

Creating a Vision

When you begin the process of strategic planning, visioning comes first. When visioning the change, ask yourself, "What is our preferred future?" and be sure to:

- Draw on the beliefs, mission, and environment of the organization.
- Describe what you want to see in the future.
- Be specific to each organization.
- Be positive and inspiring.
- Do not assume that the system will have the same framework as it does today.
- Be open to dramatic modifications to current organization, methodology, teaching techniques, facilities, etc.

Key Components for Your Vision

Incorporate Your Beliefs

Your vision must be encompassed by your beliefs.

- Your beliefs must meet your organizational goals as well as community goals.
- Your beliefs are a statement of your values.
- Your beliefs are a public/visible declaration of your expected outcomes.
- Your beliefs must be precise and practical.
- Your beliefs will guide the actions of all involved.
- Your beliefs reflect the knowledge, philosophy, and actions of all.
- Your beliefs are a key component of strategic planning.

Create a Mission Statement

Once you have clarified your beliefs, build on them to define your mission statement which is a statement of purpose and function.

- Your mission statement draws on your belief statements.
- Your mission statement must be future oriented and portray your organization as it will be, as if it already exists.
- Your mission statement must focus on one common purpose.
- Your mission statement must be specific to the organization, not generic.
- Your mission statement must be a short statement, not more than one or two sentences.

Here is an example mission statement: "By providing quality education, we empower individuals to become caring, competent, responsible citizens who value education as a lifelong process."

Benefits of Visioning

The process and outcomes of visioning may seem vague and superfluous. The long-term benefits are substantial, however. Visioning:

- Breaks you out of boundary thinking.
- Provides continuity and avoids the stutter effect of planning fits and starts.
- Identifies direction and purpose.
- Alerts stakeholders to needed change.
- Promotes interest and commitment.
- Promotes laser-like focus.
- Encourages openness to unique and creative solutions.
- Encourages and builds confidence.
- Builds loyalty through involvement (ownership).
- Results in efficiency and productivity.

Vision Killers

As you engage in the visioning process, be alert to the following vision killers:

- Tradition
- Fear of ridicule
- Stereotypes of people, conditions, roles and governing councils
- Complacency of some stakeholders
- Fatigued leaders
- Short-term thinking
- "Naysayers"

Exercise in Creating a Vision

Take the time to assimilate this information, use the following example to exercise your planning techniques:

It is five years from today's date and you have, marvelously enough, created your most desirable district. Now it is your job, as a team, to describe it - as if you were able to see it, realistically around you.

Respond to the following questions:

- How has the job market changed?
- What have we done to prepare our students for success in this world?
- What do we as board members spend most of our time doing?
- How are our meetings structured?