



Touchstone

Best Practices to Expand Your Reach



Best Practice (BP) | Best practices are specific, discrete ministry activities that measurably increase program scale, effectiveness, and/or efficiency, and can be replicated by other National Ministries. Best practices should be supported by evidence (data).

BP#12: Developing a Strategic Plan

Benefits:

Developing a strategic plan is a time-intensive process that demands deep engagement but results in a clear direction for your organization.

Strategy is about choices – you choose a vision, a mission, you choose how to engage in the world to accomplish your mission, you choose what activities to pursue and which to pass up, you choose how to raise and allocate funding, you choose how to deliver your services... and so much more. Conducting the research and holding the discussions that lead to strategy decisions sharpen your organizational focus and develop an intentionality for your ministry.

Your strategic plan then becomes the lens through which your organization makes decisions; if an activity does not align with the mission and vision, then it is not pursued.

A strategic plan also helps you:

- Set a long-term direction for your ministry.
- Develop and maintain competencies.
- Set targets and build objectives to meet them.
- Set budgets effectively.
- Assign staff responsibility and authority.
- Shape organizational culture.
- Navigate conflicts.
- Gain efficiencies and build capacity.
- Focus the marketing/fundraising message.
- Build a brand identity.

A strategic plan normally has a lifespan of three-five years.

POC (contact for more info):



Brazil



Colombia



Philippines

Planning Considerations (*How to do it*):

The first step is determining who will be involved in developing a strategic plan. The board of the organization will drive the process but invite other stakeholders to speak into it – employees, beneficiaries, partners, donors, consultants, etc.

- There are five stages in strategic planning: analysis of the current state, defining the future state, determining goals and objectives, implementation and evaluation.
- The first step is to conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of your organization. The Strengths and Weaknesses highlight things internal to your organization while the Opportunities and Threats require you to look outside and see how what is happening could affect your organization (environmental scan).
- After analyzing the current state of organization, move to defining the future state of the organization. This often consists of developing a vision (what you are building toward) and a mission statement (how you will achieve your goal) by focusing on what you have determined your organization can be successful at. This stage should also include developing core values and functions in the organization.
- The next step is to take your mission and vision and use them to identify goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are the tactical pieces that will help you meet your mission and eventually your vision. This helps an organization to understand what it needs to accomplish in order to address its priorities.
- When the strategic plan has been finalized, the Board will review and approve it.
- Next, begin executing the overall plan and determining accountability for the goals and objectives. This is about allocating time, finances and the people responsible to achieve the objectives.
- The final stage is evaluation. The organization's leaders review the performance of the plan and ensures that it is achieving results. Evaluation is scheduled and conducted regularly (i.e., quarterly). This review allows the strategic leaders to examine and assess if the project(s) is moving in the right direction, and to make adjustments as needed.

The process and outputs should be documented, below is an example of sections to include in your strategic plan.

- Executive Summary: This is simply a summary of the entire strategic plan report. The summary is a tool for communicating the report is a short and simple way to donors, supporters, partners, etc.
- Background: This section tells the story of your organization - the work you do, how you do it and where you work. You can also provide a history of your organization.
- Management Structure: This section describes your organization's governance structure, highlighting your board members and the management of the organization. It should also include an organizational chart.
- Mission, Vision and Values: In this section you can list your organization's guiding principles and your newly crafted mission and vision statements.
- Strategic Analysis: Here you would describe the final results of the work that you did analyzing your current organizational state and the external environment.
- Goals and Strategies: The strategy analysis leads to the development of organizational goals. Here you will expound on the goals and the plans you have created to achieve them.
- Evaluation: In this section you will explain the processes that will be used to evaluate the success of the plan.

It is important that the strategic plan be a living document that is regularly reviewed. The strategic plan should be used as your guide for annual planning.

Required Resources (What you Need to do it):

1. Human Resources.

- Someone will need to lead the strategy development.
- Someone will need to coordinate with the strategy planning participants.
- Someone will need to lead the SWOT analysis.
- Someone will need to collect feedback from stakeholders.
- Someone will need to document the process, discussions, decisions, etc.

2. Collateral

- Prep materials for planning meetings.
- Finalized strategic plan.
- Executive summary for donors.

3. Time

- Time to plan and prepare for strategy development meetings.
- Time for each step in the development process.
- Time to conduct evaluation.

4. Space You will need space to hold a series of meetings.

5. Cost The cost varies. Considerations include meal/snack expenses, travel expenses, types of communication (email, phone, text), plan design and documentation.

A link to a presentation on building a strategic plan:

<https://www.pfinfo.org/organisational-growth/strategy-development>