

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING USING THE WALTERS INFINITE CIRCULAR PLANNING FRAMEWORK¹

- What do we need to do?
 - Who will do it?
 - How will it be done?
 - What resources will we need?
 - What is the deadline (when must it be done)?
 - How will we know that we are successful?
- Step 1: Plan to plan
 - Step 2: Analyze the situation & needs ²
 - Step 3: Prioritize & select goal & purpose
 - Step 4: Develop clear, specific objectives
 - Step 5: Identify alternative strategies & select the most effective one
 - Step 6: Plan the implementation
 - Step 7: Plan for evaluation
 - Step 8: Draw up a summary and circulate it
- Is it relevant (to our mission and objectives)?
 - Is it realistic (in terms of our capacity and resources)?
 - Will it make the most effective use of our capacity and resources?
 - Can it be done more simply? More efficiently? Less expensively?
 - Will it get the support we need from potential allies and partners?
- What are the major problems faced by our target community?
 - Which of these is the key or central problem or issue?
 - What are the causes and effects of this problem?
 - Can we realistically hope to make a significant contribution to addressing this problem?
 - How does this problem or issue affect our primary stakeholders? How do they see it? What are their concerns and interests in relation to the problem or issue?
 - What key stakeholders stand to gain or lose from our taking up this problem or issue? How can we increase our allies and decrease the impact of potential opponents?
 - What experience have we had so far that is relevant to this problem or issue and what can we learn from it?
 - What can our organization realistically expect to achieve? What resources and capacity are available to us inside and outside our organization? What does this mean for our planning?
- The goal - the long term change we want to see [sometimes called vision]
 - The purpose - the contribution our organization commits itself to make to achieving that change [sometimes called mission]
 - Our specific objectives - the things we have to achieve [results] to make sure we reach our purpose [these objectives can be long-term and short-term]
 - Our strategies to achieve our objectives - choosing the best approach to reach each objective
 - Implementation plans - the actual tasks [activities] we will have to do to make sure each objective is achieved, who will do them, by when and what resources will be needed.
 - Evaluation mechanisms - the ways we will measure what we have achieved or failed to achieve, and the reasons why.
- Who will be affected by our plan or who can affect whether it is successful or not? Who are our key stakeholders (don't forget the staff)?
 - Who needs to understand the plan and who do we need to implement it effectively?
 - Who will provide useful input to the planning process?
 - How important and/or influential is each main stakeholder group? Whose needs, interests and concerns should be prioritized in the planning process?
 - How useful or essential will their involvement be at each step in the planning process?
 - What kind of involvement will be adequate for each key stakeholder in each step of the process?

¹ Find the Walters Infinite Circular Planning Framework at www.theleadershipcenter.com

² Find the Committee Activity Evaluation & Recommendation Form at www.theleadershipcenter.com