

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Often a non-profit organization's engagement in "strategic planning" turns into a daunting process for people unaccustomed to planning strategically, i.e. what do we want our organization to be known for in 5 years? And often meaningful results of strategic planning are encumbered with complicated process charts and work flow illustrations. And frequently absent are projections of resources – funding and personnel – required to meet agreed-upon strategic planning objectives.

The following are intended as "keep it simple" definitions and reference points for sound strategic planning for a non-profit organization.

Key Elements

- Entire leadership team, lead by CEO, drives strategic planning process
- Non-incremental thinking generating "out-of-box" ideas and alternative scenarios
- Focusing on a few strategic priorities building on core capacities and strengths
- Performance measurements to monitor and drive strategy implementation
- Projection of resources required to accomplish agreed upon objectives
- Dynamic design allowing for flexibility over time based on changing circumstances

Strategic Planning Model

Mission: Why we exist

Vision: What we want to become

Goals: Defining/prioritizing directions

Objectives: Assigning responsibilities, specific steps and timeline

Initiatives: Planned actions to achieve objectives

Outcomes: Indicators and predictors of success

Criteria for a Sound Strategy

- ***Distinctive:*** Defines the organization uniquely among key competitors
- ***Descriptive:*** Underscores the inherent nature of the organization's business
- ***Believable:*** Offers a plan that is both realistic and achievable
- ***Actionable:*** Sets specific directions with action steps
- ***Measurable:*** Establishes benchmarks for evaluating progress