

THE
**NONPROFIT
STRATEGY
REVOLUTION**

by David La Piana

**FACILITATOR'S
GUIDE**

TO REAL-TIME STRATEGIC PLANNING

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Facilitator's Guide:

Real-Time Strategic Planning

THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED to help you lead your nonprofit through the one-day Real-Time Strategic Planning kick-off session described in Chapters 4 and 5 of *The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution* book. The process culminates in developing an identity statement and Strategy Screen for your organization. In our pilot efforts we have found that these pieces provide a sound basis for addressing the Big Questions your organization faces. Sometimes the Big Questions can be identified and even addressed during the kick-off session, but most often the session provides tools that are then useful in addressing Big Questions after the session.

We recommend that you conduct such a session as frequently as seems useful. For some groups that will be annually, for others a longer or shorter time; certainly we do not intend that you conduct a session every three years, whether you need one or not! Regardless of whether you use an external consultant or choose to lead the session yourself, make sure that you read through this section carefully in advance so you know what to expect. And share a summary of this description of the kick-off session—the goals, expected outcomes, and the agenda, at a minimum—with all those you invite to participate in the session.

The session works best with a group of ten to fifteen staff and board members. Assemble the best strategic thinkers in your organization. Likely suspects include the board's executive committee and the management team. But be sure to include people from throughout the organization who are creative, knowledgeable, and up to date regarding the external environment, trends, and the competition, and who have good external networks that keep them informed.

Components of the Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session

The session has the following primary components, each of which corresponds to a specific aspect of your nonprofit's identity statement. For most components, we include at least one handout or worksheet to help you. Most components of the full session can also be used alone at those times when you want to home in on just one specific issue, such as your competitors. The complete kick-off session consists of the following components:

1. **Introduction of participants.** Each person states why they work for your nonprofit or serve on its board. This ensures that everyone meets each other, especially when new staff or board members are present, and grounds everyone in the mission-related reason they are involved.
2. **Focus on mission statement.** This is not a reworking of the mission statement. You should begin the Real-Time Strategic Planning kick-off session with agreement on your mission already in hand. (If your organization needs to revisit and rework its mission statement, see Tool 20: Mission Statement Refinement.) The session starts with posting your mission statement on a big piece of chart paper at the front of the room to anchor the discussion. Throughout the day, refer to it as necessary.
3. **Overview of the session, objectives, and agenda.** Whomever you choose as session facilitator should conduct this piece.
4. **Brief history and overview of your nonprofit.** The executive director should lead this.
5. **Review of your nonprofit's current scope and business model.** The facilitator should lead a review of the geographic area served, customers served, services or programs offered, and funding sources.
6. **More detailed review of your nonprofit's current sources and distribution of funding.** This is the final component of your business model. Your facilitator should lead this discussion and the rest of the session.
7. **Discussion and analysis of competitors and your nonprofit's market position.**
8. **Identification of your nonprofit's competitive advantages, if any.**
9. **Review of current and future trends.** Examine the marketplace factors that may impact your nonprofit.
10. **Articulation of your nonprofit's desired future scope and business model.** This covers the future vision for geographic area served, customers served, and services offered.
11. **Clarification of your nonprofit's identity statement.**
12. **Development of your Strategy Screen.**
13. **Identification of any Big Questions** (opportunities or challenges) that your nonprofit is currently facing.
14. **Next steps:** Construct a work plan for creation and implementation of a strategy and for building your nonprofit's capacity for ongoing strategic thinking and acting.

Following is a step-by-step facilitator's guide to *Real-Time Strategic Planning*. Keep in mind that it is a kick-off for your ongoing strategy formation work, which needs to respond rapidly to changes in the real world. The theory and rationale for this process are described in greater depth in Part 1 of the book *The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution*. This guide is intended for practical use when actually doing the session.

Desired Outcomes of the Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session

When you and your staff participate in the Real-Time Strategic Planning process, you can expect to

- Gain clarity and consensus about your organization's identity, who and where your organization is now, and who and where it wants to be.
- Develop a better shared understanding of your current and future situation.
- Learn how to use practical and tested tools, adapted to your nonprofit, to address changing trends and environmental factors and develop the capacity to implement strategies to help you get where you want to be.
- Develop a work plan for creating and implementing your strategy.
- Develop the ability to continuously recognize and address basic trends and factors in the environment that may impact your nonprofit. (The book provides a wealth of practical tools to help you build your capacity for strategic thinking and acting, as well as easy-to-use tools designed to help you address specific situations or needs).
- Strengthen the bonds between the staff and board members who attend the session, effectively forming a "strategy team."

Preparing for the Kick-Off Session

Before we jump right into the session itself, there's some prep work you need to do. This preparation is not extensive, but it is important to set expectations appropriately and to help participants do some thinking in advance. At a minimum, send all participants (1) a brief overview of the session; (2) the desired outcomes (described above); and (3) the session agenda (pages vii–viii). The pre-session preparation also consists of

- Ensuring that all logistical details are taken care of. Hold the session in a comfortable room large enough for everyone. You will need two easels with large chart pads of paper and markers. There should be sufficient wall space to post the pages of notes you put on chart paper while you are leading the session. Make sure there is sufficient food and drink. Ask someone from your staff to take notes, augmenting the chart paper notes.
- Completing certain worksheets in advance of the session. The executive or appropriate staff person should complete Worksheets E: [Funding Sources](#); F: [Program Income and Expenses](#); H: [Competitor Analysis](#); and J: [Trend Analysis](#). Bring copies of the completed worksheets to the session; they will form the basis of a discussion about each of these topics. The person who is most familiar with your nonprofit's financial situation should complete the financial worksheets. The executive director should complete the others.

- Preparing large charts prior to the session. A number of large charts will be used throughout the session. These are noted in the instructions. To help you track them, the List of Charts (pages xvi–xvii), notes all the charts you’ll need to prepare and shows what labels go on what charts.

A Note on Facilitation

The skills required to successfully facilitate this session are those of any good facilitator. There are, however, a few twists we would like to describe.

First, the agenda needs to move quickly through most of these issues, so the facilitator must keep a close watch on the flow and must not be shy about moving the process forward. Toward this end, it may help to have a second person responsible for charting, and perhaps even a third person, with a laptop computer, taking notes as backup. The facilitator’s full attention must be engaged in the process itself.

Second, we have found that the facilitation process is also a consultation process. That is, the sessions work best when the facilitator is not only focused on ensuring that there is a good discussion, but also offers his or her own insights, suggests direction, and provides feedback to the group. Having an active facilitator is associated with greater success in these sessions, according to our independent evaluator.

Session Agenda

The Real-Time Strategic Planning kick-off session focuses on developing consensus about your nonprofit’s identity, developing a Strategy Screen, and selecting a current opportunity or challenge in the environment that you would like to address, that is, your current Big Question. The selection of this opportunity or challenge is achieved through an interactive process leading to a group decision. How you decide to address this opportunity or challenge is the focus of the strategy that you will form.

A typical agenda for the session is outlined in the next pages. Modify it as needed; this session is meant to help your process of thinking strategically, not to straightjacket your organization.

What follows may seem like a lot to accomplish in one day, and it is. Yet, we have seen it accomplished over and over again by large and small nonprofits, using the process outlined. It does require a brisk pace to move through all the items, so having a great facilitator, either from within your organization or externally, is essential. This compression is actually an important part of the process: longer is not necessarily better.

Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session Agenda

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts* |
|--|------------|---|
| Introductions: Each person tells the group why he or she works or volunteers with the nonprofit | 20 minutes | No handouts |
| Overview of the session (review agenda), definition of strategy, and the purpose of the one-day session <i>(Session facilitator to review)</i> | 20 minutes | A. What Is Strategy? B. Real-Time Strategic Planning Process C. Example of Identity Statement, Big Question(s), Strategy Screen, and Strategy |
| History and background of the nonprofit. What impact is it seeking to achieve? <i>(Executive director to give an overview)</i> | 10 minutes | No handouts |
| Current business model <i>(All participate)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic area served • Customers served • Services or programs offered | 20 minutes | D. Current Business Model |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources and distribution of funding <i>(Executive director or finance staff to present)</i> | 20 minutes | E. Funding Sources F. Program Income and Expenses <i>(Note: Complete these worksheets in advance.)</i> |
| BREAK: 10 minutes | | |
| Market awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of competitors <i>(Executive director or facilitator to present)</i> • Key competitors • Market position | 40 minutes | G. Types of Competitors H. Competitor Analysis <i>(Note: Complete Worksheet H in advance.)</i> |
| The nonprofit's competitive advantage | 50 minutes | I. Competitive Advantage |

* Letters refer to handouts to be used during each segment of the day.

(continued)

Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session Agenda (continued)

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts* |
|---|------------|--|
| LUNCH BREAK: 30 minutes | | |
| Current and future trends and factors in the market that may impact the nonprofit | 20 minutes | J. Trend Analysis <i>(Note: Complete this worksheet in advance.)</i> |
| Future business model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic area served • Customers served • Services or programs offered • Sources and distribution of funding | 30 minutes | K. Future Business Model |
| The nonprofit's identity statement | 30 minutes | L. Identity Statement Review C. Example of Identity Statement, Big Question(s), Strategy Screen, and Strategy |
| Developing the nonprofit's Strategy Screen | 20 minutes | M. Strategy Screen |
| BREAK: 15 minutes | | |
| What is the Big Question (opportunity or challenge) that the nonprofit is currently facing (if any)? Try out a strategy or two against the Strategy Screen. | 30 minutes | N. Big Question Review C. Example of Identity Statement, Big Question(s), Strategy Screen, and Strategy O. Applying the Strategy Screen <i>(post-session)</i> |
| Next steps | 30 minutes | P. Examples of Tools Q. Next Steps Work Plan R. Strategy Road Map <i>(post-session)</i> |
| Evaluation of one-day session and wrap-up | 15 minutes | S. Session Evaluation Form |

* Letters refer to handouts to be used during each segment of the day.

Facilitator Instruction

The rest of this guide follows the sequence of the agenda for the Real-Time Strategic Planning kick-off session. The handouts are referenced by their letters and are presented in the order in which they are discussed. As you lead the session, follow the sequence of these handouts as noted in the agenda. Modify the text to fit your style.

Consultant's or Facilitator's Guide to a Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| Breakfast | Prior to 8:30 | Pick up breakfast if needed. |
| Setting up for the session | 8:30–8:45 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Label and hang on the walls the different pieces of butcher paper you will need. (The List of Charts on pages xvi–xvii includes examples of the charts you will need.) <input type="checkbox"/> Write out the mission statement and post it on the wall. <input type="checkbox"/> Put out packets at every place. Put name tags on a separate table so attendees can choose where they want to sit. <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange seating in the room (if it isn't already arranged) in a U-shape, with the easels and the facilitator at the open part of the U so everyone can see them. |
| Introductions: Why you work or volunteer with XYZ Nonprofit | 9:00–9:20 20 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have everyone introduce themselves, taking about one minute per person (no more). Key things to mention include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board or staff member? • How long with XYZ Nonprofit? • Why volunteer or work for XYZ Nonprofit? <input type="checkbox"/> Point out the mission statement, posted visibly on a wall. <input type="checkbox"/> Briefly discuss the impact of XYZ Nonprofit. This is a brainstorm of sorts: What is the impact that XYZ Nonprofit seeks to achieve on its stakeholders and community at large? Have the participants determine what the main impact of XYZ Nonprofit is. |
| Overview of the Real-Time Strategic Planning process, definition of strategy, and the purpose of the one-day session Overview of nonprofit | 9:20–9:40 20 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review with participants what is in their packets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Real-Time Strategic Planning (pages 2–4) and agenda for the day. (<i>Note: All participants should receive these ahead of time to review prior to the session.</i>) • Review the agenda for the day. Mention that the agenda is a general guideline. Some sections may be longer or shorter; you can adjust the time frame accordingly during the course of the session. • Mention that the handouts are in their packets, and the session will draw on these. |

Note that the completed worksheets (E, F, H, J) are not in the packet. You will hand these out during the session.

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Consultant's or Facilitator's Guide to a Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session (continued)

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="737 323 1474 432">□ Discuss the definition of strategy and the three types of strategy. The highest level (organizational) is not addressed by traditional strategic planning, for the most part. <li data-bbox="737 462 1422 529">The process consists of several steps, many of which will be covered in the one-day session. <li data-bbox="737 546 1471 613">□ Review of where organization is now, how it got to this position, and where it wants to go next. <li data-bbox="737 630 1094 663">□ Forming Identity Statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="773 680 951 709"><i>Business Model</i> <li data-bbox="773 718 1455 785">Mission + geographic/programmatic/client scope + operational model + financial model <li data-bbox="773 814 984 844"><i>Market Awareness</i> <li data-bbox="773 852 1471 919">Knowing what the market is + where we are in the market + how we got there + where we want to go next <li data-bbox="773 949 1042 978"><i>Competitive Advantage</i> <li data-bbox="773 987 1471 1054">The ability to produce social value using a unique asset, outstanding execution, or both <li data-bbox="737 1150 1464 1331">□ Review the handout. This gives a good example of the identity statement, Strategy Screen, Big Question, and strategy. Today the group will develop XYZ Nonprofit's identity statement, identify its Strategy Screen (decision) criteria, and determine the Big Question that it wants to address. |
| <hr/> History and background of nonprofit | 9:40–9:50 <i>10 minutes</i> | □ Executive director to give an overview. |

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Consultant's or Facilitator's Guide to a Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session (continued)

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <p>Current business model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic area served • Customers served • Programs or services offered | <p>9:50–10:10 20 minutes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In advance: Set up the butcher paper with the labels Current Geographic Area, Current Customers, and Current Programs/Services. Draw a line down the middle of each piece of paper as pictured by numbers 2, 3, and 4 on the List of Charts (pages xvi–xvii). <input type="checkbox"/> Lead a discussion of the current situation for each topic. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources and distribution of funding | <p>10:10–10:30 20 minutes</p> | <p>and (<i>Staff to prepare in advance</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute worksheets. Have the executive director (or whoever prepared the financial worksheets) review them with the group; then have the facilitator lead a discussion about them. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the butcher paper (labeled as per number 5 in the List of Charts) as the executive director (staff) reviews the worksheets. <input type="checkbox"/> Lead a discussion about funding: What are the trends—past, current, and future? What changes have there been in types or sources and levels of funding? What funding is at risk (if any)? What funding is potentially going to increase (if any)? <input type="checkbox"/> Capture this discussion on the butcher paper. |
| <p>BREAK: 10:30–10:40; 10 minutes</p> | | |
| <p>Market awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of competitors • Key competitors • Market position | <p>10:40–11:20 40 minutes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute the handout and review it with the group. Review the definitions of types of competitors. Mention that the group is going to consider (for the sake of the discussion) direct and substitutable competitors together. They are very similar and there is such overlap that this is a more efficient way to discuss them. |

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Consultant's or Facilitator's Guide to a Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session (continued)

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts |
|--|---|---|
| | | <p data-bbox="776 289 1097 323"><i>(Staff to prepare in advance)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="737 340 1471 411">☐ Distribute and have the executive director (or whoever completed the competitor worksheet) review it with the group. <li data-bbox="737 428 1471 571">☐ Then lead a discussion with the entire group to review these competitors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="776 499 1360 533">• Do people believe these are the top competitors? <li data-bbox="776 537 1101 571">• Who else would they add? <li data-bbox="737 588 1471 806">☐ Using the butcher paper, have the group add to the list from the worksheet(s) any other competitor that they believe should be included in the discussion. Set up two easels, one with the Direct/Substitutable Competitors label at the top, and the other with the Resource Competitors label at the top (see numbers 6 and 7 in the List of Charts). <li data-bbox="737 823 1471 894">☐ Have the group review these competitors and prioritize them, choosing the top three in each category. <li data-bbox="737 911 1471 1016">☐ Focus now on the Direct/Substitutable Competitors. Ask the group what they admire about these competitors. What does each competitor do well? What are their strong points? |
| <p data-bbox="266 1108 493 1205">What is <i>XYZ Nonprofit's</i> competitive advantage?</p> | <p data-bbox="537 1108 678 1171">11:20–12:10 50 minutes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="737 1155 1471 1226">☐ Review the handout and discuss the definition of a competitive advantage. <li data-bbox="737 1243 1471 1461">☐ Have the group discuss what <i>XYZ Nonprofit's</i> competitive advantages are. Note that it is possible that <i>XYZ Nonprofit</i> could have more than one competitive advantage, but push the group to come up with something (or more than one thing) that really distinguishes <i>XYZ Nonprofit</i> from the competition, provides value, and also advances its mission. <li data-bbox="737 1478 1471 1621">☐ Complete the butcher paper (label paper like number 8 in the List of Charts). Have the group brainstorm about what makes <i>XYZ Nonprofit</i> competitive in the market. What is the value it brings to its customers? |
| <p data-bbox="266 1684 773 1717">LUNCH BREAK: 12:10–12:40; 30 minutes</p> | | |

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Consultant's or Facilitator's Guide to a Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session (continued)

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Current and future trends and marketplace factors or events that may impact <i>XYZ Nonprofit</i> | 12:40–1:00 <i>20 minutes</i> | <p><i>(Staff to prepare in advance)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute and have the executive director (or whoever completed the trends worksheet) review it with the group. <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss these (and any other trends) and record the comments on the butcher paper that is labeled Current and Future Trends (see number 9 in the List of Charts). <input type="checkbox"/> Are there additional trends that should be considered? What are the most important trends that may impact <i>XYZ Nonprofit</i>? What have the impacts been to date? How sure is the group of the potential outcomes of the trends and their impact on <i>XYZ Nonprofit</i>? |
| Future business model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic area served • Customers served • Services or programs offered | 1:00–1:30 <i>30 minutes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In advance: Set up new sheets of butcher paper with the labels Future Geographic Area, Future Customers, Future Programs/Services, and Future Funding. Draw a line down the middle of each (as shown by numbers 10, 11, 12, and 13 in the List of Charts). <p><i>Note that this discussion is of the future situation. Looking at trends, how will these trends impact XYZ Nonprofit's business model?</i></p> |
| <i>XYZ Nonprofit's</i> identity statement | 1:30–2:00 <i>30 minutes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review Handout C. Example of Identity Statement, Big Question(s), Strategy Screen, and Strategy as a reference. <input type="checkbox"/> Label a piece of butcher paper with the row and column headings like number 14 in the List of Charts. Write the components of the identity statement in the right column. |
| Developing <i>XYZ Nonprofit's</i> Strategy Screen | 2:00–2:20 <i>20 minutes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review the worksheet with participants. Use the butcher paper that is labeled Our Strategy Screen (see number 15 in the List of Charts). <input type="checkbox"/> Lead a brainstorming discussion with the group to help them identify their Strategy Screen criteria. Have the group complete the worksheet. |
| BREAK: 2:20–2:35; 15 minutes | | |

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Consultant's or Facilitator's Guide to a Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session (continued)

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <p>What is the Big Question (trend, factor, event) that XYZ Nonprofit is currently facing?</p> | <p>2:35–3:05 30 minutes</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Review Handout C: Example of Identity Statement, Big Question(s), Strategy Screen, and Strategy as a reference.</p> <p>At this point in your Real-Time Strategic Planning session, you are ready to ask yourselves, what is the Big Question facing XYZ Nonprofit that the group would like to address? The discussion of the business model—current and future—and trends is critical to identifying the Big Question. And, knowing your nonprofit's position in its market, what makes it different, is important input, too.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Start by having the group brainstorm the Big Question. After about 5–10 minutes, you'll have a good list. Then narrow the list to one Big Question, if possible. There may well be more than one, but try to have no more than two or three at the absolute most.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Once your group has come to consensus on your Big Question, you can finalize your identity statement and apply the Strategy Screen. Write the Big Question on the butcher paper (see number 16 in the List of Charts) and complete the identity statement.</p> |
| <p>Next steps</p> | <p>3:05–3:35 30 minutes</p> | <p>This worksheet can be used after the session to test strategies developed to address the Big Question.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the next steps with the group. These are the tools that you will suggest to help develop a strategy addressing the current Big Question identified during the session and to implement it. Use these tools to help gain experience in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying issues in the external environment that, if not addressed, may impact the organization • Developing a Strategy Screen • Identifying potential strategies to address the issue • Testing potential strategies with the Strategy Screen • Selecting and implementing a strategy <p>After this, the group will monitor the impact of the strategy and make adjustments as needed.</p> |

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Consultant's or Facilitator's Guide to a Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session (continued)

| Topic | Time frame | Handouts |
|--|--|---|
| | | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work with the group to create a work plan for creating strategy and the next steps in the work ahead (see number 17 in the List of Charts).</p> <p><i>Do not have the group complete the strategy component during this discussion; that will be done after the session.</i></p> <p>The Strategy Road Map summarizes the kick-off session. It may be helpful for audiences that did not attend. This worksheet should be completed after the session.</p> |
| <p>Evaluation of one-day session and wrap-up</p> | <p>3:35–3:50 <i>15 minutes</i></p> | <p>Ask the participants to take a few minutes to complete the evaluation form and return it to you at the end. Ask them to be candid, as their feedback is important.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Then facilitate a discussion among the participants to learn their thoughts about the session. This will allow you to probe more deeply to learn what worked, what didn't work so well, what could be improved, and what questions they have.</p> |
| <p>Post-session</p> | <p>Immediately after the session</p> | <p>Debrief: Discuss and take notes (see number 18 in the List of Charts).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What went well? • What did not go so well? • What might we want to change? <p>What are the immediate next steps to be taken? Who will do what? When will it happen? (Complete the work plan for your next steps.)</p> |

List of Charts

Use these chart headings during the Real-Time Strategic Planning kick-off session.

1. **MISSION:**
[Write the organization's mission here]

IMPACT: What is the impact we want to have?

2. **CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC AREA**

| Includes | Does Not Include |
|----------|------------------|
| | |

3. **CURRENT CUSTOMERS**

| Serve | Do Not Serve |
|-------|--------------|
| | |

4. **CURRENT PROGRAMS / SERVICES**

| Offer | Do Not Offer |
|-------|--------------|
| | |

5. **CURRENT FUNDING**

| Includes | Does Not Include |
|----------|------------------|
| | |

6. **DIRECT / SUBSTITUTABLE COMPETITORS**

7. **RESOURCE COMPETITORS**

8. **COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE(S)**

9. **CURRENT & FUTURE TRENDS**

(continued)

Real-Time Strategic Planning Kick-Off Session Packet

Why Real-Time Strategic Planning? 3

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The difference between traditional strategic planning and Real-Time Strategic Planning 4

Expected outcomes 5

Kick-off session 6

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Worksheet D: Current Business Model 10

Worksheet E: Funding Sources 11

Worksheet F: Program Income and Expenses 12

Handout G: Types of Competitors 13

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Worksheet L: Identity Statement 19

Worksheet M: Strategy Screen 20

Worksheet N: Big Question 21

Worksheet O: Applying the Strategy Screen 22

Handout P: Examples of Tools for Post-Session Support 23

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Why Real-Time Strategic Planning?

La Piana Consulting developed the Real-Time Strategic Planning process and tools to help nonprofits adapt to the rapidly changing environment that is the reality for most organizations today. Nonprofits operate in an environment of relative scarcity. There are never enough resources to meet the vast social needs that nonprofits seek to address. To remain viable and advance their mission, nonprofits must make the most effective use of available resources; they must be able to adapt to change quickly and position themselves to obtain needed resources.

To do this, nonprofits need to constantly monitor the external environment (or marketplace) in which they operate and be aware of the trends, factors, and events that may impact them—positively or negatively. They need tools to help them develop this awareness and to determine how they will address these trends so as to best advance their mission.

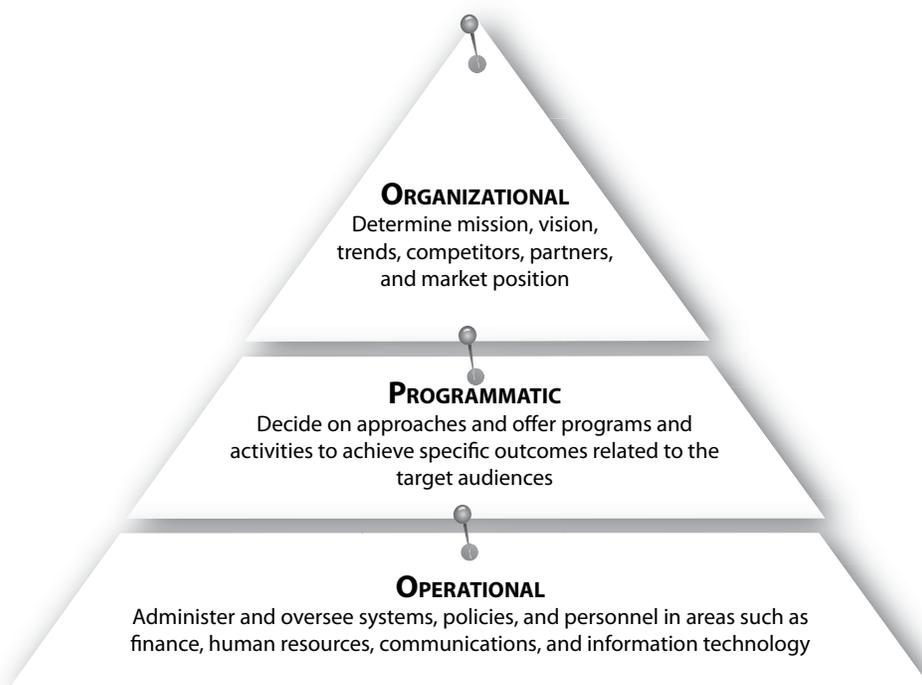
Overall, the Real-Time Strategic Planning process seeks to help nonprofits strengthen their capacity to advance their mission. Specifically, this means strengthening nonprofits' capacity for strategic thinking and acting—their ability to successfully adapt to change on an ongoing basis. The process begins with a one-day kick-off session, which is used to form an identity statement and Strategy Screen for the organization. It is followed with identification of at least one Big Question facing the organization, for which proposed strategies are developed, tested, and selected for implementation. The process continues with the selection of strategy-building tools the organization thinks will be most helpful at a given time. The process is ongoing, integrated into the organization's life.

Types of strategy

Nonprofits develop and implement a variety of strategies. These generally fall into one of three categories: operational, programmatic, and organizational. These are illustrated in the Strategy Pyramid on the following page. The ability to adapt to major change, and to make decisions on how to do so, requires the ability to form and implement strategy at the highest level of the nonprofit—the organizational level. The primary tool available for nonprofits to use to develop strategy is strategic planning; however, strategic planning typically does not distinguish clearly among these three levels.

In La Piana Consulting's work in helping nonprofits with strategy formation, we focus on the top level: organizational strategy. Strategies at the other levels must be consistent with, and supportive of, the nonprofit's organizational strategy. At the organizational level, strategies are formed in response to trends, factors, and events in the external environment (the nonprofit's marketplace) that may impact the nonprofit's ability to advance its mission, positively or negatively. At the programmatic level, strategies support the nonprofit's programmatic work. At the operational level, strategies support the nonprofit's internal capacity and its ability to operate efficiently and effectively.

The Strategy Pyramid



The difference between traditional strategic planning and Real-Time Strategic Planning

The primary tool currently available to nonprofits for forming strategy—traditional strategic planning—does not distinguish clearly among the levels of strategy; moreover, it often focuses on the programmatic and operational levels. While traditional strategic planning, done well, has many benefits for organizations, it has other drawbacks, which we seek to address through Real-Time Strategic Planning. These include

- *The length of time it takes an organization to develop a strategic plan* (often six to twelve months), which drains resources and focus from the nonprofit's current situation and work, and often means that the plan is out of date before it is completed.
- *The periodic nature of traditional strategic planning* (typically it is conducted every two to three, or even five, years), which often prevents the nonprofit from addressing issues that arise in the external environment. Left unaddressed, these issues may negatively impact the organization. Similarly, without constant monitoring of and adaptation to the marketplace, the organization may be unaware of, and thus not address, a situation that could benefit it.
- *The lack of sufficient focus on developing the organization's capacity to think and act strategically on an ongoing basis.* Traditional strategic planning often occurs apart from the day-to-day work of the organization. The nonprofit's capacity to recognize trends, factors, and events that may impact it, and to proactively address these, is not developed. When changes occur, the organization may be no better prepared to deal with them than it was when it began its planning process.

- *The focus on operational and programmatic issues, rather than on issues impacting the organization's advancement of its mission.* Related to this is the lack of focus on the marketplace and how the organization is positioned in its market. Organizations often end up focusing on the trees and missing the forest. For example, an organization focuses on the need to raise funding for a program, but fails to notice that the demographics and needs of the community have changed, resulting in decreased demand for the program.

While Real-Time Strategic Planning concentrates on addressing the need for tools for forming organizational strategy, it also seeks to address these other drawbacks of strategic planning. It arose out of funders', nonprofits', and nonprofit consultants' frustrations with traditional strategic planning. La Piana Consulting conducted considerable research on the uses of strategic planning in nonprofit organizations. Findings from the research (including a literature review and interviews) were consistent: strategy "gurus" from the business sector and academia, as well as nonprofit leaders considered by their peers to be highly strategic and successful, voiced the same frustrations with traditional strategic planning and its lack of focus on enhancing the organization's capacity for strategic thought and action. (We note, though, that traditional strategic planning, done well, can have many benefits for organizations; in particular, it helps organizations to develop strategies at the programmatic and operational levels, along with related goals and plans for achieving the desired outcomes.)

Expected outcomes

As a participant in the Real-Time Strategic Planning kick-off session, you can expect to

- Gain clarity and consensus about your organization's identity, that is, who and where you are now, and who and where you want to be.
- Develop an understanding of how you may address your current and future situation (development of an organizational strategy). Specifically, you will learn how you can assess the potential impact of any current or future trends, factors, or events in the marketplace in which you operate that may positively or negatively impact your nonprofit.
- Learn how to use practical and tested tools, adapted to your nonprofit, that will help you address these trends, factors, and events, and develop the capacity to implement your strategy to help you get where you want to be.
- Develop the ability to proactively recognize and address on an ongoing basis trends, factors, and events in the external environment that may impact your nonprofit.

Kick-off session

The kick-off session focuses on developing consensus about your nonprofit's identity and on selecting a current key challenge in the external environment or marketplace (Big Question) that may impact your organization and that you would like to address. The selection of this challenge is achieved through an interactive process of group discussion leading to a group decision. How you decide to address the challenge becomes the major question facing your nonprofit and the focus of the strategy that you will form. The one-day Real-Time Strategic Planning kick-off session constitutes the *beginning* of a process that you can continually use to build, implement, and revise successful strategies. After completing the session, the organization should continue to employ the tools it used during that session, and also explore the many other tools provided on the *The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution website*.

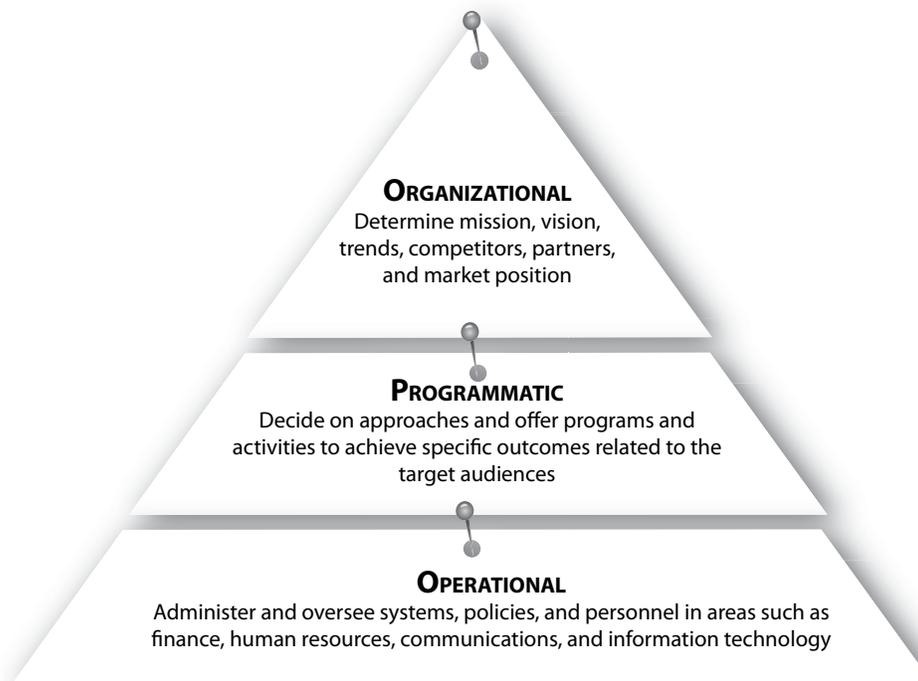
HANDOUT A What Is Strategy?

We define *strategy* as

A coordinated set of actions designed to create and sustain a competitive advantage in achieving a nonprofit's mission.

Types of strategy

There are three "levels" of a nonprofit organization, each of which requires different types of strategy: organizational strategy, programmatic strategy, and operational strategy. These levels are displayed in the Strategy Pyramid.



In our work with pilot organizations, we focus on the top level: organizational strategy. Strategies at the other levels must be consistent with, and supportive of, the nonprofit's organizational strategy. At the organizational level, strategies are formed in response to trends, factors, and events in the external environment that may impact the nonprofit's ability to advance its mission, whether positively or negatively. At the programmatic level, strategies support the nonprofit's programmatic work. At the operational level, strategies support the nonprofit's internal capacity and its ability to operate efficiently and effectively.

Strategy is built upon your nonprofit's business model (see page 6), awareness of the environment you work in, and your competitive advantage (what makes your nonprofit unique and effective). It consists of the actions you take to create and sustain a competitive advantage in carrying out your mission. You may have several organizational strategies, each one addressing a specific trend, factor, or event in the marketplace in which you operate that, if not addressed, could result in a negative consequence for your organization or the loss of a prospective benefit to your organization.

(continued)

HANDOUT A **What Is Strategy?** (continued)

A strategy can be long-lasting, but it needs to change when it is no longer the best way to advance your mission. So, it is important to constantly monitor your environment and your strategy's effectiveness. The following elements are the basis of successful strategy:

A Sound Business Model = being clear about

- Who we are (our mission/vision)
- What we do (our program)
- How we do it (our structure and operations)
- How we finance it

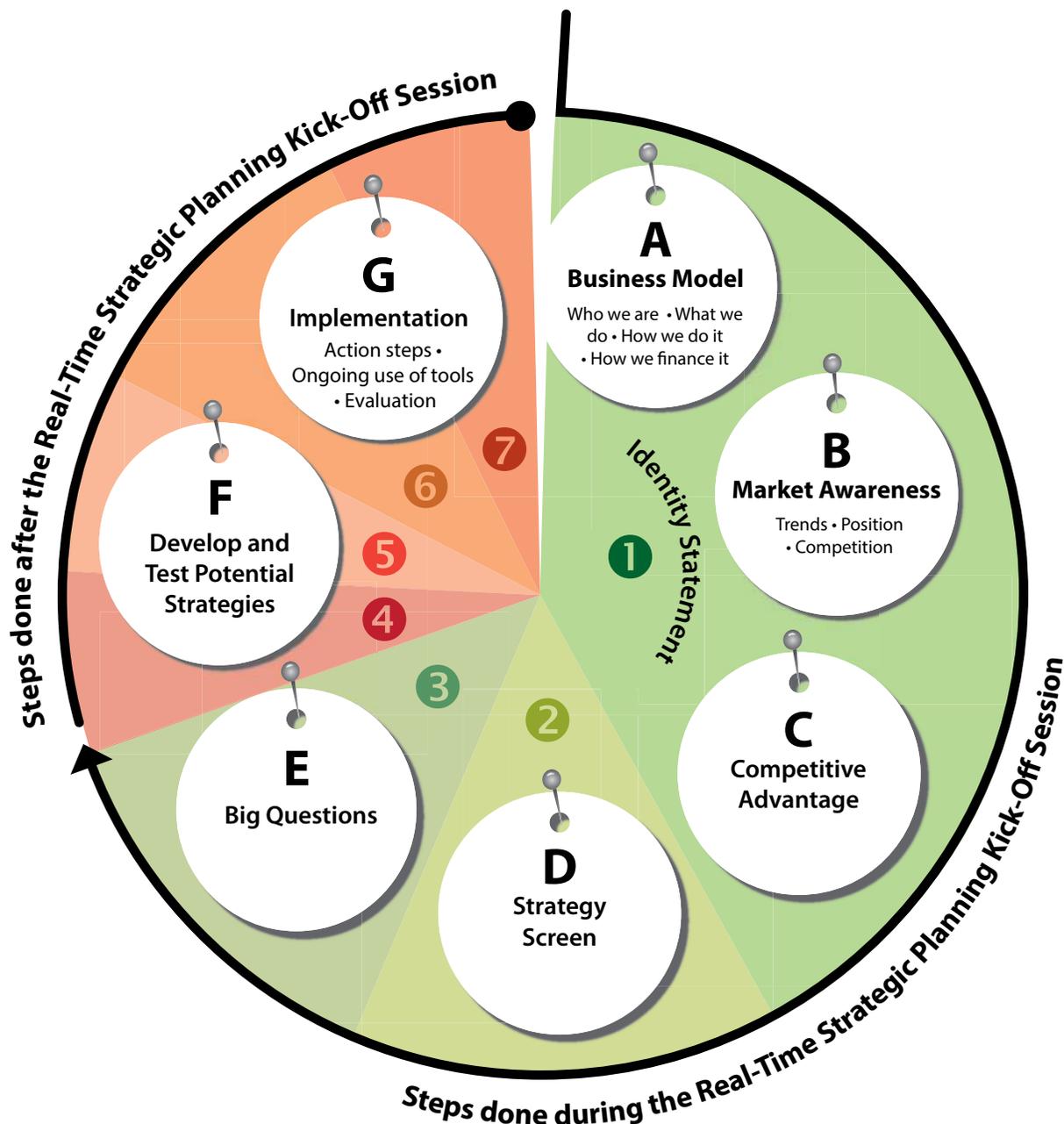
Market Awareness = knowing

- What the market is
- Where we are in the market
- How we got there
- Where we want to go next

Competitive Advantage = the ability to produce social value by

- Using a unique asset (such as a strength that no other similar organization in your geographic area has) and/or
- Having outstanding execution (such as being faster or less expensive, or having better service, than other similar organizations in your geographic area)

HANDOUT B Real-Time Strategic Planning Process



- 1 Develop Identity Statement
- 2 Develop Strategy Screen
- 3 Identify Big Questions
- 4 Develop Strategy
- 5 Apply Strategy Screen
- 6 Implement Strategy
- 7 Use Tools to Build Capacity for Strategic Thinking and Acting

HANDOUT C Example of Identity Statement, Big Question(s), Strategy Screen, and Strategy

Nonprofit: Community-based symphony

Mission: To contribute to the community's sense of civic pride and identity

Identity Statement

Programs: We offer the local community access to symphonic music

Geographic area: Our local urban community

Customers: Our local community members

Funding: Primary source = individual ticket sales

Competitive advantage: We are the only symphony easily accessible to the local community

Big Question: How should we address key trends?

There are more and more ways local community members can spend their leisure time and disposable income; there is greater competition for local community members' time and money.

Transportation to the nearby big city has become easier with the advent of rapid transit; thus, the local community has greater access to the "big city" symphony, which plays similar traditional music; we are not well-distinguished from this other symphony.

Our focus on individual performance ticket sales means that funding levels are unpredictable from one performance to the next.

Strategy Screen criteria

Consistent with our mission, we seek to serve and support our immediate local community and provide easy access (both geographic access and financial access) to symphonic music.

We also want to distinguish ourselves and, by association, our local community from competing symphonies in neighboring cities and to contribute to the positive "branding" of our community.

Proposed strategy

We will be known for promoting outstanding new symphonic music; we will commission new works from prominent contemporary composers that will be exceptionally well performed by our musicians. We will play a limited performance schedule and will aggressively seek season subscriptions that will provide a steady source of income.

Testing the strategy

The strategy meets the criteria of the Strategy Screen.

WORKSHEET D Current Business Model

This discussion asks you to consider your nonprofit's current situation.

| Scope | Includes | Does <u>not</u> include |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Geographic service area | | |
| Customers served | | |
| Programs or services offered | | |
| Funding sources | Current sources of funding and why we pursue these sources: | Funding sources we do not have or seek: |

WORKSHEET E FUNDING SOURCES

This worksheet displays your nonprofit's sources of revenue. This will help you review recent trends in funding (past and current fiscal years), and consider whether your nonprofit has sufficient diversity of funding. Additionally, by identifying which sources of funding are stable, and what new sources of funding you might attract in the coming fiscal year(s), you will get a sense of your nonprofit's financial stability. The worksheet also asks you to enter your nonprofit's total revenue and expenses for the fiscal year and to indicate whether you had a surplus or deficit or neither.

| Source of Revenue (Income) | Percent of total budget, last (prior) fiscal year | Percent of total budget, current fiscal year | Comments (if applicable) such as regarding changes in funding from prior to current year | Comments regarding next fiscal year such as changes in current funding sources in next fiscal year, new funding anticipated, funding at risk |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Foundation grants | % | % | | |
| Corporate grants | % | % | | |
| Government funding | % | % | | |
| Unrestricted funding (such as endowment, donors, memberships) | % | % | | |
| Earned income (including program fees, if applicable) | % | % | | |
| Other | % | % | | |
| Total revenue | | | | Projected revenue: \$ |
| Total expenses | | | | Projected expenses: \$ |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | | | | |

WORKSHEET F PROGRAM INCOME AND EXPENSES

This worksheet asks you to examine how your nonprofit's revenue/income is allocated and used by each main program area.

If your nonprofit has more than one main program area, please complete this worksheet (copy it if you have more than three main program areas). If you have only one program, skip this worksheet. It is intended to help you learn whether one or more of your programs are dependent on certain types of funding. If so, and if that type of funding is increasing, this will be positive for the program. If that type of funding is decreasing, this could pose risk for the program's future.

| Source of Revenue (Income) | Program = | | Program = | | Program = | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Income for program from each funding source | % of total income from this source of funding allocated to this program | Income for program from each funding source | % of total income from this source of funding allocated to this program | Income for program from each funding source | % of total income from this source of funding allocated to this program |
| Foundation grants | | % | | % | | % |
| Corporate grants | | % | | % | | % |
| Government funding | | % | | % | | % |
| Unrestricted funding (such as endowment, donors, memberships) | | % | | % | | % |
| Earned income (including program fees, if applicable) | | % | | % | | % |
| Other | | % | | % | | % |
| Total program income | | % | | % | | % |
| Total program expenses (including administrative surplus/deficit) | | | | | | |
| Comments: <i>Is the program too dependent on any source(s) of funding? Is funding at risk? Growing?</i> | | | | | | |

HANDOUT G Types of Competitors

There are three main types of competitors. It is important to think about all of these as you seek to determine your nonprofit's competitive advantage.

| Direct Competitors | Substitutable Competitors | Resource Competitors |
|--|---|---|
| These organizations have the same market focus as your nonprofit—they do what you do (i.e., they have a similar program) within the same geographic area, for the same types of customers. | These organizations meet the same need that your nonprofit meets, but in a different way. | These organizations do not compete with your nonprofit for customers, but do compete for other resources such as funding, board members, other volunteers, paid staff, and media attention. |

Example: Happy Tots—a nonprofit child care center

Direct competitors of Happy Tots

Happy Tots competes for customers—the parents who purchase child care services. As a child care center working in a community, Happy Tots needs to know what other nonprofit child care providers serve the same age groups in its service area. These are Happy Tots' direct competitors. Happy Tots needs to know how these other providers are different, who their customers are, and how their customers differ from Happy Tots' customers—if they do indeed differ.

Substitutable competitors of Happy Tots

In addition to those organizations offering similar services, Happy Tots competes with other forms of child care, including

- Governmental child care programs (such as those run by school districts)
- Family daycare or for-profit daycare centers—both in the neighborhood and outside of it (such as close to the parents' places of work)
- Nannies working out of parents' homes
- Grandparents or other relatives

Note: While we define direct and substitutable competitors separately, we usually discuss them at the same time because they are often very similar.

Resource competitors of Happy Tots

While they do not have the same market focus, and thus they do not compete to meet the same needs of parents who purchase child care services, these competitors compete for other resources, including

- Funds—from private foundations, government, corporations, donors, members
- Human resources—skills and expertise of board members, other volunteers, staff
- Media attention and the resulting visibility and awareness
- Community leaders—spokespersons, advocates

WORKSHEET H Competitor Analysis

Complete this table for your top three competitors and also for your nonprofit. Think about the competitor's strengths and weaknesses in each category. How strong a competitor is this? How does your nonprofit compare with its competitors in each area? Is it stronger than others, or not as strong?

| Resource | Your nonprofit What makes your nonprofit strong in this area? | Competitor A What makes this competitor strong in this area? | Competitor B What makes this competitor strong in this area? | Competitor C What makes this competitor strong in this area? | How does your organization compare? |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Organization name: | | | | | |
| Customers (such as number of customers, customer satisfaction, customer retention) | | | | | |
| Media attention/publicity | | | | | |
| Human resources: | | | | | |
| Staff | | | | | |
| Board | | | | | |
| Volunteers | | | | | |

WORKSHEET H Competitor Analysis (continued)

| Your nonprofit What makes your nonprofit strong in this area? | Competitor A What makes this competitor strong in this area? | Competitor B What makes this competitor strong in this area? | Competitor C What makes this competitor strong in this area? | How does your organization compare? |
|---|--|--|--|--|
|---|--|--|--|--|

Resource

Organization name:

Funding:

Diversity of funding

Availability/amount/types of funding

Programs or services

(type, quality, number of services provided)

Mission-related impact

Comments

HANDOUT I Competitive Advantage

Your nonprofit's competitive advantage is one of the most important—if not the most important—components of its strategy.

Definition

Competitive advantage is the ability to produce social value (have an impact, make a difference) by

- Using a unique asset (such as a strength that no other similar organization in your geographic area has) and/or
- Having outstanding execution (such as being faster or less expensive, or having better service, than other similar organizations in your geographic area)

(Examples of these two types of competitive advantage are below.)

However, having a competitive advantage is not enough to be successful; an organization must understand and use its competitive advantage.

Discussion

Competitive advantage is determined, in part, through comparison of your nonprofit with its competitors. It is something that customers and funders value.

- Your nonprofit's competitive advantage distinguishes it from others, thus allowing it to compete effectively for resources and customers.
- If your nonprofit's mission reflects its social value, then its competitive advantage includes things that allow it to have a greater impact and a more positive outcome from its efforts.
- Your nonprofit will only be successful in contributing true social value if it identifies and applies its competitive advantage.

Note: A nonprofit may have more than one competitive advantage; these may be specific to the situation for which it is forming a strategy. For example, suppose your nonprofit is a primary health care clinic serving low-income families. If immigrants to your service area are increasingly monolingual in Spanish, the fact that your organization has bicultural and bilingual staff (and your competitors do not) is a competitive advantage in serving this population. Also, if you are located on a main bus line and your competitors are not within easy reach of public transportation, your clinic is thus more accessible to the entire population and can draw clients from a broad geographic area.

Types of competitive advantage

Asset advantages

- Better program design leading to better outcomes
- Unique attributes of programs or services such as linguistic or cultural capacity
- An accessible location or network of locations
- An attractive or specialized building or property that enhances program delivery
- A robust, diversified funding base that provides flexibility and stability
- Great name recognition and reputation among funders and constituents
- Powerful partnerships
- A well-connected board of directors

Execution advantages

- Lower costs to funders or customers
- Greater efficiency in delivering programs or services per dollar spent
- Faster delivery of programs or services (e.g., no waiting for service)
- Sound marketing and communications that raise visibility and awareness
- Better accountability and public reporting

WORKSHEET J Trend Analysis

Complete the worksheet below. If you know your market well, through discussion you and your colleagues should be able to do it off the top of your heads. For each trend, identify the direction of the trend as it applies to your nonprofit's environment. Is it increasing, decreasing, staying about the same? In the comments column, include the sources you used, if any, to identify and analyze this trend. How reliable are these sources? To prepare for the trend analysis discussion, consider: How important is this trend to your nonprofit? What do you think your nonprofit needs to do to address this trend?

| Type of trends | Direction of trend | Comments |
|---|--|----------|
| Social needs/demands for your programs/services | Needs/demands are <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing <input type="checkbox"/> Decreasing <input type="checkbox"/> Staying about the same | |
| Available funding for your programs/services | Funding is <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing <input type="checkbox"/> Decreasing <input type="checkbox"/> Staying about the same | |
| Other trends impacting your organization | | |

WORKSHEET K Future Business Model

This discussion asks you to consider your nonprofit's future situation.

| Scope | Includes | Does <u>not</u> include |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Geographic service area | | |
| Customers served | | |
| Programs or services offered | | |
| Funding sources | Future sources of funding and why we will pursue these sources: | Funding sources we will not seek: |

WORKSHEET L Identity Statement

| Components of identity statement | Your nonprofit's identity statement |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| We advance our mission of | |
| ... and seek to <i>(impact)</i> | |
| by serving <i>(customers)</i> | |
| in <i>(geographic area)</i> | |
| through <i>(programs or services)</i> | |
| and emphasizing our competitive advantages of | |
| We are sustainable by <i>(funding sources)</i> | |

WORKSHEET M Strategy Screen

Before implementing a new strategy, your nonprofit will need to evaluate the impact of the strategy using specific decision-making criteria, that is, its “Strategy Screen.” You should develop the Strategy Screen after you have created your identity statement and before you determine the current Big Question facing your nonprofit (that is, the trend, factor, or event in your marketplace that you have decided to address by forming a strategy). The specific criteria of the Strategy Screen depend on your organization’s mission, competitive advantage(s), and situation. The criteria are different for each organization and most likely need to change over time as your nonprofit adapts to changes in the environment.

The strategy must support

- Your organization’s mission (assuming that your mission does not need to change)
- Your organization’s competitive advantages (specific to the situation, the Big Question facing your nonprofit)

Include additional criteria as you see fit, such as requiring that the strategy

- Meet specified financial criteria (e.g., a new program must pay for itself)
- Meet quality criteria (e.g., new services must be of high quality)
- Meet criteria related to your organization’s geographic and customer scope
- Position your organization as a leader

Your Strategy Screen criteria

List the criteria your group has selected for its Strategy Screen.

Our strategy must . . .

WORKSHEET N Big Question

Use this tool when you are ready to ask yourself what Big Questions face your organization. The discussion of business models (current and future) and trends is critical to identifying Big Questions. Knowing your nonprofit's position in its market and what makes it different is also important.

Start by having the group brainstorm the Big Question. These are opportunities, competitive challenges, or business model challenges. After about five to ten minutes, you'll have a good list. Then narrow the list, finding consensus on the most significant and pressing issue you face, or at least on the one that you want to tackle first. There may be more than one Big Question, but for now, just choose one. Once your group has come to consensus on your Big Question, move on to finalize your identity statement and use your Strategy Screen.

Some of our most important questions are:

Our most important Big Questions, in priority order, are:

The Big Question we will focus on now is:

WORKSHEET O Applying the Strategy Screen

Evaluating your proposed strategy using your Strategy Screen (post-session)

Write your Big Question here:

(Note: This is a trend, factor, or event in your marketplace that may impact your nonprofit and that you have decided to address.)

Write your proposed strategy here:

How does the strategy answer our Big Question?

**How does the strategy meet (or not meet) the criteria of our Strategy Screen?
Is it consistent with our . . .**

| Criteria | Notes |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Mission | |
| Competitive Advantage | |

If the strategy falls short on any criteria , you need not rule it out, but should consider carefully why you may or may not wish to pursue it anyway,

WORKSHEET O Applying the Strategy Screen (continued)

Often organizations will find it helpful to consider more than one potential strategy side-by-side, to compare the relative merits of each. This tool can help facilitate that conversation.

Write in up to three strategic options in the column headings marked Option A, Option B, and Option C. Then, fill in the chart for all options, working through each of the criteria, one at a time (i.e. consider how each option achieves the mission, then move to how each leverages your competitive advantage, etc. — this approach reduces the tendency to “make a case” for one option over the other, whether consciously or unconsciously).

| Criteria | Option A | Option B | Option C |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Best Way to Achieve Mission | | | |
| Leverage Competitive Advantage | | | |
| Criteria 3 | | | |
| Criteria 4 | | | |

HANDOUT P Examples of Tools for Post-Session Support

The chart below shows some of the typical challenges organizations identify, the objectives they develop, and the tools they use to address those challenges. Some of the tools can be found in the book. Others can be readily found in Internet searches or typical nonprofit references such as books on board development, communications, or fundraising.

| Trend impacting organization | Objective | Tools |
|---|---|---|
| Board's capacity to meet the strategic needs of the organization is limited | Develop the board's capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct self-assessment to determine board's capacity and identify areas for improvement • Develop skills matrix to identify gaps in board members' experience, interests, and skills • Create a board recruitment plan and a nominating committee • Incorporate strategic discussions into the board meetings |
| Key government contract is in jeopardy | Improve business model Diversify funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop donor campaign • Hold "friend-raising" event; follow with annual campaign |
| New competitors are entering market and need to be monitored | Increase market awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute regular discussions of competitors at board and staff meetings |
| Key competitor is gaining market share | Strengthen (or reassess) competitive advantage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement rolling 90-day plan for incremental improvements |
| There is increased recognition of the need for the nonprofit's programs, but the organization is not known to potential donors and funders—it is a "well-kept secret" | Increase visibility of organization and its programs, especially with its key stakeholders (target audiences) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop communications plan using template, including identifying key messages and vehicles for communicating with stakeholders and developing relationships with the media |

WORKSHEET R Strategy Road Map

The agenda for the Real-Time Strategic Planning kick-off session essentially forms an outline for the Strategy Road Map. Drawing on your notes from the session, complete each of the sections listed below.

Description of Real-Time Strategic Planning

Goals or reasons why our nonprofit engaged in this process

Our nonprofit’s mission statement and identity statement

| Components of identity statement | Your nonprofit’s identity statement |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| We advance our mission of | |
| ... and seek to <i>(impact)</i> | |
| by serving <i>(customers)</i> | |
| in <i>(geographic area)</i> | |
| through <i>(programs or services)</i> | |
| and emphasizing our competitive advantages of | |
| We are sustainable by <i>(funding sources)</i> | |

(continued)

WORKSHEET R Strategy Road Map (continued)

Our current business model

See completed Worksheets D, E, F.

Overview of competition

| Resource | Competitor A What makes this competitor strong in this area? | Competitor B What makes this competitor strong in this area? | Competitor C What makes this competitor strong in this area? |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Organization name: | | | |
| Customers | | | |
| Media attention/ publicity | | | |
| Human resources: | | | |
| Staff | | | |
| Board | | | |
| Volunteers | | | |
| Funding: | | | |
| Diversity of funding | | | |
| Availability/ amount/types of funding | | | |
| Programs or services | | | |
| Mission-related impact | | | |
| Comments | | | |

(continued)

WORKSHEET R Strategy Road Map (continued)

Summary of our competitors and how our nonprofit compares

What we admire about each of our top direct or substitutable competitors; what we can learn from them and from our resource competitors; how our nonprofit compares and what we do well. See completed [Worksheet H](#).

Our nonprofit's competitive advantage

Description of competitive advantage: list advantages mentioned by the group and identify top competitive advantage (or top three). See [Handout I](#).

(continued)

WORKSHEET R Strategy Road Map (continued)

Current and future trends and their impact

| Type of trends | Direction of trend | Comments |
|--|--|----------|
| Social needs/demands for our programs/services | Needs/demands are <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing <input type="checkbox"/> Decreasing <input type="checkbox"/> Staying about the same | |
| Available funding for our programs/services | Funding is <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing <input type="checkbox"/> Decreasing <input type="checkbox"/> Staying about the same | |
| Other trends impacting our organization | | |

Summarize the discussion about trends.

(continued)

WORKSHEET R Strategy Road Map (continued)

Future business model

| Scope | Includes | Excludes |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Geographic service area | | |
| Customers served | | |
| Programs or services offered | | |
| Funding sources | Future sources of funding and why we will pursue these sources: | Funding sources we will not seek: |

Our Strategy Screen

(continued)

WORKSHEET R Strategy Road Map (continued)

Big Questions facing our nonprofit

List top question(s). Identify your top priority Big Question to be addressed. Attach completed Worksheet N.

Some of our most important questions are:

Our Big Question:

Our selected strategy to address our Big Question

Summarize our strategy and demonstrate that it passes our Strategy Screen.

(continued)

HANDOUT 5 Session Evaluation Form

Name of organization:

Date of session:

1. How useful was the session? *(Check one.)*

Very useful Useful Somewhat useful Not at all useful

2. How would you rate the handouts and other session materials? *(Check one.)*

Excellent Good Fair Poor

3. How would you rate the agenda/format of the session? *(Check one.)*

Excellent Good Fair Poor

4. How do you think your nonprofit will use the findings and conclusions from today's discussion?

5. How useful are each of the following components of the discussion you had today?

(Check one response for each component listed below.)

| | Very useful | Useful | Somewhat useful | Not at all useful | Not applicable <i>(did not do this)</i> |
|---|-------------|--------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Discussion | | | | | |
| Scope (geography, customers, programs or services, funding) | | | | | |
| Competitors | | | | | |
| Competitive advantage(s) | | | | | |
| Trends | | | | | |
| Selection of a Big Question to address | | | | | |
| Identity statement | | | | | |
| Development of Strategy Screen | | | | | |
| Strategy statement | | | | | |

(continued)

HANDOUT S Session Evaluation Form (continued)

6. Overall, what did you find most useful about today's session?

7. Please tell us any suggestions you have for improving the session.

8. How would you rate today's session in comparison to other sessions you have participated in for forming strategy (such as strategic planning retreats or processes)?

More effective

About the same

Not as effective

Not applicable

(have not participated
in any such sessions)

9. Please tell us any other comments you have about today's session.