



Strategic Planning In 150 Pages Or Less

Here's a cogent look at planning from the board's perspective.

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

The Board Member's Guide To Strategic Planning

By Fisher Howe. 114 pages. Hardcover. Published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

It's up to a nonprofit's board members—those who lead the organization—to take responsibility for planning. Yet few publications approach planning from the board's perspective. That's why this excellent, to-the-point guide is so welcome. Crisply and concisely, it leads board members from present ideas to future actions, through a series of clear-cut steps:

Decide when to hold your first strategic planning session. Timing is vital, Howe asserts, as is inviting the right people. Your overall purpose will help you make the right decisions here.

Prepare for the strategic planning session. Know exactly what you want to accomplish. Without a goal, you'll find it hard to follow up with action steps or even to know if the session was worthwhile.

Conduct the planning session: (1) Clarify the organization's mission and values. (2) Explore the organization's external and internal environ-

ments, identifying issues most critical to the organization's future. (3) Develop objectives within those issues. (4) Articulate your vision for the future. Confirm or modify your mission, and create a concept of the ends you want to reach. You have already established the steps for getting there.

Act on your plans. Moving from planning to action is the hardest part. Howe is at his most helpful here, showing how to put the strategic plan together to assure that you'll act on it.

Howe makes good use of examples, taking you through the planning process of several organizations. He describes problems they faced and ways they modified the process to fit their own situations. He also describes the use of facilitators and consultants in the planning process—when they're helpful, when they're essential, and when they aren't necessary.

The Board Member's Guide To Strategic Planning is so brief that it is almost an outline. That is its true

value—concisely laying out the strategic planning process. At the very least, it can help your organization guide your facilitator. But it will most likely do much more than that by showing your organization's board members how uncomplicated a thorough, effective strategic planning process can be. ■

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This helpful book shows board members how uncomplicated strategic planning can be.