

## **Planning – The Key to Organizational Sustainability**

An educational session at the 2007 Southern SAWG CFS Leadership Training  
July 25, 2007

### **Presenter**

Ruth Peebles, Funding Development Director  
Southern SAWG  
The INS Group  
Raleigh, NC  
919-231-2870  
rpeebles@theinsgroup.com  
www.theinsgroup.com

**Purpose:** The overall purpose of this training session was to explore planning processes within organizational sustainability. The group prepared for the planning process, walked through some basic definitions and key concepts in strategic planning, went through the basic steps of strategic planning, and explored components of strategic planning. They also examined annual operating plans and looked at opportunities for utilizing outside consultants in the strategic planning process.

### **What is a Strategic Plan?**

- A roadmap for the organization
- Outlines the goals and objectives of the organization
- Provides timelines to meet the goals
- Essentially, the strategic plan is the organization's business plan

Why is strategic planning important for an organization?

- To set goals
- To evaluate the progress of the organization
- To assess and reassess goals of the organization
- Helps keep the organization focused
- Helps to make determinations about what falls under the mission and what doesn't
- To guide the organization

Benefits of strategic planning

- Strategic planning brings all components of the organization together to see the big picture.
- Strategic planning entails team building within the organization
- Strategic planning brings many people within the community to the table to accomplish a goal.

### **Preparing the planning process**

- Decide to plan or not to plan
- Think about your level of planning

- Once the decision is made, take the following steps
  - Obtain a formal commitment to conduct planning, including education of board and staff, if necessary
  - Select a strategic planning committee of no more than five to seven people, a combination of visionaries and "actionaries," and a planning liaison to spearhead the process
  - Develop a work plan that outlines who is responsible for each outcome and time frames
  - Consider the adequate level of resources (dollars and time) required to conduct an appropriate planning process

## **Key Concepts and definitions**

### **Basic steps**

1. Getting ready
2. Articulating the mission and vision of the organization
3. Assessing the situation
4. Looking at your environment internally and externally
  - developing goals, objectives and strategies
5. Completing the written plan

### **Components of Strategic plan**

- Executive summary - summarizes the strategic plan so that a stranger can read and get the gist of the plan
- Organizational descriptions - summarizes the organization including history and highlights
- Mission, Vision and value statements - describes the strategic philosophy of the organization
- Goals - broad based statements about ultimate results
- Objectives - measurable outcomes to accomplish goals
- Strategies - action steps to reach objectives; also summarizes a timeline and the person responsible for implementation
- Monitor and Evaluation of plan - summarizes who will be responsible for reviewing the plan and progress of the organization and how that is accomplished
- Communication of the plan - summarizes who will be informed about the organization and your plan, and how they will be informed
- Budget - money in and money out
- Operating plan - describes the goals and activities to be accomplished over the coming fiscal year
- Financial reports - last year's financial information
- Description of the strategic planning process - how the plan was developed (in the event of turnover)
- Strategic analysis data - information generated during the external analysis and internal analysis
- Goals for Board and Chief Executive Officer - goals for the board and chief financial officer

## **ALL INFORMATION ABOVE IS VITAL TO HAVING A SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC PLAN!!!**

### **Annual operating plan and implementation**

- Involve the people who will be responsible for implementing the plan.
- Create an action plan (or work plan) for each staff member
- Specify who is doing what and by when (action plans are often referenced in the implementation section of the overall strategic plan).
- Detail particularly the first 90 days of the implementation of the plan. Build in regular reviews of status of the implementation of the plan.
- Translate the strategic plan's actions into job descriptions and personnel performance reviews.
- Be sure that one internal person has ultimate responsibility that the plan is enacted in a timely fashion.
- Have designated rotating "checkers" to verify, e.g., every quarter, if activities completed.

### **Using external consultants**

Some organizations use an external consultant to facilitate the strategic planning process.

When choosing a consultant consider that consultant must:

- Really need to understand the organization, the work that it does and the organization's need
- Choosing a consultant may take a couple of months, be sure to allow for this time within the strategic planning timeline.
- Think about developing and Request For Proposals (RFP) asking consultants to submit a plan or their approach to Strategic Plan
- Be clear about the expectations of the organization and the consultants
- Proposals should include
  - Background
  - Methodology for providing services
  - references
- Conduct interviews (staff should be included in the process)

### **Successful strategic plans**

- Leads to action
- Builds on a shared vision
- Is inclusive, participatory process in which board and staff take on shared ownership
- Accepts accountability to the community
- Is externally focused and sensitive to the organizations environment
- Is based on quality data
- Requires openness to questioning the status quo
- Is a key part of effective management

### **Key Points**

- Strategic planning is a process whereby the organization's leadership evaluated the organization's mission, determines a strategy to advance its mission, and sets realistic goals and objectives for the future
- The planning results in a document that becomes the organization's roadmap to the future
- If your organization does not have an overall strategic plan, the rationale and process for developing a strategic plan for fundraising becomes much more difficult
- A strategic plan for fund raising must fit within your organization's overall strategic plan

### **Strategic Planning for Fundraising**

Strategic planning in fund development is essential to capacity building and sustainability. All stakeholders must be at the table to help develop a fund development plan.

Effective fundraising is the result of

- Planning, planning, and more planning
- Relationship building
- Conversations with friends and family

### **Key components of fund development plan**

- Identify community needs and current trends
- Mission statement and organizational purpose
- Funding needs
  - Describes the organization's current, near term and long term funding requirements for special projects programs and physical plant expansion
- Case Statement
  - Describes the organization's distinctive merit and needs for seeking private contributed support
  - Articulates the most compelling reasons that someone should contribute
- Constituency of Contributors
  - Identifies individuals, foundations, businesses and charitable associations as potential donors to the organization
  - Evaluates their contribution potential and assesses the best approach to solicit them
- Fundraising methodology
  - Describes fundraising approaches
  - You want the most cost-effective and result-oriented approach for solicitation contributions
- Organization and leadership
  - Describes the role of organization and leadership's role in fund development

- Donor and volunteer recognition
- Administrative and systems procedures
- How are you going to track donations
- Professional staff
  - Identifies the professional staff time and experience necessary to meet these goals
- Fund raising materials
- Timeline- establishes a realistic

### **Public awareness and marketing**

- Define your target, research similar organizations and associations
- Determine the desired outcome of your marketing efforts
- Using the information gathered, develop brochures and marketing materials that describe the benefits, services, donations, opportunities and values of your organizations
- Develop a public relations strategy
- Use the media and other associations that are reaching out to similar markets
- Develop and maintain a professional internet presence by creating a website
- Search for alliances with other organizations, commerce, government, advertising media and business
- Research and maintain prospect, consumer and customer databases
- Show and advertise the results and objectives that your organization achieves.

### **Capacity building and Fundraising Strategies**

- Direct mail
- Cause related marketing opportunities
- Social ventures
- Special events (signature events)
- Major donor campaign
- Memberships
- Fundraisers
- Individual gifts
- Fees for service
- Grants
- Face to face asks
- In-kind donations

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is the role of the staff in strategic planning?** Ultimately, the board of directors develops the strategic plan; however, input from the staff is vital. The staff members will be the ones who implement and assess the goals of the plan. The staff can help the board operationalize their goals and also help set realistic goals and objectives based on experience.

**Who decides on the agency's mission, vision and purpose?** The board develops the mission, vision and purpose of the organization.

**Can the mission change as the organization grows?** The true mission and vision of the organization typically stays the same. However, how the mission is addressed, and in what ways the organization functions to address the mission may change as the organization grows and times change.

**Do all organizations need a strategic plan?** Absolutely, your organization is never too small to have a strategic plan. The strategic plan helps to guide the organization and keep the organization on track.

**How do you get the board committed to the strategic planning process?** This can often be a difficult task. The most important way to get the board committed is to educate board members about the strategic planning process. Let them know that it is a constant and ongoing process and that it is vital to the continuation of the organization. Board members must also have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibility in this process.