

## Strategic Planning

2017 NATP Manager's Workshop  
June 21, 2017

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Please write down your **best and most honest** answers to the following questions...



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1. What is the one thing your organization was worst at this year?
2. What is the one thing your organization did best this year?
3. Which department, division, team or function was most responsible for standing in the way of your organization's success this year?
4. Which department, division, team or function was most responsible for your organization's success this year?

**-Predictable Success  
by Les McKeown**

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5. What is the single metric or measurement you least liked hearing about this year?
6. What is the single metric you will measure your success by? (not how anyone else will measure your success-- how you will measure your own success)
7. If you fired yourself today, and came back tomorrow as a new boss with a clean sheet, what would you do?

**-Predictable Success**  
**by Les McKeown**

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### What are YOU going to do about it?



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### Think Strategically

- Planning
  - Identify key strategic issues facing the organization & formulating strategies to manage these issues
- Management
  - Develop an effective process for implementing & managing the strategic initiatives

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### Think Strategically

- A strategic plan is a tool used to define an organization's:

The diagram consists of five colored boxes arranged in two rows. The top row contains three boxes: a red box labeled 'Vision & Mission', a green box labeled 'Core Values', and a purple box labeled 'Threats & Opportunities'. The bottom row contains two boxes: a blue box labeled 'Strengths & Weaknesses' and an orange box labeled 'Short- & Long-term Goals'.

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### Think Strategically

The diagram features two main components. On the left, a red rounded rectangle contains the text 'Guides Business Processes'. To its right, a large light-red arrow points right, with a bulleted list: 'Operating Budget' and 'Capital Budget'. Below this, a green rounded rectangle contains the text 'Measures Performance'. To its right, a large light-green arrow points right, with a bulleted list: 'Identifies Key Performance Indicators' and 'Sets Targets'.

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### Think Strategically

- In general, agencies are better at developing plans than they are at implementing them - a plan on a shelf is of no use to anyone.

An oval-shaped photograph showing a spiderweb stretched across a wooden shelf. The web is intricate and appears to have been recently spun, with some strands still attached to the shelf's edge.

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**Benefits - Internal**

- Creates organizational vision & direction
- Helps agency become more customer focused
- Creates better alignment between governing body, management & staff

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**Benefits - Internal**

- Increases interdepartmental coordination
- Makes departments & agency as a whole more accountable for results
- Helps identify areas for improvement
- Empowerment of staff as well as management

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**Benefits - Internal**

- Aids in decision making & setting priorities
- Can assist in more efficient & effective use of resources
- Helps determine need to expand or reduce services

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### Benefits - Internal

- Promoting greater board ownership of overall agency initiatives
- Improving agency customer focus
- Sets out a 3-5 year focus vs. year-to-year budget plan (establishes a long-range view in decision making and priority setting)

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### Benefits - External

- Increases funding opportunities
- Helps define agency's core responsibilities to the community & service area
- Increases external stakeholder awareness & input resulting in greater support

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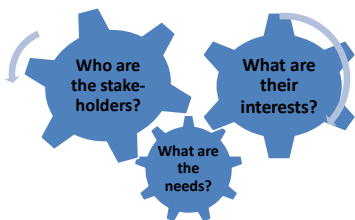
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### Stakeholder Analysis



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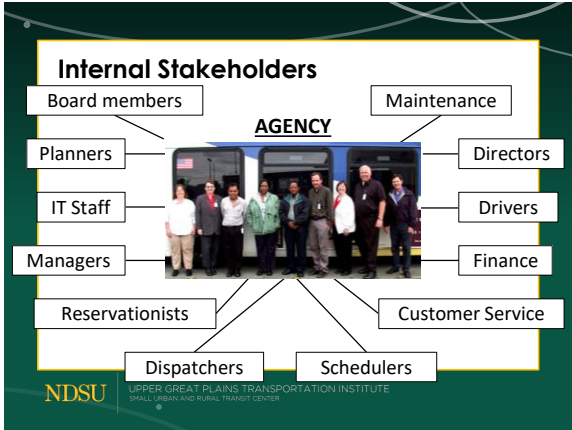
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**Mission, Goals and Objectives**

- Mission statement
  - A clear and succinct representation of the organization's purpose for existence
  - The mission statement describes why the public transportation system exists

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**Mission, Goals and Objectives**

- Goals
  - Broad statements of what the transit agency hopes to achieve
  - Focused on outcomes or results
  - Qualitative in nature
  - Used to establish policy
  - Determines the organizational direction

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**Mission, Goals and Objectives**

- Well written goals are **SMART**
  - **S**pecific-easy to understand, no interpretation needed
  - **M**asurable-easy to determine if accomplished
  - **A**ttainable-a challenge, but within reason
  - **R**elevant-linked to the agency's mission
  - **T**ime limited-must have a timetable

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**Mission, Goals and Objectives**

- Goals
  - Improves communication
  - Reduces micromanagement
  - Encourages employee innovation
  - Communicates the right message to the public

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### Mission, Goals and Objectives

- Objectives
  - Steps towards achieving a goal
  - Typically 2-3 objectives for each goal
  - Should be aligned with performance measures
    - Measurable
    - Specific

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### Process

- Develop an effective process for implementing & managing the strategic initiatives




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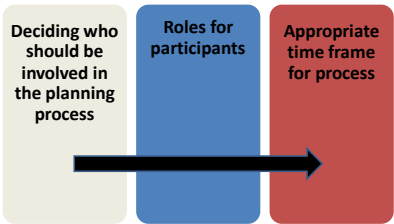
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### Process




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### Process

- Identify key strategic issues facing the organization & formulating strategies to manage these issues
- Evaluating progress & making mid-course corrections as necessary



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### Process

Assessing the organization's environments to identify:



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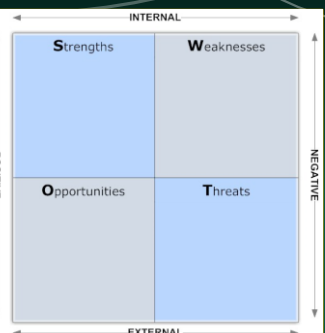
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### SWOT



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**Conduct a SWOT Analysis...**

You are considering expanding service to a growing area of town that is planning new housing, a middle school and an entertainment district. Your agency funding, staff and equipment are already stretched thin. Community surveys are demanding service, but elected officials remain skeptical. Transit advocates are very vocal. The media is engaged in the discussion. New infrastructure construction is beginning.

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**Process**

- Recognize challenges
  - Inadequate staff resources
  - Operating pressures (lack of time)
  - Always putting out "fires"
  - Inability to enter new "markets" or alter service area
  - Financial constraints

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**Process**

- Stumbling Blocks...
  - Difficulty of staying focused on strategic issues throughout the year in light of pressing day-to-day issues
  - The use of goals that are too broad & do not provide enough guidance for priority setting
  - Inadequate communication & participation

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**Process**

"There is often a significant gap or breakdown between completing a strategic plan and implementing its recommendations. Too often the focus is on the production of a plan document and not enough emphasis is placed on its execution."

"How to Develop a Strategic Plan That Won't Gather Dust," by Richard Simonetta, CEO, Valley Metro Rail, Inc., Phoenix, AZ

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**15 Strategies for Success**

1. De-emphasize the formality of process
2. Keep level of data & analysis reasonable for size of agency (One size does not fit all)
3. Keep cost in relationship to benefits

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**15 Strategies for Success**

4. Know difference between long-range planning and strategic management
5. Be realistic about capabilities of agency – Make the plans & goals ambitious, but attainable
6. Set priorities and clearly define objectives for strategic management process

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### 15 Strategies for Success

- 7. Management and governing body must be seriously committed to the planning and management process
- 8. Clear communication about process so everyone understands their role in its success
- 9. Objectives must be stated in a way that are measurable

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### 15 Strategies for Success

- 10. Clear linkage must be made between the plan and budget
- 11. Broad participation & involvement from all stakeholders
- 12. Assignments of responsibility need to be made for implementation
- 13. Once started, the process should be flexible and continuous

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### 15 Strategies for Success

- 14. There must be milestones and performance measures must be established to measure progress & celebrate achievements
- 15. Recognize that change is difficult & it will take time and effort

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### Process

- Implement planned strategies to improve an agency's effectiveness by:
  - Goal Setting
  - Leadership Development
  - Team Building
  - Employee Feedback Surveys & Meetings
  - Education Programs & Staff Training
  - Coaching & Counseling Employees
  - Developing Reward & Recognition Programs

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### Managing Change

- Managing the change process
  - Recognizing the need for change
  - Leading and planning for change
  - Making the change happen
  - Institutionalizing new approaches

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### Managing Change

Tendency to assume the future is just like the past

Need to think strategically **AND** creatively to make change possible

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### Best Practices

- Annual goals & objectives with quarterly reviews & presentations to the board of directors (or governing body) to ensure plan moves from paper to implementation
- Educating the board of directors helps them articulate the goals of the agency externally and work in support of the agency's vision and mission

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### Best Practices

- Linking the strategic plan to the operational and capital budgets ensures the resources needed to support the plan are available



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### Best Practices

- Strategic plans can be used to justify a need to increase funding by showing that the agency requires more resources to meet the needs of its service area & how those resources would be used



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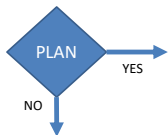
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### Best Practices

- Strategic plan must be linked to performance measures in order to monitor whether or not:
  - Plans are being achieved
  - Corrective action needs to take place



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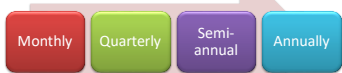
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### Best Practices

- Specific performance measures tied to plan and reported on monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and tracked on a yearly basis creates accountability for implementation



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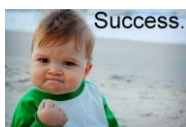
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### Best Practices

- Re-order priorities based on specific goals and performance measures
- Carve out specific time for strategic planning & making it a priority
- Acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments



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### Resources

- TCRP Synthesis 59 "Strategic Planning and Management in Transit Agencies" 2005
- TCRP Report 88 "A Guidebook for Developing a Transit Performance-Measurement System" 2003

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## Small Urban and Rural Transit Center

Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute  
North Dakota State University  
Fargo, ND

[www.surfc.org](http://www.surfc.org)

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