

Strategic Planning

Definition: Strategic planning is a systematic process through which an organization agrees on, and builds commitment among key stakeholders to the priorities that are essential to its mission and are responsive to the environment. It is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what actions it takes, and why it takes those actions. Strategic planning also guides the acquisition and allocation of resources to achieve those priorities.

Keys to effective strategic planning:

- Focus on the most important issues during your strategic planning
- Be willing to question both the 'status quo' and the old assumptions – these must be challenged!
- Produce a document
- Make sure the strategic plan is translated into an annual operating plan

Who should be involved?

- Key to the success of strategic planning is the engagement of all who will directly or indirectly assist in the successful implementation of the plan
- All staff members, board members, associates, partners, and funders should have a say in the organizations strategic plan

Potential benefits of strategic planning:

- Promotes strategic thinking, acting, and learning
- Improves decision making
- Enhanced organizational effectiveness
- Can produce enhanced effectiveness of broader societal systems
- Benefits the people involved
- Can be a very effective route to enhanced organizational responsiveness, performance, and accountability

What strategic planning is not!

- It is not a tool to predict the future
- It is rarely a smooth, predictable, or linear process
- It does not produce results; it is a means, not an end!
- There is no guarantee that it will produce all or any of the above noted benefits!

Strategic planning can be used to help organize and manage effective organizational change processes in which the organization figures out what to change but also keeps what works.

Strategic planning is the act of setting direction and goals for a specific period of time.

This old adage says it all when it comes to strategic planning: "If you don't know where you are going how will you know when you get there?" And more importantly how will you celebrate your successes?

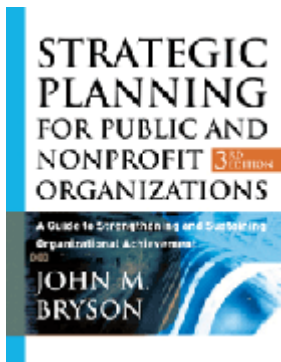
Most organizations don't plan to fail, they fail to plan!

Successful strategic planning improves the focus of an organization and improves the process of people working together.

In relation to non-profit organizations this is critical as boards of directors' change regularly.

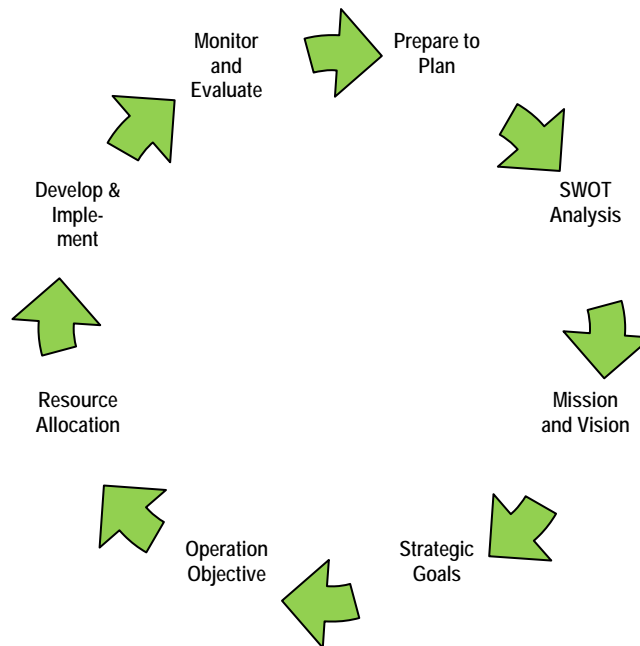
For more resources visit the Centre's website at www.bccnpsd.ca under links or articles of interest

You may also wish to check out library resources on this topic!



Strategic Planning Process

The following is a model for strategic planning processes.



Step One: Prepare to plan – it is highly recommended that strategic planning be completed in a one or two day session and that a facilitator be hired

Step Two: SWOT Analysis Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats or otherwise known as an environmental scan – this can be completed through a survey sent to all key stakeholders and participants in advance of the session or incorporated within the strategic planning process

Step Three: Mission & Vision- whether your organization is brand new or has been in existence for several decades, a review or the establishment of a mission and vision statement are critical to the success of any organization – often over time, an organization has changed direction without thinking that they are no longer in alignment with their mission and vision

Step Four: Strategic Goals – goals specify what is to be achieved within a specific time frame – usually one to five years

Step Five: Operational Objectives – objectives represent the tasks that need to be completed in order to achieve the goals – they identify very specific changes to be made

Step Six: Allocate Resources – resources are allocated based on the goals in the plan
Step Seven: Develop and Implement – once a strategic planning session has been completed, the office or leadership team of an organization will develop an operational plan to achieve the goals

Step Eight: Monitor and Evaluate – key to knowing when you have successfully met your goals!