. List those on the large sheet of paper. At this point, some of the items from the SWOT list and the "envisioning the future" list may seem very similar. These similar items should be combined into a single item whenever possible. Through discussion among the members of the group, have the planning team come up with up to 10 issues or themes. However, there is no magic number of themes, and each planning team will have to decide for itself if the themes are distinct from one another or are too broad. Some questions the group might ask itself include

* Is each issue or theme consistent with the organization's mission? If not, then should the mission be changed or should the theme(s) be restated?
* Are the themes consistent with one another? It may seem obvious that the organization doesn't want to suggest, for example, expanding and contracting the same program at the same time, but it is easy to miss these contradictions.
* Are the themes or items distinct enough from one another that they can be easily categorized? For example, issues related to the physical plant or space occupied by the organization may be separated from issues related to the personnel of the organization. There may be interrelationships (more staff may require more space, for example), but the themes should be listed separately. They will be linked later on in the process.
* Is anything missing? Conversely, is there too much? Sometimes planning teams are too caught up in the immediate issues so they fail to see the larger picture or they become too global and too general. One way to check whether anything is missing is to review the notes from all the previous steps in the planning process, including the issues originally set out by the organization. Also, the planning team might wish to check with the organization's board of directors at this point to ensure the themes are inclusive enough.
* Does everyone understand the items? A way of checking this is to ask individuals to quickly restate each theme in their own words.

**Step 7: Setting Out the Steps and Time Frame (approximate time required: 60 - 120 minutes or longer)**

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 | **Suggested Method**. Using the themes developed in the previous step, list each on a separate easel pad sheet. Have the members of the planning team then begin to brainstorm the major steps or components of each theme. Have the facilitator or leader write them down. For example, if the organization identified its building as inadequate and a theme for planning is replacing the building, some of the brainstormed steps might include investigating buying a new building vs. renting more space and conducting a needs analysis for size and space usage. In some themes, there will be many items brainstormed, including some that will be contradictory. That's all right because they will be resolved later on in the process. This stage is simply designed to flesh out the framework a bit. |

Next, tape several large sheets of paper together and draw vertical lines on them to divide the years into the future (e.g., 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010). Label the years at the top of the large sheet.

Post the lists of planning themes and their major components near this large sheet so everyone can e them. Using large Post-it notes, have individual planning team members write components on separate Post-its2. Individually, silently, have them begin to post the notes on the large sheet of paper within the year in which the planning component or step is largely finished or resolved. For example, if the organization needs more space, a team member might write "space needs analysis completed" on a Post-it and put it in the column for 2007. Another might write the same thing, but put it in the column for 2006. Have the members also develop additional steps and post them on the large sheet. Once the group has slowed its pace of posting items, have the group leader then begin to discuss what is posted on the large sheet.

At this point, the process may become somewhat messy, and members of the planning team should feel free to move around, write on the large sheet, post more Post-its, move them around, and so on. Have the discussion focus on whether the steps are in the right order (e.g., one shouldn't prepare to move into a new building before signing the lease) and whether they can be accomplished in the time available. Also, having members identify interim steps (these can be listed with smaller-sized Post-its) is very useful at this point. Some groups may also use markers to draw lines between some of the Post-its and to add information to them (be sure the markers don't bleed through to the wall). Some of the items the group should consider include

* Are the major steps in the "right" order?
* Are the completion dates realistic?
* Are there critical starting points and interim steps that should be listed?
* What are some of the linkages between the themes and their major components? Draw lines between these if necessary.
* How will we know when we have accomplished this objective? What will determine whether we have been successful?
* What are some of the weaknesses and threats that will affect the organization's ability to complete each step? How can they be dealt with, and are additional steps needed in order to ensure the organization can accomplish its goals?
* What resources (e.g., time, personnel, talent, and money) are needed to accomplish each component or step? Are these resources currently available to the organization or must they be acquired? If they must be acquired first, then they should be identified in the appropriate place(s) on the large sheet of paper.

Most people are familiar with the structure of goals and objectives. What emerges from this stage of discussion is a set of goals (the themes) and objectives (the steps or components within each theme). Stating the objectives in action-oriented, time-delimited terms is very important. Organizations need to be able to measure their successes (and understand their failures) and state clearly what is to be done, by when, and by whom. This is, therefore, a very important component of the plan.

It is, however, likely that there will be more objectives listed in the early years of the planning period than in the later years. This is fine, and as the organization moves through its planning cycle, it will add objectives to accomplish in future years.

2
If possible, provide different colored Post-its for each theme area. Alternatively, mark horizontal lines o the large sheets of paper to separate the themes' steps or components from one another.

**Step 8: Bringing It All Together-Writing the Plan (approximate time required: 20 - 60 hours)**

The plan writer will have been taking careful notes throughout the process, including preparing interim reports between planning sessions. The plan writer now must assemble the information into a coherent document that reflects the key decisions of the planning team and enables the organization to move forward to implementation.

**Suggested Method**. The plan writer may wish to begin with a basic outline and prepare what amounts to minutes of each session or meeting of the planning team. The plan writer, however, should also add to the plan so it becomes more than simply a set of minutes or a record of what occurred. The writer will need to insert some ideas and clarification into the plan. Following is a suggested outline for the final plan:

* The organization's mission. This section may also include any relevant comments summarizing some of the ways the organization's mission makes it unique or provides it a competitive advantage.
* The organization's mandates and its stakeholders
* A summary of the SWOT analysis
* Vision of success. This section may include descriptions of key items the planning team identified in its "envisioning the future" exercise. The plan writer may wish to modify the items on the list somewhat so that it will be clear how the organization will know it is succeeding.
* Strategic issues, goals, and objectives. This section will be the meat of the plan because within it will be a listing of each planning theme (now identified as a strategic issue) and the goals and objectives associated with it.
* Financial implications of the plan
* Time line for reviewing and updating the plan

**Step 9: Reviewing and Revising the Mission (approximate time required: 30 - 60 minutes)**

Early in the planning process, the organization's planning team reviewed the mission statement. At this later stage in the planning process, it is important to review the mission once again and to modify it to reflect the plans and ambitions of the organization. Sometimes a mission is too narrowly stated, and a strategic planning process may identify areas needing broader focus; conversely, a mission may be too vague, and it will need specifics.

Once the organization has a draft of a plan, it is helpful to review the mission with the plan in mind. If the items in the plan are out of sync with the mission, either the mission or the plan will need revision. Depending on the plan writer's capabilities, s/he may suggest some wording changes as a draft for revising the mission.

**Suggested Method**. Post the original statement of the mission (from Step 1) where the planning team can easily see it. Reread the mission aloud, noting those words or phrases identified earlier that raised questions or special interest. Next, review the planning themes (i.e., the strategic issues). Are there linkages between the strategic issues and the mission statement? Using a marker pen, add or delete items from the mission or from the strategic issues. More large easel pad sheets may be needed to accurately reflect the results of this discussion.

Once the planning team has prepared suggested changes to the organization's mission, the entire board must adopt the mission statement.

**Step 10: Adopting the Plan (approximate time required: 30 - 45 minutes)**

The planning team and the plan writer may have considered several drafts of the plan before presenting a final version to the board of directors. As a separate item at a regular board meeting, the plan should be formally presented to the board for its consideration and adoption. Ideally, the board members will have read the plan before the board meeting, but it is often helpful to provide a verbal overview of the plan's contents.

**Step 11: Checking Progress on the Plan (approximate time required: 15 - 30 minutes)**

Once the board has adopted the plan, it should also plan to check the progress on accomplishing the plan's goals and objectives. Such checkpoints should occur at regular board meetings, perhaps every three months. The time for checking may vary with the nature of the objectives, but their review should be an important part of the board's business on a regular basis.

**Getting Finished**

Just as it is important to get started with planning, it is important to finish a planning process. In some ways, though, effective planning never ends because a plan must be revised and updated on a regular basis. Nonetheless, the planning process champion must ensure the planning process comes to a successful conclusion and that the organization can move to implementing the plan.

**Sample Plan – Next Page**

**Division of Personnel**

**Department of Administrative Services**

**State of New Hampshire**

**Workforce Development Strategic Plan**

**June 2008**

It is not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.

Roy Disney

**Workforce Development Premise:** Competent, motivated employees are an essential factor to providing effective services to the State of New Hampshire.

**Values:** Performance Excellence, Flexibility, Diversity, Integrity, Dedication, Empowerment.

**Purpose:** Getting the right number of people with the right competencies in the right jobs at the right time.

**Vision:** The State of New Hampshire will be an employer of choice with a skilled, motivated and engaged workforce that provides outstanding service.

**Mission:** To launch a workforce development strategy within all state agencies that promotes planning and innovation to ensure that state’s workforce is adaptable and empowered to meet the ever-changing needs of the New Hampshire citizens.

**Goals:**

1. Every agency will implement a viable workforce development plan

2. The state will successfully recruit and retain skilled workers

3. Career development programs will be in place for personnel at all agencies

Leadership is getting the right people to do the right thing for the right reason in the right way at the right time at the right use of resources. *-Clark Crouch*

There are some people who live in a dream world, and there are some who face reality; and then there are those who turn one into the other. *-Douglas Everett*

By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail. *-Benjamin Franklin*

The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them. *-George Bernard Shaw*

Personal leadership is the process of keeping your vision and values before you and aligning your life to be congruent with them.

Stephen Covey

*Workforce Development Premise*:

Competent, motivated employees are an essential factor to providing effective services to the State of New Hampshire.

*Values:*

* Performance Excellence
* Flexibility
* Diversity
* Integrity
* Dedication
* Empowerment

*Purpose:*

Getting the right number of people with the right competencies in the right jobs at the right time.

*Vision:*

The State of New Hampshire will be an employer of choice with a skilled, motivated and engaged workforce that provides outstanding service.

*Mission:*

To launch a workforce development strategy within all state agencies that promotes planning and innovation to ensure the state’s workforce is adaptable and empowered to meet the ever-changing needs of New Hampshire citizens

*Goals:*

1-Every agency will implement a viable workforce development program.

2-The state will successfully recruit and retain skilled workers.

3-Career development programs will be in place for personnel at all agencies.

Goal #1:

Every agency will implement a viable workforce development program.

Objective #1:

Create a framework for state-wide workforce development.

Objective #2:

Obtain stakeholder buy-in/support for workforce development.

Objective #3:

Implement a mechanism for Division of Personnel to review and evaluate agency progress in meeting the goals of their workforce development program.

Objective #4:

Create a program to reward and recognize agency progress in workforce development.

Objective #5:

Support agencies needing technical assistance in achieving their workforce development goals.

Goal #2:

The state will successfully recruit and retain skilled workers.

Objective #1:

The Division of Personnel will review and make needed policy, procedure and rule changes to foster effective workforce development initiatives.

Objective #2:

The Division of Personnel will assist agencies in creating benchmarks to show a return on investment at the agency level.

Objective #3:

Complete a systematic review, and where necessary, a revision of all qualifications for certification in each classification.

Objective #4:

Evaluate and, where appropriate, restructure compensation and benefits system to be competitive and attractive. Provide plan options.

Objective #5:

Improve the “Candidate Experience”.

Objective #7:

Create an employee referral system.

Objective #6:

Establish a funding source to provide broader access to internships for agencies that do not have adequate funding.

Objective #8:

Implement a system to continuously gather and analyze data regarding employee entrance, employment, and exit experiences.

Objective #9:

Develop and Implement a mechanism to match retirees to part-time opportunities throughout the state.

Objective #10:

Each agency to implement a six-month on-boarding process.

Objective #11:

Each agency to implement a “New Employee Orientation” for new hires, transfers and promotions.

Objective #12:

Develop and implement marketing strategies to attract more qualified candidates.

Goal #3:

Career development programs will be in place for personnel in all agencies.

Objective #1:

Implement policy for “Mandatory training for supervisors and managers”.

Objective #2:

Create partnerships with state colleges and universities to develop “for credit cooperative learning programs”

Objective #3:

Provide assistance to agencies in creating alternative education opportunities.

Objective #4:

Crete a centralized Skills Assessment and Career Counseling Center.

Objective #5:

Establish funding source to provide broader access for training for agencies that do not have adequate funding.

Objective #6:

Create uniform tuition reimbursement standards and process. Restructure the State’s program for tuition support and reimbursement and incorporate IDP requirement linked to agency mission and goals.

**Strategic Plan Implementation Phases**

**Phase I [1-3 years]**

Goal #1:

Every agency will implement a viable workforce development program.

Objective #1:

Create a framework for state-wide workforce development.

Objective #2:

Obtain stakeholder buy-in/support for workforce development.

Objective #5:

Support agencies needing technical assistance in achieving their workforce development goals.

**Strategic Plan Implementation Phases**

**Phase I [1-3 years]**

Goal #2:

The state will successfully recruit and retain skilled workers.

Objective #1:

The Division of Personnel will review and make needed policy, procedure and rule changes to foster effective workforce development initiatives.

Objective #5:

Improve the “Candidate Experience”.

Objective #7:

Create an employee referral system.

Objective #8:

Implement a system to continuously gather and analyze data regarding employee entrance, employment, and exit experiences.

Objective #9:

Develop and implement a mechanism to match retirees to part-time opportunities throughout the state.

Objective #11

Each agency to implement a “New Employee Orientation” for new hires and transfers.

Objective #12:

Develop and implement marketing strategies to attract more qualified candidates.

**Strategic Plan Implementation Phases**

**Phase I [1-3 years]**

Goal #3:

Career Development Programs will be in place for personnel in all agencies.

Objective #1:

Implement policy for “Mandatory training for supervisors and managers”.

Objective #6:

Create uniform tuition reimbursement standards.

**Strategic Plan Implementation Phases**

**Phase II [4-6 years]**

Goal #1:

Every agency will implement a viable workforce development program.

Objective #3:

Implement a mechanism for DOP to review and evaluate agency progress in meeting the goals of their workforce development program.

Objective #4:

Create a program to reward and recognize progress in workforce development.

**Strategic Plan Implementation Phases**

**Phase II [4-6 years]**

Goal #2:

The state will successfully recruit and retain skilled workers.

Objective #2:

DOP will assist agencies in creating benchmarks to show a return on investment at the agency level.

Objective #6:

Establish a funding source to provide boarder access to internships for agencies that do not have adequate funding.

Objective #10:

Each agency to implement a six-month on-boarding process.

**Strategic Plan Implementation Phases**

**Phase II [4-6 years]**

Goal #3:

Career development programs will be in place for personnel in all agencies.

Objective #3:

Provide assistance to agencies in creating alternative education opportunities.

Objective #4:

Create a centralized Skills Assessment and Career Counseling Center

**Strategic Plan Implementation Phases**

**Phase III [7-10 years]**

Goal #2:

The state will successfully recruit and retain skilled workers.

Objective #3:

Complete a systematic review and make needed policy, procedure and rule changes to foster effective workforce development initiatives.

Objective #4:

Evaluate and, where appropriate, restructure compensation and benefits system to be competitive and attractive. Provide plan options.

**Strategic Plan Implementation Phases**

**Phase III [7-10 years]**

Goal #3:

Career development programs will be in place for personnel in all agencies.

Objective #2:

Create partnerships with colleges and universities to develop “for credit cooperative learning programs”.

Objective #5:

Establish funding source to provide broader access for training for agencies that do not have adequate funding.

**Definitions for Workforce Development Values**

**Performance Excellence:** To continually work towards and document performance excellence.

**Flexibility:** The ability to adapt to new circumstances and ideas.

**Diversity:** A blend of demographics and talents. Creating the environment that values diversity at all levels.

**Integrity:** A core of ethical judgment independent of political pressure, in stewardship of the public trust, with transparency.

**Dedication:** A sense of purpose in public service.

**Empowerment:** Administrators, at all levels, encourage and allow employees to make decisions within the scope of their job.

**Some Key Points To Remember:**

* In the private sector a plan may cover a period of 10, 20 or even 30 years. Given our system and culture a 4-5 year plan may be appropriate.
* Stakeholder input must be sought. Survey your stakeholders seeking their thoughts and feelings.
* The plan must be reviewed and updated annually as part an Annual Review Process.
* The Annual Review Process includes reviewing your “Program Measurements” to help you decide how well your plan is working.