A Planning Toolkit for the University of Minnesota

2010-2011 President’s Emerging Leaders Program
Planning Toolkit for Campus, Collegiate, and Departmental Units

2010-2011 PEL Project

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Title: Planning Toolkit for Campus, Collegiate, and Departmental Units
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OVERARCHING PHILOSOPHY

Why Plan?
As the University of Minnesota Board of Regents emphasized in its 2004 *Transforming the U for the 21st Century* report, “We’ve reached a watershed moment in higher education. Today, the University faces fierce competition, shifting patterns of enrollment, and dwindling resources.” This statement held true long before the prolonged economic downturn that began in 2007, which has only intensified the demands on scarce resources. The result is increased pressure on units at the University to demonstrate the value of the unit’s activities in support of the institution’s mission and goals. Increasingly, unit leaders will be asked to support their funding requests by demonstrating measurable need tied to measurable results in support of activities aligned with University goals. Those who most cogently put forth their case with evidence that succinctly illustrates value will stand the best chance of limiting cuts to their programs, maintaining existing funding, or even securing modest funding increases for investment in core functions and growth.

The University’s mission is founded in the American land grant tradition, and our current aspirational goal is to be among the top research institutions in the world by 2020. To ensure our work remains mission-centered while striving toward that goal, intentional planning must have a prominent place in the daily operation of the institution. It is easy to dismiss the exercise of ‘planning’ as something that anyone with common sense can understand and do. After all, as many University leaders state, intentional planning is so intuitive as to appear simple. For those who have participated in planning retreats or teams in the past, but have seen the plan devised and then relegated to a shelf in an office, it is easy to be cynical about the process. To help planning remain thorough, thoughtful, and actionable -- not merely an exercise in futility or so superficial as to be useless -- several excellent resources exist at the University. The Office of Planning and Analysis and the Organizational Effectiveness unit within Human Resources are the two primary offices with expertise in this area, both available to departments and units interested in pursuing intentional planning initiatives. Also, there are several documents pertaining to the entire University that units may find informative to the ‘big picture’—University mission, vision, goals, and budget constraints.

- Financial Futures report
- Regents budget
- The University of Minnesota’s current mission, vision, and priorities.
- “Transforming the U for the 21st Century” report, including the thirteen essential areas it identifies “upon which a strong public university should focus its resources and expertise in order to become world class”:
  1. Educational Quality and Experience
  2. Research Enterprise
  3. Public Engagement and Outreach
  4. Financial Access and Affordability
  5. Interdisciplinary Scholarship
  6. Academic Quality and Productivity
  7. Diversity
  8. Internationalization
  9. Human Resources
  10. Space and Energy
11. Informational Technology and Support  
12. Improved Productivity, Safety, and Service  
13. Management and Stewardship

- Office of Planning and Analysis (OPA)  
- Office of Human Resources - Organizational Effectiveness (OHR/OE)

**Toolkit for Purposeful Planning**

We propose a toolkit of templates, resources, and recommended planning steps that is a synthesis of strategic planning theories and best practices designed to provide structure and support for departments and units charged with planning initiatives. The Planning Toolkit, grounded in research and theory on strategic planning and change management, will aid units in connecting goals and measurable outcomes to the unit's mission and ultimately help to ensure that activities across units align with the University’s mission and vision. The planning steps, resources, and templates were developed or gathered for the purpose of helping units make planning easier as well as intentional, purposeful, and disciplined, ideally making the resulting plans real and actionable.

A review of research in the field of strategic planning and strategic management was the starting point for the development of the Planning Toolkit. The distinct planning models of John M. Bryson, Peter F. Drucker, John P. Kotter, or Louise G. White could be useful depending on a unit’s needs; likewise, units should be encouraged to look to best practices in their particular area. For a business plan management perspective, we had only to go to the University’s own University Services to tap outstanding planning practices. Kathleen O’Brien, Vice President of University Services, leads the University in the expectation of all units within University Services developing and actively reviewing individual unit business plans on a continuous basis to ensure alignment of services and mission. Other University leaders (Patty Franklin, President’s Office; Joe Shultz, Provost’s Office; Teri Spillers, Organizational Effectiveness) helped to refine the composition of the proposed planning model and resources to ensure that the steps most relevant to the University’s current culture and reality (state budget short fall and declining support for the University, student demographic changes, etc.) were included.

**Planning is really a way of thinking.**

Dr. John Bryson at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs is one of the preeminent researchers in the area of public and non-profit planning, and someone whom this project team found to be a valuable source of knowledge and resources. He describes strategic planning succinctly as “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.”1 Bryson also emphasizes throughout “Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement” and in interviews that the process of strategic thinking, acting, and learning is often more important in responding to challenges than the end product—the plan.

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Planning is not a linear process.
Although an effective plan begins with mission and ends with action steps that lead the organization to results, the process of developing, implementing, and reevaluating the plan is continuous. Planning teams may address tasks out of sequence or undertake multiple tasks at once, but it is important to give attention to each one. One example of this involves communication. Effective communication is key to every step and may be as important to success as the plan itself. Although (discussion) about communication appears later in this document, it is relevant throughout the planning process. Wherever the starting point, it is critical to understand assumptions and decisions made in the other phases of planning. This is especially true in situations when a group is working on just one component of a plan, or developing a plan that supports a broader goal.
The U 5-Step and Planning Toolkit
This report outlines a planning process (the “U 5-Step”) with resources and tools for each step that may be useful for large-scale planning initiatives, but will be most helpful for smaller, working-group units when tasked with planning or implementation of new goals. The U 5-Step is fluid and can be easily tailored to a unit’s planning needs. Intentional planning, if done well, is deceptively simple and the U 5-Step is designed to ensure that all major considerations are touched on during the planning process. Many leaders follow these general steps naturally or by force of habit, but it is articulating the information, decisions, or conclusions of each step that is crucial in order for a unit to work as a whole and ensure that all activities are grounded in the mission, vision, and broad goals of the larger organization.

The U 5-Step
Step 1: Getting Started—Planning to Plan
Step 2: Mission and Context
Step 3: Develop the Plan
Step 4: Gather Feedback and Communicate the Plan
Step 5: Implementation

Each section contains resources and templates intended to be incorporated into an easily accessible Planning Toolkit website. From University-level reports to print-and-go templates, the toolkit is envisioned to be used in part or in whole, based on an individual unit’s needs. A draft concept is included on disc.
Recommendations

- Implement a toolkit that allows units to select all or part of the available resources as their situation requires.
  - Collaborative partnership opportunity between Organizational Effectiveness and Office for Planning and Analysis.
  - Obtain appropriate permissions for highly requested items.
  - Offer brief coaching session to units new to planning.

- Develop a website that avoids subpage links and layers, minimizing click-throughs and maximizing accessibility.
  - Include glossary of terms to facilitate common understanding and use of strategic planning language: goals, strategies, tactics, objectives, initiatives, and measures.
  - Short podcasts of interviews with leaders/units who have successfully navigated planning or highlighting a particular tool or resource.

- Prominently feature contact information for Planning and Analysis as well as Organizational Effectiveness.
  - Highlight Organizational Effectiveness staff and consultants, including specialties (creating new mission/vision statements, environmental scan review, etc).
  - Highlight frequently requested metric options (enrollment, staffing, budget) available from OPA (menu of available information).

- Communicate broadly to small and intermediate size units, with an emphasis on the flexibility of this model and toolkit.
  - Outreach to P&A Senate, Civil Service and Bargaining Unit governance to promote toolkit.
  - Encourage HR professionals to incorporate toolkit to unit in-service on planning.
STEP 1: GETTING STARTED—PLANNING TO PLAN

Before any planning can occur, a unit needs to identify the purpose of the planning effort, or “what we’re going to do, and why.” Much of the work of planning comes before the actual development of the plan itself: gathering the team, agreeing on a process, and establishing a vision of success. In Leading Change, John Kotter encourages organizations to plan carefully and build the proper foundation. This effort often breaks down into just three simple activities, which can be challenging to implement:

1. Gathering key actors
2. Working through a strategic thinking and acting process
3. Focusing on what’s truly important for the organization (Addressed in Step 2)

Planning typically takes on one (or more) of three identities: business planning, resource planning, or challenge response planning. Regardless of the purpose or motive for planning (business, resource, or challenge), all involve change management during the planning process and through the implementation of the plan. Once motive has been identified, a planning team should be developed, an assessment of organizational readiness done, and a process agreed upon.

Purpose for Planning
Planning does not deal with future decisions, or what an organization should do tomorrow. Rather, it asks, “what do we have to do today to be ready for an uncertain tomorrow”. A well-developed plan has the potential to help focus efforts on core mission and services, align activities with University goals, help manage resources, and improve how we convey what we do, what we accomplish, and what are our strategies. There are several typical purposes for planning at large institutions: business development, resource management, and challenge response, all involving change management.

Business Planning
Business planning is a process that provides both strategic and tactical direction to University units. A business plan is a mid-range plan (5-year planning horizon) that aligns a unit’s services with the strategic goals of the University and the entities within which the unit resides (e.g. college, department, program, etc.).

A business plan addresses what the unit does; what it is trying to achieve; who it serves; how it will utilize its resources to achieve its goals; and how it will know when it has been successful. Simply put, it is a road map for where the unit wants to go as an organization.

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2 Bryson, 91.
5 Krueger, 2.
**Resource Planning**
Each unit at the University of Minnesota has a predetermined set of resources (money, staff, space, facilities, and equipment). The apportionment of—or access to—resources can be threatened, reduced, or sometimes enhanced during a normal business cycle. The change, potential or real, should be met with careful planning that includes revisiting the mission of the unit.

The unit’s mission should align with and support the University’s mission, and should guide decisions about allocation of resources. In other words, the mission should guide activities; resources should be allocated to support those mission-critical activities. This should also extend to the individual work plan level, with the work of each staff and faculty member supporting the office, unit, and University missions.

**Challenge Response Planning**
There may be instances when an organization needs to address a particular challenge that is not specific to an allocated resource or a goal. In this case, planning may be forced to start at some other point than what would normally be the beginning of typical planning models. This is different than skipping steps; skipping steps creates only the illusion of speed and never produces satisfactory results. An organization may undertake multiple steps at once, or may start the process at some other point than ‘step 1’, but should avoid skipping or ignoring a step. Making the investment of time to articulate the decisions or information from each step helps to avoid confusion and erroneous assumptions along the way.

**Change Planning**
There are four underlying principles to keep in mind for all types of change:

- Change is a process it is a journey and not a destination.
- Everyone responds and reacts to change differently.
- Change Management and Project Management are not the same things. Each requires different training and a different skill set.
- The unit undergoing change must have a concrete reason for a specific change, in addition to supporting the University’s goals. What are the benefits of the specific change and whom will it benefit? How will each group or individual benefit?

**Gather Key Actors**
Support and commitment of key decision makers are vital and provide legitimacy to the planning effort. They will indicate “who should be involved, when key decision points will occur, and what arguments are likely to be persuasive at various points in the process.”

**Who should be included and how should they participate?**
Key actors should be both initiators and champions of the process. Large-scale strategic planning may require anywhere from 5 to 25 days of attention from these key actors over the course of a year, or as much as 10% of their time, so it is important for the key actors to be fully on board with the planning initiative. Money is not usually the most-needed resource, but

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8 Bryson, 65.
9 Bryson, 81.
rather it is time. This is the group Kotter identifies as the “powerful guiding coalition” who have the clout, reputation, skills, and relationships to make the process successful.\textsuperscript{10}

Many authors have suggested planning efforts are a form of a drama, with settings, themes, plots, subplots, actors, scenes, beginning, middle, conclusion, and interpretations. Keep these key decision makers informed along the way, and involved if appropriate, so that there are no surprises with all of the drama’s moving parts.

*Identify a sponsor and a champion.* Sponsorship provides legitimacy; the champion drives and helps sustain the process. The sponsor may be the same person as the champion, but not always.

It is advisable to *involve people from three organizational levels*:
- Top policy/decision makers to set the direction
- Middle managers to translate policies and decisions into operations
- Frontline staff to provide input about how the operation runs day to day, and to implement the plan.

*Form a task force or coordinating committee.* This may vary in size and scope, depending on the type of planning. Remember that people can provide input and be consulted without having a seat at the decision-making table. Also, the level of support needed during the process, both professionally and administratively, should be considered.\textsuperscript{11}

**Assess Organizational Readiness**
A quick assessment of organizational readiness can be helpful to determine what work has already been done, what is still relevant, and what needs attention in the planning process. Ask the team:
- What is the current mission?
- Key issues or trends to investigate?
- Budget, human resources, and communications?
- Costs and benefits of this planning process?
- How to overcome barriers?
- Ability to execute the plan and evaluate its effectiveness?

**Agree on Strategic Thinking & Acting Process**
It is essential to agree on the scope and sequence of the planning process in order to maintain focus and address the needs of the unit.

*Defining the scope* of the planning initiative is crucial to keep the planning focused and intentional. Outlining what is on the table for discussion and what is not appropriate for consideration (“givens” that cannot be changed) can save a significant amount of time and helps

\textsuperscript{10} Kotter, XIX.
\textsuperscript{11} Krueger, 11.
refine the discussion to what can actually be addressed.

Outline the general sequence of planning, so that the process is clear and makes sense to all involved. In order to get others on board, Kotter believes that establishing a sense of urgency can help drive motivation.\(^{12}\)

Outline the form and timing of reports that will be produced. This includes identifying who is responsible for reporting and to whom reports are submitted.

A large-scale planning effort may best be started with a kickoff retreat. Smaller-scale planning efforts might benefit from a meeting of individuals at whatever organizational level the planning most directly impacts.

**Planning to Plan: Resources**

Bryson offers a five-step process for conducting a preliminary stakeholder analysis, which can be used all or in part, on pages 74-75 of Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement. Oval mapping process (Resource B, Bryson, 355) can be used for larger-scale planning as one technique to identify and illustrate stakeholders, relationships, processes, etc.

For larger-scale planning, McNamara’s thorough “plan to plan” outline is in an easy to understand format and may be useful.\(^{13}\)

**Planning to Plan: Tools**

- **Strategic Planning Overview - Organizational Effectiveness**
- **Stakeholder Analysis**
- **SOAR: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results**
- **Stakeholder Resistance**
- **The Cycle of Change**
- University Services’ environmental scan worksheet
- University Services’ SWOT and PESTEL worksheets
- **Should we proceed with strategic planning?** worksheet\(^{14}\)
- **Plan the Planning Effort** worksheet can be used all or in part, depending on the depth of the planning\(^{15}\)

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\(^{12}\) Kotter, 36.


\(^{15}\) Bryson and Alston, 40.
STEP 2: MISSION & CONTEXT

A review of a unit’s mission, vision, and values is critical for grounding the planning effort in what is truly important to the organization. Understanding the current context and culture—both of the unit itself and the larger academic and/or administrative division(s) at the University in which the unit resides—will help frame the process of articulating mission/vision/values and provide clarity about what a unit may have to change, build on, or improve in its own operations.

Mission, Vision, and Values Statements
Well-crafted strategic plans typically feature three key statements that guide an organization’s future activities.
- Mission statement: clarifies WHY an organization should be doing what it does. It is a declaration of purpose.
- Vision statement: describes WHAT success looks like for the organization. It answers the question, “What is our shared Vision of Success?”
- Values statement: HOW an organization should behave while it fulfills its mission.

By no means should these terms be used rigidly or exclusively. In the literature of planning and leadership, terms are often used interchangeably, e.g., mission statements are sometimes called purpose statements; vision and values statements may be combined. What is crucial to any planning process, however, is to define and agree upon terms, and regularly refer back to them throughout the process. Because larger planning initiatives require several meetings over the span of many weeks or months, it is particularly important at the outset of each meeting to recap what had been concluded at the previous meeting and briefly review terms.

Mission Statements
While the University mission guides the institution as a whole, individual units can and should develop their own mission to clearly identify their purpose within the organization. If a unit does not have an existing mission statement, Bryson suggests it should grow out of discussions aimed at answering six questions:16
1. Who are we?
2. What are the basic social and political needs we exist to meet, or what are the basic social or political or social problems we exist to address?
3. In general, what do we do to recognize, anticipate and respond to these needs or problems?
4. How should we respond to our key stakeholders?
5. What are our philosophy, values and culture?
6. What makes us distinctive or unique?

Four key benefits of articulating a mission statement include:17
1. Fosters a habit of focusing discussion on what is truly important.
2. Gets key decision makers to focus on what’s best for the organization as a whole.
3. Clarifies an organizational (or community) purpose, or strategic intent.
4. Because defining the mission may be thought of as the central function of leadership, more effective leadership should result.

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16 Bryson, 114.
17 Bryson, 105.
Vision Statements
The strongest vision statements are succinct, compelling, and describe what success looks like for the unit. The best statements evoke aspirational thinking and connect with a reader’s emotional commitment to the vision of success. A powerful vision statement can move key internal and external stakeholders to work hard toward realizing success for the organization and inspire prospective stakeholders, such as potential benefactors, to “join the team.”

Values Statements
Values, as guiding principles, impact everything that happens in the workplace and shape an organization’s culture. The process of articulating a values statement during planning helps to generate ownership of the process by—and often spurs clarifying conversations between and among—employees and organizational leaders.

The statement itself asserts the values an organization seeks to uphold as it works toward achieving its mission and vision and fosters agreement in the organization about how employees will interact with one another and represent the institution to its stakeholders.

Assessment of Context
Effective planning requires intentional thinking about an organization’s purpose, its key stakeholders, and the constituencies it serves. An accurate assessment of the current context, or ‘reality as we know it’, is key to every element of the planning process, from articulating mission, vision, and values statements, to identifying metrics that document success, to telling the story clearly and compellingly to stakeholders. Environmental scans and stakeholder analysis are two means for assessing the current culture, climate, and context of an organization.

Environmental Scan
An environmental scan is an assessment of internal and external influences - trends, developments, competition - that shape the work, culture, product, and effectiveness of a unit. Understanding these forces is key to a unit adequately preparing effective responses to barriers to success as well as positioning it to take full advantage of opportunities developed through the planning process. From casual water cooler conversations to formal market research, environmental scans help a planning team understand the ‘big picture’ in which their unit and initiatives exist. It is important to consider ‘external’ in two ways: external to the University as a whole (state of Minnesota, marketplace trends, demographics), but also external to the unit yet within the University (other departments, users from all employee classes, etc).

Morrison cites Coates (1985), who identified the following objectives of an environmental scanning system:18

- detecting scientific, technical, economic, social, and political trends and events important to the institution,
- defining the potential threats, opportunities, or changes for the institution implied by those trends and events,
- promoting a future orientation in the thinking of management and staff, and

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• alerting management and staff to trends that are converging, diverging, speeding up, slowing down, or interacting.

Perform a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) or PESTEL (political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal) analysis on the areas that are the focus of the planning process. Completing exercises such as these will produce a set of issues, events, and/or trends that are likely to impact the unit in the near future and will provide further definition to the plan development discussions.

**Stakeholder Analysis**
A stakeholder analysis can be beneficial in determining who should be at the table if it is prudent (but not if impractical or unnecessary) and will ensure that all cohorts affected by developments or change will be considered at some level throughout the planning process. Through planning, resources are concentrated in a limited number of major directions in order to maximize benefits to stakeholders, i.e., those we exist to serve and who are affected by the choices we make. As Bryson notes, the term *stakeholders* "refers to persons, groups or organizations that must somehow be taken into account by leaders, managers and front-line staff." Definitions of “stakeholder” that might be useful to expand and frame planning discussions:

- “Any person, group or organization that can place a claim on the organization's attention, resources, or output, or is affected by that output”
- “[A]ny group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives"
- “Those individuals or groups who depend on the organization to fulfill their own goals and on whom, in turn, the organization depend.”
- As the planning team conducts its stakeholder analysis, it is important to consider the direct or indirect impact on other units in the University. One unit’s planning may have an unintended impact on, or ramifications for, other units.
- In higher education, stakeholders often include students and their families, alumni, employers of graduates, funding agencies, state legislature, business partnerships, and the general public. Internal stakeholders include students, faculty, and staff, including governing structures (senates, unions) and other working groups such as ad hoc or consultative committees and task forces.

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19 Krueger, 17 and 57.
Bryson offers a five-step process, which can be used all or in part.\textsuperscript{24} It is most useful if there are stakeholders who can inform the process or if their buy-in is key to successful implementation of the plan, regardless whether they are process stakeholders or agenda stakeholders.\textsuperscript{25}

**Mission & Context: Resources**

For a comprehensive case analysis of formal environmental scanning processes in three different institutions of higher education, see: *Introduction to Environmental Scanning in Higher Education* (Pritchett, 1990). Figures 1 (p. 16), 2 (p. 23) and 3 (p. 32) provide comparative diagrams of the processes at each institution.

For a searchable, open access, international, peer-reviewed scholarly journal dedicated to making accessible the results of research across a wide-range of information-related disciplines, including Environmental Scanning, see *Information Research* at: [http://informationr.net/ir/index.html](http://informationr.net/ir/index.html) (Privately published by Professor T.D. Wilson, Professor Emeritus of the University of Sheffield, with in-kind support from Lund University Libraries, Lund, Sweden, and from the Swedish School of Library and Information Science.)

**Budgeting Resources at the University of Minnesota**

- For chart depicting the University’s Budget Cycle, see: [Budget cycle summary](#)
- For budget instructions, see: academic or admin units
- For compact instructions, see: academic or admin units
- For capital budget instructions, see: Capital budget instructions

For the University criteria for decision making, see: [University criteria for decision making](#) (Office of Service and Continuous Improvement).

If enrollment data or student head counts factor into your business unit’s planning, see: [Enrollment data](#) (Office of Institutional Research).

If employee headcounts factor into your business unit’s planning, see: [Employee headcounts](#) (Office of Institutional Research).

For an alternative to traditional SWOT analysis, see: [SOAR: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results](#) (Office of Human Resources: Organizational Effectiveness).

For a graphic representation of the STAR model of organizational design, see: [STAR model of organizational design](#) (Office of Human Resources: Organizational Effectiveness).

For an excellent change management toolkit, including a list of key questions to ask during the process and a checklist for unit-level tasks in when preparing for a Change Initiative, see: [Change management toolkit](#) (Office of Human Resources).

\[\textsuperscript{24}\] Bryson, 74.
\[\textsuperscript{25}\] Bryson and Alston, 25.
Mission & Context: Tools at the University of Minnesota

Bryson’s worksheet\textsuperscript{26} provides a good tool for assessing whether and how your unit should proceed with the planning process; as does University Services’ two-page worksheet.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{26} Bryson and Alston, 34
\textsuperscript{27} Krueger, 18-19.
STEP 3: DEFINE THE PLAN

“The plan” is a cogent outline of the unit’s goals, the strategies to reach those goals, the specific initiatives within each strategy, and the measures by which the goals will be evaluated. Prioritization of the goals based on existing resources and resource needs while clearly defining roles and responsibilities for implementation keep the plan focused on making the goals actionable. Further, the desired outcomes and the measures used to evaluate progress towards the goals need to be defined.

Develop Goals, Strategies, and Initiatives
Unit goals, or strategic issues a unit is attempting to address, should align with University goals to ensure relevance and institutional support. It can often be helpful to phrase the goals “...as a question the organization can do something about and that has more than one answer.” In this way, energy is focused on what can realistically be affected but also creative, ‘out of the box’ thinking can occur in discussing the strategies and initiatives to address those goals. “Strategies are developed to achieve goals; objectives (as opposed to goals) should be thought of as specific milestones or targets to be reached during strategy implementation.”

- Goal: issue to be addressed or desired outcome.
- Strategy: how to achieve or reach the goal; pattern of decisions and actions.
- Initiative: specific program, task, or action.
- Outcome: measurable result; target to be reached.

For many working groups or units, senior leadership may dictate goals, while strategy and initiative development remain the responsibility of the unit. What language is used and at which phase a unit is tasked with the responsibility for planning, “(t)he plan must convert intentions into action.”

Information gathered through the environmental scan process (SWOT, PESTEL, general feedback) can play a significant role in this step to assist with the creation of goals, strategies, and initiatives. By asking planners to identify barriers, limitations on implementation are taken into consideration when identifying which proposal or alternative will help the organization reach its intended goal best. “...(A)n effective strategy will take advantage of strengths and opportunities and minimize or overcome weaknesses and challenges.” Bryson suggests questions to help illuminate the connections or relationships among the priorities.

- What is really reasonable?
- Where can we combine proposals, actions, and specific steps?
- Do any proposals, actions, or specific steps contradict each other, and if so what should we do about them?

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28 Bryson, 159.
29 Bryson, 167.
32 Bryson, 202.
What (including the necessary resource) are we or the key implementers really willing to commit to over the next year?

What are the specific next steps that would have to occur in the next six months for this strategy to work?

**Prioritization of Goals, Strategies, Initiatives**

A key component is the arrangement of the strategic issues in some sort of order: priority, logical, or temporal. Prioritization should be influenced by the mission, vision, and values of an organization with resources assigned accordingly. “The listing and arrangement of issues should contain information that helps people consider the nature, importance, and implications of each issue.”

A realistic assessment of current resources (personnel, finances, technology, equipment, space) should be considered as well as the resources that may need to be developed to give the initiatives a realistic chance of success.

One unit’s priorities, and thus allocation of time, support, and resources, will undoubtedly affect other units within an organization. The prioritization process should consider opportunities for collaboration with, or unintended consequences for, other units. Considerations for criteria to reflect on and evaluate priorities might include:

- Political Climate
- Administrative and Technical Realities
- Results Focused
- Legal, Ethical, Moral

**Identify Outcomes and Metrics**

After defining and prioritizing goals, strategies, and initiatives, the plan must identify a vision of success that can be translated into measurable outcomes. Measures are developed only after goals are identified and prioritized, to ensure that it is the goals that drive the metrics, and not the reverse. A plan that does not contain metrics is likely to lose priority and languish on a shelf. Solid, reliable data are key to assessing success and positioning the unit for the future.

**Define the Plan: Resources**

- [Translating Performance Metrics from the Private to the Public Sector](https://www.balancedscorecard.org) from the Balanced Scorecard Institute.
- [Setting SMARTER Goals and Objectives](https://managementhelp.org) from Carter McNamara’s ManagementHelp.org.
- [Sample plan documents](https://managementhelp.org) from Carter McNamara’s ManagementHelp.org.

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33 Bryson, 155.
Define the Plan: Tools

Snow card procedure - Bryson, 140-142.

Goals Grid - [http://www.nickols.us/goals_grid.htm](http://www.nickols.us/goals_grid.htm)
STEP 4: GATHER FEEDBACK & COMMUNICATE THE PLAN

After developing a plan, it is crucial to solicit feedback (reactions, missing pieces, unintended interpretations) from stakeholders as well as peers on the decided course of action. While ideally a planning team should continually inform stakeholders throughout the process, this step specifically concentrates developing key messages for every stakeholder cohort in order to cultivate enthusiasm (buy-in) and garner support for the plan.

Listening to Stakeholders/Peers and Incorporating Feedback
First, obtain feedback and gather support for the plan. When approaching stakeholders with a draft plan, it is important to manage expectations and clearly communicate the planning process objectives.
- Which stakeholder groups and individuals should provide feedback on the plan?
- What is the process (e.g. format, venue, time frame) for obtaining feedback and buy in from stakeholder groups?
- How will feedback be incorporated into the planning process?
- A common piece of advice is to keep the word “Draft” on the plan, because the environment is always changing, and it helps to communicate that feedback will be incorporated into the plan.

Communicating the Plan
Effective planning requires effective communication, and is particularly important when managing change. William Bridges advises leaders to “give people information, and do it again, and again.”34 In the absence of information, stakeholders may speculate and elevate anxiety needlessly over actions that may or may not occur. Bridges also cites several common rationalizations for not communicating which should be avoided:
- “They don’t need to know yet. We’ll tell them when the time comes. It’ll just upset them now.”
- “They already know. We announced it.”
- “I told the supervisors. It’s their job to tell the rank and file.”
- “We don’t know all the details yet ourselves, so there’s not point in saying anything until everything has been decided.”

Bryson defines characteristics of effective communication:35
- Messages are clear, concise, and targeted toward specific stakeholders and designed to produce specific responses.
- Communication networks effectively convey information to both internal and external stakeholders.
- Forums provide the occasions and settings for appropriate discussion and dialogue.

A communication strategy is informed by the stakeholder analysis and environmental scan.

34 William Bridges, Managing transitions: making the most of change. (2nd ed. Cambridge:: Perseus, 2003) 32.

35 Bryson and Alston, 156.
Communication strategy is often included in the written planning document, outlining the process for launching and implementing the plan. The focus at this step is:

- Who needs to know?
- What do they do to know?
- When do they need to know it?
- How should it be said?

*Develop key messages for all and every stakeholder cohort.* Consider targeting the message to each stakeholder group, based on their levels of interest, influence, knowledge, and impact.

- Establish “key ideas” or “key messages” that all stakeholders should hear. This may include the vision, mission, goals, and/or the major changes outlined in the plan.
- Develop “key ideas” or “key messages” for each stakeholder group; tailor these ideas based on the group’s level of interest, influence, knowledge, and impact.
- Identify the communication strategy for each stakeholder group. Consider the weight of and context for the message, the audience, and the timing. For example, you likely would not announce a major reorganization and staff layoffs to your employees in an impersonal email, nor would you send a press release these topics first before notifying employees.

*Communicating the plan is an ongoing process.* Develop a calendar for communicating about implementation. Regularly report progress to stakeholder groups, even when there is no progress to report, to maintain engagement and support. Effective communication will also lead to increased support and enthusiasm for the plan.

**Gather Feedback & Communicate the Plan: Resources**

- Leadership tasks during times of change
- Tips for targeting communication about your strategic plan
- General organizational communication tips and tools
- Developing a communication plan
- Communicating your results
- UMN Brand Standards and Communication Tools, including resources on developing a blog, creating websites, and sending mass email.
- Example of using an organizational website for communicating your strategic plan
- UMN Office of the President Communications Archive, including communication to internal audiences

**Gather Feedback & Communicate the Plan: Tools**

- Interest-Influence Grid
- Key messages to communicate worksheet
- Stakeholder communications worksheet
STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation phase generally involves two components: an action plan and resource development or allocation. Management, monitoring, and evaluation with possible course correction follow once the strategies and initiatives are in place and allowed time to develop.

**Develop an Action Plan**
Action plans may be either direct (e.g. when a situation and solution is simple or immediate action is necessary) or staged/phased implementation (e.g. pilot program, or wave roll-out). Action plans should be developed for each priority and should outline the following:

- Who, what, when, where, why, how
- Specific expected results, objectives, and milestones
- Roles and responsibilities of implementation teams and individuals
- Specific action steps
- Schedules and markers
- Resource requirements and sources
- A communication process
- A review and monitoring process
- Accountability processes and procedures

**Resource Development and Allocation**
Utilization of existing resources or the development of new resources give an action plan momentum as implementers then know what they have to work with to make the plan happen. Consider using existing resources to engage team members, including personnel and their skills and expertise, in new and creative ways; interdisciplinary teams may advance initiatives in ways not originally considered.

*Gather, develop, and apply resources based on the desired goals.* This may mean development of new policies and procedures, business processes or even changing organizational structures. Using policy change as an example, resource allocation and development could consist of:

- changes in organizational structures
- shifts and reclassification of personnel
- establishment of new routines, tasks, procedures
- installation of new incentive systems
- retooling production of new products or services
- marketing of new services or creation of demand among new consumers
- development of new financing mechanisms
- organizing coalitions to maintain political, budgetary, and beneficiary support
- developing collaborative mechanisms with cooperating organizations

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36 Bryson, 259.
37 Bryson, 36-37.
38 Benjamin Crosby, *Strategic Planning and Strategic Management: What Are They and How Are They Different?* (United States Agency for International Development Technical Notes, October 1991) 5.
Management, Monitoring, & Evaluation

“The monitoring process should be continuous, regular, and capable of feeding into the decision-making process.” Crosby states that the monitoring process must be timely and usable for evaluating and reporting the status of the plans and should be established at the outset, with clear lines of responsibility for gathering information and assessment. Similarly, White’s model of strategic management ends with specific emphasis on the need to develop mechanisms for monitoring results and making adjustments as appropriate.

Key questions for monitoring and evaluating the progress of implementation:

1. Are goals and objectives being achieved or not? If they are, then acknowledge, reward and communicate the progress. If not, then consider the following questions.
2. Will the goals be achieved according to the timelines specified in the plan? If not, then why?
3. Should the deadlines for completion be changed? Carefully analyze why efforts are behind schedule.
4. Do personnel have adequate resources (money, equipment, facilities, training, etc.) to achieve the goals?
5. Are the goals and objectives still realistic?
6. Should priorities be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals?
7. Should the goals be changed? Why are existing efforts not achieving the goals? (ex: internal v. external forces)
8. What can be learned from monitoring and evaluation in order to improve future planning activities and also to improve future monitoring and evaluation efforts?

Qualitative and Quantitative Measures

Good planning provides criteria—both qualitative and quantitative—that allow stakeholders a way to measure the effectiveness of a unit’s activities. The desired outcomes and identified measures for success are reviewed once implementation is generally complete, or at least, at an easily identifiable and natural point for reflection. Although early wins can help build momentum, caution should be exercised to avoid assessing success too early. As many leaders identified, change within academia often takes much longer due to multiple timelines in play that units may or may not control--academic, fiscal, legislative, etc. And while quantifiable metrics are often the easiest means to assess the success of an initiative and realization of a goal, qualitative measures often reveal far more regarding satisfaction, commitment, and engagement of stakeholders.

Course Correction & Future Strategic Planning

Answering the questions above should direct what adjustments need to be made, whether in resource allocation, support, or even the goals, initiatives, and measures. Course correction is integral to the process of achieving the desired outcomes as any number of factors can change

39 Crosby, 6.
41 Carter McNamara, Field guide to nonprofit strategic planning and facilitation (Minneapolis: Authenticity Consulting, 2003).
throughout the process or be altered by the implementation process itself. Leaders should be able to understand and articulate the reasons for course correction, update the plan to accommodate the new course accordingly, and communicate to the team the purpose of the course correction.

Finally, evaluate and assess the strategic planning process as a whole. “Strategic planning should build on past efforts. As organizational capacity for strategic thinking, acting, and learning increases, the strategic planning process should become easier.” Occasionally, there may be painful or costly lessons learned: the value of including all relevant cohorts in planning (planners as well as implementers), being realistic about available resources, or accurately assessing the culture and commitment to change. Likewise, some strategies may have been extremely successful and should be maintained in the new iteration of planning.

**Implementation: Resources**


Scribner, Susan. Introduction to Strategic Management: Introduction to Strategic Management

McNamara, Carter. Basics of Monitoring, Evaluating and Deviating from the Strategic Plan © Copyright Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD, Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Adapted from the Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation.

Basics of Action Planning (as part of Strategic Planning) (Carter McNamara, Free Management Library)

http://managementhelp.org/plan_dec/str_plan/actions.htm

Basics of Monitoring, Evaluating and Deviating from the Strategic Plan copyright Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD, Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Adapted from the Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation. (link in our report)

Education Leadership Toolkit - Planning for Change and Technology

http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/pfcnt.html (A project of the National School Boards Foundation implemented by NSBA’s Institute for the Transfer of Technology to Education with a grant from the National Science Foundation.)


http://blogs.hbr.org/bregman/2011/01/the-secret-to-ensuring-follow-.html

**Implementation: Tools**


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42 Bryson and Alston, 129.

43 Bryson, 37.
APPENDIX A: THE U 5-STEP OUTLINE

Step 1: Getting Started—Planning to Plan
- What is the motivation to develop a plan? (e.g., business planning vs. challenge/change planning)
- Identify a sponsor and champion.
- Compose a team/task force/working group/committee.
- Assess organizational readiness.
- Outline planning sequence and scope.
- Initiate and agree on process including timeline, roles, reporting structure.

Highlights and key activities:
- Identifying and articulating the purpose of the planning effort.
- Gathering key actors.
- Developing and agreeing upon the process for planning.

Step 2: Mission and Context
- Review and articulate existing mission, vision, goals, and values of organization.
  - Develop mission if new direction is needed.
- Assess context and environment.
  - Environmental scan to assess strengths, challenges, resources
  - Stakeholder analysis

Highlights and key activities:
- Define the organizational mission.
- Conduct an environmental scan and stakeholder analysis.

Step 3: Define the Plan
- Develop unit goals and strategies, which should be clearly aligned with UMN goals.
- Prioritize goals strategies, and initiatives, taking into account existing and needed resources.
- Develop initiatives for each strategy (i.e., “the plan”)
- Map existing resources: personnel, finance, technology, equipment, and space.
- Define roles and responsibilities for accomplishing the desired outcome at each level: goals, initiatives, action plans.
- Identify desired outcomes and measurables.
  - Define metrics to be used in evaluating results.
  - Metrics should clearly measure progress toward unit goals.

Highlights and key activities:
- Developing unit goals, strategies, initiatives, and action plans.
- Aligning unit goals with UMN goals.
- Defining metrics and establishing evaluation plan.
Step 4: Gather Feedback and Communicate
- Implement process for gathering feedback from peers and stakeholders on the plan.
- Adjust plan based on feedback if appropriate.
- Gather support and cultivate enthusiasm (buy-in) within stakeholder groups.
- Refine overarching key messages and communications strategies and tactics.
- Develop specific key messages, strategies, and tactics for each stakeholder group.
- Communications should include regular progress reports.

_Highlights and key activities:_
  - Soliciting feedback and incorporate into plan.
  - Developing key messages and communication plan for all cohorts.
  - Communicating early and often.

Step 5. Implement the Plan
- Develop action plans for each goal and initiative.
- Allocate resources and monitor status continuously.
- Change and/or create organizational structures, business processes, policies and procedures.
- Establish a system to continuously monitor and evaluate progress, based on identified metrics.
- Change course if evaluation suggests new direction or misalignment.
- Review planning process as a whole to inform future planning endeavors.

_Highlights and key activities:_
  - Following the action plan and allocating resources accordingly.
  - Assessing and evaluating progress toward goals.
  - Course correction if needed, with clear rationale for change.
APPENDIX B: PLANNING TOOLKIT WEB RESOURCE MOCK UP

http://www.tc.umn.edu/~prohman/toolkit/
APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Recent strategic planning initiatives at the University of Minnesota:
- The University of Minnesota, Duluth and the University of Minnesota, Crookston offer excellent examples of using technology to communicate effectively and engage stakeholders around strategic planning.

Strategic planning processes and models:
- Professor John Bryson uses a 10-step process for strategic planning called the “l.‖ "Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement‖ by John Bryson
- Balanced Scorecard offers a 9-step process. It is a strategic planning and management system that is used extensively in business and industry, government, and nonprofit organizations worldwide to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications, and monitor organization performance against strategic goals. The balanced scorecard is a management system (not only a measurement system) that enables organizations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action. Metrics can be put into place to guide managers in focusing training funds where they can help the most. In any case, learning and growth constitute the essential foundation for success of any knowledge-worker organization.
- “Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change” by William Bridges
- “The Practice of Management” by Peter F. Drucker

Tools and templates available from the University of Minnesota Office of Human Resources Organizational Effectiveness team:
- McKinsey 7S Model outlines seven elements that must be aligned within an organization for success.
- 5 Star Planning
- The RASCI matrix is a system that brings structure and clarity to assigning the roles people play within a team.
- The SCARF model uses neuroscience research to encourage high performance.
- ADKAR is a goal-oriented change management model that allows change management teams to focus their activities on specific business results.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


