

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION (SO)

Strategic Orientation is the ability to link long-range visions and concepts to daily work. At lowest levels, it includes simple understanding of strategies; at the highest level it is a sophisticated awareness of the impact of the world at large on strategies, and how in turn that affects choices.

<i>This Means...</i>	<i>This Doesn't Mean...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">continually assessing how day-to-day tasks support the broader governmental objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">planning your work based on short-term commitments and deadlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none">aligning your branch's goals with the government's strategic goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">setting goals in your branch that are independent of government priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">visualizing what might or could be by preparing and reviewing contingency plans for future problems and opportunities; developing resources necessary to carry them out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">reacting and taking a day-to-day approach to handling issues and challenges; focusing on the short term and neglecting the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none">engineering and promoting new business opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">focusing on existing processes and products
<ul style="list-style-type: none">assessing economic/environmental, social, and technological trends and calculating any potential implications these may have on your branch's future direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">constantly revising your branch based on new information

**Developmental
Activities**

Level 1-2 Activities

Gather information from your peers.

- Spend time with a peer discussing their knowledge of your business unit's strategic goals.
- Ask your peer how they address the business unit's goals in their own planning.

Reflection Tip:

- * Make notes on each conversation, and spend some time comparing the different approaches of your peers.

Gather information from your manager.

- Spend some time with your manager discussing the business unit's strategic goals.
- Ask your manager how those goals were set.
- Ask your manager how he/she ensures business unit goals are aligned with organizational strategies.

Reflection Tip:

- * Use this information to inform the creation of your own work plan.

Research the Strategic Orientation Competency in your Organization.

- Find out how others learn about organizational strategy and factor it into work prioritization.
- Research how your business unit strategy is created.
- Share your own ideas for implementation of strategy into the business unit with peers. Listen carefully to their comments.
- Integrate your findings with the comments of your peers to create an implementation plan.
- Follow through on it.

Reflection Tip:

- * Create some sort of mechanism that will help you to keep on top of the changes that occur with respect to organizational goals and priorities.

Review the priorities and current activities of your branch.

- Identify those that will deliver the expected short-term results and those that will deliver the medium term results.
- Do you have the right balance between short-term and medium-term?

- What is your branch doing that is a “nice to do” which is not tied to the short-term or medium-term results versus a “must do”?
- Meet with your colleagues to discuss those activities that will not deliver short-term or medium-term results. Re-deploy resources to the medium and short-term priorities that require more support.

Conduct a “SWOT” analysis.

- Conduct an “environmental scan” of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) related to your branch. List each of them and determine specific actions and steps that you can take to improve performance in your division. Discuss the results with your manager.

Reflection Tips:

- * Discuss your results with your peers. Did they come up with additional suggestions?
- * Discuss your results with a manager from another business unit. Can they come up with any additional suggestions, based on experience in their own business units?

Select a key task or function within your business unit that would significantly improve results if it were to be done differently.

- Investigate and develop different approaches for performing the function.
- Develop a business case that supports a change including such things as strategic repositioning and leverage, resource utilization, cost/benefit and impact analysis, and so on.
- Examine the pros and cons from the perspective of each stakeholder group/customer group.
- Create a draft implementation plan. Include a transition plan for migration/conversion to the new approach and a communication plan for repositioning the project and updates to stakeholder groups.
- Present your ideas and case to the appropriate groups.

Reflection Tip:

- * What short-term goals will meet your long-term objectives? What necessary adjustments are needed to achieve success at the unit level?

Learn more about the division and future assumptions of clients/key service partners.

- Study client/key service partner satisfaction surveys and external industry reports to better understand their needs.
- Talk to clients/key service partners about issues facing them, trends affecting them, and concerns they may have about the future.
- Summarize the common themes that you identify.

- Discuss your findings with your colleagues/direct reports to incorporate their impressions into the critical issues facing the client/key service partner.
- Draft a plan, working with colleagues/direct reports to outline what, if anything, you can do to help clients/key service partners address these issues.

Level 3-4 Activities

Assess your division's contribution to the organization's strategic plan.

- Identify your branch's specific expertise. Then ask yourself, "what outputs, accomplishments or services would be lost, now and in the future, if our division did not exist?"
- Test whether the major mission for your branch is aligned with and adding value to the overall direction of the government.
- Review your branch's overall strategic plan.
- Once you have identified your division's contributions, consider how its expertise should evolve and adapt over time to continuously add value on the broader level, and to support the organization's strategic plan.
- Produce a written record of your conclusions and the action steps required.

Reflection Tip:

- * What challenges/ opportunities will impact your business unit's strategic plan?

Prepare a strategic human resource plan for your area.

- Analyze your division's objectives and strategy. Determine if there are any people issues that are impacted by the direction of your division. Does your strategy imply a need for a different mix of skills, knowledge or behaviors among your current staff in the future?
- Review the organization chart for your branch, showing all your team members and their teams. Identify positions that may open up or change due to promotions, lateral moves, attrition and/or resignations.
- Identify competencies required for the job.
- Determine other staff within the division who could serve as successors to key roles within your branch, including yourself. Put plans in place to develop the competencies of potential successors.

Get input from your peers.

- Talk to your peers in other divisions on a regular basis about issues and trends affecting them and concerns they have about the future.

- Ask your peers in other divisions to share their work plans, the assumptions on which their plans are based and what trends are affecting their branch.
- Consider the issues they raise in relation to your business unit's plans and approach.
 - ⇒ Do the same assumptions hold true for your area as for theirs?
 - ⇒ Are your strategic needs/directions similar to theirs?
 - ⇒ Are their action plans to meet similar challenges transferable to your business context?
- Include the results of this analysis in your on-going planning sessions.

Reflection Tip:

- * What present policies, processes and methods might affect future developments and trends in your business unit and the Organization?

Assess a current department process or policy against the government's strategic priorities.

- Select any one of your department's current processes or policies which you consider to be less than effective.
- Analyze the process/policy against each strategic priority and determine if it supports or hinders the strategic priority. List the strategic priorities that are supported and those that are hindered.
- Taking one of the strategic priorities that are hindered, brainstorm what changes could be made to the process or policy that would align it with the strategic priority. Repeat the brainstorming exercise for the remaining strategic priorities that are hindered.
- Redraft or modify the process or policy using the results of the brainstorming exercise, which in your view is more likely to lead to the desirable results.
- Use the following process:
 - ⇒ Assess the scope and impact of the intervention.
 - ⇒ Identify the individuals or groups who will be affected by it.
 - ⇒ Think about how this change will benefit and what reasons they may have for dismissing the change.
 - ⇒ Work on anticipating different problems that may arise and the approaches you could take to address potential problems.
- Test the revised policy on some of the key stakeholders that you will need to champion it as well as those that will be impacted by the changes.

Reflection Tips:

- * Produce a brief written report summarizing what you have learned from this exercise. Share it with your colleagues.

- * Make sure you think about how to balance customer needs against the demands of the organization as you modify the process or policy.

Schedule strategic planning sessions with your team members. Ensure participation of team members from various locations.

- Communicate the long-term vision for the organization and your vision for your area.
- Lead your team members through an environmental scan exercise, (i.e., opportunities, threats, strengths, weaknesses) and determine the key factors you anticipate will affect your branch.
- Have each team member conduct a similar exercise with their team and determine how their team currently supports achievement of the key environmental factors, and how they will continue to support the future vision.
- Reconvene your team members and have them present their team's long-term plan to influence key environmental factors.
- Lead the team through an exercise of identifying overlaps, gaps and establishing future priorities and accountabilities.
- Have each team member translate the team's future priorities into team and individual priorities and accountabilities.
- Hold regular meetings with your team members to review progress and determine whether change in direction or priorities are required.

Reflection Tips:

- * What similarities or differences exist between team members' approach and view of strategic planning?
- * How can you communicate to your team members the importance of buy-in from their employees? How can you ensure that it will happen?
- * Think about what could be done to ensure that all team members understand the importance of these priorities. What could be done to ensure that they act on the priorities?

Level 5-6 Activities

Keep current with trends and issues affecting your Organization as well as the government in general.

- Review local, national and international events and trends affecting your division in general by reading relevant publications (i.e., local and international newspapers, technical reports, etc.). Consider what implications, if any, these developments have for your division.

- Look at what other government branches are doing. What assumptions are they making about the future that is driving their current strategy?
- Attend provincial government, federal government, or private industry conferences/seminars.
- Collect information about best practices and key success factors in other branches that you believe could be transferable to your branch.
- Anticipate changes in legislation and/or accepted industry standards and determine any adjustments your branch will have to make in order to keep on track with accomplishing its objectives.

Reflection Tips:

- * Ask your peers what additional information sources they regularly consult.
- * Ask your peers about the thought processes they used when factoring external issues/trends into their strategic planning. Would these processes be appropriate for you to use?

Identify your key client's critical issues and assumptions about the future.

- Study client/key service partner satisfaction surveys and external industry reports to better understand their needs.
- Talk to clients/key service partners about issues facing them, trends affecting them, and concerns they may have about the future.
- Summarize the common themes that you identify.
- Discuss your findings with your peers/direct reports to incorporate their impressions into the critical issues facing the client/key service partner.
- Draft a plan, working with peers/direct reports to outline what, if anything, you can do to help clients/key service partners address these issues.

Reflection Tip:

- * What do these benchmarks reflect about the current culture of the organization? Discuss your thoughts about this with your peers.

Conduct a market review to identify trends and potential responses.

- Focus on specific areas - regulatory trends, demographic, social, environmental, and technological trends, changes in senior personnel within government and industry.
- Create a template for yourself and others to use, so that information is in a standard, easily accessible format.
- Once you have recorded the information, look for trends across organizations or within organizations. How have they typically responded to changes in the marketplace or changes in the economy?

- Review any available information regarding your strategic direction - in what areas are you well-positioned? Vulnerable or under-utilized?
- Take action – include team members in your action plan.

Reflection Tips:

- * Can you detect a pattern to the trends? Is there a key factor that generally initiates a change?
- * Reflect on how external reactions to changes in the marketplace has impacted your branch or Organization.
- * Are there changes that your branch should be preparing for?
- * Share your thoughts with your peers and collect their feedback. Keep copies of your analyses in a centrally accessible place, so others can understand your reasoning, learn more about external players, and use them as a template for their own review and planning processes.

Use the following procedure to help formulate decisions involving reorganizing your branch to better meet long-term objectives.

- Develop and test your assumptions:
 - ⇒ Review the information collected, identify the major themes and formulate a direction;
 - ⇒ Facilitate a meeting with internal experts to help quantify your assumptions on environmental factors impacting the government;
 - ⇒ Test your assumptions by participating in an external forum on current government issues and future trends;
 - ⇒ Participate in Internet forums on relevant topics.
- Draw appropriate conclusions:
 - ⇒ Outline the impact of your assumptions and the implications on people, technology, product/service and process;
 - ⇒ Obtain and review samples of successful strategic plans/papers which have been produced internally and externally;
 - ⇒ Review your conclusions with trusted colleagues/direct reports.
 - ⇒ Develop a plan to reorganize the branch. Identify the measures of success which will help guide implementation.