

Strategic Planning

Rob Lynch
Training Coordinator
Small Urban and Rural Transit Center

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."



Yogi Berra

Please write down your **best and most honest** answers to the following questions...



NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

1. What is the one thing your organization was worst at this year?
2. What is the one thing your organization did best this year?
3. Which department, division, team or function was most responsible for standing in the way of your organization's success this year?
4. Which department, division, team or function was most responsible for your organization's success this year?

**-Predictable Success
by Les McKeown**

5. What is the single metric or measurement you least liked hearing about this year?
6. What is the single metric you will measure your success by? (not how anyone else will measure your success-- how you will measure your own success)
7. If you fired yourself today, and came back tomorrow as a new boss with a clean sheet, what would you do?

**-Predictable Success
by Les McKeown**

What are YOU going to do about it?



Think Strategically

- A strategic plan is a tool used to define an organization's:

The diagram consists of five colored boxes arranged in two rows. The top row contains three boxes: a red box labeled 'Vision & Mission', a green box labeled 'Core Values', and a purple box labeled 'Threats & Opportunities'. The bottom row contains two boxes: a blue box labeled 'Strengths & Weaknesses' and an orange box labeled 'Short- & Long-term Goals'.

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Think Strategically

The diagram features two main sections. The top section has a red rounded rectangle labeled 'Guides Business Processes' with a large grey arrow pointing right. Next to the arrow are two bullet points: 'Operating Budget' and 'Capital Budget'. The bottom section has a green rounded rectangle labeled 'Measures Performance' with a large green arrow pointing right. Next to the arrow are two bullet points: 'Identifies Key Performance Indicators' and 'Sets Targets'.

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Think Strategically

- In general, agencies are better at developing plans than they are at implementing them - a plan on a shelf is of no use to anyone.

The image shows a close-up of a wooden shelf covered in a thick layer of dust and a large, intricate spiderweb, illustrating the concept of a plan that is not implemented.

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Uses of Strategic Planning

- Multi-year planning
- Performance measurement program
- Market analysis – service changes
- Marketing plans - outreach
- Financial planning
- Comprehensive planning as part of other jurisdictions

Benefits - Internal

- Creates organizational vision & direction
- Helps agency become more customer focused
- Creates better alignment between governing body, management & staff

Benefits - Internal

- Promoting greater board ownership of overall agency initiatives and less emphasis on “pet” projects
- Improving agency customer focus
- Sets out a 3-5 year focus vs. year-to-year budget plan (establishes a long-range view in decision making and priority setting)

Benefits - Internal

- Increases interdepartmental coordination
- Makes departments & agency as a whole more accountable for results
- Helps identify areas for improvement
- Empowerment of staff as well as management

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Benefits - Internal

- Aids in decision making & setting priorities
- Can assist in more efficient & effective use of resources
- Helps determine need to expand or reduce services

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Benefits - External

- Increases funding opportunities
- Helps define agency's core responsibilities to the community & service area
- Increases external stakeholder awareness & input resulting in greater support

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Stakeholder Analysis

Who are the stakeholders?
What are their interests?
What are the needs?

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Internal Stakeholders

Board members Maintenance
Planners DIRECTORS
IT Staff Drivers
Managers Finance
Reservationists Customer Service
Dispatchers Schedulers

AGENCY

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

External Stakeholders

Regional planning agencies Local government Council of Governments
Transit agencies AGENCY Human service agencies
Developers Toll authorities
Organizations Businesses
Law enforcement Federal agencies
Emergency responders Tribal Leaders Educational institutions

AGENCY

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission Goals Objectives

NDSU | UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Mission, Goals and Objectives

- Mission statement
 - A clear and succinct representation of the organization's purpose for existence
 - The mission statement describes why the public transportation system exists

NDSU | UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Mission Statement Example

"We at Metro Transit deliver environmentally sustainable transportation choices that link people, jobs and community conveniently, consistently and safely."

NDSU | UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Mission Statement Example

"At Namekagon Transit it is our goal to provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation to the residents in our service area."



Mission, Goals and Objectives

- Goals
 - Broad statements of what the transit agency hopes to achieve
 - Focused on outcomes or results
 - Qualitative in nature
 - Used to establish policy
 - Determines the organizational direction

Mission, Goals and Objectives

- Well written goals are **S M A R T**
 - **S**pecific-easy to understand, no interpretation needed
 - **M**easurable-easy to determine if accomplished
 - **A**ttainable-a challenge, but within reason
 - **R**elevant-linked to the agency's mission
 - **T**ime limited-must have a timetable

Mission, Goals and Objectives

- Well written goals...
 - Improves communication
 - Reduces micromanagement
 - Encourages employee innovation
 - Communicates the right message to the public

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Mission, Goals and Objectives

- Objectives
 - Steps towards achieving a goal
 - Typically 2-3 objectives for each goal
 - Should be aligned with performance measures
 - Measurable
 - Specific

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Mission, Goals and Objectives

- Objectives
 - Quantitative and/or qualitative
 - 1-2 year timeframe
 - Should be easily understood
 - Should not be difficult/expensive to measure

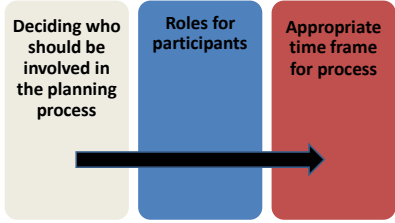
NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Process

"There is often a significant gap or breakdown between completing a strategic plan and implementing its recommendations. Too often the focus is on the production of a plan document and not enough emphasis is placed on its execution."

"How to Develop a Strategic Plan That Won't Gather Dust," by Richard Simonetta, CEO, Valley Metro Rail, Inc., Phoenix, AZ

Process



Process

- Identify key strategic issues facing the organization & formulating strategies to manage these issues
- Evaluating progress & making mid-course corrections as necessary



Process

- Implement planned strategies to improve an agency's effectiveness by:
 - Goal Setting
 - Leadership Development
 - Team Building
 - Employee Feedback Surveys & Meetings
 - Education Programs & Staff Training
 - Coaching & Counseling Employees
 - Developing Reward & Recognition Programs

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Process

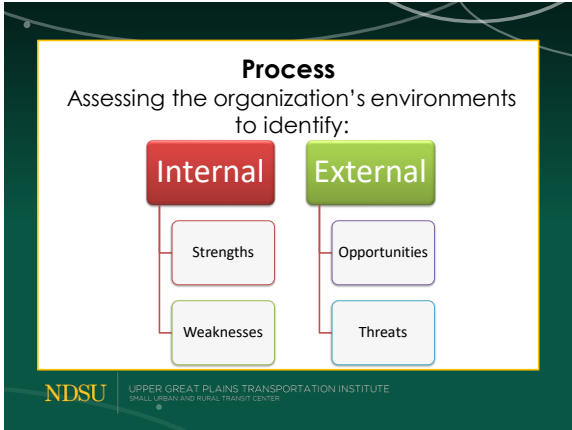
- Recognize challenges
 - Inadequate staff resources
 - Operating pressures (lack of time)
 - Always putting out "fires"
 - Inability to enter new "markets" or alter service area
 - Financial constraints

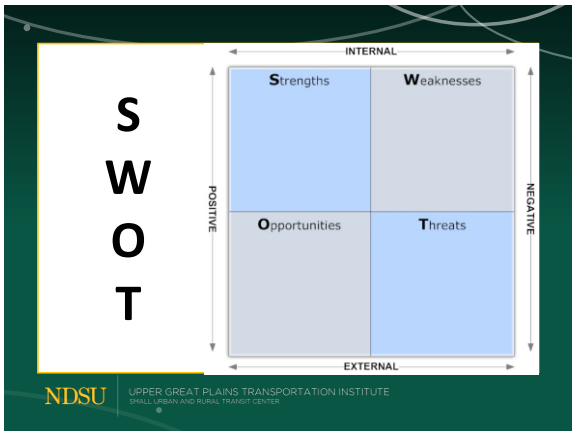
NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Process

- Stumbling Blocks...
 - Difficulty of staying focused on strategic issues throughout the year in light of pressing day-to-day issues
 - The use of goals that are too broad & do not provide enough guidance for priority setting
 - Inadequate communication & participation

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER





XYZ TRANSIT is considering expanding operations to a growing part of their service area that is planning new housing, businesses and a middle school. Streets and other infrastructure are now under construction in the new growth area. Your funding, staff and equipment are stretched thin. Local transit advocates are very vocal. Your board is hesitant without establishing a new revenue stream. The media is closely monitoring the discussion.

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

15 Strategies for Success

1. De-emphasize the formality of process
2. Keep level of data & analysis reasonable for size of agency (One size does not fit all)
3. Keep cost in relationship to benefits

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

15 Strategies for Success

4. Know difference between long-range planning and strategic management
5. Be realistic about capabilities of agency – Make the plans & goals ambitious, but attainable
6. Set priorities and clearly define objectives for strategic management process

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

15 Strategies for Success

7. Management and governing body must be seriously committed to the planning and management process
8. Clear communication about process so everyone understands their role in its success
9. Objectives must be stated in a way that are measurable

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

15 Strategies for Success

- 10. Clear linkage must be made between the plan and budget
- 11. Broad participation & involvement from all stakeholders
- 12. Assignments of responsibility need to be made for implementation
- 13. Once started, the process should be flexible and continuous

15 Strategies for Success

- 14. There must be milestones and performance measures must be established to measure progress & celebrate achievements
- 15. Recognize that change is difficult & it will take time and effort

Best Practices

- Annual goals & objectives with quarterly reviews & presentations to the board of directors (governing body) to ensure plan moves from paper to implementation
- Educating the board of directors (governing body) helps them articulate the goals of the agency externally and work in support of the agency's vision and mission

Best Practices

- Linking the strategic plan to the operational and capital budgets ensures the resources needed to support the plan are available



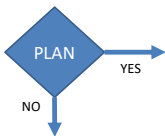
Best Practices

- Strategic plans can be used to justify a need to increase funding by showing that the agency requires more resources to meet the needs of its service area & how those resources would be used



Best Practices

- Strategic plan must be linked to performance measures in order to monitor whether or not:
 - Plans are being achieved
 - Corrective action needs to take place



Best Practices

- Specific performance measures tied to plan and reported on monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and tracked on a yearly basis creates accountability for implementation



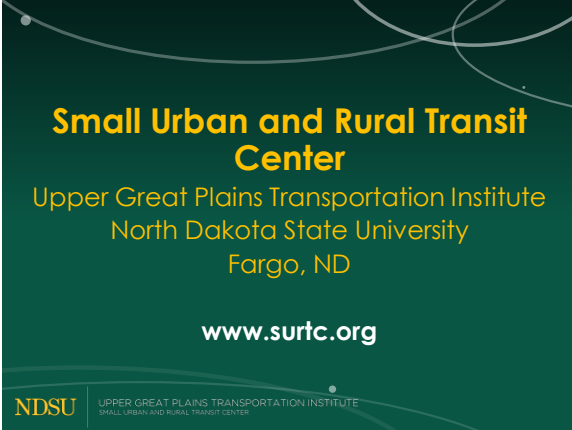
Best Practices

- Re-order priorities based on specific goals and performance measures
- Carve out specific time for strategic planning & making it a priority
- Acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments



Resources

- TCRP Synthesis 59 "Strategic Planning and Management in Transit Agencies" 2005
- TCRP Report 88 "A Guidebook for Developing a Transit Performance-Measurement System" 2003



Small Urban and Rural Transit Center
Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute
North Dakota State University
Fargo, ND

www.surfc.org

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
SMALL URBAN AND RURAL TRANSIT CENTER
