



***Strategic Planning & Successful Execution***  
***For Not-For-Profit Businesses***

***Prepared by: Ellen Feldman***

Strategy is worthless without execution...  
...just as execution is random without strategy

# Agenda

- Common Challenges of Not-For-Profit Businesses
- Common Myths About Strategic Planning
- What is Strategic Planning & Why Is It Important?
- Obstacles to Avoid In Strategic Execution
- Practical Approaches to Strategic Planning
- How To Tackle Successful Implementation
- How To Build An Effective Board of Directors
- Conducting An Annual Implementation Assessment
- Questions & Answers

## Common Challenges of Not-For-Profit Businesses (part 1 of 2)

- Financial sustainability
- Cutbacks in funding
- Increasing regulations & less flexibility in how funding is used
- Scarce/Limited resources
- Competing with other not-for-profit organizations while establishing collaborative partnerships

## Common Challenges of Not-For-Profit Businesses (part 2 of 2)

- Day-to-day operations leaves little time for planning
- Competition for skills makes recruitment & retention of staff challenging
- How to manage short-term financial challenges while maintaining long-term mission goals
- Succession planning
- And for some, these challenges are even greater when serving low-income and high-need populations

## Common Myths About Strategic Planning (part 1 of 2)

- Strategic planning is painful & difficult
- Because the future is uncertain, planning is fruitless
- Strategic plans end up on the shelf collecting dust. They don't help to guide the day-to-day business
- We don't have time to do strategic planning. We need to use our time to do "real work"

## Common Myths About Strategic Planning (part 2 of 2)

- Once you have a plan you should stick with it
- Strategic planning is only for big for-profit businesses
- Strategic planning takes too long
- Things are running well, let's do the planning when we need it

## What Is Strategic Planning? Why is it Important?

- Strategic planning is a process that answers the questions of:
  - Where is our organization now?
  - Where do we want to be?
  - How are we going to get there?
- It is thoughtful, deliberate, analytical and fact-based
- Helps ensure that the organization remains relevant & responsive to the needs of its community, and contributes to the overall stability & growth of the organization
- It provides a base for setting priorities, decision making & assessing progress
- Funders require them
- Note: The plan should serve as a compass, but not an inflexible blueprint for action

## Practical Approaches To Strategic Planning (part 1 of 4)

- Begin with a Situational Analysis
  - Review current strengths & weaknesses
  - Look at:
    - Changing demographics
    - Political trends
    - Community values
    - Economic trends
    - Implications of new or changing laws & regulations
    - ....And consider their impact on the organization and the population it serves
  - This “SWOT” analysis then summarizes the greatest internal strengths & weaknesses, as well as the greatest opportunities & threats

## Practical Approaches To Strategic Planning (part 2 of 4)

- Look at the immediate target community or service area to determine its status & needs, and specifically those of current & potential clients
  - Consider opportunities and challenges related to resources & funders
  - Look at actual and potential collaborators & competitors
    - Including organizations which may serve the same region and/or target population or may seek funding from the same funding sources
- Identify key issues, questions and choices to be addressed as part of the strategic planning process
  - Examine why each is important
  - The benefits and financial analysis associated with each
  - The ease or difficulty of implementation
  - The negative consequences of not addressing it

## Practical Approaches To Strategic Planning (part 3 of 4)

- Define a core set of initiatives & determine which are the most important.  
Consider:
  - Value - will the initiative contribute to meeting agreed upon goals?
  - Appropriateness - is it consistent with the organization's mission & values?
  - Feasibility - is it practical given personnel, financial resources & capacity?
  - Acceptability - is it acceptable to the Board, key staff & other stakeholders?
  - Cost-benefit - is it likely to lead to sufficient benefits vs the costs?
  - Timing - should the organization do this now given external factors and competing demands?
  - Assumptions - what other conditions must exist for success?

## Practical Approaches To Strategic Planning (part 4 of 4)

- Ensure continued involvement, communication & approval by the organization's Board of Directors throughout this process
- Develop an action plan with clear responsibilities for their implementation
  - The Board must approve the action plan
- Build in the procedures for monitoring & modifying strategies based on changes in the external environment or the organization
- Note: Strategic planning often work best when facilitated by an outsider knowledgeable about the organization or community based organizations

## Strategic Execution: Obstacles to avoid in executing a strategic plan

- Absence of an executive champion
- Insufficient staff participation
- Little/No integration between the strategic plan & operations
- Necessary budget allocations have not been made
- Lack of organizational alignment
- Inadequate measurements in the strategic plan
- Lack of monitoring throughout the execution
- Limited adjustments to the plan as the environment changes

## Strategic Execution: How To Tackle Successful Implementation (part 1 of 2)

- Establish measurable objectives for each strategic plan initiative
- Determine the deliverables that are to be produced
- Highlight all of the actions that need to be taken
- Determine who is going to what, by when, & clarify expectations
- Identify and make available the skills required to execute the actions
- Include milestone success points

## Strategic Execution: How To Tackle Successful Implementation (part 2 of 2)

- Allocate budgets to support the actions
- Have each team develop their own goals & actions for support
- Monitoring, measurement, and feedback throughout the process
- Staff are kept informed throughout the process
- Strategic plan reviews conducted to keep strategy current & on track
- Successes are celebrated

## Strategic Execution: Building an Effective Board (part 1 of 3)

- Board members' primary responsibilities include:
  - Legal & fiduciary responsibilities for the organization
  - Creating and enforcing policies, by-laws and strategic plans in conjunction with management
  - Fund raising, fund raising, fund raising
  - Access to resources
  - Being passionate advocates for the organization
  - Hiring and the annual review of the Executive Director/CEO (not the staff)

## Strategic Execution: Building an Effective Board (part 2 of 3)

- Constantly evaluate the Board composition to properly address the needs:
  - Professional skills & expertise (legal, accounting, marketing, medical, HR, etc)
  - Community knowledge
  - Financial capacity
  - Networking capabilities
  - Ethnic/geographic diversification
- Use the committee structure to engage & train future potential Board candidates

## Strategic Execution: Building an Effective Board (part 3 of 3)

- Pair new Board members with existing Board members
- Create a Board Development Committee to:
  - Evaluate Board composition year-to-year to maximize alignment with the not-for-profit organization's vision, mission, goals, strategies and needed skills & expertise
  - Conduct a nomination process to recruit new Board members who have a clear understanding of expectations & requirements
- Consider the use of a “consent agenda” to allow more time spent in Board meetings on strategic issues, decisions that the Board needs to make, etc.

Strategic Execution: Conduct a comprehensive strategic plan implementation assessment at least annually (part 1 of 2)

- Five questions to ask:
  - What goals have been achieved to-date?
  - What obstacles might exist preventing further goal achievement?
  - Where has performance expectations lagged behind?
  - What needs to happen to move forward?
  - Who is resisting change?

Strategic Execution: Conduct a comprehensive strategic plan implementation assessment at least annually (part 2 of 2)

- Look for:
  - Measurable results towards the strategic goals & objectives
  - Financial improvements
  - Expanded and enhanced programs & services
  - Indication of development of strategic affiliations & collaborations
  - Increased donors and philanthropic dollars
  - Evidence of a more engaged and motivated board
  - Improved governance and committee structure

*Questions??*

*Thank you!*

## Backup: About SCORE

- SCORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through education and mentorship. We have been doing this for nearly fifty years.
- Because our work is supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and thanks to our network of 13,000+ volunteers, we are able to deliver our services at no charge.
- Our 320+ chapters hold events and workshops locally across the U.S. and its territories, and match up entrepreneurs with local, volunteer mentors. SCORE is headquartered in Herndon, VA.
- Information shared with SCORE Certified Mentors are kept confidential.
- Our services are offered for the life of each business, as our clients think valuable & appropriate.
- Our services include strategic planning, market plan development, business development, effective organizational design, governance, social media, communications, financial management, cash flow analysis, business model design, quality engineering, etc.

# Backup: Ellen Feldman Resume

- Retired Global IBM Vice President with 38 years of business & technology consulting, strategic planning, leadership of professional services organizations, leading major initiatives to improve organizational effectiveness (within IBM and for Fortune 500 companies). Strong skills in project management, business development, effective operational execution, problem solving, HR and team building.
- Within IBM, Ellen's leadership roles have included:
  - IBM Vice President of Business Development For Energy & Utilities, Media & Entertainment and Telecommunications Clients across the globe. This included coaching deal teams in professional services, in multi-million dollar pursuits. It also included defining new revenue producing programs, leveraging multiple brands across IBM, one of which achieved over \$500M in new revenue for IBM in a given year.
  - IBM Vice President, Corporate Strategy, for the identification & strategy development for new & emerging growth businesses for IBM (future businesses of \$1B+)
  - Certified IBM Consultant & Managing Principal Across the Northeast, US & Global levels for technology consulting, leading teams of several hundred professionals with annual services revenue of triple digit millions
  - IBM Vice President, Business Consulting for IBM's Own Internal Strategies & Business Unit Transformations
- Currently, Ellen serves as:
  - Certified SCORE Mentor, specifically focused on Strategic Planning & Operational Effectiveness for Not-For-Profit Businesses
  - President of the Achieve Board of Directors (Broome-Tioga Chapter of NYS ARC)
  - Member of the Achieve Foundation Board of Directors
  - NYS ARC Board of Governor
  - Member of the NYS ARC Finance Committee
- Some of Ellen's previous roles with not-for-profit organizations as a board member or volunteer included:
  - The founding member and the Board Chair (for 6 years) of a not-for-profit start-up in NY focused on the intellectually & developmentally disabled. Her role had been to formulate the growth strategies, associated business plans & operations execution plans, Board governance, HR, etc.
  - Vice Chair for the Board of Directors Broome-Tioga County ARC (dba Achieve). Within this capacity she served on numerous committees addressing capital campaigns, residential services, by-laws, the Nominating Committee, and the Chapter's Executive Committee.
  - Board of Director (for 7 years) of the Handicapped Children's Association of Broome County NY. This is our county's local chapter of Cerebral Palsy Affiliates. Her participation had been to establish several new policies, spearhead changes in HR, compliance, provide fiscal oversight, etc.
  - Community volunteer for local NY campaigns for the American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, America Cancer Society, Autism Awareness and the March of Dimes

On a personal note, she & her husband (Marc) have been married for 40 years. Both were originally from Brooklyn, NY. Marc is recently retired from his dental practice in Greene, NY. They consider the Southern Tier their home, having moved here 38 years ago. They have a 33 year old, developmentally & intellectually disabled son, Matthew. Marc & Ellen are passionate about animal rescue, and actively volunteer to save & socialize dogs in NY, Arizona and St Maarten.