

Definitions of Commonly Used Terms in Strategic Planning

Vision Statement

A brief statement that describes the ideal organization of the future.

Mission Statement

A brief statement that clearly communicates the purpose of the organization to its stakeholders.

Mandate

This is often used instead of a mission statement. A mandate is also a brief statement, though more detailed, that communicates the purpose of the organization. A mandate takes the perspective of being a command, something compulsory and is often viewed as being "authoritarian".

Values Statement

A statement, (or series of statements), that outlines the beliefs of the organization regarding its products and services, processes and stakeholders. Most value statements start with the words, "we believe", "we believe in" or "we value".

Strategic Driver

A strategic driver is a primary determiner of the scope of the organization's future programs, services and geographic market. A strategic driver represents the "means" to a particular outcome, conclusion, result or end.

Strategic Priority

Strategic priorities are those 2 to 5 key areas that the organization will investment incremental resources above and beyond normal day-to-day operations. Each strategic priority should be consistent with and move the organization closer towards its vision.

Strategic Objectives

Are generally defined as being specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited.

Core Competence (Organizational)

An organizational core competence was originally defined by Hamel & Prahalad in their book "Competing for the future" and is defined as a bundle of skills and technologies that make a disproportionate contribution to stakeholder perceived value, are unique to your organization (or your organization is significantly better) and can be leveraged to develop new programs or services.

Environmental Scan

Is a review or assessment of trends and factors that are external to the organization AND could have an impact upon the future operations of the organization. The key in doing an environmental scan is to determine the key factors that could impact upon the organization, the probability of that impact and the severity of it. This information is then used in the setting of the organization's strategy.

Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is the development and evaluation of a variety of scenarios within the framework of planning. Each scenario should be a reasonable possibility and the purpose of scenario planning is to evaluate between a series of possible strategies.

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