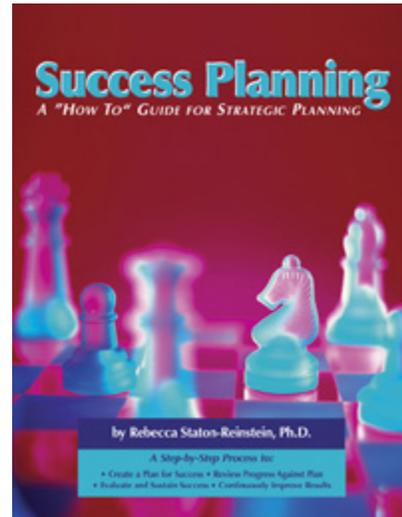


SAMPLE CHAPTER

Success Planning: A ‘How-to’ Guide for Strategic Planning



I PREPARE FOR PLANNING

Notes

Preparation is critical to good planning. It is easy to dismiss or overlook. Without sound preparation, it is very difficult to maintain your strategic focus. You are much more likely to plunge into tactics without preparation. You may need to curb your desire for more immediate action. Improving the quality of your preparation will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of your planning by reducing rework, missed opportunities and wrong directions.

I Prepare for Planning

A. Perform Situational Analysis

B. Perform SWOT Analysis

C. Define Customer Expectations

D. Perform “brain dump” of ideas and desired activities

E. Collate Planning Considerations

A. Perform Situational Analysis

Before beginning to plan, you must understand the context in which you exist. Depending on the size of the organization and the data available, the analysis product may vary from one page to a thick volume. Focus on the areas of the organization that contribute to success and must be considered.

Financial information is critical, including the balance sheet, Profit and Loss statement, previous projected revenues and expenditures and actual revenues and expenditures, factual explanations of discrepancies, debt, capital expenditures, cost of money, and much more.

Analyze the state of the core product or service provided by your organization. What indicators of quality and productivity do you measure and what are the trends? What are your existing plans in these areas?

What data do you collect currently? What data do you analyze regularly? Are these data sufficient? Do you need to collect additional data? Are there relatively simple, inexpensive ways to gather additional, useful data for the current analysis?

What industry data do you follow and collect? What economic data and trends are important? What competitor analysis do you have available? What benchmarks do you use?

Situational Analysis must be thorough and encompass all areas that will affect your success.

Notes

Notes

Situational Analysis steps:

1. Determine data that you need for a thorough, useful analysis.
2. Gather the data.
3. Determine data accuracy and completeness.
4. Analyze data.
5. Create a summary report and state conclusions.

1. Determine data that you need for a thorough, useful analysis.¹

Data	Source	Importance	Availability

Focus first on data of high importance that are at least moderately easy to get.

Typical Types of Data: financial, productivity, quality, customer expectations, unique measures for organization, projections, actual results against previous projections, trends, industry standards, employee satisfaction, objective and subjective information.

¹ This form provides a way to capture information for analysis. Use it as a template or create one of your own. An additional copy is available in the **Tools** Section.

2. Gather the data.

Find all of the data and collate. Depending on the amount of data you want to review, post the report for easy reference and provide hard copy in advance for all planning participants.

3. Determine data accuracy and completeness.

a. Are the data accurate?

b. Are the data complete?

c. Do you need additional data?

d. What steps do you need to take to complete data collection and analysis?

4. Analyze data.

Analyze the data for trends over time, if that information is readily available. If the results are not what you desired, look for the root causes using **Root Cause Analysis**² (also known as Fishbone or Ishikawa Analysis.)

Some questions to ask:

- What are the data telling you about your processes and capacity to reach the desired goals and obtain the desired results?
- Are there conflicting messages in different parts of the data?
- How reliable are the data?
- Do you have enough data to make decisions or do you need to gather more or different data?
- Which information is the most important and reliable?
- Which information should not carry as much weight in decision-making?
- Do trends show improvement, decline or flat results over time?
- Do you need to take action on any of the data, trends or interpretations immediately or in the future?
- Do you need to develop new data or data gathering methods as you go forward?

² If you are unfamiliar with this technique, or to renew your understanding, refer to books in the **References** Section.

4. Create a summary report.

Summarize the analyses, indicating the critical factors that will affect the Plan. State Conclusions.

a. What conclusions do the data suggest?

b. What trends do the data demonstrate over time?

c. What are the alternative conclusions?

Data Analysis Results - Priority information for planning:

Notes:

The depth and breadth of your Situational Analysis will depend on your particular circumstances.

- **Information Technology** departments may need to add a major emphasis on analyzing the current strategy for technology and innovation that will have strategic impact on the organization.
- **Individual Departments** in a larger organization may receive a higher-level Plan and have little to analyze other than their own track records.
- **Non-profits** may want to gather data about funding resources or giving patterns in addition to a thorough financial analysis.
- **Individuals** may be analyzing more subjective factors such as personal psychology, life stage and belief systems as well as objective data such as financial circumstances. It is always difficult to be objective about oneself. To the extent that you can, try to stand outside yourself and look at your current situation dispassionately. Be aware of how your beliefs limit and support your dreams and desires.