



COMMUNICATION MARK

ASSESS Fact Sheet B: Strategies Defined

Once you identify and understand a need, you can determine a *strategy* to address that need. A strategy is a plan of action intended to accomplish a specific goal.

The goal of each of your strategies will be to eliminate a critical need. Therefore, a measure of a strategy is its effectiveness at eliminating such a need.

Why develop enduring strategies to meet your organization's needs? *Wikipedia* notes that "Organizations can often survive—indeed do well—for periods of time in conditions of relative stability, low environmental turbulence and little competition for resources. Virtually none of these conditions prevail in the modern world for great lengths of time for any organization or sector, public or private."

Regarding strategies, note that:

- **Strategies are long-term.** According to *Wikipedia*, "Strategy is differentiated from tactics or immediate actions...by its nature of being extensively premeditated, and often practically rehearsed."
- **Strategies are different from goals, tasks, outcomes and objectives.** Strategies make needs easier to understand and address. For example, imagine that your organization serves the visually impaired. One need might be to help the visually impaired participate more actively in community life. Your *strategy* might be "*to launch a radio reading service that will keep the blind better informed about current affairs.*"

In contrast:

- ***Goals*** are broad aims that may never be achieved: "Our goal is to ensure that every visually impaired person in the region actively participates in community life."
- ***Objectives*** are measurable aims: "Our objective is to purchase an antenna for the radio reading service by June 2010 that will help reach 2,000 blind individuals."
- ***Outcomes*** are the measurable results of objectives, and may be stated as the latter part of an objective: "The outcome will be that 90% of the 2,000 people reached will report that they feel more connected to their communities."
- ***Tasks*** are short-term "to-dos" that bring you closer to an objective. A task might be to "Speak to five existing radio reading services in other communities to determine which antenna is the best one to purchase."
- **Strategies require leadership decisions.** A strategy is a choice. Because strategies articulate long-term plans, the organization's leadership must choose it carefully and support it whenever possible. In the example above, the strategy to launch a radio reading service is clearly one that would be selected only after careful consideration. The organization could have decided on other strategies, or on a series of strategies. For instance, the organization

could have decided to recruit volunteers that would visit visually impaired residents and tell them, in person, about current affairs. Or, the organization could have decided to print information in Braille as a means of getting their constituents more involved in the community.

- **Effective strategies are clear and defensible.** The best strategies are simple and make “good common sense.” A solid strategy inspires confidence in your organization. The statement of a strategy is often accompanied by a rationale, such as “We decided to launch a radio reading service after learning that 90% of all organizations serving the blind report that this is the most effective way to increase community involvement among the visually impaired.” You may wish to explain why other strategies were considered, but not used. “We considered printing a newsletter in Braille, but a survey showed that ½ of those we wish to reach do not read Braille.” “We considered having volunteers go door-to-door, but found that that strategy would not be as cost-effective or efficient as broadcasting the information by radio.”