

Strategic Planning

The Main Components

Mission Statement

Lists our organization's primary purpose. Tells who we are and why we exist. Needs to be clear to our members as well as to our publics and stakeholders. Needs to be concise – a sentence or two? Some are longer. The “ideal” – it will fit on the back of your business card.

Vision Statement

A clear, inspiring word picture of where we would like our organization to be in 2-3 years. Some are only a phrase (“A Coca-Cola within arm's reach of everyone in the world.”); some are much longer. A good vision needs to be communicated in 5 minutes or less.

Core Values

These values indicate how our organization operates. These are the things we believe in and tell how we will conduct ourselves. (“We believe in, we care about, we value...”)

Strategic Goals

Strategic goals are differentiated from an organization's *annual goals*.

Our *annual goals* are important. They are what we do to carry out our mission. They tend to be focused on the coming year. This is our “regular business” that we do, day in and day out, with great professionalism.

Our *strategic goals* are determined by keeping in mind our vision or ideal future; making decisions and taking actions for the long term; and by a continual awareness of our environment and its impact on our organization. They usually are set to be accomplished within 2-3 years. These are strategic items which we work on in addition to our daily work, carrying out our mission.

Strategic goals are often discovered by conducting a SWOT analysis for the organization. A SWOT analysis is an honest look at the Strengths and Weaknesses internal to the organization and the Opportunities and Threats in the environments external to the organization. Once the SWOT analysis has been conducted, the organization can determine which Strengths/Opportunities it should enhance or take advantage of to reach its vision and the Weaknesses/Threats it needs to address in order to overcome difficulties and barriers to reaching its vision.

An organization needs to set strategic goals and then determine implementation strategies to accomplish the goals, a time-line for accomplishing the goals and the persons responsible for carrying out the strategies. It is also crucial to devise a way to monitor the implementation of the strategic goals.