

Albert Einstein on Problem Solving – “The significant problems we face cannot be solved with the same level of thinking that created them.”

Definitions

Vision Statement - A broad, compelling, succinct leadership statement articulating a desired and possible future condition to strive for. It embodies the Organization’s mission and values and is responsive to major societal trends. It should inspire, motivate and facilitate understanding regarding the direction the organization intends to move toward. It allows comparison of present conditions with the future desired state to draw conclusions for strategic goals and initiatives. ***Powerful, effective visions have three qualities: bold, attractive/compelling and do-able.***

Mission Statement - An effective mission statement does the following:

- Succinctly describes the organization’s fundamental purpose; its reason for existing; the value delivered to its customers
- It speaks to the business of the organization & indicates its products and services.
- Stakes out the scope of its work & distinguishes its purpose from other similar organizations.

Strategic Goal – One of a select few goals that rise above other operational goals and objectives because of its critical importance in moving the organization towards its stated vision; it is a goal chosen by leaders to address a particular area of concern (GAP) where significant effort must be directed. A strategic goal is usually one of the vital few goals addressed in a strategic plan.

Strategic Thinking/Collaboration – Big picture thinking designed to conceptualize an over-arching vision, intention or goal that will draw synergy of efforts; also conceptual positioning to optimize and leverage resources and energy for success.

Operational Thinking/Collaboration – Discussion is aimed at articulating the commitments and decisions needed to mobilize action towards a larger vision.

Tactical Thinking/Collaboration – Discussion is aimed at defining the specific tactics that will implement the operational commitments, decisions and objectives to achieve a larger vision. (How, when, how much, who, etc.)

Objectives – Measure-able statements articulating decisions that commit resources for specific results and will mobilize tactical actions, within a prescribed timeframe, to align with larger, longer-term, goals.

Strategy – A set of interdependent, mutually complementary operational commitments and tactical actions purposely converging to achieve a strategic goal aimed at realizing a larger vision.

Strategic Plan – The purpose of a strategic plan is to articulate the vision, mission, values and the few most vital goals of the organization. It describes where and how the organization will direct its efforts toward its vision. It becomes a principal driver of leadership attention, emphasis, priority and resource allocations. The strategic plan communicates and directs decisions and tactics in ways that create synergy, leverage, interdependence and integration of efforts towards the vision.

Organizational Values & Guiding Principles – Are a set of commonly held and supported beliefs. They draw individual and group behaviors and practices towards fulfilling the mission. Collectively, these values define the culture and character of the organization to external observers.

Organizational Culture – The recognizable, unique identity of an organization based on manifestations of core ideology (core values & purpose) over time; It transcends the style or strategic emphasis of individual leaders; It includes the reputation that members try to live up to and that outsiders perceive.

Personal Values - A value is a “thing or a condition” which a person (or persons) consistently acts on to get or keep; a strongly held belief, selected from alternatives, consistently and frequently acted upon; defended if challenged. If any of the above is missing, it is not a value, rather a preference or desire.

Principles – Are fundamental truths, laws or assumptions; an enduring rule or standard guiding practices and behaviors.

Behaviors – Are observable individual actions.

Practices – Are group actions; supporting systems.

Team – A Team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. (*Katzenbach & Smith*)

Major Societal Trends - Large scale, observable patterns of behavior of critical masses of people, shaped by changing attitudes about what they want.

System – A perceived whole whose elements “hang together” because they continually affect each other over time, and operate toward a common purpose; (e.g. an information system, a management system, the human body, an ecosystem...) (*Innovation Associates, Inc.-1996*)

Written Goal Statements Should: Describe the intended, desired outcome and alignment with a vision; indicate quality and quantity measures, timeframes and inspire action.

Written Decision Statements Should: Describe the commitment to an objective; the commitment of resources (people, money, materials, time, etc.), alignment with a goal and prescribe a timeframe for results.

Written Tactical Action Plans Should: Describe how decisions will be implemented and executed to meet stated objectives. (Tasks, Tactics, Timeframes, Tradeoffs and Accountability)

