

What is Strategic Planning?

Adapted from: Bryson's Strategic Planning in Public and Nonprofit Organizations

Strategic planning is a tool to help organizations work most effectively. This includes guiding an organization's decisions to focus resources, be sure that project staff operates from shared goals, and assess and determine future directions for the organization in the field.

Strategic planning is a structured effort to identify and document core decisions and related action steps that will guide the organization's image and identity, its vision and mission, and finally its programs, products and services.

Successful strategic planning involves an awareness and clarity of the organization's objectives, resources, and the environment and community in which it operates.

The "planning" includes setting actionable goals and developing a strategy to achieve those goals that reflect the shared vision and mission of the organization. By answering a series of probing questions from staff, volunteers, Board members, clients, partners, and others, the strategic planning process provides the means to analyze the organization's past assumptions, current success, and future needs and desires.

The process can prove challenging, even messy, but the final product of a published plan for the organization's future to share with current and potential stakeholders is invaluable to the sustainable future of an organization.

What Strategic Planning Is Not

- Making decisions for future actions; strategic planning produces decisions for the present.
- A substitute for sound judgment by organization leadership.
- A smooth linear process; strategic planning is a creative process that moves forward and back a few times before reaching the final plan.



Strategic Planning Resources

Allison, Michael, Jude Kaye, and Judy Kaye. Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook, John Wiley & Sons.

This comprehensive book discusses how to create and implement effective strategic plan using a simple, seven-phase process that covers everything from defining your mission and setting your course to initiating, monitoring, and streamlining your plan. The workbook is designed for nonprofit of all shapes, sizes, and budgets, and can be easily adapted to fit anytime frame.

Bryson, John M. Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Since first published in 1988, this book has become the standard book in the field of public and nonprofit organizations. This thoroughly revised edition combines information on leadership, strategic planning, and tools that can help leaders and followers enhance organizational achievement in the public and nonprofit sector.

Bryson, John M., and Farnum K. Alston. Creating and Implementing your Strategic Plan: A Workbook for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

This workbook shows you how to create and implement a strategic plan in the public and nonprofit sector including charts, checklists, suggestions and tricks for the practitioner in mind.

Howe, Fisher, and Alan Shrader. The Board Member's Guide to Strategic Planning: A Practical Approach to Strengthening Nonprofit Organizations, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

This book offers action steps to strategic planning in nonprofit organizations. Board members are guided through each critical step of strategic planning, including planning meetings, using consultants and facilitators, and determining visions and values. The book shows how strategic planning can lay the foundation for sound management and enthusiasm in the performance of an organization.



Strategic Planning Resource Online

Center for Community Change

<http://www.communitychange.org/OD.htm>

Center for Community Change assists organizations build their communities' capacity for self-help, develop strong leaders, provide critical services, build homes, develop businesses, give residents a say in their community's future and, perhaps most important, give low income people a sense of hope.

Management Assistance Program for Nonprofits

<http://www.mapnp.org/library/org%5Feval/uw%5Fplng.htm>

Our purpose is to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations to achieve mission-driven results. Since 1979, we have provided quality, affordable management consulting and board recruitment services to thousands of nonprofit groups.

Organizational Self-Assessment Checklist

<http://arts.endow.gov/pub/Lessons/Lessons/WARSHAWSKI.HTML>

This checklist was designed by the National Endowment for the Arts to be used by arts organizations, but it can apply to any community organization. The assessment explores organizational purpose, programs, governance, staff, marketing, community relations, programming, fundraising, finances, facilities, planning, communications and external factors.

Resource Materials for Strategic Planning

http://www.geocities.com/ywca_berkeley/resourcesplanning.html



