

What is Strategic Planning? How are they developed?

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I. What is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is the process by which an organization decides its future course of actions. Participants must reflect on the past and be forward-thinking about what they envision their organization to be in the future.

Strategic plans can cover a future duration of 1 day to several years. Typically, they are 1 to 5 years in duration.

The components of a strategic plan are:

- Vision

A shared organizational vision strengthens each employee's belief that the vision can be achieved. The vision is what an organization wants to look and be like.

“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision”. - Helen Keller

- Mission

The mission is the organization's purpose. The mission should be a statement of what the organization does to achieve its vision.

- Goals

A goal is an aim. They are the end results that organizations want to achieve. Goals are developed over a span of time.

“Set Specific, Time-Sensitive Goals....actual numbers, dates, dollar amounts” – Nell Merlino

HERE ARE LEMONGRASS CONSULTING'S STATEMENTS:

Vision

- To serve as a model of excellent, ethical, professional planning services in a dynamic work environment of cooperation, competence, initiative, respect, integrity, and teamwork – forging lasting client relationships by linking their goals with practical action plans

Mission

- To provide high quality planning services at the highest level of professional and ethical standards.

Long-Term Goals

- To operate with integrity and to provide timely service and quality work products on a consistent basis;
- To gain recognition as a premiere planning firm in the southeastern USA;
- To earn steady and sustainable growth and business development while remaining small, manageable, family-friendly, and healthy.

- Objectives

Objectives are strategic positions to obtain. Objectives are things toward which our efforts are directed. Organizations are to think about what their main objectives are – e.g. to teach, to sell, to ... describe what needs to get done in order to achieve the aim or goal. Organizations should have a minimum of 3 to 5 simple and realistic objectives to strive for.

Objectives can be specific for each day, week, or month.

For example, if the goal is to achieve \$1,200,000 in sales each year, an objective would be to achieve \$100,000 in sales each month.

- Strategic Activities

Strategic planning is a very important business activity. The plans need to be translated into day-to-day projects and tasks. It is imperative that organizational leaders keep employees excited about completing strategic activities so that the organization achieves its goals and objectives.

Leaders have to translate the organizational vision into reality. Each strategic activity should be in alignment with the organization's stated goals, objectives, mission, and vision.

II. How is a Strategic Plan Developed?

The best way to draft strategic plans involving a team of employees is to involve each team members. Members need to be trained on the strategic planning process and the benefits to having a plan. Members can participate in surveys, retreats, workshops, and/or strategy sessions.

Typically, first, participants list what they do – i.e. what services and products do they provide. Second, participants describe the customers and clients they serve. Lastly, participants discuss ways that the organization can excel – and what goals, objectives, and strategies will help them excel.

“The best vision is insight” – Malcolm Forbes

The SWOT analysis is a great tool to use to gain insight into the organization. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Participants reflect on and list the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

During the SWOT analysis businesses should think about how to overcome competition and other concerns.

Strategic planning training includes:

- Discussion of Services Performed
- Performance Based Budgeting
- Establishing Goals, Objectives, and Activities
- Crafting Performance Measures that are Quantifiable and Effective
- Identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT Analysis)
- Establishing Goals that Minimize Weaknesses, Maximize Strengths, and Capitalize on Opportunities
- Prioritizing Goals

Strategic plans should be reviewed monthly by organizational leaders to assess whether the organization is on track.