

Project Management

Simplifying Strategic Planning

In 1993 the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) was enacted that requires federal agencies to apply project management best practices such as goal setting, results measurement, and performance reporting. To comply with GPRA, agencies must:

1. Develop and maintain five-year strategic plans that at a minimum must contain a mission statement and long term results-oriented goals covering each of the agencies major functions
2. Prepare annual plans that establish performance goals and describe how these goals will be met, measured, and verified
3. Prepare annual performance reports that review the success or failure in meeting targeted performance goals and identify mechanisms for improvement

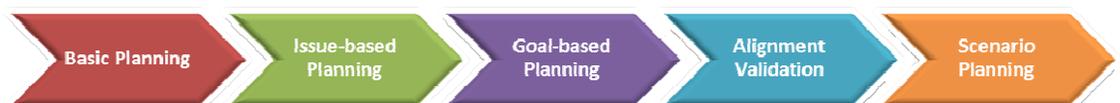
Strategic planning is the formal discipline of recognizing, anticipating, forecasting, managing, and controlling opportunities while minimizing risk. Strategic planning is a critical element for articulating a shared vision across an organization. It is vital to identifying common needs across stakeholder groups, obtaining stakeholder support, building partnerships necessary for functional areas to collaborate on common goals, and to move programs forward.

Organizations must plan to clarify for stakeholders mission, goals, and objectives; structure, roles, competencies; and metrics, measures, accountability, and timelines. Strategic planning considers such variables to find and develop unique opportunities to create value. It encourages proactive long-term thinking to identify desired outcomes and to formulate integrated plans to achieve desired future state(s) based on available organizational assets and other influencing environment factors, and the sequence of steps and actions necessary to achieve them.

To maximize efficient utilization of available resources agencies must effectively translate strategy into tactical results at all levels of the organization (i.e. agency, operating division, office, division, and business units). Strategy developed at the agency level must eventually be decomposed to a level applicable to each subordinate level within the organization. This activity ensures the effective alignment of tactical investments, programs, projects, and operational activities to agency strategy, goals, and objectives. Related management actions and activities then support transparency, efficient resource utilization, and enable the ability to manage each business units and their associated functional lanes of work in a manner that maximized public health benefit.

- Agency strategy defines overall responsibilities, goals, areas of focus, and seeks to develop synergies through the selection, development, and coordination of public health portfolios
- Lower level strategies then becomes less about the coordination of operating units and more about properly positioning resources and anticipating changes in demand, regulations, technologies, etc and then adjusting strategy to accommodate them

Although there are recognized strategic planning approaches, no one model is ideal for all organizations. Almost all models must first evolve through the collection and integration of process assets to become truly relevant to an organization. The unique aspects of working in a regulatory, policy, and politically heavy government environment further challenge this process. As a result, the development of a strategic plan often utilizes a collaborative iterative approach. Strategic planning iterations cycle through basic planning, issue-based planning, goal-based planning, alignment validation, and scenario planning to identify unique opportunities to create value and develop an optimal strategy.



Each iterative cycle advances the organization's level of strategic maturity through the following generic process steps. The results of which are documented within the details of a formal strategic plan.

- Current state analysis
- Desired future state identification
- Strategic action planning
- Implementing strategy; including budget and performance integration
- Performance evaluation and validation

No one methodology is ideal for all organizations. However, adopting a methodology that is consistent and repeatable is the most effective way of enabling the ability to control investments, make better strategic decisions, and eventually translating them into tactical results. Leaders strongly influence such success through their actions and leadership. For organizations to achieve success requires a strong and prominent organizational commitment to consistent planning that is vigorously supported by the organization's leaders and promoted by individuals in positions of influence. Some of the tools and approaches used in these processes may include:

Current State Analysis

- Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)
- Analysis of Political, Economic, Social, and Technological (PEST) factors
- Identification of Drivers, Enablers, and Trends (DET)

Desired Future State Identification

- Defining a future vision
- Documenting a mission statement
- Implementing guiding principles and core values

Strategy and Performance Evaluation

- Defining achievable goals
- Identify specific objectives for those goals
- Outline and implement strategies for achieving objectives
- Define, monitor, and track key performance indicators, measures, and metrics

It's important that leaders, in collaboration with the strategic planning team, develop and support a methodology that allows for repeatability of practice and process and that defines, measures, analyzes, improves, and controls business functions through what is traditionally a four step iterative process of

planning, doing, checking, and acting. The strategic planning team facilitates the strategic planning process and helps guide stakeholders through the creation of a high-quality strategic plan. Ultimately, it is the trust gained from this collaborative process, and the partnerships formed from it, that provides the most valuable. Moving forward these relationships will make it easier to identify organizational synergies; encourage opportunities, and enable value not previously achievable.

For more information and tools related to strategic planning, the CDC Unified Process, or the Project Management Community of Practice please visit the CDC UP website at <http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/>. ■

Project Management Community of Practice

- **October 28, 2011**
Information Security 101 for Project Managers
- **December 09, 2011**
Enterprise Architecture

For more information on the Project Management Community of Practice visit the PMCoP website at <http://www2.cdc.gov/cdcup/library/pmcoP/> ■

CDC Unified Process Presentations

The CDC UP offers a short overview presentation to any CDC FTE or Non-FTE group. Presentations are often performed at your facility, on a day of the week convenient for your group, and typically take place over lunch structured as one hour lunch-and-learn style meeting.

Contact the CDC Unified Process at cdcup@cdc.gov or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup> to arrange a short overview presentation for your group. ■

Contact the CDC Unified Process

The CDC Unified Process Project Management Newsletter is authored by Daniel Vitek, MBA, PMP and published by the Office of Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services.

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