

INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

OVERVIEW

Unless you know where it is you want to go, you are never likely to get there! This sounds self evident. Unfortunately, however, strategic planning has acquired a bad name. Many people are scared of the concept. Others don't see it as relevant to them or their business. Still others are confused by the differing concepts tied up in the ideas of "Business Planning", "Marketing" and Strategic Planning".

Worse still, others see planning as an exercise somehow removed from the mainstream activities of their business. And they pursue a number of strategic activities without any real attempt – overt or otherwise – to integrate these with the wider organisation.

The reality is that we are all familiar with the basic principles of planning and most of us undertake some "strategic planning" whether we realise it or not. The problem is that not all of our planning is done very well. This "Strategic Planning" program is specifically designed to help participants understand the concepts of sound planning and to enable them to apply these in their real business environment.

AIM

The aim of the program is to equip participants with a knowledge of the fundamental principles and pragmatic techniques of strategic planning so that they can use these to improve the effectiveness of their own organisation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the program, participants will :

1. Understand fundamental strategic planning principles and be able to apply these to their own company or organisation.
2. Understand how to analyse and define their organisation's present situation and position.
3. Be able to define desired strategic business directions or purposes, including Vision and

Mission, using effective and practical planning tools.

4. Be able to develop appropriate strategies designed to "bridge the gap" between the present position and the desired future position.
5. Understand the importance of translating these strategies into "Action Plans" capable of systematic implementation within the organisation.
6. Understand the importance of systematic evaluation and review of the plan and the planning process.

PROGRAM CONTENT

The program is structured around the following elements :

- a. Planning overview; the difference between "strategy" and "tactics".
- b. Planning tools; what they are and how to use them; what is best for your business or organisation.
- c. Evolving the organisation's Vision and Mission; do you need a Vision or Mission Statement?
- d. Developing strategic responses; what is achievable; keeping your sights lowered, versus daring to dream; the "Mind of the Strategist".
- e. Using quality criteria as a map to direct your strategic initiatives.
- f. Strategic implementation; the importance of the "resource loop"; creating Action Plans which the organisation can manage and digest.
- g. Applying strategic planning back in the job.

Every effort is made to tailor the precise program content to reflect the major needs and interests of individual participants and their organisations.

The program uses a blend of classroom sessions, interactive group work and experiential learning activities.

EVALUATION

Participants themselves are always invited to provide their responses to the program which provides an indication of participant "comfort level". However, over time the only real determinant of program success is the extent to which the program may be seen to have impacted upon participant performance.

Our approach is to provide the participant, or a nominated manager or supervisor, with an evaluation instrument for completion several weeks after conclusion of the program. This is essentially an in-house tool for use by the client.

However, we encourage organisations to return a copy of the instrument for use in the future review, development and general improvement of the program.

DURATION

The program is designed to cover two full days of eight hours each, although a number of successful variations have been used working with companies in-house.

PLANNING FACILITATION

We regularly work with organisations (in both the private and public sectors) in support of strategic and other planning initiatives.

One option that has proven highly successful with several organisations is to integrate an "Introduction to Strategic Planning" Workshop for staff with the real-life development of an organisational strategic plan. Our expert facilitators ensure a high level of synergy and ensure, not only that participants learn the basics of effective planning, but actually produce a high quality plan at the end of the process.

We would be glad to explore the way in which this approach might work with your organisation.