

# Strategic Planning Definitions, Anatomy & Quality Check

	Questions to Answer & Definitions	Anatomy of...	Quality Check: Did we get it right?
Strategic Issues	<p><b>What are we trying to fix, accomplish or avoid as a result of this process &amp; plan?</b></p> <p><b>Strategic issues</b> are critical unknowns that are driving you to embark on a strategic planning process now. These issues can be problems, opportunities, market shifts or anything else that is keeping you awake at night and begging for a solution or decision.</p>	<p>What or how do we + <u>(activity, process, or challenge)</u> + <u>(outcome)?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Are your strategic issues comprehensive and critical?</li> <li>✔ Are you clear about how we intend the organization to be different as a result of this process?</li> <li>✔ Did you identify issues, concerns or areas of focus that are external such as customers, market or competitors?</li> <li>✔ Did you include at least one issue that is internally facing such as process efficiency, profitability improvement, organizational structure or innovation?</li> </ul>
SWOT	<p><b>What are our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities &amp; threats?</b></p> <p>A <b>SWOT analysis</b> is a quick way of examining your organization by looking at the <b>internal</b> strengths and weaknesses in relation to the <b>external</b> opportunities and threats.</p>	<p><u>(Attribute, Characteristic or Trend)</u> + <u>(Impact* to the organization)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Does your SWOT contain all the key areas relevant to the plan, including customer, employee, leadership, competitor, and industry trends?</li> <li>✔ Are the items under strengths and weaknesses internal and controllable?</li> <li>✔ Are the items under opportunities and threats external and not controllable?</li> <li>✔ Does each item identify both the attribute and the impact?</li> </ul>
Mission Statement	<p><b>What is our purpose? Why do we exist? What do we do?</b></p> <p>The mission statement describes an organization's purpose or reason for existing.</p>	<p>Our mission is <u>(verb in the present tense)</u> + <u>(what you do)</u> + <u>(for whom you do it) resulting in (benefit of your work)</u> + <u>(location – optional).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Does your mission statement avoid clichés and vague words? (Let's make sure it is real and relevant!)</li> <li>✔ Does it contain enough specificity to distinguish this organization from others in the same industry?</li> <li>✔ Is it short and mostly memorable? Does it fit on a t-shirt and would you wear it?</li> </ul>
Vision Statement	<p><b>Where are we going?</b></p> <p>A Vision Statement defines your desired future state and provides direction for where we are going as an organization.</p>	<p>We envision + <u>(verb in the future tense)</u> + <u>(description of the organization in the future or impact on the world)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Does the vision represent the preferred future of the organization or the impact you want to have?</li> <li>✔ Is it clear, compelling, and easy to grasp?</li> <li>✔ Is it somehow connected to the core purpose?</li> <li>✔ Will it be exciting to a broad base of people in the organization, not just those with executive responsibility?</li> </ul>
Values statement	<p><b>How will we behave?</b></p> <p>Your values statement clarifies what your organization stands for, believes in and the behaviors you expect to see as a result.</p>	<p><u>(Value stated as a noun):</u> We believe <u>(value noun)</u> as demonstrated by + <u>(behavior you expect to see).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ As a group, do they explain a replicable and consistent success formula?</li> <li>✔ Are these non-negotiables in how we operate?</li> <li>✔ Are you willing to stand by these values no matter what the cost – for example lost clients or lost revenue?</li> </ul>

Competitive Advantages	<p><b>What are we best at?</b></p> <p>A characteristic(s) of an organization that allows it to meet their customer's need(s) better than their competition can. What are we best at in our market?</p>	<p><u>(Company Name or We)</u> are best at or have the best <u>(activity, asset, process, product/service)</u> because <u>(why are you the best).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Did you identify at least three advantages that you are better than your competitors and your customers care about?</li> <li>✔ Do they encompass the key strengths in your SWOT?</li> <li>✔ Can you constantly improve the competitive advantages you identified?</li> </ul>
Org-Wide, Business Level Strategies	<p><b>How will we succeed?</b></p> <p>Your strategies are the general methods you intend to use to reach your vision. No matter what the level, a strategy answers the question "how."</p>	<p>Guiding all of our strategic activities is <u>(1 of the 3 value-creating strategies)</u> which we will accomplish by <u>(method* or approach)</u> in order to <u>+(problem we are trying to accomplish, fix or avoid).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Does your organization-wide strategy(s) clear spell out how you will succeed and be differentiated in the market?</li> <li>✔ Is the strategy(s) phrased as methods to be implemented—NOT results to be achieved?</li> <li>✔ Is it support or work together with your competitive advantages?</li> </ul>
Strategic Objectives	<p><b>What must we focus on to achieve our vision? What are the "big rocks"?</b></p> <p>Long-term, broad, continuous statements that holistically address all areas of your organization.</p>	<p><u>(Objective Label):</u> <u>(Action Verb) + (broad aim or activity or mini vision for this focus area).</u> (One or two supporting sentences explain the broad approach and rationale.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ As a group, do the strategic objectives represent every one of the organization's key strategic focus areas?</li> <li>✔ Are there at least three strategic priorities, but no more than six?</li> <li>✔ Are the goal descriptions global in scope and start with "infinite" verbs?</li> <li>✔ If the organization achieves these goals, and only these goals, will the organization most likely have achieved its vision?</li> </ul>
Corp Goals	<p><b>What is most important right now to reach our long-term strategic objectives?</b></p> <p>Annual statements that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound. These are outcome statements expressing a result expected in the organization.</p>	<p><u>(Action verb) + (single key result – from X to Y) + (purpose – why) through (explain how if the clarity is necessary) by when (target date).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Are all of your goals SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound?</li> <li>✔ Do the measures spell out the outcome you are seeking?</li> <li>✔ Do all of your goals have start and end dates?</li> <li>✔ Is the measure and target for each goal clear enough to stand on its own?</li> </ul>
Dept Goals/Action Items	<p><b>Who must do what by when?</b></p> <p>Functional goals/action items support the accomplishment of the annual objectives and align with individual performance plans.</p>	<p><u>(Verb) + (Output and/or deliverable - be specific – that is a lead measure) by (date).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Do you have the resources to implement the goal/action?</li> <li>✔ Is ownership clearly assigned?</li> <li>✔ Is your measure a lead measure – predictive, influencable, and measurable monthly?</li> </ul>
KPIs	<p><b>How will we measure our success?</b></p> <p><b>Key Performance Indicators (KPI)</b> are the key goals that you want to measure that will have the most impact in moving your organization forward. We recommend you guide your organization with measures that matter.</p>	<p><u>Lag/Outcome Measure: (Percentage, Number, Currency or Percent Complete) + (result or outcome)</u></p> <p><u>Lead/Output Measure: (Percentage, Number, Currency or Percent Complete) + (deliverable, activity, process the owner can influence)</u></p> <p><u>Target Structure: (Number for achievement by the end date of the goal)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Have you identified three to five indicators that will provide an ongoing assessment of your progress?</li> <li>✔ Are the indicators you selected as KPIs truly "key" and track outcomes not just outputs?</li> <li>✔ Is the measure and target for each goal clear enough to stand on its own?</li> <li>✔ Is the associated measure and target something you can measure monthly and will you be able to see movement?</li> </ul>

