

# Moving beyond Strategic Planning

Skyrocketing change requires new approaches to daily planning and big-picture thinking.

By Terrence Fernsler

**Strategic Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations** By Alan Walter Steiss. Hardcover. 438 pages. Marcel Dekker, Inc. (dekker.com).

Strategic planning is a good starting point, but, by itself, it's not enough. You need to move beyond strategic *planning* to strategic *management*.

Managing strategically means:

- **identifying** your organization's long-range needs
- **exploring the consequences** of policies and programs designed to meet these needs
- **developing strategies** that enhance your organization's advantages and minimize its shortcomings.

In this instructive book, Alan Walter Steiss describes the three basic components of strategic management:

### 1. Planning in a strategic way.

Such planning:

- **clarifies** goals and objectives
- **creates policies** to acquire and distribute organizational resources
- **translates decisions** into specific actions.

### 2. Managing resources effectively.

Such management involves:

- **turning goals and objectives** into programs, projects and activities
- **designing processes** to carry out those programs, projects and plans
- **staffing the processes and acquiring** other necessary resources.

### 3. Establishing accountability.

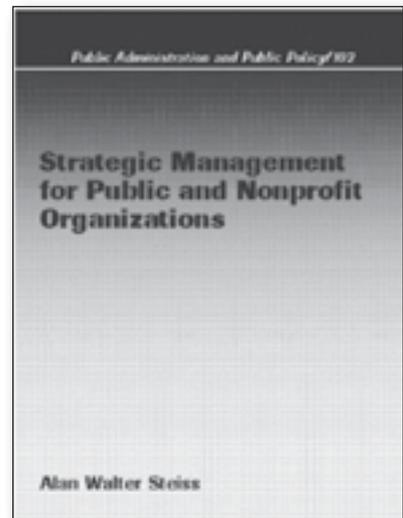
Meaningful performance evaluation assesses how effective and efficient programs are in achieving goals. Information management systems can be quite useful in collecting and storing relevant data needed to measure performance.

The tasks needed to carry out strategic management are typically assigned to different parts of the organization: Planners plan, financial analysts measure, program personnel control resources, and administrators evaluate. Steiss argues that this division of labor may be an obstacle to strategic success. A more comprehensive framework is needed to guide and coordinate, he suggests. Thus, he explains the purpose of each aspect of strategic management in detail. Such an understanding will help organizations implement strategic tasks across organizational divisions.

While this book is an academic work, it contains many practical applications. The case studies, references, and glossary are added bonuses. Those seeking ways to manage their organization strategically, to help it progress and meet the demands placed upon it, will find *Strategic Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* quite useful. 

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## Making a Strategic Decision in the Face of Uncertainty

The framework for strategic management is decision making. Yet the behavior of decision makers often appears to violate rational thinking. To assure that your decisions make good sense for your organization, follow these three steps:

1. **Assess alternatives.** Determine what payoffs each option implies for your organization's stakeholders.
2. **Evaluate the attitudes toward risk** held by your organization's stakeholders.
3. **Estimate the benefits each option offers.** Decide whether these benefits outweigh the risks you're willing to take. Then select the outcome that has the most benefits while not exceeding the acceptable risks.

— from *A Primer for Policy Analysis* (Norton) as quoted in *Strategic Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*

## Basic Strategies for Managing Change

1. **Invite employees to participate in change.** Ask for their opinions. Help them identify their own self-interest regarding the proposed change. Make sure they feel part of the process.
2. **Provide an incentive for people to change.** Self-interest is one of the most important motivators.
3. **Develop an open communication system** so that people understand the purpose for the changes.
4. **Encourage feedback both from and to employees.** Everyone enjoys knowing how things are going and how much progress is being made.

— from *Management* (Random House) as quoted in *Strategic Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*