



# Strategic Planning/SWOT (Foundational Track)

Suzula Bidon | February 12, 2024





## Presenter: Suzula Bidon

- Attorney (MD, MN, and DC) specializing in criminal legal system reform and substance use-related law and policy
- Extensive experience with nonprofit boards and Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs)
- Certified Peer Recovery Specialist
- Certified yoga teacher and the creator of Recovery Yoga Meetings®: a yoga curriculum for individuals seeking recovery in treatment centers, yoga studios, and institutions
- M.S. in addiction policy and practice, Georgetown University



# Learning Objectives

- Learn best practices for using the strategic planning process.
- Understand the importance of including stakeholders.
- Determine how to develop the structure to create and implement a strategic plan.





# Agenda

- **What a strategic plan is**
- **When and why to undergo strategic planning**
- **How to prepare for strategic planning and select people to participate**
- **The strategic planning process and the SWOT analysis tool**
- **Implementing and monitoring progress of the strategic plan**

# Strategic Planning Components and Considerations



# What Is a Strategic Plan?

"A strategic plan serves as a roadmap for an organization to define goals ... to achieve its mission. [The plan] also plots the course on *how* to reach those goals over the next three to five years.

"During the planning process, board and staff members collaborate with other key stakeholders to determine how to design programs, allocate resources, and measure success. ...

"A comprehensive strategic plan can assist you in navigating challenges, pivoting operations, and adjusting priorities." (Taproot, 2022)

# Components of the Strategic Planning Process

- Overview of the Process
- Mission, Vision, Values
- Environmental Scan/Stakeholder Engagement
- SWOT Analysis
- Strategic Priorities
- SMART Goals
- Success Measures/KPIs
- Financial Projections
- Organizational Resources and Capabilities
- Critical Success Factors
- Key Learnings

NOTE: Some of these components will appear in an appendix or unabridged version of the plan

(Baker Bower, 2023)

# Before Starting the Planning Process

1. **"Perform a deep assessment of the overall health of your organization:** Dive into the performance of the organization and have honest conversations" about organizational capacity and impact.
2. **"Consider building on your current plan before moving forward with a new plan:** ... Is it possible to continue building on the current plan" or proceeding in the current direction?
3. **"Know what you want to accomplish:** Remember that making a course correction does not necessarily require a new strategic plan. It may make more sense to develop an operations, board development, or fundraising plan as the appropriate new 'roadmap' for the organization." (Ladipo, 2021)



# When Is the Right Time for Strategic Planning?

- "There is a change in the environment ... [or] your organization. ..."
- "You're not sure which opportunities to say 'Yes' or 'No' to." (Waldron, 2023b)
- You've never done one or can't remember the last time you did one (or the one that you did has been collecting dust on the shelf...).
- Your organization's current strategic plan is ending.



Note:  
Make sure your strategic planning process takes your fiscal year into consideration.

# How Much Time Should Be Allocated?



- A lot of boards try to tackle strategic planning at a retreat...but a full strategic planning process takes time!
- Allocate at least three (3) to six (6) months for the strategic planning process. (Waldron, 2023b)

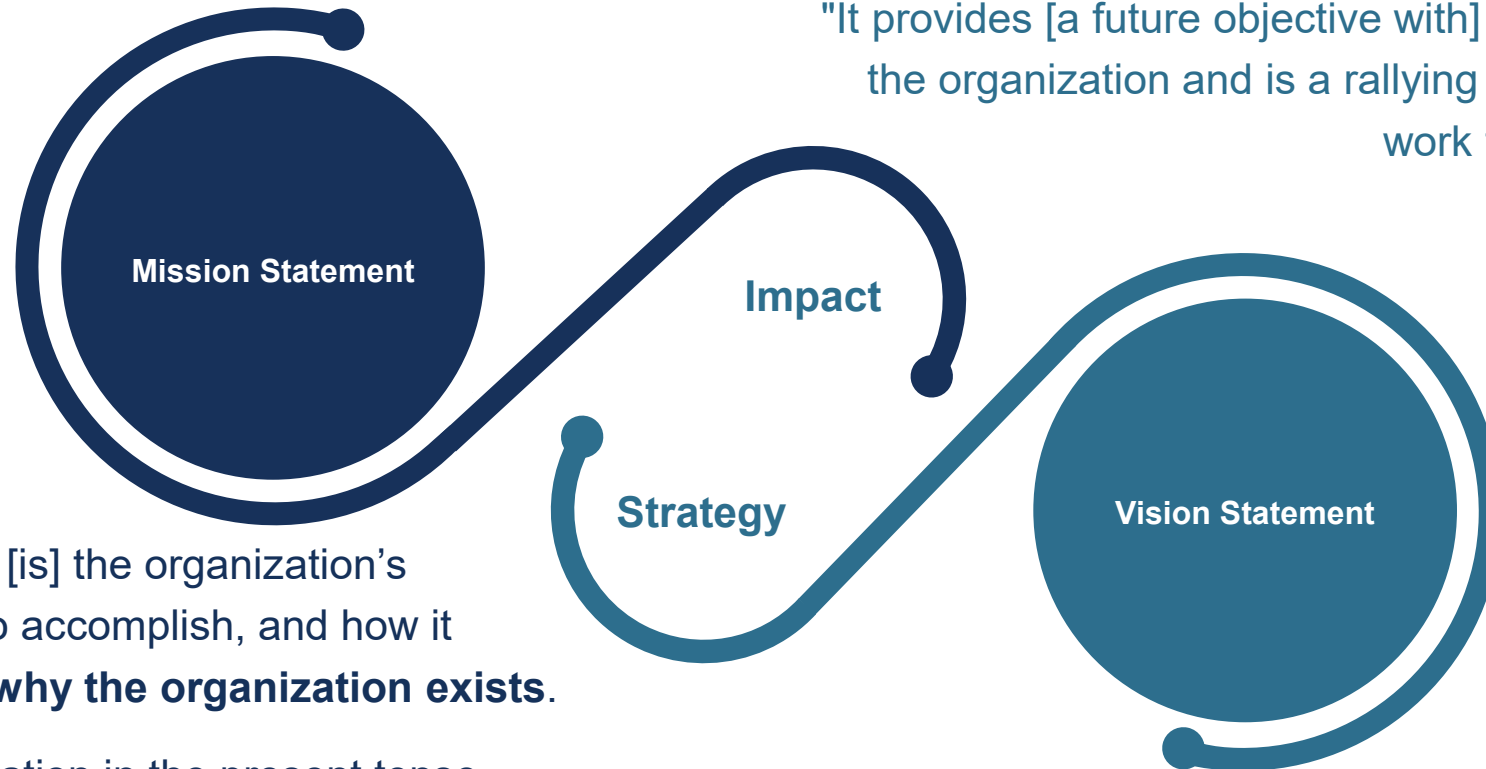
# The Strategic Planning Process



# Before You Begin: Ensure Clarity on Mission And Vision!

"A **vision statement** is an aspirational declaration of what an organization hopes to achieve." **It's where you are headed.**

"It provides [a future objective with] direction and purpose for the organization and is a rallying cry for all stakeholders to work towards a common goal."



"A **mission statement** [is] the organization's purpose, what it aims to accomplish, and how it plans to" succeed. **It's why the organization exists.**

It describes the organization in the present tense, what the organization does, and who benefits from its work.

(Appold, 2023)

# The Process



Source: The Bridgespan Group

"The best way to start strategic planning is by asking **why** you are doing it and **what** you want to get out of it. ...

"There are **many approaches** to strategic planning—and **no one-size-fits-all** template for the process."

(Waldron et al., 2023a)

(Waldron et al., 2023a)

# Scope the Work

## "Clarify the critical questions or decisions that will guide your planning process"

- "Why are we embarking on a strategic planning process, and what do we want to get out of it?"
- What is our history of planning?
- "What are the most important decisions facing our organization?"
- "Where should we focus our time and energy in the planning process?"
- How will we facilitate the process?



# Engage Stakeholders: Context

"Strategic planning offers a valuable opportunity to learn from and engage individuals beyond your core leadership team and board. ... These groups might have formal decision making and advisory roles in the process, or they may provide more informal feedback and information."

## Why engage a range of stakeholders in your strategic planning process?

- Provides "better answers by incorporating fresh, diverse perspectives and ideas."
- Increases "buy-in and shared ownership of any changes your strategic plan calls for."
- "Contribute[s] to better and more equitable answers by involving those closest to your organization's work." (Waldron et al., 2023b)



# Engage Stakeholders: Considerations

"In engaging a set of stakeholders, it's important to consider:

## "Who and why?"

- "Who are the key stakeholders [to engage]?"
- "What are the main objectives of each individual or group?"
- "Which [individuals or groups] might have formal decision-making roles or critical roles in executing the plan?"
- Do these individuals or groups reflect the perspectives of those closest to our work?

(Waldron et al., 2023b)

## "How?"

- "How will feedback be gathered, synthesized, and incorporated?"
- "Who will lead the engagement?"

## "When?"

- "When will communication take place and how will it be sequenced?"
- "For those who are less formally involved, how will you share back how the information was used?"

(Waldron et al., 2023b)



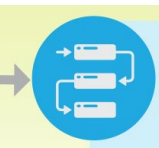


# Clarify Strategy

**"Make choices about the impact you want to have, how, and for whom.**

- Why does the organization exist?
- "What is the problem we seek to address in the world?"
- What will be the ultimate result of the organization's work?
- "What goals will we hold ourselves accountable to over the next 3-5 years?"
- "Who is our population of focus?"
- "Where will we do our work?"
- "How does our portfolio of work lead to the impact we aspire to achieve?"
- "What external trends could affect our work?" (Waldron et al., 2023a)

These will be influenced by your mission and vision.



# Clarify Strategy: SWOT Analysis



# What Is a SWOT Analysis?

A "**SWOT analysis** is a tool that helps you assess the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats** involved in any organization.

"It can [help you] obtain **insights from prior situations** and figure out **possible outcomes to prevailing or potential problems.**"

"Performing a SWOT analysis is an effective way to make **strategic plans** and to determine the **goals** of the organization; however, **[it] should not be the only tool** used to make important decisions."

(Vaia, n.d.)

# Components of a SWOT Analysis

- **Internal factors:** those the organization can control (**strengths and weaknesses**)
- **External factors:** those the organization can't control (**opportunities and threats**)
- **Helpful factors:** those that support the organization's success (**strengths and opportunities**)
- **Harmful factors:** those that hinder success (**weakness and threats**)

# SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- What are your current program advantages?
- What do you currently do well?

## Weaknesses

- What could be improved?
- What is done poorly?
- What should be avoided?

## Opportunities

- If the program succeeds, what new opportunities will become available?

## Threats

- What is your competition doing?
- What obstacles do you face in continuing your program as it is?

# SWOT Analysis: High-Level Example

## Strengths

- Board and staff aligned around the organization mission and vision

## Weaknesses

- Challenges with recruiting and retaining talent

## Opportunities

- Form new collaborations with community partners

## Threats

- Decrease in government funding allocated to nonprofit organizations

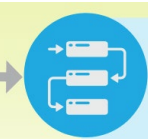
# Set Strategic Priorities

**"Translate your impact goals into clearly articulated priorities."**

After agreeing on the mission and vision, the next phase is to agree on 3 to 5 important areas of focus to achieve the vision.

- What concrete steps can we take to move toward our vision statement?
- "How well are we performing against our impact goals today? ..."
- "What will we need to do differently to accomplish our impact goals in the future?"
- "What programs may we need to grow, evolve, or sunset?" (Waldron et al., 2023a)

Use your SWOT analysis, mission, and vision to help you with this task.



# Estimate Resources

**"Figure out the time, money, and skills it will take to carry out your priorities.**

- "What resources—financial, human, organizational—will we need to pursue our strategic priorities?"
- "Where will we need to add, reduce, or diversify talent?"
- "What new systems or capabilities will we need to build or buy?"
- "What level and what type of funding will be required?"
- "Do we have the right [infrastructure] in place to pursue our strategic priorities?" (Waldron et al., 2023a)

 Will our current infrastructure enable us to achieve our vision priorities?





# Monitoring Progress



"Strategic planning **does not end** when the plan has been written and distributed. A well-formed framework or plan will guide decision making and help ensure that all activities and programs are aligned with the organization's mission. **Ongoing monitoring** and **revision** are two important aspects of effective strategic planning.

**"The organization should ask itself:**

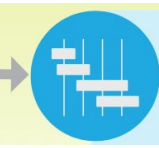
- "How are we incorporating vision priorities, goals, and actions of the strategic plan into program and individual work plans and budgets?"
- "Do we have appropriate evaluative metrics in place to help regularly review performance?"
- "Are we referring back to the strategic plan in less formal ways, such as during staff meetings, committee meetings, and individual performance reviews?"

(BoardSource, 2016)

# Plan to Implement

**"Determine how to manage and monitor progress and adapt as needed.**

- "What metrics and milestones will we track to ensure progress and accountability? ...
- "What are the biggest risks or outstanding open questions?
- "How will we proactively mitigate these risks?
- "How will we experiment, learn, and adapt over time?
- "How will we use our strategic plan to continually inform decision making?" (Waldron et al., 2023a)



# Learning Objectives

- Gain best practices for using the strategic planning process.
- Understand the importance of including stakeholders.
- Determine how to develop the structure to create and implement a strategic plan.



# Q&A



## **Next Session**

**Monday, March 4, 2024**

**12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. PST**

**Topic: Board Development  
and Governance**

# References

Appold, K. (2023, February 8). [\*Vision statement vs mission statement for nonprofits\*](#). Nonprofit Hub.

Baker Bower, L. (2023, May 25). [\*A comprehensive guide to nonprofit strategic plan\*](#). DonorBox.

BoardSource. (2016). [\*5 Phases of strategic planning\*](#).

Ladipo, K. (2021, June 8). [\*The strategic plan dilemma: Building for the future while you're drowning\*](#). Candid.

Taproot. (2022, May 12). [\*How to create a nonprofit strategic plan\*](#).

Vaia. (n.d.). [\*SWOT analysis\*](#).

Waldron, L., Nayak, P., Lanre-Amos, T., & Seeman, B. (2023a, June 1). [\*How nonprofits and NGOs can get real value from strategic planning\*](#). The Bridgespan Group.

Waldron, L., Nayak, P., Lanre-Amos, T., & Seeman, B. (2023b, June 1). [\*Practical questions your board and team might ask about strategic planning\*](#). The Bridgespan Group.



**Thank You**