



Strategic and Operational Planning Worksheet

A Planning Tool by NGO Futures for Community Organizations

These tools were developed and used by Ken Phillips and his colleagues with many clients and classes. They are designed to assist nonprofit organizations, community associations, and groups in formation to draft their own plans and strategies.

Here is a guide for you for your overall strategic planning work. First is an overview of strategic level planning, operational or implementation planning, and big organizational development issues. Then we lead you through the necessary steps to draft an effective and involving plan for your organization. A community associations can carry out these steps in several evening meetings with the right guidance.

I encourage you to use my book *Strategic Planning and Culture for Nonprofits: Clear and doable steps to create motivating plans and the supporting culture you need for success* to guide and support you in this process.

Strategic Planning (3 to 5 Years)

1. Key Issues ✓ What did the research identify as issues we must address?
2. Dreams ✓ What are the dreams that we have about our work?
3. Landscape ✓ What did external experts say that we can use in our plans?
4. Vision ✓ Why do you exist? What is your ideal world?
5. Stakeholders ✓ Whom do you serve? How do you meet their needs?
6. Long-term Results ✓ What are your possible long-term results that create value for society?
7. Mission ✓ What do you do? What is your competitive advantage?
8. Core Values ✓ What are your most fundamental beliefs?
9. Situation/SWOT ✓ Where are you now? What is the assessment of your situation?
10. Critical Issues ✓ What are the most important issues? What must you solve?
11. Strategic Goals ✓ Where do you want to be in three to five years?
12. Key Strategies ✓ How will you move forward? What paths will you follow?
13. Positioning ✓ Who are you? How are you different? Special?
14. Credibility ✓ Why should people trust you?
15. Culture ✓ What is your organizational culture to support your plans?
16. Donors ✓ How do you benefit donors? Why should they support you?

Operational Planning (12 Months)

1. Objectives
 - Activities ✓ Exactly where do you want to be at the end of 12 months?
 - Responsibilities ✓ What will you do day to day? When will they be completed?
 - Deadlines ✓ Who will carry out the work? Who is accountable?
 - Indicators ✓ When will the activity be completed? The objective achieved?
 - Resources ✓ What are the critical success indicators? How will you know?
 - Management ✓ How much money do you need for each objective? Other resources?
 - What if... ✓ How will you monitor, guide and correct the work?
 - What if... ✓ What could go wrong? And how do you prepare of that?
2. Revenues ✓ Resources in money, volunteers and materials
3. Organization ✓ Responsibilities in the organization
4. Next Steps ✓ Next steps to improve and implement the plan

Organizational Development Issues

1. Structure ✓ How are you structured to achieve your goals?
2. Leadership ✓ How do you lead the organization to greater achievement?
3. Board of Directors ✓ How does the Board move to the next stage of development?
4. Management ✓ How do you assure the achievement of objectives?
5. Change Issues ✓ How do you promote and manage the change process?
6. Evaluation ✓ How do you make monitoring and evaluation strategic?
7. Training ✓ How do you develop and provide needed training to develop staff talent?
8. Learning ✓ How does the organization learn? How could it learn better?
9. Risk Management ✓ How to assure nothing big goes wrong? How to avoid scandal?

First of all, you need to gather a group of interested participants for the meeting. Then the first order of business is to discuss and get an understanding of the issues you want to address. Before the meeting, ask participants to think about this before the meeting.

Then there is research

A. Strategic Planning

1. Key Issues We Must Address

Capture the key issues identified in your reports, evaluations, interviews, surveys, competitor assessments, and other information so you can easily refer to them during your planning.

Key Issues We Must Address – capture these for consideration in the planning

1. How we plan?
2. What we need to consider in our programs?
3. What we need to consider in our fundraising and marketing?
4. What we need to consider in finance and administration?
5. What we need to consider in our culture, trustworthiness and positioning?
6. What about promotion, outreach, volunteers, education and advocacy?
7. What about issues in staffing and teamwork?
8. What about issues in governance, leadership and management?
9. How else can we organize ourselves to produce better results?
10. What other issues need to be addressed?

2. Dreams and Aspirations

This activity of opening up to your dreams and aspirations for the organization is important to stimulate creativity. It can play an important role in drafting a superior plan.

Dreams and Wishes – What In Your Dreams Could We Do?

Create a wish list of ideas, possibilities captured in a few words each.

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ | 11. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ | 12. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ | 13. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ | 14. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ | 15. _____ | 20. _____ |

Keep going with wild ideas, funny ideas, open to anything ideas – see how many you can get.

3. Landscape

Arrange a session to hear the views and forecasts of several external experts and capture relevant comments for consideration as you plan.

The Landscape – Capture the essence of these comments

1. Ideas about applications of new technology
2. Thoughts about politics
3. Predictions about the economy
4. Cutting edge developments in marketing
5. Changes we may see in society
6. Recommendations on other issues
7. Other

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4. Vision

What is the ideal world you see for those whom you serve? The organization’s vision is a description of the ultimate perfection of what the organization dreams could be. The vision describes a utopia.

Vision of Our Organization

Our vision is a world in which

The vision motivates and inspires people to get involved with you.

5. Stakeholders (Key Interest Groups)

Key interest groups or stakeholders are those people, institutions or groups who are important to achieving your goals. Organizations that do not satisfy the needs of stakeholders are soon out of business!

Key Interest Groups (Stakeholders)

- *Who are all your stakeholders?*
- *How they influence you?*
- *What you get from them?*
- *Why do they support you? What do they want from you?*
- *What demands do they make on you?*
- *How they are satisfied?*

Keep adding different stakeholders and clarify what they want from you. Add as many entries as you can.

Who	What we get	What they want	How we satisfy them
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

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6. Possible Long Term Results

You need to know what results you ultimately want to achieve. You can have as many rows of results as you like. The first column is the area of impact and the second is the measurement. These do not have to be precise terms or measurements. They serve to indicate how what you could do could provide wide-ranging benefits of significance. Think broadly from society's perspective, and aim high! What are the real results you want? Remember the three levels of results – immediate outputs, intermediate outcomes, and final long-term results. Add ideas – and have fun doing it!

Possible Long Term Results

These long-term results are the real benefits to society and the value you create. They should be significant. They should be measurable. They should be inspiring. For each result, just list the general term, e.g., reduced health care costs, increased school graduation rates, increased number of affordable housing units, elimination of homeless population, decreased violence in the home, an educated public about your mission, elimination of underserved people in your mission, more efficient state spending in your mission. Remember your vision and what your stakeholders want. Think openly, creatively, and out of the box.

- Long term results
- Measurable
- Solving significant social problems

Our Possible Long Term Results	Our Measurements

7. Mission of the Organization

A good mission statement describes whom you serve, what needs you meet, and how you help on a day-to-day basis. It reflects and contributes to the organizational vision. It is broad enough to allow flexibility yet also provides focus. It is clear and brief enough to remember and serve as a rallying point. Remember to answer:

- *Whom you serve*
- *What needs you meet*
- *How you help day to day*

Mission Statement

Our mission is to

The mission statement empowers and guides everyone in everything they do for the organization.

8. Our Core Values

Core values are the beliefs, norms and ideas that shape how an organization carries out its mission. They influence activities within the organization and identify how you want to treat staff, volunteers, donors, participants and others. Core values are non-negotiable and are the basis of your organizational culture. New board members and staff accept them as part of the organization's core values.

Core Values

Our Core Values are

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Core values guide and override everything else in your work and personal behavior.

9. Situation Assessment (SWOT)

The situation assessment identifies internal Strengths and Weaknesses and external Opportunities and Threats. This SWOT should bring into one section all the learnings from the research leading up to the planning:

1. History
2. Lessons from evaluations and studies
3. Interviews with key stakeholders
4. Surveys of donors
5. Surveys from program participants or beneficiaries
6. Conclusions of Marketing Studies
7. Expert views on your situation
8. Assessments of partners and competitors
9. Assessments of previous planning
10. Inputs from volunteers
11. Guidance from board members
12. Guidance from the executive director
13. Your own views and experiences

Our Situation Assessment

The situation assessment is an honest, thoughtful analysis of the reality in which you work.

- *How do you see the situation?* • *What’s good? What’s not? Be candid!*
- *What are the most important trends?* • *Politics, economics, culture, technology?*
- *What do you do best? Worst?* • *What is your competition doing?*

Major internal strengths

- +
- +
- +
- +
- +
- +
- +
- +
- +

Major internal weaknesses

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Key outside opportunities

- +
- +
- +
- +
- +
- +
- +
- +
- +

Key outside threats

-
-
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-
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10. Critical Issues

Critical issues are the 5 to 9 biggest issues you have to solve. Identifying critical issues flows directly from your analysis about the organization, the situation and the interest groups. Without identifying and solving these issues, your organization will probably not succeed.

- Critical issues are the major issues for the next few years.
- They are the issues that must be addressed to survive and perform well.
- They are issues you can influence.
- There would be serious problems if you fail to address them.
- For every threat there is an opportunity! For every weakness there is a solution!
- Each critical issue is stated in a few words, not a full sentence.

Our Critical Issues

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

If you have identified the right critical issues and then find solutions/goals, your organization will be great.

11. Strategic Goals

Key goals state where you want to be. They are the most important goals you can have for service delivery, fundraising, public relations and capacity building for the coming few years. Key goals are:

- Direct responses to the critical issues
- Responses to stakeholder expectations
- Realistic but significant (a real change)
- General destinations on your mission
- What you must do to succeed.
- Statements of what (not how or why)

A goal is written as a completed action with a single result and a single focus for each.

Our Strategic Goals

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

These are what you do in this planning period.

12. Strategic Positioning (Unique Value Added)

Donors are paying you to perform a service. They could give their funds to another NGO or spend them on other personal activities. Nonprofits are in competition with each other for funds and the competition is severe. It is necessary to appeal to donors with something special. How do you add more value to a donor's gift than other organizations could? Why should a donor give you his or her money? How do you express this in a few words? Think unique. Think what you offer donors. Think of the value of your work. Consider your name, logo, statement and slogan as communications tools.

Our Strategic Positioning

1. **Our name**
2. **Our logo**
3. **Our slogan**
4. **Our positioning**
5. **Our uniqueness**

13. Credibility Statement

Donors need to trust you to give you their money. What are the key elements of your trustworthiness? This includes history, results, management integrity, governance accountability, financial systems, external audits, transparency, reporting standards, endorsements, assurances, etc. Why should anyone trust you? Draft the key points of a Credibility Statement: You can trust us because we are committed to earn your trust.

Our Credibility Statement

Participants, donors, partners and authorities can rely on us (trust us) because

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Include actions you take to earn the trust of stakeholders especially skeptical donors.

14. Organizational Culture

Culture is the glue that binds people together and gives them a similar way of behaving. Organizational culture unifies vision, values and stakeholders. A fundraising culture unites everyone in the importance of fundraising. Organizations without a strong fundraising culture will not grow. A good fundraising culture is to know and exceed the expectations of your donors.

- What values currently exist? • How should these change? • What is desired for fundraising?

➔ See the more detailed discussion on Core Values and Organizational Culture in chapter 4.

Our Organizational Culture

Your organizational Culture is based on the Core Values you have already defined.

Current organizational culture:

Desired organizational culture:

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |
| 6. | 6. |
| 7. | 7. |

We will take the following steps to support the desired culture.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

15. Key Strategies

A strategic statement is a clear and logical explanation of how you will progress (what path, what means). Strategy is the road map to get to your goals, crafted to fit the special situation of the organization and its stakeholders. Identifying strategies requires creativity and insight. Three traditional business strategies are uniqueness, better service and lower price. Strategy is the basis for decisions, setting objectives and priorities, and allocating resources.

Examples of strategies for organizations:

- Doing what we do in a uniquely efficient way with larger than usual results
- Being the best in a particular category and dominating that market
- Developing our image (how we want to be seen) in innovative ways
- Building our capacity in fundraising
- Strengthening our board and honorary board
- Running profit making subsidiaries
- Integrating communications strategies for education, advocacy and fundraising

Key Strategies	
Organizational Strategy	
Program Strategy	
Fundraising Strategy	
Desired Image	
Key Message to Donors	
Priority Sources for Funding	
Priority Publics for Outreach	
Strategy for Campaigning	
Strategy for Advocacy	
Strategy for Lobbying	

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17. Benefits to Donors/Key Stakeholders/Groups

A clear definition of important benefits that you want to provide to key participants, donor groups, authorities, and other stakeholders will enable you to verify that the benefits are important to them and to make sure that you are in fact providing them. Be as specific as possible.

Groups	Benefit 1	Benefit 2	Benefit 3
Individuals (big gifts)			
Individuals (small gifts)			
Members			
Community			
Local Government			
State Government			
National Government			
Foundations			
Corporations			
Organizations			
Religious Groups			
School Classes			
Participants			
Individual names			

B. Operational Planning

1. Objectives for the Next 6-12 Months

Objectives state exactly what you want to achieve. Identifying objectives gets you to determine your immediate priority steps to move in the direction of your key goals.

Statement of an Objective and the Means to Achieve It

- A clear statement of a result or accomplishment
- Flows directly from the key goals and strategies
- Challenging, stretching and possible
- Measurable and specific
 - ❖ Indicate the specific activities and resources needed to succeed
 - ❖ Indicate the specific individual responsible for each activity
 - ❖ Indicate dates of completion for each activity
 - ❖ Required resources
 - ❖ Progress indicators to assure satisfactory progress

Key Outputs of Operational Planning

- Measurable objectives for 12 months for key revenues and other achievements
- All the objectives collectively work for progress toward the goals

How Progress Is Evaluated

- Objectives are specific and measurable so results can be easily measured.
- Responsibilities are assigned to individuals so accountability is clear.
- An end of project or end of year evaluation is conducted.

Progress Indicators

- Progress points along the way to the objective (e.g., a monthly count and report).
- Examples: number of proposals submitted, donors contacted, volunteers recruited, donors giving again, reports or acknowledgements made
- Progress indicators enable the responsible supervisor to monitor progress and make changes.

Summary of Objectives

Usually there would be a summary of the objectives. The objectives should probably include:

- Objectives for improved and expanded service delivery
- Objectives for major fundraising activities
- Objectives for public relations, community outreach and advocacy activities
- Objectives for volunteer recruitment and management
- Objectives for networking or association building
- Objectives for capacity building activities, evaluation and learning

Detailed Operational Plan

- The detailed operational plan usually covers one fiscal year. If this is your first operational plan for fundraising, you can make the plan cover 3 to 6 months to the end of the regular fiscal year.

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Objective: To _____

<u>Activities to achieve this objective</u>	<u>Person responsible</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
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- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)
- f)
- g)
- h)

Progress Indicators (to know you are making progress)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Support and Resources Needed

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Reasons this might not succeed and what to do about it?

- 1)
- 2)

Overall Supervision Responsibility and Reporting Process

Additional considerations

[Use this format for as many objectives as you need to have.]

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2. Projected Sources of Revenue

Together the specific objectives should create the Projected Sources of Revenue.

- Enter the years for this plan.
- Enter last year actual income received for all relevant sources.
- Enter in the current year expected income based on the objectives that you have set.
- Set challenging but realistic increases on a trend basis or best guess for later years.

Fiscal Year	Actual Income Last Year	Budget Current Year	Budget Next Year	Budget Year After
Enter the Year	20__	20__	20__	20__
Local Government				
Regional Government				
National Government				
Foreign Government				
Foundations				
Corporations				
Organizations				
Individuals (big gifts)				
Individuals (small gifts)				
Members				
Religious Sources				
Participants				
Events (net)				
Service Fees				
Interest and Dividends				
Income Producing Activities (net)				
Other Earned Income				
Other				
Total Revenues				