



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

McCourt School of Public Policy
Center for Public & Nonprofit Leadership

Strategic Planning

*Lessons from the Georgetown
Nonprofit Management Executive
Certificate Program*

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I. WHY SHOULD ORGANIZATIONS HAVE A STRATEGIC PLAN?

Nonprofit organizations are often established in response to a societal need and the vision of its founders to address it. The strategies adopted to implement the mission also initially come from the founders' insights and experiences. As organizations grow and the founders begin to share ownership of their vision with others, stakeholders such as funders, partners, community members, clients and program participants ask questions of vision and strategies. The original founders' plan may be in their heads and their hearts, but the new stakeholders need a more formal representation and shared understanding of the organization's future.

As organizations grow, funding sources and support mechanisms evolve, leadership changes, the external environment changes, and new programs are developed. New realities require new plans. Strategic guidance for the future keeps the organization on its course and allows its leadership to shape the direction and follow priorities systematically.

Strategic thinking and planning are essential to organizational success. I learned that first hand, during my 15 years tenure as the CEO of the Kennedy Institute. With the engagement and support of staff and board members, we developed three consecutive five-year plans that effectively guided and ensured the success of the Kennedy Institute's major expansion. Upon leaving the leadership of the Kennedy Institute to establish a strategic planning and leadership development consulting practice, I started consulting with nonprofit organizations whose leadership chose to develop a strategic plan. Supporting their efforts convinced me that indeed strategic thinking and planning are essential to organizational growth and success. Here are some real stories demonstrating the impact an effective strategic planning process can have on organizational growth and success.

In 1995, The Creative Alliance was founded in Baltimore, Maryland. It was established as an innovative hybrid of gallery, performance space, and artist guild that integrated the arts and humanities into the fabric of community life. As the decades brought opportunities for expansion in space and programming, staff and board members found themselves in need of a shared vision and a strategic focus. The strategic plan they developed gave them a new strategy to intensify and expand their impact in the community, brought them back to their roots of nurturing local artists, paved the way to strengthen their partnerships and their role as community leaders, and provided a process to evaluate their impact. Staff and board members now share a unified and focused approach to the diverse programs.

The LAYC Career Academy Public Charter School had been operating since 2012 and needed a clear and focused blueprint to guide its progress for the rest of its first decade. The school was seeking a touchstone for development and practices on which students, families, board, and funders would be able to rely. The preparation for strategic thinking and planning included considerable research about best practices used nationally and globally to support and motivate older youth. One of the seminal practices adopted was to use restorative practices to prevent and manage harm and disruptive behaviors. Such practices promote inclusiveness, relationship building, and shared problem-solving with students and faculty. Prior to the adoption and implementation of the strategic plan, the school needed to employ expulsions and suspensions for students several times a year. Since the adoption of restorative practices in the last school

year, there have been zero expulsions and zero suspensions for the first time in the school's history!

The National Parent Teacher Association is a household name, an organization founded in 1897 with the purpose of engaging and empowering families in support of children's success in school and beyond. The Association is a large and decentralized organization where strategic planning plays an important role in determining the priorities to harness the efforts of their 50-member staff and thousands of volunteers serving twenty thousand schools. Their most recent strategic plan (in addition to addressing the more traditional objectives, such as bold and strategic advocacy and leadership development of volunteers) included an entirely new initiative: the creation of a Center for Family Engagement. The Center was planned to deepen the quality of transformative engagement with parents. The Center now has three staff, a podcast and state-level support in developing regional examples of deeper, more inclusive engagement. It has also demonstrated success in Congressional advocacy resulting in \$15M in new allocations for State Family Engagement Centers.

Throughout my work with nonprofit organizations, I have found that clarifying mission, goals, and strategies; developing a plan to ensure their effective implementation; and developing mechanisms to hold organizations accountable for achieving their plan's outcomes are essential for organizational effectiveness. Without a strategic plan, an organization tends to become reactive and without a plan, an organization falls prey to the ideas, plans or agendas of founders, funders, clients, staff or board members. Strategies are often not unified or based on a shared vision. Programs or priorities may conflict with each other and not offer the best and most strategic approach to the accomplishment of the mission. Ideas may also change as their proponents do, leaving the organization without a steady course of action.

II. WHAT IS EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING?

As I prepare to teach the class on Strategic Planning at Georgetown University, I ask my students what they gained from the development of a strategic plan. They say:

- *"It unified the organization toward a common mission."*
- *"It gave us a course of action to follow."*
- *"It helped us establish outcomes and ways to evaluate our success."*
- *"It ensured Board, staff, and clients' 'buy-in.'"*
- *"It gave us the discipline to decide what to do and the accountability systems to do it."*

I also ask them what they did not gain. They say:

- *"We spent so much time developing the plan and then nothing changed."*
- *"There was no follow-through."*
- *"We did an operational plan, not a strategic plan."*
- *"One of our board/staff members facilitated it, and s/he was frustrated (and so were we) because s/he could not participate in sharing his/her ideas."*

- *“One of our Board/staff members facilitated it, and s/he was frustrated (and so were we) because instead of facilitating, s/he became an active participant in the discussion and the process and flow were totally disrupted.”*

So, what are the essential elements for an effective strategic planning process, one that will produce a useful plan?

1. **The involvement of all stakeholders**, such as funders, partners, community members, clients and program participants. Stakeholders’ experiences with the organization and the surrounding political, social and economic environment offer key insights into the future. Their involvement also ensures that the plan will have “buy-in” and be implemented.
2. **The ability of key organizational leaders to think strategically**. Strategic insights cannot be controlled or anticipated; hence, the development of true effective strategies is not easy. A flexible process and the appropriate tempo and timing are essential.
3. **An effective process** that guides the strategic thinking but does not control it, allowing time for strategies to surface.
4. **A skilled consultant** and facilitator who knows the questions to ask and the strategic planning process to use that is appropriate for the organization’s culture and history.
5. **A clear implementation plan** that determines the specific tasks, responsibilities, time frame, and funding implications for each strategy. It is essential to follow the strategic plan with an implementation plan in order to ensure that the goals are reached and the strategies accomplished. (See Implementation Plan Template in Appendix B)

The best we can do is to use a process that allows full engagement by all stakeholders, flexibility in time and process, and openness to allow the plan to change as new realities surface

III. BUT, IS STRATEGIC PLANNING AN OXYMORON?

The success of organizations reveal that the best strategies were created serendipitously, at the oddest times, in strange places, by the most unusual people. It is common to hear people say that their best, most insightful thinking took place in the shower, on a long hike in the mountains or sailing alone to nowhere. Designing a strategy, therefore, is not necessarily something we can plan. It is difficult, if not impossible, to force our brain to become creative and “strategic” on a particular day, time, and place.

Planning, on the other hand, is a process that can be successfully structured. If a program needs to grow by a certain percentage in size and funding, we can plan to raise more money, hire more staff, and find more space. So planning is linear and predictable. Making strategy is imaginative, not sequential, and hard to define systematically.

Strategic planning is, in fact, an oxymoron.

I address this contradiction by describing the steps in a planning process, and the areas of organizational life and structure that need to be clarified (such as goals or the clarification of the role of the Board of Directors in making strategic decisions) to ensure effectiveness. I also describe processes for making strategy, within and outside of the planning process. A good strategic plan can be disruptive and directive.

IV. STRATEGIC PLANS & IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

A strategic planning process focuses on developing the strategies required to best fulfill the organization's vision and implement its mission. Strategic plans can be for 3 or 5 years. (See Appendix A for samples of Strategic Plans)

Implementation plans determine how and when those strategies are actualized, who is responsible for their effective implementation, how success will be evaluated, and how much it will all cost. Implementation plans are 12 or 18 months in scope and are renewed every year within the period of the strategic plan. (See Appendix B for an Implementation Plan Template)

What Does a Strategic Plan Look Like?

Strategic plans take many forms and they should include the following elements:

The Vision

The vision statement answers the WHY question and is either:

- A statement of how society will be changed in the future as a result of the work of the organization, or
- A description of the organization in its ideal state: scale, scope, programs, personnel, finances, and intended results.

Some organizations include in their vision statement shared beliefs, values, and philosophy, while other organizations prefer to keep the statement of values separate.

A good vision statement communicates the organization's compelling images of future achievements and outcomes, either for the organization or for society at large, inspires and challenges, stretches the imagination, and captures dreams of capabilities and possibilities.

The Values

The values statement gives the principles, beliefs, philosophy, standards, and ideals guiding the behavior of the organization's staff, board, and stakeholders in accomplishing the mission.

A good values statement incorporates the culture and history of the organization, inspires stakeholders, and clarifies the organization's philosophical approach to accomplishing its mission.

The Mission

The Mission statement answers the WHO, WHAT, HOW, WHOM, and WHERE questions.

The mission statement expresses the distinctive identity, essence, and purpose of an organization. It usually is rather brief but may be followed by a limited series of itemized statements of specific programs, constituencies, or overall operational elements.

A good mission statement clarifies the basic societal needs the organization exists to fill; describes what the organization does to recognize, anticipate or respond to such needs, including the organization's primary contribution to its constituencies; describes the constituencies served; and delimits the geographical area served.

A mission statement includes:

1. The Identity: Who are we?
2. The Programs: What do we do?
3. The Audience: Whom do we serve?
4. The Methods: How do we serve them?
5. The Geography: Where do we accomplish our mission?
6. The Uniqueness: What makes us distinctive?

Organizations often seek to develop a "tagline," a short catchy phrase that can be used on a letterhead and other publicity materials. We should not confuse the tagline with the mission or vision, or try to squeeze all the concepts embedded in mission and vision statements in a few words.

The Outcomes

Outcomes capture the social impact and results that the successful implementation of the organization's mission will produce. Determining the expected or desired social impact is a crucial element in guiding the development of the entire strategic plan.

The Areas of Strategic Priority

The areas of strategic priority define focus areas that must be addressed in the strategic plan. Throughout different periods of an organization's life, the areas of strategic priority will change, dictating a need for different strategies and goals. That is why it is important to engage in a strategic planning process every few years, or whenever the areas of strategic priority change.

Areas of strategic priority can be realistically addressed by the organization; they focus on challenges or mandates that, if not addressed, cause serious consequences or inhibit the

successful accomplishment of the mission. Areas of strategic priority have long-term implications and major impact on the organization. Addressing these areas could result in significant changes in the development of new products or services or the expansion, reduction, or elimination of existing programs or services.

The Goals

Goals define the desired success in addressing the areas of strategic priority. They focus on what should be accomplished by the organization over the period of the strategic plan. Several goals can be developed to address each area of strategic priority. The more specific the goals are written, the easier it will be to assess their successful implementation.

The Strategies

Strategies are approaches, directions, initiatives, or programs adopted by an organization to ensure that the goals are reached. Strategies are intended to address how the internal capacity of the organization can best meet the external challenges or opportunities. Sometimes, a strategy suggests investing resources, sometimes divesting of them. Strategies can lead to partnerships and strategic alliances or develop a brand-new area of intervention (such as adding “advocacy” or “education” to the organization’s span of activities). Good strategies focus on solutions and approaches that make a difference between success and failure.

See examples of Mission, Vision, Values, Outcomes, Areas of Strategic Priority, Goals and Strategies statements in Appendix C.

Approaches to Developing Strategies

Developing a strategy is not a linear process. Sometimes organizations develop strategies during the strategic planning retreat using the Contextual Approach. Sometimes strategies surface through less structured processes, during staff meetings, board discussions, and in response to unexpected external events. Sometimes strategies are finalized after piloting projects and ideas, either during the strategic planning period or before or after, using the Human Design Thinking or Lean Experimentation approaches. The strategy-making approaches are described here.

The Contextual Approach:

This is the linear traditional approach to developing strategies. It looks at an organization’s present context (how the organizational capacity relates to the external environment) and is best suited for an organization that wants strategies to focus on how to better implement its mission and fulfill the vision. Some organizations find it helpful to analyze strategically how strengths (S), and weaknesses (W) relate to opportunities (O) and threats (T). The result of this SWOT analysis reveals areas of strategic investment or divestment, elimination, partnerships or collaboration. (Questions to help assess the external landscape and the internal capacity and a SWOT analysis chart are found in Appendix D)

The Human Design Thinking Approach:

The advantages of the Human Design Thinking approach is that it puts the needs and challenges of a potential end-user of a program or services at the beginning and the center of the planning and strategy creation process. The process enhances the planners' empathy for program participants by including the participants in a collaborative planning experience and thereby ensuring nearly immediate feedback about the potential strategy. Human Design Thinking can happen during a strategic planning process, or before it, or after the process is complete. It follows these six steps:

1. Empathize: Focus on the needs of people the organization is supporting in order to better understand their perspective.
2. Define and Invest: Clarify the problem, issue or challenge by involving program participants in determining the definition of the problem.
3. Ideate: Generate ideas involving several minds, from diverse levels of involvement in the organization.
4. Develop a Prototype: Actualize a short-term pilot and include the recipient in the evaluation.
5. Implement: Implement the program after it has been revised following participants' input.
6. Evaluate: Evaluate its success and build on lessons learned.

The Lean Experimentation Approach:

Organizations sometimes are not able to develop strategies through the SWOT process, and Human Design Thinking is not appropriate for addressing problems that need new strategies. They struggle with finding a new direction for their programs and are cautious about investing time and resources in a strategic direction that may not be found fruitful. The Lean Experimentation Process has proven to be a helpful process to solve problems and develop new programs or services that require new approaches. It allows organizations to shorten the development time of new programs and services by experimenting with short term, small pilots.

This approach weeds out ineffective ideas and validates what shows real promise. Strategically using the Lean Experimentation processes will decrease program failures and loss of revenue. Only the programs or initiatives that have been implemented successfully are brought to scale and become approved strategies for the organization. The process follows these 6 steps:

1. Ideation and Analysis: Develop and value several hypotheses after having studied the context, the competition and known practices.
2. Constituent Discovery: Determine needs and wants of clients and include them in the process.
3. Building: Develop one or more prototypes and experiment with their actualization.
4. Testing: Validate the original hypothesis by focusing on the feedback of groups of constituents.
5. Respond to the data: Collect and analyze data and adjust actions accordingly.
6. Bring to scale: Decide the size of the effort, evaluate success and change strategies depending on the lessons learned through the process.

V. THE FINAL PRODUCT

After the goals for each area of strategic priority and the strategies for each goal have been determined, the “strategic” phase of strategic planning is complete, and the role and responsibility of the Board of Directors in strategic thinking and planning is fulfilled.

Boards should be encouraged to develop their own Board Plan, to be included in the Strategic Plan. The Board Plan is ideally developed after the board has participated in a self-assessment process, which captures board members’ shared opinions of what the Board is doing well and what are the areas and functions where improvement is needed. Board plans usually cover one year of the Board life and are reviewed and revised yearly. (See a sample board self-assessment survey in Appendix E)

What is the Process to Develop a Strategic Plan?

The development of a Strategic Plan is a systematic, cooperative process. It involves the deployment of board members, staff and consultant resources, and it is accomplished within a specific time frame. What follows is a suggestion of the seven steps needed to complete a Strategic Plan and to ensure its usefulness.

1. Establish the parameters for the strategic planning process

During this phase, agreement is reached on the preferred steps in the process, the timeline, and the role of all stakeholders including the consultant. Necessary resources are committed to proceed with the effort.

2. Create a process planning group

A planning group is formed, composed of two to three Board members and two to three staff. The consultant works to support the work and decisions of the group. These groups are often called: Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Strategic Planning Working Group, Strategic Planning Process Task Force, or Strategic Planning Process Team. Throughout this essay, we will call it “the planning group.”

The planning group does not make the strategic decisions but determines the process to be used to reach the development and completion of the Strategic Plan.

The planning group can recommend the Areas of Strategic Priority and vet them with the board and staff prior to the retreat. It recommends the time span for the plan (three or five years, rarely longer). The group could also determine which are the problems or questions that need to be addressed using a specific strategic making approach (see pages 8-9). It determines the information and data that need to be collected in order to make informed strategic decisions. This should include the external trends, forces, and competition potentially impacting the future of the organization and the analysis of the internal capacity of the organization. The data should be consolidated in an accessible report, or Briefing Book, and made available to all stakeholders involved in the strategic planning process. The planning group will also set the location, date,

and agenda for the strategic planning retreat, and the steps needed to complete the planning process after the retreat.

A sample agenda for the first meeting of the planning group and the role of the planning group as well as a sample data gathering work plan are found in Appendices F and G.

3. Assess the external environment

A period of in-depth study marks this step in the planning process. Determination is made of the opportunities and threats or obstacles in the accomplishment of the mission. Opportunities and threats are determined through the following activities:

- Examination of the political, economic, social, technological, educational and physical trends and forces.
- Research into the needs and expectations of present and future recipients of the organization's work.
- Analysis of the impact of present and potential collaborators' and competitors' missions and future plans.

4. Assess the internal environment and determine organizational capacity

This phase is evaluative in nature. The organization identifies its own internal strengths and weaknesses through the following activities:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the resources supporting the organization's efforts (board, funding, professional competencies)
- Assessment of present strategies, pilots, prototypes and experiments.
- Determination of members' and stakeholders' satisfaction.
- Assessment of the adequacy of space, equipment, financial and physical assets.

See Appendix D for questions that will assist in these assessments.

5. Write the Briefing Book analyzing and summarizing the data and information gathered and share the report with board and staff

The Briefing Book should be distributed to all board and staff members participating in the Strategic Planning retreat. Participants should be encouraged to read through the report prior to the retreat.

See Appendices H for Guidance and Table of Contents for Briefing Books

6. Plan and hold the strategic planning retreat

Board members, the Executive and key staff participate in a 5-6 hour strategic planning session(s) to:

- Review the Briefing Book
- Confirm or revise the Vision, Values and Mission statements
- Discuss and agree on the Outcomes

- Discuss and agree on the Areas of Strategic Priority
- Formulate the goals for each Area of Strategic Priority
- Determine strategies for each goal

The Planning Group meetings and the Planning Retreat can be held in person or on group video platforms.

7. Draft the strategic plan from the retreat notes

As determined by the planning group, a staff, board member, the consultant or a combination of writers prepare the first draft of the strategic plan to summarize the decisions made by the strategic planning retreat participants. The document is reviewed and revised by the planning group and presented to the board and senior staff for approval or modification.

8. Approve the Strategic Plan and begin the process of developing the Implementation Plan

After the board and staff have reviewed and revised the Strategic Plan, the board formally approves it. The Executive and staff develop the Implementation Plan.

9. Develop the Implementation Plan

It is essential to follow the strategic plan with an implementation plan to ensure that the goals are reached and the strategies accomplished. The Implementation Plan includes actions or tasks, agents of responsibility, time frame, measures and metrics and funding implications for each strategy. The implementation plan, if regularly monitored and evaluated by the staff, ensures the continuous relevance of the plan goals and strategies and guides the development of improvements and new initiatives. (See Appendix B for an Implementation Plan Template)

10. Develop a process to ensure that the Strategic Plan is reviewed and revised periodically

Yearly or semi-yearly reviews of the Strategic Plan and the Implementation Plan are effective means to ensure that progress is made on goals, that the strategies remain strategic, and that the tasks and initiatives incorporated in the Implementation Plan are being executed effectively, through internal and external monitoring and evaluative processes. Remember, goals and strategies should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

I have included in Appendix A examples of strategic plans that reference other categories such as objectives, tasks and activities, evaluation, timelines and deadlines, responsibility, and cost. These categories of planning are operational and not strategic and are best captured in the Implementation Plan, which is operational in nature and is developed by the staff. While the strategic plan covers several years (3, 5, sometimes 10) the Implementation Plan covers between 12 and 18 months and is ideally aligned with the organization's fiscal year.

VI. WHAT ARE THE KEY TRENDS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING?

1. The period for a strategic plan has decreased steadily from 10 years or more to three or five years. The pace of change has intensified over the past 20 years, and staff and board members are hesitant to plan beyond three to five years.
2. Most organizations now have a strategic plan. That was not the case a couple of decades ago. Several factors are responsible for this trend:
 - Foundations and large donors now expect a strategic plan as part of the organization's request for funding to see if the request is clearly aligned with the organizational strategy.
 - Individuals being solicited for board membership ask for a strategic plan.
 - When mergers occur, strategic plans are essential in determining if the organizations are compatible for a possible merger.
 - Increased demands for accountability from nonprofits by the media, government and the general public has intensified and nonprofits need to be prepared to document progress and success.
 - As changes occur in the external environment, often unexpected and unplanned, organizations need to regroup to determine how to respond strategically to new realities and unprecedented challenges. These processes can be structured as "mini strategic planning", but must produce nonetheless clear direction about the future.
3. The process of strategic planning is becoming a cooperative effort between the staff and the Board. In the past, it was often seen as a staff-driven function.
4. The time taken to develop mission and vision statements has dramatically decreased. Boards and staff no longer have the patience to discuss and wordsmith mission and vision statements for days. An entire plan, inclusive of vision, mission, values, outcomes goals and strategies can be developed in few hours of intense work, as long as adequate preparation precedes the planning time.

I encourage every nonprofit organization I am privileged to know or work with to have a strategic plan. This is not because the funders request it, or because others have it, or because it is the current thing to do. With a strategic plan, the organization will invest its resources in effective programs; implement coherent and common actions, systems and structures (at both board and staff levels); have strategic guidance on how to assess its success and effectiveness; enhance opportunities to truly impact their community; and fulfill its vision and mission.

About the Author



Michela M. Perrone, Ph.D., is the President of MMP Associates, a consulting firm established in 1994 to support the successful development and increased effectiveness of organizations, boards and Executives in the United States and Europe. Dr. Perrone is a faculty member of Georgetown University's Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership, a consultant and trainer for the Center for Nonprofit Advancement in Washington DC. She works with hundreds of Board members, organizations, and Chief Executives to support their development and increase their effectiveness. After coming to the U. S. from her native Italy as a Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Perrone served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Lt. Joseph Jr. Kennedy Institute in Washington DC., a prominent nonprofit organization supporting children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

APPENDIX A – SAMPLE STRATEGIC PLANS

Sample 1: Nonprofit “ABC” Strategic Plan 2008–2010

Introduction

The following strategic goals reflect the critical issues facing the agency at this time. There will be a continuous evaluation process to ensure an appropriate organizational response to the evolving internal and external environment. These goals are intended to supplement the agency’s ongoing commitment to provision of the highest quality services and maintenance of a strong financial position.

Mission statement

ABC is a private non-profit agency serving the Washington metropolitan area. We enable vulnerable people to remain in their own homes in comfort, safety, and dignity. We do this by:

- Providing comprehensive home care services,
- Training those interested in meaningful careers in the home care field, and
- Supporting family caregivers.

We are committed to excellence; we embrace diversity; and we serve those in need with priority given to those unable to pay the full cost of care.

Strategic priority 2008–2010

Maintain position of excellence through the focused growth of select programs, preparation for changes in the regulatory and funding atmosphere, enhancement of the agency’s financial position and continuous engagement and training for board and senior management staff.

Goals

- 1. Target growth:** Seek diversified funding sources to maintain a sustainable financial base while broadening the scope of services to meet the needs of clients and changes in the regulatory environment.

Objectives:

- Explore the feasibility of expanding training offices to include a Certified Nursing Assistant program by 2009.
- Expand at least one innovative program through a new funding base by 2010.
- Enhance the agency’s capacity to provide nursing supervision for aides by 2010.
- Advocate to maintain XYZ’s unique model of service delivery by 2010.

- 2. Increase fundraising capacity:** Create an organizational infrastructure to support fundraising efforts and resource development.

Objectives:

- Create organizational infrastructure to support fundraising and resource development by 2008.
- Update agency website to enhance agency profile and encourage online fundraising by 2008.
- Increase board participation in fundraising through 100% board member donations and 20% annual increase in aggregate board giving by 2008.

Sample 1: Nonprofit “ABC” Strategic Plan 2008–2010 (continued)

- 3. Enhance capacity of board and senior staff:** Engage the Board and Senior staff in ongoing professional development activities to ensure that the leadership of the agency is prepared for potential opportunities and threats.

Objectives:

- Implement a plan to enhance Board member training, and engagement while building the connection between board and agency staff by 2008
- Conduct annual board assessments, which includes a review of the board composition. The process should be in place by 2008.
- Develop professional development plans for senior managers to ensure continued professional growth, cross training, and support of the leadership succession plan by 2008.

SAMPLE 2: Nonprofit “MNO” Strategic Plan 2001–2006

Celebrating the past – embracing the future

Mission

The mission of MNO is to enrich the human spirit through the art of choral music. The pursuit of excellence in repertoire and performance is at the core of all of our work. We aim to reach a broad range of audiences in the Washington Region, the nation and abroad.

Vision

The MNO of Washington is to be America’s premiere symphonic chorus.

Priorities	Goals
A. Pursue excellence and enhance quality.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enlarge the repertoire.2. Expand the season.3. Enhance performance quality.4. Recruit soloists and guest conductors of renown.5. Attain greater flexibility of venues and performance dates.6. Create collaborative performances.7. Present other choruses of renown.
B. Expand and diversity audience.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Expand audiences through touring nationally and internationally.2. Expand national audiences with radio programming.3. Produce annual recordings of high quality with superior distribution.4. Win a Grammy.5. Expand national audiences with television programming.6. Expand and strengthen community outreach and education programs.7. Refine and increase the use of technology.

SAMPLE 2: Nonprofit “MNO” Strategic Plan 2001–2006 (continued)

Priority A: Pursue Excellence and Enhance Quality

Goals	Objectives				
	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006
1. Enlarge repertoire	Follow the theme of “balance of old and new, past and future.” A minimum of one commission each year. Corigliano’s commission in the 2003-2004 season.				
2. Expand the season	4 concerts Possibly 5	5 concerts Evaluate impact, cost, benefits	5 concerts Evaluate impact, cost, benefits	5 concerts Evaluate impact, cost, benefits	5 concerts Evaluate impact, cost, benefits
3. Enhance performance Quality	Increase chorus discipline	Continue and perfect			
	Expand chorister pool	Continue and perfect			
	Increase orchestra rehearsal time	Continue and perfect			
	Improve recording engineering	Continue and perfect			
		Re-establish professional presence	Evaluate impact and effectiveness	Continue according to results of the evaluation	
	Enhance lighting	Enhance dress	Continue and perfect		
4. Recruit soloists and guest conductors of renown	One soloist Christmas	One soloist One conductor	One soloist One conductor	Two soloists One conductor	Two soloists
5. Attain greater flexibility of venues	Study feasibility	One performance in new venue	Two performances in new venue	Two performances in new venue	Two performances in new venue
6. Create collaborative performances	Laser light Slide designer	Dance	Actor	Geographic diversity	Staged
7. Present other choruses of renown	Study feasibility to present other choruses	Present one chorus and evaluate impact	Continue presentation of choruses as part of CASW concerts or as a separate offering if evaluation reveals positive fiscal impact and enhanced reputation		

SAMPLE 2: Nonprofit “MNO” Strategic Plan 2001–2006 (continued)

Priority B: Expand and Diversify Audiences

Goals	Objectives				
	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006
1. Expand audience through touring nationally and internationally	One tour Study feasibility and capacity of \$2 million endowment campaign	One tour If feasible, begin endowment campaign	No tour Continue endowment campaign	One tour Complete endowment campaign	No tour Prepare a plan for future tours
2. Expand national audiences with radio programming	Produce 7 concerts and recruit corporate and media partners	Produce 7 concerts and cultivate partners	Produce 7 concerts and recruit new partners	Produce 7 concerts and nurture all partnerships	Produce 7 concerts and solidify partnerships
	Evaluate audience and impact	If evaluation is positive, continue offerings			
	Design programming for year 2, 3	Design programming for year 4, 5	Design programming for year 6, 7	Design programming for year 8, 9	Design programming for year 10, 11
3. Produce annual recordings of high quality with superior distribution	Prepare a 3 year plan	One recording	One recording	One recording	One recording
4. Win a Grammy	Prepare a plan and begin mobilizing grassroots	Continue implementing the plan	Win a Grammy!	Celebrate performances in new venue	Prepare a plan to win another Grammy
5. Expand national audiences with television programming	Design national programming	Develop media and corporate partnerships	Broadcast MLK concert	Broadcast one concert	Broadcast one or more concerts adhering to evaluation
		Develop and implement marketing plan	Expand corporate partnerships	Evaluate impact and benefits	
6. Expand and strengthen community outreach and education programs	Develop criteria for evaluation of effectiveness and impact	Modify programs according to evaluation results	Design and disseminate models nationally	Win an award	Continue local and national exposure
7. Refine and increase the use of technology	Develop a technology plan	Begin to implement	Continue to implement	Complete implementation	Develop a new plan

SAMPLE 2: Nonprofit “MNO” Strategic Plan 2001–2006 (continued)

Requirements in Infrastructure Improvements to Support Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

Fundraising:

- Develop a fund-raising plan to support expansion contemplated in the strategic plan.
- Develop a plan to successfully raise funds for the touring endowment.

Board Development:

- Review Board composition.
- Review Board’s capacity and motivation to support growing financial needs of MNO.
- Review and revise by-laws.

Staff Development:

- Review personnel policies.
- Prepare a staffing plan to support successful accomplishment of the strategic plan goals.

Space:

- Review space availability and needs.

SAMPLE 3 - Nonprofit “XYZ” Strategic Plan –2008

The strategic plan will be effective from its approval through December 31, 2010.

Mission

XYZ is the community-based, non-profit partner of a national zoological park. Through its visitor and membership services, fundraising, and educational programs, XYZ connects people with wildlife.

Working with the National Zoo and a broad array of partners who share its passion for conserving wildlife, XYZ is building a constituency committed to understanding and restoring an endangered natural world.

Vision

XYZ broadens the way people around the corner and across the world learn, care, and act to conserve wild- life and nature. Through the services, programs, and support it delivers, XYZ advances the National Zoo in becoming the world’s finest zoo.

Goal: Provide an Unsurpassed Zoo Visitor Experience On-site and Online

1. Develop effective collaborative processes, structures, and procedures with the National Zoo that maximize the combined strengths of both. Enhance the collaboration and teamwork of XYZ and National Zoo staff and integrate our programs with those of other SI units.
2. Communicate clearly and regularly the role of XYZ in advancing the goals of the National Zoo to employees, XYZ members, and the public.
3. Strengthen and expand partnerships with corporate, governmental, nonprofit, and educational entities in the furtherance of joint XYZ and Zoo objectives.
4. Increase XYZ memberships and expand the national XYZ membership base. Enhance contact with and support from a larger membership base.
5. Clarify and communicate the interrelated roles of XYZ and the National Zoo in the upcoming capital campaign to renew the Zoo. Build effective mechanisms to coordinate activities of both XYZ and the National Zoo’s Advisory Board.
6. Expand the recruitment, training, and use of volunteers in XYZ and Zoo work. Ensure an excellent volunteer experience by providing volunteers with up-to-date training and information, performance assessment, and quality support.

Goal: Achieve Managerial Excellence, Financial Strength and Stability

1. Develop and implement a business strategy to operate efficiently and effectively as a “business enterprise,” one that invests in new processes, approaches, technologies, and facilities to improve services and increase revenues.
2. Build a financial reserve that will sustain the XYZ operations and activities in the event of unforeseen disruptions; review and monitor investment policies to balance investment returns with the board’s fiduciary duties; provide a clear, timely, and accurate representation of XYZ’s financial position and its contributions to the Zoo.

SAMPLE 3 - Nonprofit “XYZ” Strategic Plan –2008 (continued)

3. Develop clear priority-setting processes to determine how XYZ uses its resources and how the Zoo uses XYZ’s contributions.
4. Develop fair and equitable performance assessment, compensation, and reward processes and structures for all XYZ employees.
5. Broaden and enrich XYZ employees’ experience and training to meet changing organizational needs, develop leadership skills, and provide opportunities for career enrichment and advancement.

Values (for consideration)*

- **Integrity:** We are committed to honest and ethical behavior in all that we do. We are accountable and responsible for our decisions and actions.
- **Transparency:** We are committed to openness in our operation and communicate truthfully about our efforts and activities.
- **Collaboration and Teamwork:** We believe that insight, creativity, and wisdom emerge when we engage the participation and perspectives of many individuals and groups.
- **Creativity:** We encourage originality, innovation, and growth through change.

* Our thanks to the American Association of Museums whose listing and description of its values mirrors many of our own.

APPENDIX B – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TEMPLATE

Implementation Plan Template
Year

Vision:

Vision statement goes here.

Mission:

Mission statement goes here.

Priority Areas:

List priority areas as defined in the strategic plan.

Priority Area: <i>First priority area. Repeat table for each additional priority area.</i>											
Goal/Outcome	Strategies	Activities/ Initiatives	Lead	Team Members	Internal Resources	Start Date	End Date	Baseline		Goal	
								Value	Date	Value	Date
<i>Will fill in from Strategic Plan prior to the implementation planning process.</i>	<i>Will fill in from the Strategic Plan prior to the implementation plan process</i>	<i>Major activity or initiative to achieve the outcome.</i>	<i>Person who owns the initiative</i>			<i>i.e. Q1, March</i>		<i>Assumes numerical goals</i>			

APPENDIX C – STRATEGIC PLANNING TERMS: DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

The strategic planning process involves determining an organization’s priority areas (both internal and external), outcomes and strategies (high-level activities) within those areas needed to implement the mission and ultimately fulfill its vision. Prior to beginning this process, it is important that all of those involved share a common language. Given that strategic planning terminology is not standardized, this is particularly important to avoid confusion or misunderstanding during the planning process.

Use this reference sheet as a guide, adding in any additional terminology that might be used by your organization.

Terms in the Strategic Plan

Areas of Strategic Priority: The key organizational and programmatic areas that must be addressed in order to accomplish the organization’s mission. The time frame for the areas of strategic priority is that of the strategic plan.

- What are the essential priority areas on which our organization should focus over the next 3-5 years?

Goals: The highest-level change that can be reasonably attributed to an organization or program. Strategic Planning goals are developed within the strategic plan’s established timeframe and there must be at least one goal for each area of strategic priority area.

- How will I know if the area of strategic priority area has been adequately addressed?

Strategies: The high-level activities to accomplish the outcomes.

- What high-level programmatic or organizational activities should be implemented in order to accomplish the goals?

Example

Area of Strategic Priority	Goals	Strategies
Internal Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and adopt internal HR, communications and evaluation systems to make our organization the leader in its field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a monitoring and evaluation system that enables consistent program performance • Develop and maintain systems and tools to ensure continuous professional development of all staff
Financial Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the endowment to \$1 million • Increase unrestricted funds for program development by 10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand individual donor base to include at least 20 individuals giving over \$5,000 • Develop relationships and be supported by at least 5 new unrestricted funding sources

Values, Vision, Mission, Outcomes

During the strategic planning process, the board and senior leadership determine the organization's vision, mission, values and outcomes. As organizations mature, the outcomes, vision, mission and mission may no longer align with the organization's work or the needs and the program participants.

Values: Beliefs, standards or principles that guide the organization in accomplishing its mission; Values are shared by the board and staff, are strongly held and not easily changed.

- What values should guide the operations of the organization and the personal conduct of staff, board, and volunteers?
- What do we stand for as a group of individuals who together work for a common cause?

Vision: The desired-end state for the organization or its mission. Organizations can choose one of two definitions:

1. How *society* will be changed as a result of an organization's successful accomplishment of its mission
 - What does our ideal society look like? How will society look after our organization's mission has been accomplished?
2. How the *organization* will be changed as a result of an organization's successful accomplishment of its mission
 - What role should our organization play in the community it serves? What does our ideal organization look like?

Why are there two definitions for Vision? Pick the definition that works best for your organization. Organizations that need an inspiring statement to motivate action might choose the "ideal society" vision. If the vision for the ideal society is too obvious, such as "end world hunger," an organization might prefer to choose the "ideal organization" vision.

Mission: The stated purpose of the organization, its distinctive identity and essence; describes what the organization does to recognize, anticipate or respond to the societal or organizational aspirations expressed in the vision; describes the constituency and geographical area(s) served; summarizes the strategies used to accomplish the mission.

- What do we do? Whom do we do it for? Why do we do it? How do we do it? Where do we do it? What is our niche, our uniqueness?

Outcomes: Outcomes capture the social impact and results that the successful implementation of the organization's mission will produce.

- How has the social fabric changed? Has systemic change occurred?

Example

Term	Example
Values	Integrity, inclusiveness, respect
Vision "ideal society"	A world where everyone has a decent place to live (Habitat for Humanity)

Vision “ideal organization”	Become a world leader at connecting people to wildlife and conservation (San Diego Zoo)
Mission	To inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research (Mayo Clinic)
Outcome	No more homeless youth in our community

APPENDIX D – EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ASSESSMENT AND SWOT ANALYSIS

The External Assessment in Strategic Planning

The External Assessment, or External Environmental Scan, in strategic planning is an inventory of the political, economic, social, and technological forces that influence the mission and goals of an organization, and how it functions. It involves analysis of the current environment and the trends that may affect it. It also includes an analysis of competitive and collaborative forces and agents.

The result of an external assessment reveals the **opportunities and threats** that confront the organization.

Some questions used to assess **economic** trends and forces are:

- What are the global or national economic trends that might affect our funders?
- What are the labor trends that might affect our benefit and compensation packages? What are our staff recruitment and retention strategies?
- What do our tax dollars support in relation to our organization's programs and services? Should we expect similar support in the future?
- How does the trend of corporate mergers affect our mission?
- What other local, regional or national economic factors influence your organization? How will these affect us in the future?

Some questions used to assess **political** trends and forces are:

- What is the blend of services offered by government, nonprofit and corporate sectors? How might that blend change in the future?
- What political trends affect our customers and stakeholders?
- Will there be more or less involvement of government in the provision of services included in our mission? How will changes in the role of government change our mission?
- What other political factors and trends may affect our mission?
- Who are our competitors and collaborators? What are their agendas and priorities?

Some questions used to assess trends and forces in the **social** environment are:

- How will a change in population diversity or density affect our organization?
- What are the population trends for the next five to ten years that might affect our organization?
- What other social trends may affect your mission in the future?

Some questions used to assess trends and forces in the **technological** environment are:

- What changes in computer and communication technology are likely to affect our organization?
- How will changes in transportation technology affect our workforce, clients, and stakeholders?
- What other technological trends may affect our organization in the future?

The Internal Assessment in Strategic Planning

The Internal Assessment, or Internal Environmental Scan, in strategic planning is an inventory of the strengths and weaknesses in the internal operations of an organization. It includes a survey of human and physical resources, an analysis of the satisfaction of clients and stakeholders, and an assessment of the effectiveness of the Board and of the staff.

The result of an internal assessment reveals the **strengths and weaknesses** that confront the organization.

Some evaluative questions the organization might ask are:

- What is the age and make up of our clients?
- What do our clients expect of us?
- How satisfied are they of our services?
- What do our stakeholders need or expect from us?
- How well have we performed against those expectations in the past?
- What have we learned from occurrences of non-performance?
- How well do we perform relative to our competitors?
- What do our competitors think of the quality and quantity of our services?
- What social forces influence our workforce (e.g. family unit size, work flexibility requests, child/parent care issues?)
- What are the resources required to operate our programs?
- What are our major costs? Which ones are likely to increase or decrease in the future?
- What portion of our payroll is benefits? How high are employees' benefits? How likely is it that compensation and benefit packages will increase in the future?
- How effectively are our programs operated?
- What are the immediate results that can be observed as a result of our programs?
- What are the outcomes of our programs and services on the client's life and society?
- How effective is our Board of Directors?
- How effective is our management and leadership?
- How effective is our staff?

The SWOT Grid

Once the organization's Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats have been determined, the strategic analysis of their interrelation can be done via a SWOT analysis.

Where Opportunities and Strengths are aligned we need to INVEST	Where Threats and Strengths are aligned we need to DEFEND or MOBILIZE RESOURCES or ENTER INTO STRATEGIC ALLIANCES
Where Opportunities and Weaknesses are aligned we need to INVEST or DIVEST or COLLABORATE	Where Threats and Weaknesses are aligned we need to DIVEST or DAMAGE CONTROL

APPENDIX E – BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY TEMPLATE

The Board Self-Assessment Survey helps boards hold themselves accountable to good governance. It does so by asking members to identify areas of strength and needed development or improvement on board functions, structures and norms. Results from the survey should be used to inform plans that improve the board’s organization and performance.

The following template provides suggested questions for boards to consider using in their self-assessment survey. MMP Associates recognizes that each board and organization is unique; therefore, the questions are intended as a guide to help think through the different areas and questions to include. Please use this tool to make comments, edits or suggestions to the survey. MMP Associates is committed to tailoring the survey to best meet your needs. Your edits will be incorporated and uploaded to our SurveyMonkey account.

Sample Introduction

Thank you for participating in the Board Self-Assessment Survey. Please complete the survey by [Date, typically two weeks to complete].

All board members and the executive director will be asked to complete the survey. Please answer the questions based on your experience on the board over the last 12 months, unless noted otherwise.

This survey aims to gain insight into how effectively the board functions as a group, and to give you the opportunity to comment on its operations and performance. It has been adapted from BoardSource's Board Self Assessment survey. The survey is organized in three sections:

- Two main functions of the board: governance and support (what the board needs to do)
- Board operations including structures and norms (how the board fulfills its work)
- Your satisfaction as a member of the board

The individual results of this survey are anonymous. The results will be analyzed and distributed by MMP Associates, the consulting firm that is facilitating the process. Summary results will be shared with the board. If you have any questions regarding the survey or survey questions, please contact Sarah Hou at hou@mmp-a.com. Thank you in advance for your time and thoughtful completion of the survey!

Please note throughout the survey respondents will be asked to rank a series of statements using the Likert scale. Ratings will include: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Not Sure. An open-ended question asking how the board can improve in the area will also be included for each question.

Part I: Functions of the Nonprofit Board - Governance

The governing board of a nonprofit organization is expected to be accountable to the public in ensuring that the organization carries out the purposes for which it was established in a responsible, effective, ethical and legal fashion. Governance gives the board authority to set the mission and strategic direction for the organization and provide accountability and oversight of the organization's goals, finances, chief executive and legal and regulatory compliance.

The questions below ask you to assess the board's role in each of these elements. Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

Review the Mission, Vision and Strategic Direction

- a. All board members understand the organization's mission and vision.
- b. The board agrees on how the organization should fulfill its mission.
- c. The board relies upon the organization's mission, vision and values to guide the strategic direction of the organization.
- d. The board periodically reviews the mission to ensure it is appropriate to the organization.

Strategic Planning and Oversight

- a. The board has a shared vision of how the organization should evolve over the next three to five years. [Remove if currently going through a strategic planning process.]
- b. The board is knowledgeable about the organization's major programs.
- c. The frequency of strategic planning meets the needs of the organization.
- d. The board uses the strategic planning process as an opportunity to review the quality, sustainability and effectiveness of its programs and mission.
- e. The board holds itself and the organization accountable for achieving the goals of the strategic plan.

Fiscal Oversight and Risk Management

- a. The board ensures that the organization's annual budget reflects the goals and priorities of the organization.
- b. The board receives financial reports in a timely and regular basis.
- c. The financial reports of the organization are understandable and accurate.
- d. The board's evaluation of the organization's financial performance is objective, honest and free of any conflicts of interest.
- e. The auditor's findings are presented to the board in a way that is comprehensive and clear.
- f. The board ensures the organization has policies in place to manage risks (e.g. internal controls, personnel policies, conflict of interest disclosures, emergency preparedness).
- g. The board has the appropriate amount of directors and liability insurance.
- h. The board has established appropriate investment policies.

Evaluation of the Executive

- a. The board has a regular and systematic process in place for evaluating the executive.
- b. The goals set for the executive adequately incorporates input from both the executive and board.
- c. The degree of oversight exercised by the board over the executive is appropriate.
- d. The board engages in appropriate succession planning to address foreseeable and unforeseeable changes in leadership.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

- a. The board ensures that all members abide by legal, regulatory and contractual requirements.
- b. The board, in partnership with the executive, ensures that all staff abides by legal, regulatory and contractual requirements.
- c. The board has policies in place to receive, investigate and take appropriate action regarding allegations of misconduct within the organization.
- d. The board has policies or processes in place to protect whistleblowers against retaliation.
- e. The board regularly ensures that the organization is reviewing and complying with legal requirements.
- f. When legal compliance issues are identified, the board takes timely and appropriate action to address them.

Part I: Functions of the Nonprofit Board - Support

Board members add value to the organization by supporting the fulfillment of its mission. Board support can vary depending on the organization, but typically includes general and specialized advice and involvement in the areas of fundraising, volunteerism, advocacy, and public relations [we will update this list depending on the areas included]. Unlike the board's governance function, board members fulfill this function as individuals and work with or at the direction of the executive and staff.

The questions below ask you to evaluate the board's role in each of these elements. Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

Fundraising

- a. All board members understand the organization's fundraising plan and strategy.
- b. The expectation of board members' participation in fundraising, including board giving and participation in fundraising activities, is reasonable.
- c. Board members are adequately trained to fulfill their fundraising responsibilities to the best of their ability and capacity.
- d. The board appropriately utilizes the fundraising abilities and opportunities offered by its members.
- e. All board members adequately assist in fundraising.
- f. The board's fundraising efforts are integrated with the organization's fundraising efforts.

Volunteerism

- a. The board has adequate access to information about the nature and extent of volunteer opportunities.
- b. Board members are encouraged to be involved in program events or activities as volunteers.
- c. The board receives adequate training to fulfill its volunteer role.
- d. All board members regularly volunteer in programs, activities or events for the organization.

Advocacy

- a. Board members have adequate information about advocacy opportunities for the organization.
- b. All board members are strong advocates for the organization and its cause.
- c. Board members adequately coordinate their advocacy for the organization with the board and the executive and/or staff.

Public Relations

- a. Board members have a clear understanding of their role in developing and promoting the public image of the organization.
- b. Board members have a clear understanding of who is authorized to speak on behalf of the organization.
- c. Board members are adequately trained to fulfill their role in public relations.
- d. All board members promote a positive image of the organization in the community.

Part II: Board Operations

In order for the Board to effectively fulfill its governance and support functions, systems and structures must be in place to guide its work. This includes convening purposeful and productive meetings, creating committees and task forces to organize and accomplish work, orienting new members, establishing and following communication protocols, and understanding the relationship between the Board and staff.

The questions below ask you to evaluate the effectiveness of these systems and structures. Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

Composition

- a. The size of the board is sufficient for accomplishing its work.
- b. The board is composed of individuals with the necessary skills and expertise needed to help the organization fulfill its mission.
- c. Board membership is diverse.
- d. The board periodically examines its composition and identifies any gaps in expertise, influence, ethnicity, age or gender.
- e. There are formal structures in place to identify and recruit new board members.
- f. New board members are adequately onboarded.
- g. The board actively considers the appropriateness of term limits for its members.

Meetings

- a. The frequency of board meetings is appropriate to accomplish the work of the board.
- b. Board meetings are meaningful and productive.
- c. Board members receive agendas and related information sufficiently prior to board meetings.
- d. Board members come to meetings prepared to discuss and take action on agenda items.
- e. All board members actively participate during meetings.
- f. During board meetings, members have an adequate opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues.
- g. During board meetings, board members feel comfortable asking questions, offering opinions, debating issues and casting independent votes.
- h. The board follows an effective decision making process.

Committees

- a. The current committee structure meets the needs of the board.
- b. The current committee structure meets the needs of the organization.
- c. Committees have formal job descriptions or charters that describe their membership, processes and areas of responsibility.
- d. Committees effectively communicate their activities and recommendations to the full board.
- e. Whenever appropriate, the board makes use of short-term task forces for specific projects.
- f. The process regarding committee assignment offers adequate opportunities for leadership development and succession planning.

Communication

- a. Board members work together as a team.
- b. Board members have the appropriate tools to facilitate board communication and decision-making.
- c. Board members feel included in discussions about issues that affect the organization and the board.
- d. All board members are actively engaged in the board's work.
- e. All board members make governance decisions about board matters or the organization.
- f. A climate of mutual trust and respect exists among board members.

Relationship Between the Board and Staff

- a. The respective roles of the board, the executive and staff are clearly defined and understood.
- b. The board gives the executive the authority to effectively manage the organization.
- c. A climate of mutual trust and respect exists between the board and the executive.
- d. Board members do not direct the work of staff members.
- e. The board ensures the organization's human resource policies are up-to-date.
- f. The role of staff supporting board committees is clearly outlined and understood.

Part III: Board Member Satisfaction

The last part of the survey asks you to consider your own role on the board and your satisfaction with this role over. Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

Individual Satisfaction

- a. I understand what is expected of me as a member of the board.
- b. My skills and expertise are being adequately used to support the organization.
- c. I am given opportunities to take on a leadership role on the board if interested.
- d. When needed, professional development opportunities are available to help me fulfill my role on the board.
- e. I have a good working relationship with other board members.
- f. I have a good working relationship with the executive.
- g. I am satisfied with the overall effectiveness of the board.

Part IV: Open Ended Questions

Finally, please let us know what you think should be the board's priorities in the next year to three years to improve its effectiveness.

- What else can the board do to improve its effectiveness?
- What issues should the board prioritize over the next three years?
- Please share any additional comments or suggestions you have related to the board's performance and operations.

APPENDIX F – SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA AND ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

Strategic Planning Steering Committee Meeting

Day and time to be determined

AGENDA

1. Plan the strategic planning focus and the data gathering phase

Strategic focus

Discuss how we define (at a high level) the areas of strategic priority. This preliminary discussion will inform the information collection needs.

Information collection

- What data and information do we need to gather and analyze?
- What methods do we need to use to gather this data and information?

For data collected from individuals:

- What questions need to be asked?
- Who needs to be asked?
- Which stakeholders are critical to this process?
- What individuals are the best fit to contact stakeholders and ask the questions?

2. Review existing organizational information and data

- Mission and Vision
- Programs descriptions
- Past Strategic Plan accomplishments
- Present and future challenges

3. Next steps

- Summary of actions and responsibilities of Committee members
- Determine Board reporting process prior to the retreat
- Set the next meeting date and time
- Set the Board retreat date

ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee guides the process that leads to the development of the Strategic Plan. The Committee meets twice: once to complete the preparation phase, and once to review the Briefing Book and plan the Board retreat.

During the first meeting, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee will:

- Discuss how we define (at a high level) the areas of strategic priority. This preliminary discussion will inform the information collection needs.
- Determine data needed and collection methods, in both areas of internal capacity and the external landscape
- Identify key stakeholders to be involved in the strategic planning preparation process
- Assist MMP Associates in gathering and analyzing the information necessary
- Identify key organizations and information needed for the competitive/comparative analysis
- All the information gathered will be summarized in a Briefing Book prepared by MMP Associates

During the second meeting, the Committee will:

- Review and approve the Briefing Book
- Develop the agenda and coordinate logistics for the Strategic Planning retreat.

APPENDIX G – DATA GATHERING WORK PLAN SAMPLE

Strategic Planning Steering Committee Data Gathering Work Plan

WHAT	WHO	HOW	TIMELINE/DETAILS
Analyze the competition and prepare a report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Director • Administrative Assistant • Consultant 	Determine the organizations that may or do represent competition review and finalize the competitive analysis template and questions provided by MMP Associates and complete the template by doing web based research, interviewing representatives of such organizations and, if necessary, contact other individuals to expand our knowledge	<p>“competition” by Dec 9, 2016 (CRN)</p> <p>Analysis of information by Dec 16, 2016 (MMP)</p> <p>Review by Dec 23, 2016 (JR/MJ)</p> <p>Complete template by Jan 13, 2017 (CF)</p>
Determine satisfaction and needs from the Council and use the information to develop questions for parents' survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • Staff 	Conduct a focus group during one of the meetings of the Council (Michela) Prepare questions for parents' survey	<p>PC Focus Group Jan 25, 2017 (MMP&CRN)</p> <p>Prepare survey Feb 1, 2017 (MMP)</p> <p>Review survey Feb 3, 2017 (JR/MJ)</p> <p>Administer survey Feb. 6-10, 2017 (CF)</p>
Analyze internal capacity, strengths and areas needing development and prepare a report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Consultant 	Develop, administer and analyze surveys to former board members, donors and staff	<p>Develop surveys Feb 10, 2017 (MJ/ Program managers JR/MMP)</p> <p>Administer surveys Feb 20 – 24, 2017 (CF)</p>
Prepare a summary of the terms of the building lease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Consultant 	Incorporate in the Briefing Book	Prepare Summary Dec 2016 (JR)
Prepare a short history of the use of the building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Consultant 	Incorporate in the Briefing Book	Prepare History Dec 2016 (JR/MJ)

Review past evaluation reports, such as the 2010 evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Consultant 	Consult with staff and capture key elements in the Briefing Book	Prepare Summary Jan 2017 (JR/MJ)
Review past accreditation provide a statement about the value and importance of accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Consultant 	Incorporate key results from past accreditation and staff statement about value in the Briefing Book	Prepare Statement Jan 2017 (MJ/CRN/AMS) Review Jan 2017 (JR)
Provide an organizational chart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Consultant 	Incorporate in the Briefing Book	Provide Document Dec 2016 (JR/MJ)
Describe key programs' elements, features and statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Consultant 	Incorporate in the Briefing Book	Provide Summary Jan 2017 (MJ/Program Mgmt/JR)
Analyze trends in tuition/private pay demographics. Analyze how programs and facilities fit within the general context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Consultant 	Incorporate in the Briefing Book	Analysis Feb 2017 (JR/MJ)
Review and analyze environmental landscape elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Assessment - Consultant 	Incorporate in the Briefing Book relevant components of the Community Assessment	Analysis Feb 2017 (JR/MJ/MMP)
Provide a clear and short summary of the new guidelines and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	Incorporate in the Briefing Book	Provide Summary Feb 2017 (Breakwater/JR/MJ)
Review the 2006 strategic include in the Appendix of the 2017-2027 Briefing Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Planning Steering Committee 		Collect committee opinions Feb 2017 (JR/MJ/MMP)
Plan the 2017 January, March and May Board meetings to include presentations from experts in finance and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Chair • CEO 	Incorporate relevant information from the experts' presentations in the Briefing Book	Contact and confirm presentations: December/January 2017 (JR)

APPENDIX H – GUIDANCE AND TABLES OF CONTENTS OF A BRIEFING BOOK

GUIDANCE FOR A BRIEFING BOOK

Executive Summary

Our organization is committed to adopting effective and sustainable strategies that will best fulfill our mission and respond to the ever-changing realities in which we operate. As part of this process, we are undergoing a strategic planning process that will investigate our internal areas of strength, areas of needed development, and the current and expectant external trends, challenges and opportunities that will impact our work over the next five years.

The strategic planning process began in January 2016 and including interviews, focus groups and surveys with 130 key stakeholders including current and former residents, staff, board members, and partner organizations. It also included desk research on the state of housing and homelessness in Washington D.C. The goal of the strategic planning process was to foster collaborative thinking in order to develop a plan for the organization over the next five years. MMP Associates, as D.C. based consulting firm, was contracted to facilitate the process.

This report provides an analysis of the data collected during the strategic planning process. It is organized by type of stakeholder. Data collected includes:

- Interviews and surveys from our key stakeholders, including:
- Interviews with 20 former and 25 current residents
- Interviews with 10 local housing organizations
- Volunteer survey with 27 respondents
- Staff survey with 50 respondents (90% response rate)
- A board-self assessment survey, completed by 15 board members (100% response rate)
- Desk research

Overview of Findings

Across all of the stakeholders, common themes emerged in the environmental trends, challenges and opportunities as well as our internal strengths and areas of needed development. The overall trends include:

Environmental Assessment

- Federal and local approaches to homelessness are de-emphasizing transitional housing in favor of rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing, however transitional housing remains an important component of the homeless continuum of care.
- DC has seen a 50 percent increase in homelessness among persons in families, compared to an 11 percent decrease nationally. The increase in homelessness can be attributed to:
- The loss of affordable housing
- Wages and public assistance that have not kept pace with the cost of living
- The closing of state psychiatric institutions without the development of community-based housing and services.
- Transitional housing organizations that receive a large amount of federal and state funding likely have to shift their program models to adapt to the changing priorities. This is likely not the case for organizations that are able to rely on private funds.

- There are a number of organizations in the DC Metro area that provide transitional housing services to homeless families. Budgets range from \$60K to over \$2M and organizations can serve anywhere from under 10 clients to over 50 at any given time.

Areas of Strength

- The commitment, passion, and competencies of the staff.
- 95% of current and former residents indicated that the staff truly cared about their wellbeing and were helpful when needed.
- The organization's ability to provide individualized care for its residents.
- Board and staff members' commitment to the organization's mission.
- The strong relationship with D.C.'s Homeless Services Program, which has helped with the Organization's name recognition and provided critical referral opportunities for our residents.
- The strong and extensive network, particularly with legal, medical and social services organizations.
- The quality and availability of volunteer resources, particularly its volunteer trainings.

Areas of Needed Development

- Financial oversight and fundraising support, including clarifying the fundraising expectations for its Board members and hiring a full time Grants & Gifts officer.
- Streamline services and promote strategic growth. While the organization has been successful in expanding the services offered, staff members feel overworked and overwhelmed with the number of new services being offered over the last few years.
- Prioritize leadership development opportunities for the staff, including more professional development trainings and internal hires for management positions.

TABLES OF CONTENTS FOR A BRIEFING BOOK

The Briefing Book should summarize all of the information/data that needs to be considered when planning for the future of the organization. It includes data from the internal and external assessment as defined by the planning group. The following includes a sample table of contents followed by a sample Briefing Book.

Sample 1

- A. Executive Summary
- B. Recommendation on Strategic Priority Areas
- C. About the Organization
- D. The Strategic Assessment Process
- E. Environmental Assessment
- F. Internal Stakeholder Analysis
 - a. Staff
 - b. Board Members
- G. External Stakeholder Analysis
 - a. Clients
 - b. Donors
 - c. Partner Organizations
 - d. Leaders in the Community
- H. Appendices
 - a. Fact Sheet

- b. List of participants
- c. Meeting Dates
- d. Survey Graphs
- e. Community Trends

Sample 2

- A. Summary of Current Work
- B. External Stakeholder Analysis
 - a. Strengths
 - b. Areas of Development and Improvement
- C. Internal Stakeholders Analysis
 - a. Strengths
 - b. Areas of Development and Improvement
- D. Environmental Assessment
- E. Suggested Strategies
- F. Appendices
 - a. Cash Flow Analysis
 - b. Survey Results
 - c. Competitive Analysis