

Ask Better QUESTIONS
Give Better ANSWERS
Expand County CAPACITY

COURSE MATERIALS

Crafting and Implementing Effective Strategic Plans

CI 123

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COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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Goals for this Session

1. Purpose of a Strat Plan – And, why plans may work....or fail
2. Overview of Strategic Planning (SP) process and components
3. Discuss ways to engage in Strategic Planning with the Board of Supervisors or other governing board
4. Discuss tips to prepare an actionable plan
5. Consider actions to communicate the plan
6. Discuss suggestions for putting a Strategic Plan into action and making it a “living” document



Why Plan?

Question:

What happens if we don't make the time to do strategic planning for the future?



Reasons to Plan

1. Provide strategic direction
2. Guide priority use of limited resources
3. Set standards of excellence
4. Cope with environmental uncertainty and change
5. Provide objective basis for control and evaluation



Considering Strategic Planning

Questions:

- * What are some reasons why public sector entities fail in their strategic planning efforts?
- * In your experience what has gotten in the way of creating and implementing effective plans?



Why Plans Fail

1. **Resistance to the planning process because of past disappointments with similar efforts.**

*Remedy:

Make sure your planning efforts provide some reasonable assurances that the time and energy stakeholders invest in the process will result in changes and improvements which are implemented and supported by leadership.

That's you!



Why Plans Fail

2. **The failure to involve enough of the right people in the process. Consequence: the commitment to the strategic plan is weak.**

*Remedy: Involve representatives of all key constituencies in the planning process in a meaningful way.

- ▶ Hint: "Real commitment" to a shared vision for the future only results from "real participation."
- ▶ Make sure your strategic planning process provides for real participation.



Why Plans Fail

3. Failure to translate the strategic plan into concrete action plans on an annual basis.

* Remedy: Include a work plan and implementation schedule.

Identify:

- ▶ Specific timeframes & deadlines
- ▶ Budgets
- ▶ Persons responsible



Effective Strategic Planning

Question: **What elements / conditions need to be present for effective Strategic Planning?**

- ✓ **Organizational readiness**
- ✓ **Commitment**
- ✓ **Capacity**



The Strategic Planning (SP) Process

The SP process consists of two core activities:

1. **Strategy formulation** (developing the strategy)
2. **Strategy implementation** (putting the strategy into action)

- ▶ An SP will identify where your organization wants to be at some point in the future (“aspirational”) and how it is going to get there.
- ▶ A strategic **and** scientific method approach to strategic planning involves thinking in terms of **Possibilities**



When to do a SP

Discussion:

When should an organization do strategic planning?

- ▶ When things are going well when the organization is in a relatively strong position, as boards and staff members may feel more confident about undertaking a serious in-depth examination of programs and services.
- ▶ Or, if the organization is in a state of transition and/or introspection. There may be more openness to a process of renewal and consideration of a new direction for the organization.

Making SP Work

- ▶ Organizational readiness, commitment & capacity
- ▶ Managing smartly against the right outcomes
- ▶ Create a learning culture – intelligent risk taking in pursuit of both insight and impact
- ▶ People take ownership in the process and the resulting systems.

Involving Leadership, Staff & Constituents

- ▶ The organization's leadership needs to be involved because SP is at the heart of what it means to be the leaders of a public sector organization.
- ▶ The staff needs to be involved because their insights and knowledge are an important resource for SP and because their support is absolutely essential if the SP is to be implemented.
- ▶ Constituents need to be involved because their input provides invaluable feedback about what is needed and desired.

Shared Responsibilities in Strategic Planning Processes

- › Effective plans take multiple perspectives in account because no one person or role has a full grasp of all the elements or necessary considerations.
- › Actively practicing inclusion can drive effectiveness and efficiency. Consider:
 - How will we leverage our differences to create value for our organization and the community in our SP process?
 - How do culture, values and perceptions impact our thinking and planning in this process?
 - How might we use a facilitated process to assist us in being inclusive and effective?



SP Takes Focus & Discipline

“When you find a unique opportunity to make a real difference, you focus on it and constantly reassess results. This is discipline.”

Peter Drucker



SP – Focus & Discipline

Knowing what to do if things change

- › It's not just throwing out the plan, but rather adapting the plan to reflect the current realities.
- › It includes holding selves and others accountable

Question: What can was a CAO's/CEO's and Supervisors do to hold ourselves accountable?



Crafting Your Strategic Plan Austin's Seven C's

1. **Connection** with Purpose and People
2. **Clarity** of Purpose
3. **Congruency** of mission, strategy, and values
4. **Creation** of Value
5. **Communication** between Stakeholders
6. **Continual** Learning
7. **Commitment** to the Organization

Adapted from: James Austin's
The Collaboration Challenge & the seven C's of Strategic Collaboration.

Solving for the right problem...



**"If I were given one hour to save the planet,
I would spend 59 minutes defining the
problem and one minute resolving it."**

Albert Einstein

Solving the Right Problem

▸ Problem Definition:

The "strategic" part of a plan is attention to current realities, trends and changes in the community and how this affects the work of your organization.

Solving the Right Problem (cont.)

Contextualize the problem

- ▶ What approaches have we tried?
- ▶ What have others tried?
- ▶ What are the internal and external constraints on implementing a solution?



Components of Your Strategic Plan

- I. Scan of the current realities
- II. SWOT/B Analysis
- III. Mission, Vision & Values Statements
- IV. Three to Five-year Goals
- V. Strategies
- VI. Objectives
- VII. Responsibilities & Accountability
- VIII. Follow through and check points



Conducting a Scan

Scan the business environment.

- ▶ Effective planning processes include scanning the external business environment to identify various political, social, economic, and other factors that could impact on the organization.



Scanning via SWOT/B Analysis

- ▶ A realistic and comprehensive approach to assess the organization's strengths and limitations.
- ▶ Considers what is going on in both the organization, and in the community.
- ▶ This includes:
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
 - Opportunities
 - Threats/Barriers

Your turn

Activity:

- ▶ Using the worksheet provided, in pairs or triads, do a quick sample SWOT about the state of your organization's readiness to do Strategic Planning.
- ▶ Identify 2 ideas for each of the four quadrants.

Hint: Consider such things as operations, governance, staffing, program, communications, and evaluation.

| | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|----------|---------------|------------------|
| Internal | • • • | • • • |
| | Opportunities | Threats/Barriers |
| External | • • • | • • • |

Some Helpful Terminology

- ▶ **Goals:** Broad statements of what the organization hopes to achieve in the next 3–5 years. Focus on outcomes or results and are qualitative in nature.
- ▶ **Strategies:** the approaches you will take in order to achieve the goals. Statements of the method or means for attaining broad goals and addressing specific issues.
- ▶ **Objectives:** the measurable steps and tasks that will be undertaken in order to realize each strategy. Specific actions and projects to carry out strategies
- ▶ **Tactics:** the tools that will be used in order to achieve the objectives.

Goals

- ▶ To keep your plan “alive”, identify how goals will be reached and monitored (strategies, objectives, responsibilities and timelines).
- ▶ How will you know you are working on the right things to solve for the most important issues?

Hint: remember to consider “Solving for the Right Problem”



Assessing Outcomes

“An expectation unarticulated is a disappointment guaranteed. Therefore, for us, an outcome not articulated and assessed is a disappointment guaranteed.”

Marc Morgenstern



Measuring Performance

- ▶ Focus on **why & what** to measure, not just how.
- ▶ Seek to understand:
 - ✓The **needs** being addressed
 - ✓What **activities** are likely to best address these needs
 - ✓What actually happens as a **result** of these activities
 - ✓How to allocate **resources** and tweak what they do for even greater impact.
- ▶ Guide by:
 - ✓Identifying what changes to create,
 - ✓Specify how
 - ✓Employ good judgment and discernment



Measuring Outcomes

“Let’s decide jointly on a simple, coherent, user-friendly system to which we can both pay attention, which will prevail over bureaucratic (requirements) and which will feed into a serious body of knowledge. But until then, stop pretending that the problem is our lack of acceptable performance, rather than your lack of serious purpose.”

William Schambra, The Hudson Institute



A Performance Culture

Ask:

- › How can you encourage a Performance Culture?

Consider:

- › How could people who serve others not want to know how they are doing and be able to share these findings with those they serve?

Action: Focus on the people and their actions; not just the numbers.



Measuring Performance

Effective Performance Management systems encourage and reward curiosity and continuous exploration of how to do things better.

Discussion:

- › What systems or methodologies are you currently using?
- › How are they working? *And*, how do you know?
- › What do you think makes your current system work? Not work?
- › What would you need to make it more effective?



Responsibilities & Accountabilities

What you need to do as a leader:

“People need to have a sense of ownership in this process by a focused and disciplined management path towards outcomes.”

*From Leap of Reason:
Managing to Outcomes
In An Era of Scarcity,
M. Morino, (pg. Xv)*

Your Most Important Resource

Your people!

Be able to answer:

1. In what ways will the planning team be empowered?
2. Who will be involved from various types of stakeholder groups?
3. How will you be involved?
4. How will responsibilities be shared by planning team members?
5. How might you engage people in a commitment to change?

Responsibilities & Accountability

Questions to explore:

- › How will you account to each other on progress on the goals?
- › What will drive those agendas?
- › What will be the implications, consequences and impacts to the community and the organization if the goals are/are not met?

Timelines

Consider:

- › Who will be the resources to help us meet our goals and timelines?
*Hint: Involve them in your SP process!
- › What timeframes already exist that might serve to help us frame this plan?
 - What cycles and other timeframes would be good to utilize to drive the timing of your planning process?



How to Keep Your Plan Alive

- › Review your SP on an annual basis so it doesn't just "sit on the shelf" for years....We measure what's important.
- › During the annual review take the opportunity to update and modify the plan to incorporate new developments or challenges.
- › Toward the end of the three-year cycle, if you determine there has not been significant change in the organization's external environment, you may chose to add an additional year. *Resist the temptation to do this repeatedly.*
- › Reexamine your organization's mission and vision every three to five years.



Roles

- › Strategic planning is a partnership between organizational leadership and staff.
- › Both participate equally in the planning process and provide important insights and information.
- › Usually the Board of Supervisors or Commissioners provide final approval for the plan – as well as hold themselves and staff accountable for the expected results.



When to use a Facilitator

- › Consider using an external consultant if the objectivity of an outsider who useful.
- › Choose a professional with ample experience in the public sector.
 - That experience doesn't necessarily have to be with your organization.

Remember: You're looking for someone to objectively facilitate, not to be the brain.

That's your job!



Some Facilitator Qualifications

The facilitator has:

- › experience in leading strategic planning processes
- › excellent communication skills
- › an understanding of organizational issues
- › conflict management skills and confidence in handling conflicts
- › the ability to help clarify your desired outcomes
- › has a commitment to ensure the group will reach those outcomes
- › has the ability to operate systematically and keep people focused
- › has the ability to offer insight and empathy



Summary

Goals:

- › Overview of Strategic Planning (SP) process and components
- › Discuss ways to engage in Strategic Planning with the Board of Supervisors or other governing boards;
- › Discuss tips to prepare an actionable plan; what makes plan work...or fail
- › Consider actions to communicate the plan; and
- › Discuss suggestions for putting a Strategic Plan into action and making it a "living" document



Some Thoughts on Strategic Planning and Solving the Right Problem

Harvard Business Review – September 2012

“If I were given one hour to save the planet, I would spend 59 minutes defining the problem and one minute resolving it.”

Albert Einstein

A strategic and scientific method approach to strategic planning: think in terms of **Possibilities**

- * 1 - Move from Issues to Choice
 - ◆ possibilities-based approach
 - ◆ consider two or more mutually exclusive options
- * 2 – Generate Strategic Possibilities
 - ◆ ultimate creative act
 - ◆ consider the desired output or outcome
 - ◆ characterize possibilities as STORIES that don’t require proof
 - ◆ include *advantage* aimed to achieve, *scope* across which the advantage applies, and *activities* throughout the value chain that would deliver the advantage
 - ◆ include status quo
 - ◆ separate this step from subsequent steps of testing and selecting
 - ◆ “ample time for skepticism will come later”
 - ◆ reframe critiques as conditions
 - ◆ *What do we do especially well that parts of the market might value and that might produce a superior wedge between buyer value and costs?*
 - ◆ *What are the underserved needs, what are the needs customers find hard to express, and what gaps have competitors left?*
 - ◆ *What would it take to be the Google, the Apple or the WalMart of this market?*
- * 3 – Specify the Conditions for Success
 - ◆ what must to be true for each possibility to be a terrific choice?
 - ◆ turn criticism into a specific and testable condition for success
 - ◆ generate a list; then weed the list to the vital “must have” conditions
- * 4 – Identify Barriers to Choice
 - ◆ order the conditions
 - ◆ listen and consider all the skeptics
 - ◆ which ones will hold?
- * 5 – Design Tests for the Barrier Conditions
- * 6 – Conduct the Tests
 - ◆ Start with the condition the group feels is least likely to hold up and work in reverse order
- * 7 – Make the Choice
 - ◆ Becomes anticlimactic
- * QUESTIONS to be Asking
 - ◆ Not *What should we do?* but rather ***What might we do?***

- ◆ Not *What do I believe?* but rather ***What would I have to believe?***
- ◆ Not *What is the right answer?* but rather ***What are the right questions?***

Problem Definition

1. Establish the need for a solution
 - a. What is the basic need?
 - b. What is the desired outcome?
 - c. Who stands to benefit and why?
2. Justify the Need
 - a. Is the effort aligned with our strategy?
 - b. What are the desired benefits for the organization; how will we measure them?
 - c. How will we insure that a solution is implemented?
3. Contextualize the problem
 - a. What approaches have we tried?
 - b. What have others tried?
 - c. What are the internal and external constraints on implementing a solution?
4. Write the Problem Statement
 - a. Is the problem actually many problems?
 - b. What requirements must a solution meet?
 - c. Which problem solvers should we engage?
 - d. What information and language should the problem statement include? (specific but not technical – no jargon)

SWOT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

As part of your scan of the business environment, consider the current internal strengths and weaknesses along with the external opportunities, threats or barriers of your organization.

| | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|----------|---|---|
| Internal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪▪▪ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪▪▪ |
| | Opportunities | Threats/Barriers |
| External | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪▪▪ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪▪▪ |



Litmus Tests for Effective Strategic Plans

Vision Litmus Test

- 1. Does it clearly state our identity?
- 2. Does it state what we desire to accomplish?
- 3. Does it reflect what our organization will look like in the future?
- 4. Does it reflect our ideal future?
- 5. Does it reflect the desired state voiced by our customers, stakeholders, and the community?
- 6. Does it reflect an enhanced quality of life for those who use our services or product?
- 7. Is it meaningful?
- 8. Will it inspire and challenge staff and the community?

Mission Litmus Test

- 1. Does it clearly state the business we are in?
- 2. Is it sufficiently broad so that everyone in the organization can see how they contribute?
- 3. Does it rarely need to be changed?
- 4. Is the rationale for our existence clear?
- 5. Does it speak to the ends we want to accomplish?
- 6. Will it make sense to our customers? To community members?
- 7. It is succinct and meaningful?
- 8. Is it obvious why we spend public dollars on such an effort?

- 9. Will we be embarrassed if we see it on the front page of the newspaper or news web site?

Goal Litmus Test

- 1. Does the goal support the mission?
- 2. Does the goal represent a desired result that can be measured?
- 3. Does it deal with just one issue?
- 4. Is it challenging but still realistic and achievable?
- 5. Is the goal aligned with department and agency strategic plans or direction?
- 6. Is it important to customers and stakeholders?
- 7. Collectively, do the goals reflect most of the budget, staffing, and efforts of the organization?
- 8. Will someone unfamiliar with us understand what the goal means?

Objectives Litmus Test

- 1. Does the objective reflect a specific accomplishment desired?
- 2. Can progress towards the completion of the objective be measured?
- 3. Does it specify a result rather than an activity?
- 4. Is it challenging yet realistic and attainable within the planning period and resources available?
- 5. Is there a specific timeframe for completion?

- 6. Is a person identified who will be accountable for completion?
- 7. Is there at least one objective for each goal?
- 8. Will someone unfamiliar with us understand what the objective means?

Action Plan Litmus Test

- 1. Does the action plan contain a timeframe for completion?
- 2. Is the action plan broken down into important or significant steps?
- 3. Has responsibility for successful completion of each step in the plan been assigned?
- 4. Is each significant step in the plan identified with beginning and completion dates?
- 5. Are resources needed to accomplish each step of the plan identified? Have arrangements been made for resources?
- 6. Is there sufficient detail to track milestones?
- 7. Does the action plan relate to and help accomplish the objective(s)?
- 8. Does the action plan relate to the goal(s)?
- 9. Can accomplishments be objectively measured?

Performance Measures Litmus Test

- 1. Does the performance measure relate to the mission it represents?
- 2. Does it relate to the goal it represents?
- 3. Does it relate to the objective it represents?
- 4. Is the performance measure meaningful to the community? To management and the governing board?
- 5. Will it be possible to collect accurate and reliable data for this performance measure?
- 6. Is it important to the employees doing the work?
- 7. Can the results be compared to other jurisdictions?
- 8. Taken together, do these performance measures accurately reflect the key results of the organization?
- 9. Is there at least one, but not more than three, performance measures for each goal?



A Foundation of Leadership



Hallmarks of effective county elected officials and senior executives

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Personal Literacy

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Compassion

Strategy

- Strategic planning
- Adaptive change
- Shared vision
- Appreciate possibilities
- Future generations

Relationship Dexterity

- Coalition building
- Facilitate dialogue
- Appreciate differences
- Manage conflict

Advocacy

- Service to community
- Value to county
- Community needs

KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

Governance

- State and local relations
- County roles and powers
- Finances
- Decision-making

Policy

- Social and human services
- Public safety
- Land use
- Environmental protection

Administration

- Personnel and employee relations
- Performance assessment
- Customer service
- Accountability

Stewardship

- Financial and human resources
- Meeting management
- Communication
- Media relations
- Crisis management

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The **CSAC Institute for Excellence in County Government** is a professional, practical continuing education program for county officials. The experience is designed to expand the capacity and capability of county elected officials and senior executives to provide extraordinary services to their communities. The Institute is a program of CSAC and was established in 2008 with the first courses offered in early 2009.

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