



# APPOINTMENTS

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## How to implement strategic planning: Vision statement, mission statement, values

The strategic planning how-to question strikes at the heart of how to make change of any kind happen

in your organization. Start by answering why your organization might want to embark on a strategic

planning process. Want to be one of the organizations, in which employees understand the mission and goals? They enjoy a 29 percent greater return than other firms. This seems like a good reason to start strategic planning to me. How about you?

Keys to Strategic Planning Success

These are the keys to effective strategic planning for your business.

Full and active executive support.

Effective communication, Employee involvement,

Thorough organizational planning and competitive analysis,

and

Widespread perceived need for the strategic planning.

If you are implementing your strategic planning in an organizational environment that is already employee-oriented, with a high level of trust, you start the strategic planning process with a huge plus. An additional plus is an organization that already thinks strategically.

Unfortunately, the implementation of strategic planning most frequently occurs as an organization moves from being traditionally reactionary to strategic. So, often, learning to think strategically is part of the strategic planning learning curve.

Full and Active Executive Support for Successful Strategic Planning Successful strategic planning

requires a large commitment from executives and senior managers, whether the strategic planning is occurring in a department or in a complete organization. Executives must lead, support, follow-up, and live the results of the strategic planning process. Or, the strategic planning process will fail. It's as simple as that.

Without the full commitment of the organization's senior executives, don't even start strategic planning. Participants will feel fooled and misled. A vision statement and a mission statement, along with this year's goals, filed, unimplemented in a cabinet or computer, is a serious source of negativity and poor employee morale.

Senior leaders can do the following to create a successful strategic planning process.

Establish a clear vision for the strategic planning process. Paint a picture of where the organization will end up and the anticipated outcomes. Make certain the picture is one of reality and not what people "wish" would occur. Make sure key employees know "why" the organization is changing.

Appoint an executive champion or leader who "owns" the strategic planning process and makes certain other senior managers, as well as other appropriate people in the organization, are involved.

Executive support in strategic planning is critical to its success. Executives must lead, support, follow-up, and live the results of the strategic planning process. These are additional ways executive leaders can support the strategic planning process.

See the first part of this article for more ways that leaders can support the strategic planning process.



Pay attention to the planning occurring. Ask how things are going. Focus on progress and barriers for change management. One of the worst possible scenarios is to have the leaders ignore the process.

Sponsor portions of the planning or the strategic planning process, as an involved participant, to increase active involvement and interaction with other organization members.

If personal or managerial actions or behaviors require change for the vision statement, mission statement, values, and goals to take hold in the organization, "model" the new behaviors and actions. (Senior managers must walk the talk.)

Establish a structure which will support the move to a more strategically thinking and acting organization. This may take the form of a Steering Committee, Leadership Group, Core Planning Team or Guiding Coalition.

Change the measurement systems, reward, and recognition systems to measure and reward the accomplishment of the new expectations established through the strategic planning process.

Develop a within your to communicate, reinforce, and provide a structure that supports the articulation and accomplishment of the strategic planning goals.

While every person in your organization cannot make their voice heard on every issue within the strategic planning, you must solicit and act upon feedback from other members of the organization.

Integral to the strategic planning process must be the commitment of each executive to discuss the process and the plans with staff members. Too often, I have experienced executives holding information closely and consolidating their own dysfunctional power within the organization at the expense of other company employees feeling - and acting - excluded. (And then they ask: how can I get my staff to "buy-in" to these new expectations?)

Recognize the human element inherent in any change - the change from reactionary to strategic thinking is a huge leap. People have different needs and different ways of reacting to change. They need .

If training is part of the strategic plan, senior leaders must participate in the training that other organization members attend, but, even more importantly, they must exhibit their "learning" from the sessions, readings, interactions, tapes, books or research.

Lastly, and of immense significance, be honest and worthy of trust.

Throughout the strategic planning process, treat people with the same respect you expect from them. And you will enjoy the 29 percent greater return than non-strategic planning companies, predicted earlier. With your vision statement, mission statement, values, strategies, goals, and action plans developed and shared, you'll all win, both personally and professionally. [humanresources.about.com](http://humanresources.about.com)

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Interviews on 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2008 from 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

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### Harness the power of an employee suggestion program

#### Beyond the Suggestion Box

The pitfalls of an ill-conceived employee suggestion program are multiple, legendary and most frequently - avoidable. A carefully constructed employee suggestion program, that is launched with organizational commitment, clarity and ongoing communication can positively impact your bottom line and your employee motivation and enthusiasm. An ill-conceived, hastily launched, undefined employee suggestion program can turn people off and generate ill will, cynicism and misunderstanding.

#### Does Your Company Need an Employee Suggestion Program?

Before launching an employee suggestion program, consider your corporate culture. Are you currently receiving fresh and thoughtful ideas? Are employee suggestions already percolating to the sur-

face at staff meetings and in casual conversation? If so, maybe more informal methods for cultivating new ideas are warranted rather than a full-blown employee suggestion program.

Perhaps you can schedule departmental brainstorming sessions or generate ideas about particular topics during portions of your weekly staff meeting. You can set a day a month for a luncheon at which every employee is asked to submit at least one idea. You can ask your managers to bring three employee ideas to each manager's meeting. Creativity serves you well in idea generation.

If not, I'd begin by asking what about your culture is currently stifling ideas? Will these issues continue to exist when you implement an employee suggestion program? If so, your successful employee suggestion program must eliminate or circumvent these road blocks.

I am not traditionally a fan of employee suggestion programs since they are unwieldy, difficult to keep up with, time consuming, can cause more hard feelings than positive outcomes and must be strictly managed.

#### Elements in a Successful Employee Suggestion Program

I have seen few employee suggestion programs succeed, but the employee suggestion programs that did succeed shared common success elements. You may take a pause at the number of factors I consider significant to the success of an employee suggestion program, but these are factors common to any successful work process that takes employee time and offers the possibility for significant rewards and recognition. If you pursue an employee suggestion program, the following must happen for success.

#### Appoint a Cross-functional Suggestion Review Team

A cross-functional team must review the suggestions which must be acknowledged within 48 hours. If this team is all managers, or all directors, it can be perceived as out of touch or blocking change. It will, however, have the power to implement the suggestions it receives. If it involves other employees, the process can be time-consuming and perceived to serve self-interests. Senior management agreement and ownership become a second step in the approval process. People on the team must be willing to change and willing to ask "why not" rather than "why?"

Finance, especially, and all other departments must be represented on the suggestion review team. If the managers or directors review suggestions, the review must be part of a regularly scheduled meeting, with suggestions distributed and considered in advance. If the team meets more often than monthly, it becomes more work than people are usually willing to do. Rotate members of this team 4-6 times a year, but not all members at once, if a cross-functional employee team is your selected suggestion review vehicle. The choice of team members for the suggestion review team should reflect how business is gen-

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