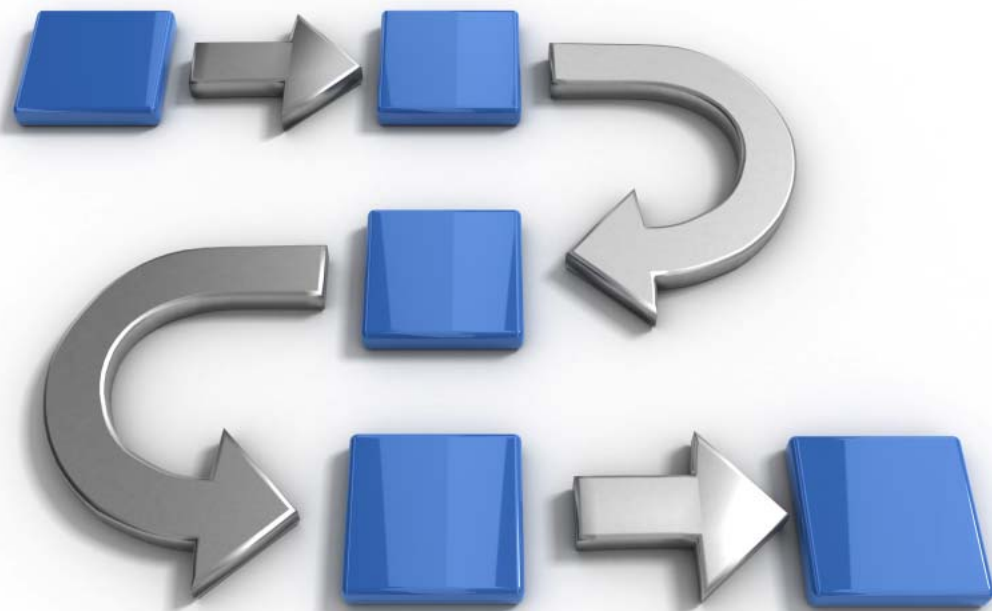


National Association of Bar Executives
Annual Meeting - August 5-8, 2008

Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process



Presented By
Nora Riva Bergman

Retreat to Advance

Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

Basic Strategic Planning Terms

Mission

This mission statement sets forth the association's reason for existence. It can be thought of as the "constitution" of the organization by which all decisions are measured, including the strategic plan.

Vision

A vision statement literally creates the vision of the association, i.e. "Where do we want to be in five or ten years?"

Values

The values statement defines what the association stands for. The values expressed must be consistent with the mission of the association.

Objectives

Objectives are specific accomplishments that must be achieved in total, or in some combination, to realize the goals in the plan. Objectives are usually "milestones" along the way when implementing the strategies.

Strategies

These are the methods or processes required in total, or in some combination, to achieve the objectives.

Action Steps

Action steps are those very specific tasks required to implement the plan. They are assigned to specific people for completion and include deadlines, measurable outcomes, and resources required. When executed, the action steps literally bring the plan into reality. Without them, most plans fail.

Resources

Resources include the people, materials, technologies, money, etc., required to implement the strategies or processes. The costs of these resources are often depicted in the form of a budget.

Plan Champion

The person responsible to report on the plan's progress and ensure the plan is regularly reviewed during board meetings and considered during the budgeting process.

*"If you don't know
what you are building,
no tool will help."*

- Nirenberg



Retreat to Advance

Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

I. Pre-Retreat: Planning & Preparation

Planning Tools

What is strategic planning?

Although most bar associations regularly engage in what they refer to as strategic planning, many may not have really considered exactly what strategic planning is. Simply put, strategic planning is a process that determines where an association is going over the next year or more, how it's going to get there, and how it will know when (and if) it arrived.

Adapted from *The Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning & Facilitation*, by Carter McNamara, M.B.A., Ph.D., Authenticity Consulting, LLC., Copyright 1997-2008

Most strategic planning processes involve three stages: 1. Scanning the environment – this stage includes obtaining both internal and external feedback, most often through member satisfaction surveys, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) surveys. 2. Creating the plan/setting objectives – this stage typically involves the strategic planning retreat, itself, which can take place in one day or over several days. 3. Implementation – In the implementation phase, strategies are developed to achieve the set objectives. Implementation includes the ongoing actions that translate the ideas of the retreat into results.

The following guidelines may help your association get the most out of the strategic planning experience.

1. The real benefit of the strategic planning process is the process, not the plan document.
2. There is no "perfect" plan. There's doing your best at strategic thinking and implementation, and learning from what you're doing to enhance what you do the next time around.
3. The traditional strategic planning process is usually not an "aha!" experience. It's like the management process itself -- it's a series of small moves that together keep the association doing things right as it heads in the right direction. (*But see Traditional v. Results Oriented Planning, below.*)
4. In planning, things usually aren't as bad as you fear, nor as good as you'd like.
5. Start simple, but start!

Adapted from *The Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning & Facilitation*

Handout 1:
Set up Your Plan for Success

Handout 2:
Checklist for Preparing to Plan

Handout 3:
Design a Process to
Meet Your Needs



"Whatever you can do or dream, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

- Goethe

Retreat to Advance

Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

Traditional v. Results-Oriented Planning

According to Roger Kaufman, in his book *Strategic Planning for Success: Aligning People, Performance and Payoffs*, Traditional Planning can be characterized as planning that improves the present model. The change created is incremental. Results Oriented Planning Strategic Planning is, “by definition, paradigm busting.” It involves new concepts, new rules, new skills. The change created is exponential. “It often requires leaving the comfortable behind.” What type of planning would be most effective for your association?

Traditional Planning vs. the High Payoff Results-Oriented Paradigm.	
Traditional Planning	The High Payoff Results-Oriented Paradigm
1. Improve the present model—more of the same. Incremental changes to the present way of doing things. Stick to same old rules but do it better.	1. Strategic thinking is by definition “paradigm busting.” It involves new concepts, realistic new rules, new techniques, and new skills to be successful.
2. Short-term objectives. Objectives project five years at most.	2. Long-term objectives that design a better world for both today’s and tomorrow’s members.
3. Dwells on tactics and activities unconnected to measurable results. Wants are often confused with needs.	3. Focuses on designing future results in measurable terms before selecting relevant strategies and tactics.
4. “Needs” are defined as gaps in resources methods and means (We “need” more buildings, we want more computers).	4. Needs are defined as gaps in results between current and desired results. Requirement for more resources are quasi-needs.
5. Level of planning focuses on immediate members.	5. Planning includes the integration and linking of members & non-members
6. Goals are more often general, vague, and exclude measurable elements.	6. Objectives are SMARTER. They are written for results at three levels, and include a measurable element.
7. Visions are more often short term. Organizational missions are “fuzzy” and sound good but don’t include the next generation of members.	7. The organizational vision defines the contribution the organization will make to the ideal vision in measurable terms. Visions are about value added—now and in the future.
8. No shared meaning of what an organization is or must deliver—usually treated as collection of unrelated parts.	8. Shared meaning on the elements common to all organizations, systemic mental models emphasize relationship between the parts.

Adapted from *Strategic Planning for Success: Aligning People, Performance and Payoffs*, by Roger Kaufman, Hugh Oakley-Brown, Ryan Watkins, and Doug Lee

Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

Why are we changing?

Change is a process, not an event. Change must be useful and aligned with the mission of the association. It cannot simply be change for the sake of change.

Bar leaders must balance between their vision and their bar association's mission when creating a strategic plan. This balance may be a delicate one. If the bar association has a mission statement or current strategic plan in place, then the leader's vision for the association must take those things into account.

Before setting forth on a strategic planning mission, bar leaders must review their association's mission statement and strategic plan, then ask themselves: How can I contribute in way that is consistent with our mission and plan and, at the same time, create a vision that I'm passionate about? How can I create a vision that will inspire others who come after me to continue to move our association forward consistent with our mission and plan? Bar leaders are caretakers of their associations. There is an ancient Native American saying that serves as a wonderful metaphor for bar leadership.

"Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

Bar leaders must think of the bar association as their planet – their earth. You are the caretaker. As the caretakers, bar leaders can set a bold path for the association that is consistent with its mission and strategic plan.

*"Change is the law of life.
And those who look only to
the past or present are
certain to miss the future."*

- John F. Kennedy



Retreat to Advance

Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

The process of strategic thinking and strategic planning involves shifting our paradigms and asking hard questions:

1. Why are we changing?
2. What are we changing to?
3. What are we changing? And what is staying the same?
4. How can we change effectively?
5. How can we measure whether change has occurred?
6. Is it the right change?
7. Have we improved performance and payoffs as a result of the change?
8. Was the change worthy enough to justify the effort?

From *Strategic Planning for Success: Aligning People, Performance and Payoffs*, by Roger Kaufman, Hugh Oakley-Brown, Ryan Watkins, and Doug Lee

These questions require the leaders (sponsors, champions) to agree on what they are changing and why. This is essential to the planning process. Effective change cannot take place without a clear understanding of the answers to these questions.

Bar leaders are responsible for creating change that moves their associations forward in a way that is consistent with the association's mission and strategic plan, not change for the sake of change or change that's built upon personal preferences. Bar leaders must also understand that people react to change in different ways; there is not one universal response. However, for most people, change is scary. Change brings with it the new, the different, the unknown. Understanding the change process is key for effective strategic planning.

*"The greatest danger
in times of turbulence
is not the turbulence.*

*It is to act with
yesterday's logic."*

- Peter Drucker

Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

In *Leading in a Culture of Change*, author Michael Fullan sets forth a six-step process for understanding change:

- **The goal is not to innovate the most.** Relentlessly taking on innovation after innovation can alienate both staff and members.
- **It's not enough to have the best ideas.** Remember, it's possible to be "dead right." Your best ideas will go nowhere fast if you can't get anyone to buy into them.
- **Appreciate the implementation dip.** The implementation dip occurs when we realize we need to develop new skills and competencies to effectively implement the change.
- **Redefine resistance.** What you may perceive as resistance, may be legitimate concerns about an issue you may have overlooked. Or it may be a manifestation of fear. Listen to the resisters.
- **Reculturing is the name of the game.** Reculturing means creating an association that has the capacity to selectively incorporate new ideas and practices on a continual basis.
- **Never a checklist, always complexity.** There can never be a step-by-step process for change. Change is not linear.

Laying the foundation for success.

Planning cannot guarantee the outcome you want. Instead, it can help you to achieve something integral to any future success: readiness to face the challenges that change presents. After clarifying why the association is changing, the association must determine if the conditions are present for a successful strategic planning process. In other words, to get ready for strategic planning, an association must first assess if it is ready.

Change Tools

Handout 4:
Manage the Transitional
Changes

Handout 5:
Staff & Board
Perceptions of SWOT

Handout 6:
Evaluate Current Programs

Handout 7:
Summary of Priorities

Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

An association should assess the following conditions before deciding to begin the strategic planning process:

- Commitment and support of top leadership, especially the president and executive director
- Commitment to clarifying roles for all participants in the planning process
- The right mix of individuals on the planning committee: board members, staff, members, non-members, visionaries, detail-oriented thinkers
- Willingness to encourage board participation so that people feel “ownership” of the process
- Adequate commitment of resources of staff time and dollars
- A willingness to change the status quo
- No serious conflict between key players

See *Strategic Planning for Success: Aligning People, Performance and Payoffs*

If the above factors are present, then the association can begin to scan the environment by gathering feedback from internal and external stake holders.

Relevant documents to gather include:

- The association’s mission statement and values statement
- Current strategic plan
- Needs assessments, member satisfaction surveys, SWOT surveys
- Financial statements
- Budget reports
- Internal procedure manuals
- Board manual
- Board minutes

*“If you don't know where you
are going, you will wind up
somewhere else.”*

- Yogi Berra



Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

2. The Retreat: Content and Logistics

Creating a successful retreat

Once the relevant data have been collected, the association should take the following initial steps in scheduling the strategic planning retreat:

Decide who should participate in the retreat and how they should be involved in planning. The right mix of individuals is critical.

List some of the main issues that face the association. This need not be a complete list, nor does it have to be fully organized. However, knowing some of the concerns of the association will help those who will be asked to be involved in planning to prepare.

Decide when the plan should be adopted by the board. Developing and drafting a plan will take a few weeks to a few months. The board should set a future board meeting to be the target date for adopting the plan.

Set aside some time for the planning process. Members of the board and staff who will be involved in planning should agree to take time for the planning process. For most bar associations, a strategic planning retreat involves a single day or weekend. The plan writers, of course, will spend more time than others as they will be preparing a document that represents decisions made at planning meetings. The total time frame from starting the planning process to adopting the plan can be accomplished within three months for a small association. This time frame may be expanded for larger associations, but generally, should not exceed six months.

Decide if a facilitator would be helpful. Some associations find that an individual who is not directly involved with the association's regular work can be quite useful in the planning process. The use of a facilitator is recommended for most bar associations. The facilitator may also be involved in writing the plan.

*“Begin with the end in mind. . .
The extent to which you begin
with the end in mind often
determines whether or not you
are able to create a successful
enterprise.”*

- Stephen R. Covey

Retreat to Advance

Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

Find a place for the planning meetings to occur. It is often helpful to meet someplace other than the standard meeting location for the association because a different setting can help members of the group step out of their usual patterns. The planning location should be comfortable, include tables or other surfaces for participants to write, and have room to move around. Having the ability to provide refreshments for planning participants is also needed. Some associations use large sheets of paper to record ideas, so having a planning location that permits hanging paper (using masking tape or other nondestructive adhesive) on the walls is ideal.

Adapted from Nonprofit Capacity Building Project funded by W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Use SMARTER Objectives

The concept of SMARTER Objectives is set forth in *Strategic Planning for Success: Aligning People, Performance and Payoffs*, by Roger Kaufman, Hugh Oakley-Brown, Ryan Watkins, and Doug Lee. SMARTER Objectives offer a different perspective from the idea of SMART Goals. SMARTER Objectives call for the objective to be “Audacious,” not merely “Achievable,” as SMART Goals suggest. In addition, SMARTER Objectives must be “Encompassing.” Objectives must encompass “results and consequences, not just for individuals, but also teams, the entire association, non-members, and the broader society.” All objectives must relate to each other. Finally, SMARTER Objectives must be reviewed and revised frequently.

“Set your target and keep trying until you reach it.”

- Napoleon Hill



S = The objective is written for a *specific* result or area of performance.

M = Each objective must be observable and *measurable*. The objective must answer these questions: How much? How many? How well?

A = The objective is *audacious*. It aims at significant change designed to “stretch horizons” and exceed the present level of results.

R = The objective must clearly define the *results* to be achieved. However, it should not include the methods and means to achieve the results.

T = Each objective must have a targeted *time* for completion.

E = The “sum total” of all of the objectives are *encompassing*. They are aligned, supportive of each other, inclusive, and linked.

R = All objectives are *reviewed* frequently to check for progress toward results.

Retreat to Advance

Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

Developing Objectives and Timelines

Action Planning Tool

Handout 8:

Action Plan

1. Objectives are specific, measurable results produced while implementing strategies.
2. When identifying objectives, keep asking “Are we sure we can do this?”
3. Integrate the strategic plan’s SMARTER Objectives as performance criteria in each “implementer’s” job description and performance review.
4. Remember that objectives and their timelines are only guidelines, not rules set in stone. They can be deviated from, but deviations should be understood and explained.

Adapted from *The Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning & Facilitation*, by Carter McNamara, M.B.A, Ph.D., Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Copyright 1997-2008

Develop Specific Action Plans

1. Actions plans specify the actions needed to address each of the strategic objectives, and who will complete each action and according to what timeline.
2. Develop an overall, top-level action plan that depicts how each strategic objective will be reached.
3. Develop an action plan for each SMARTER Objective in the strategic plan. These plans, in total, should depict how the overall action plan will be implemented.
4. The format of the action plan depends on the nature and needs of the association. The plan for each SMARTER Objective, might specify:
 - The steps to achieve each objective to be accomplished.
 - How each objective contributes to the association's overall strategic vision.
 - What specific results must be accomplished to make the objective a reality.
 - How those results will be measured.
 - When the results will be achieved (or timelines for each objective).
 - Who is responsible for overseeing the completion of each objective.

Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

3. Post-Retreat: Implementation, Measurement, Review

Now what? How do we ensure implementation of our plan?

A frequent complaint about the strategic planning process is that it produces a document that ends up collecting dust on a shelf and the association fails to implement the plan. The following guidelines will help ensure that the plan is implemented.

1. When conducting the planning process, involve the people who will be responsible for implementing the plan. Use a cross-functional team (representatives from each of the major association's products or service) to ensure the plan is realistic and collaborative.
2. Ensure the plan is realistic. Continue asking planning participants "Is this realistic? Can we really do this?"
3. Organize the overall strategic plan into smaller action plans, often including an action plan (or work plan) for each committee on the board.
4. In the overall planning document, specify who is doing what and by when (action plans are often referenced in the implementation section of the overall strategic plan). Some associations may elect to include the action plans in a separate document from the strategic plan, which would include only the mission, vision, values, key issues and objectives, and strategies. This approach carries some risk that the board will lose focus on the action plans.
5. In the implementation section of the plan, specify and clarify the plan's implementation roles and responsibilities. Be sure to detail particularly the first 90 days of the implementation of the plan. Build in regular reviews of status of the implementation of the plan.
6. Translate the actions of the strategic plan into job descriptions and personnel performance reviews.
7. Communicate the role of follow-ups to the plan. If people know the action plans will be regularly reviewed, implementers tend to do their jobs before they're checked on.

"For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."

- Aristotle



Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

8. Be sure to document and distribute the plan, including inviting input from all. Publish it in the association's newsletter and post it on your web site.
9. Appoint a Plan Champion: one internal person who has ultimate responsibility that the plan is enacted as designed.
10. The chief executive's support of the plan is a major driver to the plan's implementation. Integrate the plan's objectives into the chief executive's performance reviews.
11. Place huge emphasis on feedback to the board's executive committee from the planning participants.

Consider all or some of the following to ensure the plan is implemented.

12. In addition to the Plan Champion, have designated rotating "checkers" to verify, e.g., every quarter, if each implementer completed their assigned tasks.
13. Have pairs of people be responsible for tasks. Have each partner commit to helping the other to finish the other's tasks on time.

Adapted from *The Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning & Facilitation*, by Carter McNamara, M.B.A, Ph.D., Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Copyright 1997-2008.

Supporting Your Team Through the Implementation of the Plan

The core reality of strategic planning necessarily creates change. For many of us, change = unknown = fear. Leaders must recognize this equation and understand that what they may perceive as resistance to change – whether among members or administrative staff – may simply be fear of the unknown. As an association changes, the leadership must acknowledge that people will go through several stages in the transition process.

"It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power."

- Alan Cohen

Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

In their book, *Dangerous Opportunity: Making Change Work*, Chris Musselwhite and Randell Jones explain the process of change in four stages. It is the leader's role to support people through these transitions. Leadership here applies not only to the bar leaders, but to the executive staff, as well.

	Do's	Don'ts
Acknowledging Leadership Imperative: Give Information	Give visible support & provide information consistently & repeatedly Provide facts Assist with support networks	Hit people over the head with the truth Push for acknowledgment (this intensifies denial)
Reacting Leadership Imperative: Give Support	Listen Acknowledge the feelings of those in resistance Provide time (as the situation allows) Provide facts Be empathetic Identify areas of stability	Argue Provide reasons why they should not feel the way they feel Convince them this is good for them Push exploration (this can result in movement back to denial)
Investigating Leadership Imperative: Give Encouragement	Create opportunities to explore new possibilities Reward exploration Employ participative decision making Outline pros & cons of new possibilities	Push choices Rush choices Punish mistakes Overestimate or misrepresent future options
Implementing Leadership Imperative: Give Reinforcement	Clarify desired outcomes Reward effective performance Support risk taking & innovation Encourage communication Get out of the way	Micro-manage Control choices Limit participation

Table 8: Leading People in Transition - *Dangerous Opportunity: Making Change Work*, Chris Musselwhite and Randell Jones, 2004, Exlibris, Corp.

Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

Measure progress and continuously review

So, you've written your strategic plan, you've created SMARTER Objectives and you've create an action plan designed to make the objectives of the plan a reality. Are you finished? No. Strategic planning is a dynamic process. It is never really completed. Formal strategic planning should occur every three to five years. However, implementation, measurement and evaluation are going on all the time.

Ideally, an association should make review of the strategic plan a component of each of their board meetings. The strategic plan should always be on the "front burner"; it should inform all of the decisions made by the association during the life of the plan.

One method for monitoring, measuring and continuously evaluating the plan is to assign one individual to be the prime mover or champion for each objective contained in the plan. The "champion" can then report on progress at each board meeting, but no less frequently than once per quarter. With this type of ongoing measurement and reporting it will make it easier for the board or planning committee to evaluate whether any adjustments should be made to the plan.

As part of the evaluation process, the planning committee should meet annually in the years between planning to focus on the following questions:

- Is the current strategic plan on target? What has or has not been accomplished?
- What are the current issues facing the association, and after discussing these issues, do any changing or new priorities need to be added to the strategic plan?
- Are there new performance targets and/or modified intermediate checkpoints that need to be addressed?

Adapted from *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye.

Evaluation & Measurement Tools

Handout 9:
Evaluate the Strategic
Planning Process

Continuously refer to your
Strategic Plan and Action
Plans to measure success.

Retreat to Advance Strategic Planning: Application and Details on Process

The process of strategic planning and, indeed, strategic thinking is the responsibility of the leadership in every association. Understanding that the creation of a strategic plan is only the first step in moving the association forward is critical to any association's ongoing success. The ultimate success of the association depends upon having commitment to implement, measure and continuously review their plan.

"Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

Bibliography

Dangerous Opportunity: Making Change Work, Chris Musselwhite and Randell Jones, 2004, Exlibris, Corp.

Leading in a Culture of Change, Michael Fullan, 2001, Jossey-Bass.

Simplified Strategic Planning, Robert W. Bradford, J. Peter Duncan, and Brian Tarcy, 2000, Chandler House Press.

Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations, Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Strategic Planning for Success: Aligning People, Performance and Payoffs, by Roger Kaufman, Hugh Oakley-Brown, Ryan Watkins, and Doug Lee, 2003, Jossey-Bass.

The Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning & Facilitation, by Carter McNamara, M.B.A, Ph.D., Authenticity Consulting, LLC., Copyright 1997-2008.



Nora Riva Bergman

As a coach and Practice Advisor with Atticus, Nora is dedicated to helping attorneys create the lives and law practices they dreamed of when they were in law school. She knows the frustrations that attorneys experience every day and is committed to helping them change their lives for the better.

Nora brings a deep understanding of the practice and business of law to her work as coach and Practice Advisor. She has practiced as an employment law attorney and certified mediator and has served as a professor at both Stetson University College of Law and the University of South Florida, teaching courses in alternative dispute resolution and negotiation. In addition, Nora has been a speaker at conferences for the American Bar Association, The Florida Bar and other national legal associations. She has also served as the Executive Director of the St. Petersburg Bar Association.

Her background as an attorney, law professor and bar executive gives her a unique perspective on the challenges lawyers face and makes her a powerful coach. In addition to her broad experience with all aspects of the law firm, Nora understands the importance of, and is committed to, helping attorneys leverage technology in order to maximize their ultimate success.

Nora is a graduate of the prestigious Leadership Development Program (LPD) at Eckerd College, and is certified in the Conflict Dynamics Profile® developed by the LDP to help individuals and organizations learn how to deal with conflict constructively. She is also certified in the DISC® Behavioral Style Assessment.

Nora received an undergraduate degree in journalism, *summa cum laude*, from the University of South Florida and her J.D., *cum laude*, from Stetson University College of Law, where she was a member of the law review and served as a mentor for incoming students.

Visit Nora online at – www.atticusonline.com and www.norarivabergman.com



HANDOUT 1 - Set up Your Planning Process for Success

- Are the conditions and criteria for successful planning in place at the current time? Can certain pitfalls be avoided?
- Is this the appropriate time for your organization to initiate a planning process? Yes or no? If no, where do you go from here?

	The following conditions for successful planning are in place:	Yes	No	Unsure or N/A
1.	Commitment, support, and involvement from top leadership, especially the executive director and board president, throughout the entire process			
2.	Commitment to clarifying roles and expectations for all participants in the planning process, including clarity as to who will have input into the plan and who will be decision makers			
3.	Willingness to gather information regarding the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; the effectiveness of current programs; needs in the community, both current and future; and information regarding competitors and (potential) collaborators			
4.	The right mix of individuals on the planning committee—strategic thinkers and actionaries (individuals who are in a position to see things through to completion), as well as big-picture (conceptual) thinkers and detail-oriented (perceptual) thinkers			
5.	Willingness to be inclusive and encourage broad participation, so that people feel ownership of and are energized by the process			
6.	An adequate commitment of organizational resources to complete the planning process as designed (e.g., staff time, board time, dollars spent on the process for market research, consultants, etc.)			
7.	A board and staff that understand the purpose of planning, recognize what it is and is not able to accomplish, and have clarity about the desired outcomes of the process and issues to be addressed			
8.	A willingness to question the status quo, to look at new ways of doing things; a willingness to ask the hard questions, face difficult choices, and make decisions that are best for the organization's current and future constituencies as well as a willingness to support organizational change as a result of the planning efforts.			
9.	The organization has the "financial capacity" to sustain itself for the immediate future without a financial "crisis" appearing to detract from strategic planning			
10.	Top management's commitment to carefully considering recommendations made during the planning process rather than disregarding decisions in favor of his or her intuitive decisions			

	The following conditions for successful planning are in place:	Yes	No	Unsure or N/A
11.	There is no serious conflict between key players within the organization (although a healthy dosage of disagreement and perhaps some heated discussions can be expected during a strategic planning process)			
12.	There are no high-impact decisions to be made in the next six months by an external source.			
13.	No merger or other major strategic partnership effort is under way (separate strategic planning conversations are not taking place while strategic restructuring negotiations are taking place).			
14.	Board and top management should be willing to articulate constraints and non-negotiables upfront.			
15.	A commitment to tie the strategic planning process to the organization's annual planning and budgeting process—to create a detailed annual operating plan for the upcoming year, and monitor/revise the strategic plan as needed			
16.	A commitment to allocating sufficient resources to support the implementation of core strategies			

Comments to explain—and/or suggestions on how to respond—to “No” or “Unsure or N/A” answers

Other issues/concerns?

Is this the appropriate time for your organization to initiate a planning process? Yes or no? If no, what steps need to be put in place to ensure a successful planning process—where do you go from here? Or, should the organization consider doing something other than a formal strategic planning process?

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

HANDOUT 2 - Checklist for Preparing to Plan

<i>Task</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>	<i>Date Completed</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and select sponsor(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess readiness		
<input type="checkbox"/> Brief sponsor(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Gain agreement to process		
<input type="checkbox"/> Select planning partners		
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify barriers and resistance		
<input type="checkbox"/> Commit to the Mega level of Needs Assessment		
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on what data to collect		
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on how to gather data		
<input type="checkbox"/> Select project team		
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop project plan		
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate plans		
<input type="checkbox"/> Define time frames		
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess skill levels of planning team		
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess existing data on needs		
<input type="checkbox"/> Collect needs data		
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce and analyze data		
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify needs		
<input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize needs		

HANDOUT 3 - Design a Strategic Planning Process to Meet Your Organizational Needs

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- What has been your previous experience with strategic planning?
- Consider some of the choices to be made when designing your strategic planning process
- Other considerations for the strategic planning process

What has been your previous experience with strategic planning—what has worked or not worked in the past that might inform the design of your strategic planning process?

The following is a list of some of the choices to be made when designing a strategic planning process:

- Who makes what decisions—who decides the strategic direction for the organization, and what degree of input is sought from the board and the staff
- Whether to involve external stakeholders in addition to internal stakeholders (board and staff)
- How long a process to have (abbreviated, moderate, or extensive)
- Whether to use an existing committee or a strategic planning committee for such activities as coordinating the work and assisting with some of the planning activities (such as external stakeholder interviews, research, etc.)
- Whether to have a strategic planning committee—and/or ad hoc issue-focused task forces—charged with the responsibility for discussing future program or administrative options and making recommendations to the board
- If using a strategic planning committee, deciding who should be on that committee. If using ad hoc task forces, deciding membership of those committees (including the decision as to whether nonboard members might be on those committees)
- Who will lead the process
- Who will be the primary writer of the plan (with guidance from a consultant if necessary)
- The sequencing of discussions (i.e., “do data collection first and then have a retreat” or “kick off the planning process with a board/staff retreat and then create issue-focused board/staff task forces to collect and analyze data and make recommendations to the board of directors”)
- Whether to use a consultant and, if yes, how best to use a consultant/expectations regarding the consultant’s role

Other considerations for the strategic planning process:

Planning committee membership:

Name	Representing what key stakeholder
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Milestones and deadlines:

Planning principles and values (e.g., we are committed to being inclusive of all key stakeholders; we are willing to look at new and different ways of doing things and face the hard choices regarding how to best use our resources; client input is critical to creating a plan that will meet client needs):

Meeting agreements (e.g., when offering a dissenting opinion, be willing to offer a solution that meets your needs and the needs of others; show up at meetings and be prepared; seek first to understand, then to be understood; respect differences):

How will board and staff be kept informed about the strategic planning discussions?

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

HANDOUT 4 - Manage the Transition: The Changes Required for Success

- List the major changes that may need to happen as a result of the decisions reached in the strategic planning process.
- Identify skills needed, system structures, and organization culture changes that need to happen to ensure these changes are successful:

List the major changes that may need to happen/will happen as a result of the strategic plan:

- Changes that will impact staff and the skills they may need in the future
- Changes that will impact the structures and systems that may need to be modified to support the changes
- Changes that will impact how the organization's culture (mindset) may need to be modified to support the changes

New skills that may be needed	Modified or new structures and systems that may be needed	New culture/mindset that may be needed

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

HANDOUT 5

Staff and Board Perceptions of Organization's SWOT

- List our organization's primary (program and administrative) strengths and weaknesses—internal forces working for and against our organization achieving its mission.
- List our organization's key opportunities and threats—political, economic, social, technological, demographic, or legal trends that are or may impact our organization's ability to achieve its mission.
- (Optional) Indicate any possible connection between an opportunity or threat and a strength or weakness? (Are there any opportunities we can take advantage of because of a particular strength? Are there any threats that are compounded by a weakness?)

(Optional) Draw lines connecting any opportunity or threat that may be either positively or negatively impacted by any of the organization's strengths or weaknesses

Internal Forces	⇕	External Forces
Strengths: • • • •		Opportunities: • • • •
Weaknesses: • • • •		Threats: • • • •

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

HANDOUT 6 - Evaluate Current Programs

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- Evaluate each of your programs in terms of community needs, results, competitive position, and potential for increased efficiency.

Note: If you are filling this out by hand, please write legibly.

Program/service name:

Name of person(s) filling out this assessment:

Date:

Description of program service:

Units of service/number of people served including demographic information (if applicable)

Total Annual Expenses: _____ Total Annual Revenue: _____

What is the need in the community that this program exists to meet?

Who is the target audience(s) that this program serves to reach?

What impact does this program currently have, or intend to have, on addressing the need articulated above?
What is the outcome(s) of this program's work?

Measures of success: What evidence do you have to show that this program is having the impact you want it to have? How do we know we are being successful? What do this program's customers/clients consider value? How do we currently measure success: What are the indicators of success (benchmarks) we currently use to measure success?

How should we measure success? Are there other indicators of success we should use in measuring success? How should we measure results/impact/outcomes of this program in improving the quality of constituents' lives and making a difference in the world?

What are the greatest strengths of this program?

What are the greatest weaknesses of this program?

What are the trends in the environment—political, social, economic, technological, demographic, legal forces—that are or will be impacting this program in the future: trends either potentially moving the program forward (opportunities) or holding it back (threats)?

How could we improve the cost effectiveness of this program?

How could we improve the quality of this program? How could we improve our ability to deliver this product/provide this service? If we were to reinvent this program, what changes would we make in how the service/product is delivered?

How might we better market this program (i.e., increase the public's awareness of this program)?

Is there potential for (starting/increasing/improving) collaboration? How? With whom?

Within the organization?

Outside of the organization? In what ways? With whom? Why?

If the budget for this program were suddenly cut, what would you recommend we do?

If the budget for this program was suddenly increased, what would you recommend we do?

What is the unrealized potential for this program? What would it take to reach that potential?

Competitive Analysis of This Program

Program fit:

How is this program congruent with the overall purpose and mission of our organization?

How does/could this program draw on existing skills in the organization and share resources/coordinate activities with other programs?

Ability to Attract Resources:

Does this program have the potential to attract resources and enhance existing programs?

Note: The ability to attract resources deals with issues of market demand; stable funding or ability to provide current and future support; appeals to volunteers; measurable, reportable program results; complements other programs; low exit barriers—ability to discontinue program or abandon past commitment without alienating supporters.

Yes No

Why did you give the yes or no response that you did? Where do you think the continued resources will come from? Where do you think are the untapped opportunities for additional resources?

Competitive Position:

Note: A program with a strong competitive position is one that meets the following criteria: good logistical delivery system; large reservoir of client, community, or support group loyalty; past success in securing funding; strong potential to raise funds; superior track record/image of service delivery; large market share of the target clientele; better-quality service/product/service delivery than competitors; superior organization, management, and technical skills; cost-effective delivery of service.)

Are there many groups, or few groups, providing similar services in the community? Who else is doing the same or similar work to address this need in our geographic area?

Few Groups Many Groups

List names of groups here:

Do you think your program is in a strong competitive position in relation to the above groups?

_____ Yes, strong competitive position _____ No, not a strong competitive position

Why or why not?

Why do you think it is important for our organization to address this need (as opposed to another organization)? What is your program's competitive advantage? What makes your program unique in comparison to the competition?

Suggested future growth strategy for this program:

___ Increase ___ Maintain ___ Decrease ___ Eliminate

Why this strategy? Include the implications if we were to ignore this strategy.

What impact would this growth strategy have on our resources (staff time and other expenditures) and revenues?

Analysis of Competitive Position (Fill this in only if applicable.)

Name of organization	Ability to provide service	Quality of service	Why did you rate the ability to provide service the way you did? Why did you give the rating on quality of service?
Our program:	4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Fair Poor	4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Fair Poor	
Competitor:	4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Fair Poor	4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Fair Poor	
Competitor:	4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Fair Poor	4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Fair Poor	
Competitor:	4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Fair Poor	4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Fair Poor	

Other competitors not assessed:

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

HANDOUT 7 - Summary of Administrative, Financial, and Governance Priorities

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- For each administrative, financial, and governance function, list the overall goal or objectives and any long-term objectives/priorities to be included in the strategic plan.

Administrative Functions	Goal(s)	Long-Term Objectives/Priorities
Staffing and benefits		
Public relations and communications		
Infrastructure: information systems, technology, facilities, etc.		
Planning, evaluation, quality control		
Financial Functions	Goal(s)	Long-Term Objectives/Priorities
Financial management		
Resource development		
Governance Functions	Goal(s)	Long-Term Objectives
Board of directors		
Networking and collaboration		

HANDOUT 9 - Evaluate the Strategic Planning Process

- Evaluate your strategic plan, your annual operating plans, and the strategic planning process
- Make any suggestions for improving future planning endeavors

Strategic plan	Yes	No
Provides guidance to both short-term and long-term priorities?		
Helps the organization to allocate resources?		
Is understandable by people who have not participated in the development of the plan?		
Responds to the organization's best understanding of its internal and external environments?		
Was developed from a consensus and commitment-building process?		
Has been formally adopted by the board of directors?		
Comments and suggestions for future strategic plans:		
Annual operational plan(s)	Yes	No
Has both process and outcome objectives specified?		
Has been developed by staff members who are responsible for the implementation of the goals and objectives?		
Provides an easy implementation, monitoring, and reference tool?		
Operationalizes the strategic plan—helps ensure that the strategic plan will be implemented?		
Has a realistic budget to support the operational plan?		
Comments and suggestions for future annual operational plans:		
Planning Process met the following criteria	Yes	No
The process was consensus building: It offered a way to surface the needs and interests of all stakeholders and allowed sufficient time to reach agreement on what is best for the long-term and short-term interests of the client/customer?		
The process allowed sufficient time to assess programs, and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?		
The process supported the achievement of the outcomes that were initially identified?		
Comments and suggestions for future planning processes:		

From *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, 2005, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.