

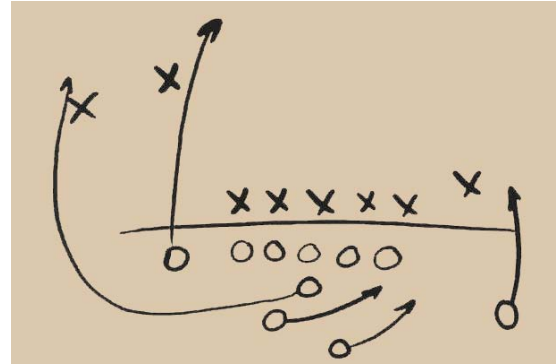


“Basic Planning and HOW!”

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Strategic planning has a basic overall framework. Not to oversimplify the strategic planning process, but by placing all the parts of a plan into the following three areas, you can clearly see how the pieces of your plan fit together:

- **Where are we now?** Review your current strategic position and clarify your mission, vision, and values.
- **Where are we going?** Establish your competitive advantage and your vision. Clearly see the direction your organization is headed.
- **HOW will we get there?** Lay out the road to connect where you are now to where you're going. Set your strategic objectives, goals, and action items and HOW you'll execute your plan.



This article is about the need to discuss and document HOW you will achieve your ambitious goals.

By developing a list of “HOW” you can better determine the exact steps required to understand and influence the stakeholders of your plan. For instance:

- Encourage your key people to interact with your customers about their perception of your future and bring those views to the planning table.
- Develop a profile of your target account and then decide if that account can reach the potential you have assigned to it. If so, HOW? Here are some examples:
 - Does their business plan align with yours?
 - Do they have the skills to ensure success?
 - Are they willing to invest “windshield time”?
 - Will their management be driving the plan with you?
- Document the exact requirements you have in order to propose a plan for success. Then write down how you will accomplish them.
- Implementation is the phase that turns strategies and plans into actions in order to accomplish strategic objectives and goals. The critical actions move a strategic plan from a document that sits on the shelf to actions that drive business growth.
- The plan must clearly articulate goals, action steps, responsibilities, accountabilities, and specific deadlines. And everyone must understand the plan and his individual role in it.
- Before closing the strategic planning session, clearly explain what comes next and who’s responsible for what. When you walk out of the room, everyone must fully understand what he’s responsible for and be clear about the deadlines for each action.
- Focus on accountability for results and have clear and compelling consequences for unapproved missed deadlines.

Sports is always a great metaphor for planning. Here’s how a football strategy might be described:

- **Where are we now?** On the 20 yard line
- **Where are we going?** To the End Zone
- **HOW will we get there?** We will use one of the plays which we have practiced to give us the best shot of scoring on this opponent.

“What do you need today?”™