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strategies to achieve social impact

briefing paper

Ten Keys to Successful Strategic Planning for Nonprofit and Foundation Leaders

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Strategic planning has long been used as a tool for transforming and revitalizing corporations, government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Recently, however, skepticism about planning has been on the rise. Political and economic uncertainty is the norm and the pace of technological and social change has accelerated. There is some disillusionment with planning efforts that can't keep pace. "We did a plan five years ago and haven't looked at it since," is one common complaint. Or, "By the time we completed our plan, we were already carrying out all of its strategies."

But such comments miss the point. Rather than expose some fatal flaw in strategic planning, they reflect a basic misconception about the purpose and value of strategic planning and what it takes for a plan and the process to succeed. Indeed, the process can prove pointless and frustrating and the end product of dubious value when care isn't taken to set clear, realistic goals, define action steps explicitly, and elicit the views of major stakeholder groups.

Yet few tools are better suited to help address the staggering array of challenges brought about by a changing environment. A successful strategic planning process will examine and make informed projections about environmental realities to help an organization anticipate and respond to change by clarifying its mission and goals; targeting spending; and reshaping its programs, fundraising and other aspects of operations.

Plans Into Action: Prerequisites of Success

A successful plan is, by definition, a *usable* plan–one that informs the organization's activities as well as its long-range view, and one that yields meaningful improvements in effectiveness, capacity and relevance.

For more than 25 years, TCC Group has assisted private, community and corporate foundations; public charities; and nonprofit organizations throughout the country to develop and design effective strategic plans. Although the challenges of funding, governing, and managing each organization are unique, certain lessons apply across the board. The features of a good planning project do not vary–regardless of its organizational scope, emphasis or specific issues. This paper shares ten immportant keys to promote more successful strategic planning.

For purposes of brevity and readability, foundations, public charities and nonprofit associations are all referred to in this paper as organizations.

1. A clear and comprehensive grasp of external opportunities and challenges.

No organization exists in a static environment. Social, political and economic trends continually impact the demand for its offerings and services. Even as advances in technology present new opportunities, they also generate new expectations. Needs and community demographics are all subject to change. So too are methods for delivering programs and services. It is thus essential that a strategic plan reflect the external environment. Programs, services and operations should be reexamined and reshaped in light of current realities and future projections.

Strategic Planning: What It Is — and Isn't

More than a few strategic planning efforts have run aground because they were based on a fundamental misunderstanding of what a strategic plan is. Sometimes strategic planning is confused with other planning modalities, each valid in its own right but geared toward a different end result. To put it simply, not every plan is a strategic plan.

A ***strategic plan*** is a tool that provides guidance in fulfilling a mission with maximum efficiency and impact. If it is to be effective and useful, it should articulate specific goals and describe the action steps and resources needed to accomplish them. As a rule, most strategic plans should be reviewed and revamped every three to five years.

An ***operating plan*** is a coordinated set of tasks for carrying out the goals delineated in a strategic plan. It thus goes into greater detail than the strategic plan from which it is derived, spelling out time frames and the roles of individual staff and board members, for example. It also has a shorter horizon than a strategic plan — usually one fiscal year.

A ***business plan*** is typically focused on the actions and investment necessary to generate income from a specific program or service. A business plan includes information about an organization's products, competitive environment and revenue assumptions.

A ***case statement*** is geared toward marketing and fundraising rather than planning. It describes the organization's goals, capabilities and strengths and the benefits it provides. Its purpose is to secure contributions and grants from individuals, foundations, corporate giving programs and other philanthropic entities.

In 1994, the Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) approved a five-year strategic plan that, predictably, had run its course by 1999. "Most of the goals had been achieved," says Martin Gomez, BPL's Executive Director. "We embarked upon a new planning process in 2000, in part because we believed that we needed to rethink our services and programs in light of new technology. In the current market, we realized we could no longer get by with yesterday's systems." Moreover, while few had questioned the English-only platform for the Library's online catalog five years earlier, an assessment of Brooklyn demographics, coupled with information from staff discussion groups conducted by TCC Group as part of the planning process, revealed that the library's user base included increasing numbers of immigrants from Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and Asia. Thus, *Taking Flight*, the Library's 2001-2006 strategic plan calls for the development of a multilingual and more flexible online catalog of its holdings as well as an advanced telecommunications infrastructure.

"Ultimately, we'll be able to create virtual collections of print, video and multimedia materials that can be accessed from any of 59 branch libraries throughout Brooklyn, as well as by library users in other parts of New York City," Gomez says. "That wouldn't have been a top-line priority a decade ago. Today it is."

"Rising operating costs, especially those connected with repairs and maintenance, were draining our resources, overtaxing our board and hampering our effectiveness."

— Noelle Mills Adler
President
LCU

2. A realistic and comprehensive assessment of the organization's strengths and limitations

The bedrock of any successful strategic plan is a warts-and-all consideration of capabilities and strengths, weaknesses and limitations. Information, both objective and subjective, must be gathered from a wide array of sources, including staff and board members, clients, community leaders, funders and partner organizations, among others.

Sometimes the process yields unexpected results. A 1999 organizational assessment led to a turning point in the nearly 150-year history of LCU, a provider of low-cost housing for deserving young women studying and working in New York City. Interviews with board members and staff brought out a pervasive belief that it was time for LCU to consider new approaches to fulfilling its mission.

"Rising operating costs, especially those connected with repairs and maintenance, were draining our resources, overtaxing our board and hampering our effectiveness," says LCU President, Noelle Mills Adler. "The capacity assessment helped us fully grasp how serious our situation had become. It also presented us with two possible solutions: professionalize our operations in order to reduce the load on the Board, or sell our residences and establish a grantmaking program."

LCU's Board reflected on what would be most realistic and chose the latter course. "Our plan is to provide housing stipends for young women in conjunction with schools and nonprofit housing providers throughout the city," says Adler. "It's a way of making better use of our resources and serving an even larger client base."

A capacity assessment likewise laid the groundwork for a successful strategic plan for the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, a private foundation dedicated to improving public education in Connecticut. The foundation retained TCC Group to organize and facilitate a strategic planning project in 1999 as its existing five-year plan was moving into its last year. The process examined all aspects of the Fund's operation, including governance, staffing, program, communications and evaluation. The assessment provided a stepping-off point from which the actual plan development could proceed. The goals and strategies outlined in the plan that was approved by the Fund's board in 2001 focused on increasing organizational capacity to ensure program success.

3. An inclusive approach

At one point or another, all important stakeholder groups should have a voice in the planning effort. At a minimum, that includes staff, current and incoming board members, clients, funders and partner organizations. To be sure, all views will not be weighted equally, nor will every staff member be involved at every stage: it is possible to be inclusive without falling into the too-many-cooks trap. But a strategic plan should not become the exclusive responsibility of a small cadre of stakeholders. If the planning process is to succeed, it must incorporate the views of all the constituencies that will be affected by the plan or have a role in its implementation.

When Ethical Culture Fieldston School began work on a new strategic plan in 1999, its intention was to honor "the long tradition of democratic,

broad-ranging consultation," says school head Joseph Healey. "But we also needed to avoid chartering so many committees and adding so many layers that the work would bog down." To achieve inclusiveness without sacrificing productivity, the work was divided among task forces in several key areas, including diversity, faculty life, governance and buildings and grounds. Each task force, as well as an oversight committee, drew representatives from each of the school's major constituencies — faculty, student body, parents, administration, alumni and trustees.

"In a real sense, our methodology was consistent with our objective," says Healey. "The school was operating as three separate schools — two for lower grades and one for upper grades, each with its own principal and distinctive curriculum, with little sense of institutional cohesiveness. We are striving to unify the three into a single PK-12 school with a single mission, culture and curriculum." Ethical Culture Fieldston's new strategic plan, completed in December 2000, "is an important first step in that direction," he says.

4. An empowered planning committee

Strategic planning should be a participatory undertaking—but not an anarchic one. As a matter of practical necessity, the core work will generally be entrusted to a small planning committee with sufficient decision-making authority to keep the project moving forward.

This isn't to suggest that the committee members have carte blanche to adopt and implement key action steps, or that they not be held accountable to the board or larger community. But neither should they be subjected to constant second-guessing, or be required to seek board or management approval at every step. The board's confidence in their skill and judgment must be implicit. At the Miami, Florida-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, a board-staff committee oversaw the strategic planning effort from start to finish, reviewing the scope of work and tracking its progress through regular reports. The committee also planned and led a three-day retreat where the framework and direction of the new plan were formalized. In the end, the Board discussed and approved the final plan – a common organizational practice, but "they knew that they had appointed a strong planning committee, and that the committee had done its job," comments Executive Vice President Penny McPhee. "There was no need to revisit or question the end result."

At Safe Horizon–a New York City-based nonprofit formerly called Victim Services–the bulk of the initial planning work was done by an eight-person committee comprising four staff members and four representatives from the Board of Directors. In the 20 years since its founding, Safe Horizon had strayed from its mission "to provide support for victims of crime and abuse and their families." The organization had branched out into several new areas, including immigrant services, "which were valuable in their own right, but not consistent with our reason for being," says Senior Vice President Elizabeth McCarthy. "We saw strategic planning as a way to get back to our founding mission."

"Committee empowerment was especially important because of our aggressive time frame," McCarthy adds. Work began in December 1999 with the goal of having a plan in place before the end of the fiscal year, the following June — an ambitious undertaking for an organization with more than 60 sites and a $40 million budget. While the committee's recommendations were subject to Board approval, "the Board took them very seriously," McCarthy says. "In fact, most members didn't see the plan until it was in close-to-final form in May."

"We saw strategic planning as a way to get back to our founding mission."

— Elizabeth McCarthy
Safe Horizon

5. Involvement of senior leadership

Some executive directors and board members are inclined to take a hands-off approach when it comes to strategic planning. They may simply lack the necessary time or interest to get involved. Or they may underestimate the significance of the task at hand and its potential impact on the organization.

Must executive directors micromanage the effort or involve themselves in its every aspect? Certainly not. But their active participation—that is, buy-in that goes beyond mere verbal endorsement—is crucial. Absent their vision and commitment, and the certainty that funds and resources will be available to implement action steps, others are unlikely to take the process seriously.

Prior to the arrival of Gordon J. Campbell as Chief Executive Officer of Safe Horizon in 1998, the Board had taken steps toward drafting a new strategic plan. "But Gordon was uncomfortable with that approach," says Brooke McMurray, Chair of the Planning Committee. "He felt that this needed to be an agency-wide effort, involving staff as well as board, front-line personnel as well as senior management." In fact, Campbell hosted a two-day senior management retreat that resulted in development of core features of the plan. "What we needed was a plan for increasing our impact and relevance in tangible ways," McMurray says. "Without Gordon's dynamic involvement, I doubt we would have gotten there."

6. Sharing of responsibility by board and staff members

An effective plan takes multiple elements into account: the funding climate, the expectations of clients and other stakeholders, the competitive landscape and the exigencies of operations and programming. Neither board nor staff, acting on its own, has a full grasp of all those areas. Hence the need to ensure that both are fully involved.

As policy-setters and financial and legal watchdogs, board members are charged with keeping an organization on track and working to fulfill its mission. It's an important responsibility—one to which they must be fully committed, notwithstanding any other professional and business involvements. The duties of governance require that board members figure centrally in defining the goals of the plan and laying out its structure.

However, removed from day-to-day operations, board members may propose ambitious ideas that require tempering or scaling back. Staff members are likely to have a more intuitive and informed understanding of the organization's internal workings and capabilities, and a clearer sense of what is feasible and what is not. They understand the ins and outs of programming, operations and personnel functions; they're the ones who deal directly with clients.

Components of an effective strategic plan

Strategic plans are comprehensive documents that cover all aspects of an organization's work, including programs and services, management and operations, fundraising and finances, facilities and governance. Depending on the organization's scope and emphasis, a plan might also describe approaches to enhance marketing, internal and external communications, membership development and administrative systems.

Information about these topics should be presented in an action-oriented format. Good strategic plans include:

A Mission Statement
A brief expression of the organization's purpose. It should answer the questions "Why do we exist?" and "What, at the most basic level, do we do?"

A Vision Statement
A description of the organization's desired future state. An *organizational* vision statement is internally focused: It projects the future in terms of the program, budget or staff size, answering the question "Where do we want to be?" Some organizations also adopt *societal* vision statements, articulating the desired influence of their

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The upshot: professional staff and board members each bring complementary skill sets and perspectives to the table. One without the other would result in a skewed and incomplete picture. The planning effort should draw on both.

Established in 1991, the Foundation for the Mid-South (FMS) has since evolved into a kind of "hybrid foundation," in the words of its president, George Penick. "We'd started out as an operating foundation, and later became a public charity," he says. "Today we function as a combination of a number of philanthropic models." The foundation's original purpose — to build the communities, resources and leadership of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi through change strategies based on regional cooperation — remains in place. But by 1999, a certain ambiguity had crept into the foundation's message: its board seemed unclear on FMS's institutional priorities.

"We weren't in disarray or on the brink of a crisis," Penick says. "It was more of a tremor than an earthquake. But we needed to have everyone on the same page with regard to our mission, objectives and management practices." The development of a strategic plan "provided the board with an opportunity to immerse themselves in our activities and operations — to really get their hands dirty," he says. "For their part, I think they felt TCC Group's work gave them a greater sense of the scope and workings of the Foundation. And the entire experience gave them permission to ask tough questions that might not otherwise have been raised." The Board, in fact, was responsible for framing the plan and defining the foundation's mission and goals; the staff played an essential role by restructuring programs within that framework.

"We're on a much better footing than before," Penick says. "Board members have a much clearer sense of programs. Outcomes are more measurement-driven. And program managers have a better awareness of what their programs actually cost."

Why vision matters

A strategic plan cannot succeed unless it is derived from a clear vision of what the organization will look like at a specific point in the future. This vision is encapsulated in a written description of the organization's desired future state in terms of budget size, client base, staffing levels and program areas and other parameters. (Alternatively, a vision statement may focus outward on the organization's societal impact. See Components of an Effective Strategic Plan on page 4.)

Sometimes the vision is so self-evident at the outset of the planning process that the statement virtually writes itself. But more often, the existing vision may be hazy, ambiguous or outdated. Indeed, the effectiveness of many organizations is hampered by conflicting visions, or myopic visions devoid of "big picture" thinking.

A vision statement should be explicit, straightforward and, above all, concise.

Regardless of the starting point, an external scan and organizational assessment are essential prerequisites for drafting an effective vision statement. They ground the process in reality, thereby helping stakeholders narrow their choices or see opportunities that they had not previously considered.

Group facilitation techniques can be especially useful. TCC Group regularly convenes retreats for planning committee members and other key stakeholders to develop a vision for the future. Creative groups with good insights about programming and constituents' needs can write newspaper headlines about their work and operations five years down the road and use this as a starting point for deriving the vision. The scenario approach, whereby a planning committee discusses several different possible directions for the future, is another common tool for building consensus.

A vision statement should be explicit, straightforward and, above all, concise. Omit secondary points and needless digressions; keep the statement focused. Because of the defining nature of the vision statement, it is important for an organization to invest as much time as necessary in crystallizing its ideas and articulating them on paper.

7. Learning from best practices

Clearly, each organization has its own individualized mission, client base and operating culture. Thus, each must map a strategy, incorporating goals and action steps carefully customized to its needs. A plan that is appropriate in one setting won't necessarily be appropriate in another, no matter how similar the organizations.

Nonetheless, it is possible to learn from the successes, failures and mistakes of others. One way or another, every organization and foundation deals with challenges related to human resources, technology, capacity building, fundraising, organizational development and governance. Whatever their specific goals and methods, all must find ways to remain relevant, meet the needs of a changing client population and make the best use of available funds. Often, a solution that works for one can be successfully adapted by another.

Thus, many comprehensive planning processes include a survey of comparable organizations' experiences in dealing with similar challenges. These can be researched via interviews, database searches and a review of relevant literature, such as journal articles and position papers.

In preparation for formulating a new strategic plan, the Knight Foundation was particularly interested in examining its evaluation and communications functions. Toward this end, TCC Group conducted extensive benchmarking interviews to obtain information about enhancements other large foundations were making in these areas. "The interviews gave us a broad context from which to make informed decisions about the future," says Penny McPhee. "We learned some new approaches that our planning committee might never have previously considered."

8. Clear priorities and an implementation plan

While missions and visions are essential to inspiring commitment to your organization, they may be seen as hollow unless accompanied by an organized description of activities needed to fulfill desired aims. (See Components of an Effective Strategic Plan on page 4.)

Developing a workable strategic plan means dissecting the organization's objectives and strategies and determining which take precedence. Sometimes it is easy to define first steps, such as shoring up current operations before moving on to replication in new sites or restructuring a Board. In other instances, leading strategies may be less clear, but prioritization is still essential. When a planning committee focuses on coming up with new ideas without determining which are most important, the task of implementing the plan becomes overwhelming. Goals are rarely achieved.

The best time to make these tough choices is after key features of the mission and the vision for the future are clear. The planning committee should outline the full list of priorities and, if there are many, decide which to move ahead on and which to cut back. Outside consultants can often help facilitate this type of discussion and build consensus. Once priorities are set, members of

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work on their target community or constituency. This type of vision statement answers the question "What is the impact of our work?"

A Values Statement
The principles on which an organization is built, and that guide its planning, operations and programs. It answers the question "What do we believe in?"

Goals and Objectives
These express desired outcomes and may be focused on discrete parts of the organization's programming or internal operations. Progress toward achieving goals and objectives should be measurable. While the terms are often used interchangeably, goals are generally more comprehensive or far-reaching than objectives. Framed clearly, they answer the question "What do we want to accomplish?"

Strategies and Tactics
These consist of approaches or sets of activities needed to achieve the goals and objectives. They answer the question "How will we actually accomplish our work?"

An Implementation Plan
This is an organizational "user's guide" to the strategic plan. It spells out the cost, duration, priority order and accountability for each strategy and tactic. The implementation plan answers the questions "What are our specific priorities?" and "How can we pursue our plan in a logical and feasible fashion?"

the planning committee need to identify strategies or sets of activities to achieve the goals and objectives.

Next, staff members often give critical input about the costs of new ideas and who might take on the responsibility. Having such extensive information allows key individuals on the planning committee to make further choices about sequencing and paring back (or in rare cases, stepping up) the activities represented in the plan. It often takes time to achieve this level of detail, but in the long run it is worth it.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities works to increase opportunities for all individuals with learning disabilities to achieve their potential. TCC Group worked with the organization to create a plan that included information about the organization's vision, target audience and goals. The plan also encompasses more than 50 strategies covering all facets of the organization as well as information about who has responsibility for each strategy, how much implementation would cost and when it will happen. "This tool has been incredibly helpful for our work," says Jim Wendorf, Executive Director of NCLD. "We have clear ideas of what new activities we need to fundraise around and, whenever the Board gets into a debate about new program ideas, we can refer to the strategic plan. It has also helped us assess our progress and see how much we have accomplished in a short span of time."

9. Patience

For small and mid-size organizations, strategic planning often moves forward on a speedy timetable. But for larger organizations with many constituencies, the process may advance much less quickly. When an organization is making major changes and needs extensive buy-in, the process may not be perfectly linear. As information is gathered, sifted and analyzed, assumptions are rethought, new ideas advanced and old ones revamped or discarded.

It is important to keep things on course and maintain momentum, but rushing is counter productive. "We recognized a compelling need to revisit our existing plan and rethink our priorities," recalls Penny McPhee of the Knight Foundation. "At the same time, we knew at the outset that the process could take a year or longer if it was to be done right." For one thing, staff and Board members had to fit their duties into already crowded work schedules. "The reality is that we simply didn't have the time or resources to devote every waking moment to the strategic planning process," says McPhee. "We had a foundation to run."

Further, the planning process coincided with the arrival of a new president "who was eager to build a consensus and willing to take the time to do so," says McPhee. Historically, Knight had addressed two key areas: journalism and quality of life issues in 26 U.S. communities. "We expected to make changes, but didn't expect to wind up with a plan that took us in such a markedly different direction," says McPhee. While not abandoning its twin focus, the Foundation eliminated several grant programs, restructured its staff and revamped its philanthropic criteria to meet its grantees' needs in a more focused way. "We have much greater impact now," says McPhee. "That wouldn't have been possible had we cut corners in the planning process."

How Consultants Can Help

Many organizations large and small have Board and staff members with strategic planning experience. What they often lack are objectivity, discipline and time. A consultant can provide invaluable assistance in designing a strategic planning process that involves all key stakeholder groups in a cost-effective way. Consultants can also obtain sensitive information confidentially and share it in a useful fashion.

Other productive roles for consultants include providing "expert advice" based on their work with other organizations; facilitating consensus among stakeholders with differing points of view; keeping planning committees on track and on schedule; and helping to organize seemingly diffuse or contradictory thoughts and approaches into a sound strategic plan document.

What outside consultants cannot do is take full responsibility for developing the strategic plan, or determine an organization's mission, vision, goals or implementation activities. Rather, their role is to facilitate a process whereby the organization's leadership makes those decisions. Nor should consultants be expected to communicate to an organization's constituents about the value of a planning process or generate enthusiasm for new directions. It is the consultant's job to furnish background information when needed and to focus on process. This ensures that the plan reflects the interests of individuals who will be instrumental in helping the organization thrive in the future.

"Everyone understood the importance of making this a participatory and collaborative venture."

— Gail Nayowith
Citizens' Committee for Children

10. A commitment to change

No matter how relevant its original mission, no organization can afford to shackle itself to the same goals, programs and operating methods year after year. As client needs, market conditions and funding criteria change, strategies need to be revisited regularly. Sometimes all that's needed is fine-tuning; other times, a more fundamental rethinking of goals and opportunities may be required. If they are to remain viable and effective, organizations must be prepared to change as extensively as conditions require.

Prior to 1994, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) had never drafted a strategic plan. What the organization did have was a clear mission— "to ensure that every New York City child is healthy, housed, educated and safe." Since its founding, CCC had applied a broad array of advocacy tools "to provide an effective voice for children and make sure children in every city neighborhood had the rights, protections and services they deserve," says executive director Gail Nayowith. With the approach of CCC's 50th anniversary, "we decided a strategic plan could help us clarify and recommit to our mission and make sure we were using our resources to achieve the best possible results for kids."

From the beginning, Nayowith says, "everyone understood the importance of making this a participatory and collaborative venture. We knew that serious changes were likely, and that change always carries risk. I think we all recognized that the best way to manage that risk was to make sure we were all on the same page."

In the end, "there wasn't a single aspect of the operation that wasn't changed in some way," says Nayowith. Governance was closely reexamined and overhauled: Board size was reduced, the bylaws were strengthened and, for the first time, term limits were set for directors.

"Putting our heads together, we also reworked our basic operating model with an eye toward becoming less of a think tank and more action-oriented," says Nayowith. While CCC's original mission hadn't changed, "we needed to recapture our original agility and nimbleness. The strategic planning experience helped both staff and board see that "in an increasingly conservative funding environment, the surest way to achieve that mission would be through purposeful action — not endless examination and discussion."

Apart from governance and organizational changes, the plan helped CCC double its fundraising within two years, becoming an even stronger and more effective advocate for children while eliciting the single largest funding increase for children's mental health programs in the history of New York State.

"We also found ways to use our communications resources more efficiently, resulting in an exponential increase in media coverage and visibility," says Nayowith. "For an organization whose stock in trade includes advocacy, the shaping of public policy, and the dissemination of information, that's a very valuable payoff."

A Final Word

It is important to understand the limitations as well as the possibilities of strategic planning. A strategic plan is not a wish list, a report card or a marketing tool. It is certainly not a magic bullet or a quick cure for everything that ails an organization — especially if the plan winds up on the shelf.

What a strategic plan can do is shed light on an organization's unique strengths and relevant weaknesses, enabling it to pinpoint new opportunities or the causes of current or projected problems. If board and staff are committed to its implementation, a strategic plan can provide an invaluable blueprint for growth and revitalization, enabling an organization to take stock of where it is, determine where it wants to go and chart a course to get there.

Strategic Planning Resources

Allison, Michael and Jude Kaye. *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook*. John Wiley and Sons, 1997.
ISBN: *0-471-17832-2*

Availability, $39.95: http://www.wiley.com or 877.762-2974

Written by consultants of the Support Center for Nonprofit Management in San Francisco, this guide and workbook is a good combination of explanation and examples and worksheets. A disk with worksheet formats is included with the book.

Barry, Bryan. *Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations.* Amherst Wilder Foundation, 1997.
ISBN: *0-940069-07-5*

Availability, $28 through the Wilder Foundation Publishing Center at 800.274.6024 bulk rates available or http://www.wilder.org/pubs

This basic hands-on guide is one of the best tools for explaining the strategic planning process and demonstrating how it can be implemented. The workbook was recently updated from its 1986 version. It provides step-by-step instructions that are general enough to be tailored to most nonprofit organizations yet detailed enough to provide specific instruction and value. The workbook features an overview, guidance through five strategic planning steps, three methods for developing a strategy, a sample three-year plan, detachable worksheets and completed sample worksheets.

Bryson, John M. *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement* (revised edition.) Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.
ISBN: *0-787-90141-5*

Availability, $36: http://www.wiley.com or 877.762.2974

This book is a comprehensive discussion of strategic planning for the more serious planner/reader. A companion workbook is also available as a step-by-step guide to conducting strategic planning. This new version of the book addresses the leadership role in strategic planning and the ways in which strategic thinking and acting can be embraced throughout an organization. It is not a quick read but is valuable for those most serious about strategic planning.

Drucker, Peter. *The Drucker Foundation Self-Assessment Tool: Participant Workbook.* Drucker Foundation and Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998.
ISBN: *0-787-94437-8*

Availability, $14: http://www.wiley.com or 877.762.2974

The Drucker Foundation Self-Assessment Tool: Participant Workbook "combines the best elements of long-range planning and strategic marketing with a passion for dispersed leadership."

Eadie, Douglas C. *Beyond Strategic Planning: How to Involve Nonprofit Boards in Growth and Change*. BoardSource (formerly National Center for Nonprofit Boards), 1993.
ISBN: *Not applicable*

Availability, $4.99 (members), $6.25 (non members):
http://www.boardsource.org/Bookstore.asp or 800.883.6262

The guidebook focuses on: the practical steps boards can take to play a meaningful role in the process; helping organizations identify key strategic issues; and implementing a plan to ensure that each issue is fully developed and addressed.

Grace, Kay Sprinkel. *The Board's Role in Strategic Planning*. BoardSource (formerly National Center for Nonprofit Boards), 1996.
ISBN: *Not applicable*

Availability, $9 (members), $12 (non members): http://www.boardsource.org/Bookstore.asp or 800.883-6262

This best-selling booklet explains the importance of strategic planning and why board involvement is essential. It discusses types of planning, defines key planning terms and outlines a sample process. The lesson discusses the importance of ongoing monitoring, evaluation and revision once the plan is in place. A valuable primer for board members and executives who are beginning a planning process.

Kibbe, Barbara and Fred Setterberg (for The David and Lucile Packard Foundation). *Succeeding With Consultants: Self-Assessment for the Changing Nonprofits*. The Foundation Center, 1992.
ISBN: *Not applicable*

Availability, $19.95 through The Foundation Center at 212.620.4230

Based on the Packard Foundation's work with nonprofit organizations and consultants over the last decade, this guidebook provides nonprofit leaders with the basics of how to assess management and organizational capacity; when a consultant may be needed and how to select and use one effectively; and how to begin a process of organizational planning and change. In plain prose, this resource presents nonprofit executives with the right questions to ask before engaging in a planning process. It introduces who consultants are and what they do, how to select and hire one and how to evaluate the consultant relationship.

Mittenthal, Richard. *Effective Philanthropy: The Importance of Focus*. TCC Group, 2000.
ISBN: *Not applicable*

Availability, downloadable at http://www.tccgrp.com or phone 212.949.0990

This briefing paper provides insight into helping foundations and philanthropies define a carefully articulated purpose, a clear understanding of the larger environment in which they operate and a carefully defined grantmaking program. With a detailed look at the prerequisities to effective philanthropy, this resource examines the necessary ingredients for an organization to achieve success.

Porter, Michael E. *Operational Effectiveness Is Not Strategy*. Harvard Business Review, November-December, 1996.
ISBN: *Not applicable*

Availability, $8.50 (Hard Copy or Electronic): http://www.harvardbusinessonline.com or 800.988.0886

Written by a leading thinker and writer regarding competitive strategy in the business world, this article pushes the reader to think about the distinction between doing work well and doing work strategically. Porter argues that the essence of strategy is choosing to perform activities differently than rivals do. A thought-provoking article.

Stern, Gary. *The Drucker Foundation Self-Asessment Tool: Process Guide*. Drucker Foundation and Jossey-Bass Publishers., 1999.
ISBN: *0-787-94436-X*

Availability, $30: http://www.wiley.com or 877.762.2974

The Drucker Foundation Self-Assessment Tool: Process Guide "lays out the three phases of a full self-assessment process and gives step-by-step guidance."

TCC Group

About TCC Group

For over two decades, TCC has provided strategic planning, program development, evaluation and management consulting services to nonprofit organizations, foundations, corporate community involvement programs and government agencies. In this time, the firm has developed substantive knowledge and expertise in fields as diverse as community and economic development, human services, children and family issues, education, health care, the environment, and the arts.

From offices in Philadelphia and New York, and full-time staff in Chicago, the firm works with clients nationally and, increasingly, globally. Our services include strategic planning, organizational assessment and development, feasibility studies, program evaluation and development, board development, restructuring and repositioning, as well as grant program design, evaluation, and facilitation.

Approach

Our approach is governed by the need to establish a clear and engaging consulting process that offers structure and predictability as well as flexibility to meet unforeseen needs. Working in multidisciplinary teams, we tailor each new assignment to meet the individual needs and circumstances of the client. We develop a scope of work that responds to the particular challenges, timetable and budget for the assignment.

Sometimes clients engage us for short-term research, problem solving, or facilitation projects. Other times we provide comprehensive planning and evaluation assistance over a longer period or conduct other activities, over one or more years. Increasingly, TCC helps clients manage and implement their work and provide advice on an ongoing basis. We bring to each new assignment the perspective of our expertise, broad experience and the enthusiastic commitment to get the job done right.

Our Services to Grantmakers

Our distinctive competence ranges from establishing foundations to asessing grantees and their needs, to developing funders' internal processes and external communications strategies. We have extensive experience in helping private foundations, corporate community involvement programs and government agencies understand and improve both grantmaking and organizational issues.

Services include:

- Grantmaking strategy and needs assessment
- Program design
- Grantmaking and program management
- Evaluation
- Strategic planning
- Organizational development and assessment
- Foundation formation
- Strengthening grantees

Our Services to Nonprofit Organizations

We provide an array of consulting services that can help nonprofit organizations address operational and environmental challenges. As a result of their work with us, our clients are able to:

- Strategic planning
- Business planning
- Benchmarking, peer review and research
- Program feasibility and design
- Marketing strategy
- Program evaluation
- Organizational assessment and development
- Governance review and board restructuring
- Training on topics such as strategic planning, governance, developing mission statements, and addressing challenges at particular stages of an organization's life cycle

For more information about TCC Group or to learn how we can help your organization, visit us online at http://www.tccgrp.com.

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