Strategic Planning
in Distance Education

BY DR. WENDY R. KILFOIL, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Strategic Planning in Distance Education

June 2003

Written by

Dr. Wendy R. Kilfoil
University of South Africa
E-mail: kilfowr@unisa.ac.za

Strategic Planning in Distance Education

Table of Contents

Strategic Planning in Distance Education

Introduction

Strategic planning is popular in the business sector and there are many publications that detail the process in different ways, software to assist with data analysis, and companies that act as consultants in the process. A classic text on strategic planning in a business context, often prescribed in MBA programs, is Michael E. Porter's Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors. It is not suitable for direct application in educational institutions. John Bryson's Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement can be used by educational institutions as can other publications specifically targeted at higher education: for instance, Michael G. Dolence, Daniel James Rowley and Herman D. Lujan's Strategic Change in Colleges and Universities: Planning to Survive and Prosper and its companion, Working Toward Strategic Change: A Step-by-Step Guide to the Planning Process. Another useful publication is Daniel James Rowley and Herbert Sherman's From Strategy to Change: Implementing the Plan in Higher Education, which adapts many of Porter's ideas.

If you are thinking about strategic planning in your institution, you need to read these and other texts first and make a decision that suits your own context. You can also consult the website of the Society for College and University Planning: www.scup.org and look on the web for the strategic plans of other education institutions that you think of as your peers or competitors or as leaders in the field.

Banking, Bartending, Bible Study, Biology …

There is no "one size fits all" in terms of strategic planning, either in business or education contexts. When we narrow the focus to distance education, we find that institutions in this category do not form a homogenous group.

- Some for-profit institutions with a narrow niche market might wish to use a business model similar to that advocated by Porter although they would be advised to adapt it to include an educational focus – partly because the stakeholders include faculty, students, alumni, education authorities, professional associations, accreditation commissions and so on; other institutions are publicly funded and have a broad teaching, research and community service focus so they need an education model.

- Some distance education institutions work exclusively in an online environment,

others deliver their services and instruction through mixed media while yet others are predominantly paper based.

- Some are exclusively distance education; others are part of traditional campuses that have branched out into distance education to provide service to their own students online as well as expanding their instruction to a wider market.

- Distance education is also offered at different levels such as K-12 and post-secondary.

- Institutions often have a professional or vocational orientation so everything from office management to health care to liberal arts is offered through distance education.

An institution needs to know what strategies are appropriate for its specific context. Therefore, the five-step model suggested in this publication is merely a generic process, not a prescriptive recipe for undertaking strategic planning.

What is Planning?

Planning is an ongoing process in any institution to ensure that things get done on time and as efficiently as possible. At a school or university we plan for the upcoming registration period, for the writing of new courses, for the budget for the following year. Note some significant features of these plans: they

- are discrete,
- involve existing activities, and
- focus on the present or near future.

In many ways, they are concerned with fulfilling the institution's present mission and they often take place at a micro level, although the budget is a macro-level activity.

How is Strategic Planning Different from Other Planning?

Strategic planning can take place at a unit or institutional level. For instance, the Department of Student Services could decide that it wanted to investigate ways to serve students more efficiently and effectively; an institution could decide that it wanted to develop strategies to be more competitive. Note some of the significant features of these decisions. They—

- involve change, and
- focus on the future.

In fact, they are concerned with vision and such planning takes place at a macro level.

What is the Purpose of Strategic Planning?

The purpose of strategic planning, as it is outlined in various publications (Bryson 1995, Dolence, Rowley and Lujan 1997, Rowley and Sherman 2001), is to align the institution with the external environment. In fact, it is a complex solution to a complex problem. Environmental change is inevitable and it will always impact your institution sooner or later. It is better to be proactive, thoughtful and in charge of change than to be always in a reactive mode to external stimuli.

How is Strategic Planning Defined?

Strategic planning is

- a disciplined, fact-based decision-making process,
- based on an analysis of internal and external contexts and data,
- related to choices on how you are going to commit your resources,
- in ways compatible with your vision and mission, and
- to optimize strengths and opportunities and minimize weaknesses and threats.

Bryson (1995:211) defines strategic planning more technically as "a set of concepts, procedures, and tools designed to help leaders, managers, and others think and act strategically on behalf of their institutions and their institutions' stakeholders."

Strategic planning forms a bridge between where an institution is now and where it wants to be in future in the light of its analysis of the environment.

Current Position: Mission		Future Direction: Vision
Reason for existence Groups served	Strategic Planning • bridges between the present and the future; • analyzes internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats; • generates alternative strategies; • chooses from alternatives in the light of predetermined criteria; • sets measurable goals and objectives; • draws up implementation plans including action plans, people responsible and time frames; • draws up evaluation criteria.	Where the institution wants to be in 3-5 years

FIGURE 1

What Do You Want to Do and Why?

Strategic planning, if successful, may lead to an institution's success or continued improvement. It should be undertaken with a clear purpose in mind because it entails a great deal of work. It is particularly useful in a number of situations: (1) for major transformation initiatives; (2) as a basis for continuous improvement through cycles of strategic planning; (3) to solve specific problems; (4) to take more advantage of specific opportunities. Bryson (1995:7) says there are clear benefits although they might not all be realized: for instance, it promotes strategic thought and action, improves decision making, enhances institutional responsiveness and performance and helps people work together to fulfill their roles. He also points out, as do other writers, that strategic planning is not always advisable. A crisis needs immediate and decisive leadership, not a committee. If there is no support from leadership or implementation is unlikely, it is not a good idea to go ahead either.

We can think of strategic planning initiatives on a continuum with re-engineering at one extreme and incremental improvement at the other:

Re-engineering _____ Incremental Improvement

Re-engineering is drastic, risky, time-consuming, costly and most likely to cause insecurity that will result in resistance. However, it is also sometimes necessary. You just need to be very sure why you are doing it: the need for dramatic improvements in cost, quality, competitive advantage or just plain survival.

At the other end of the scale we have incremental improvement. You might look at your institution and decide that on the whole it is functioning well but that one or two departments need to be more effective. You could decide to undertake strategic planning processes in those departments only. However, you need to look at the institution as a system and note how a change in one subsystem would impact on another subsystem. A unit's strategic plan must always align with the institution's mission and not be at the expense of another unit's plans. "Alignment," in this context, is the process of ensuring that lower level goals support and flow logically from higher level strategies and the overall mission. You could also make an institution-wide strategic planning initiative the basis for the introduction of cycles of strategic planning in budget or cost units and thus begin a process of continuous quality improvement.

Should Strategic Planning be Top-Down or Bottom-Up?

Strategic planning is usually a combination of top-down and bottom-up processes in educational institutions. The quality of results from the combined process is usually better. The vision or general direction often comes from the top but actual strategies are developed with participation at all levels. Only in extreme circumstances would a President/ Principal/ CEO

or governing body step in and take unilateral top-down steps. Plans would meet a great deal of resistance and might break trust for years to come, effectively undermining any benefit from the change. Rowley and Sherman (2001) point out that a bottom-up model is important for motivation and for using the expertise of people who have to implement the plans. However, a purely bottom-up process could result in a lack of coordination among initiatives if not properly planned and managed. In business, strategic planning is often top down. In universities, the concept of shared governance is important and there is a tradition of participation by faculty in decision-making processes.

How Often Should Strategic Planning Be Done?

Strategic planning is usually undertaken in three to five year cycles. To attempt such in-depth planning every year would be onerous since it is not the work of a day or week. However, Bryson (1995) points out that strategic planning and its implementation should not take more than 10% of the time of top decision makers each year, between five and twenty-five days.

A written record of the strategic plan and the process provides a valuable reference tool for monitoring and evaluation. The document would consist of an executive summary, the strategic plan and any addenda.

Unless the strategic planning brings about complete and drastic transformation, the institution will be implementing these strategies alongside existing strategies. As the planning committee had baseline information about existing processes and strategies, there should be few problems, but some explicit mechanisms or guidelines might be necessary.

Sample Case Studies

Distance education can be distinguished from traditional, classroom education in a number of ways:

- the geographical distance of students from campus and each other;
- the geographical distance of faculty from campus in the case of adjunct faculty;
- the asynchronous nature of much of the learning, although technology is changing that to some extent;
- the constructed nature of academic activity, which is not simply a matter between faculty and students, because instructional designers, editors, critical readers and peers all contribute to the material developed;
- the technology-based nature of contact between faculty and students, whether through printed materials, audio and video tapes, radio programs, CD-ROMs or computers linked to the Internet; and
- limited physical plant.

It would be a good idea to read the five-step model outlined in the next section with specific institutions in mind, preferably your own. However, to illustrate some of the tools, and based on the features of distance education listed above, selected details are given about three fictitious institutions below: Home Network, Office College and Public University. Technology has been chosen as the main focus as it cuts across boundaries within institutions.

The three institutions have the following features in common:

- They have been in existence for over 25 years.
- From their inception they have been paper based, using study guides and/ or commercially produced textbooks.
- They use small teams of instructional designers to help faculty produce study material where applicable.
- They have gradually introduced audiotapes and videos in some courses.
- They have gradually introduced computers for use by staff for typing, recording and storing information, e-mailing students and so on.
- The institutions that have permanent teachers/ faculty members have supplied them with computers.

Home Network
- Pre-school, plus K-12
- Home schooling for children in remote areas, children who have disabilities that keep them house bound, children whose parents wish to home school them
- Permanent teachers
- Traditional age students for this type of schooling
- Publicly funded
- Limited computer access; little connectivity
- Study guides printed at state printer plus commercially produced textbooks, included in enrolment fee

Office College
- Variety of secretarial and office oriented short courses, 3-12 months
- Contract faculty
- Adults, usually working
- For-profit
- Computer and internet access by students: limited access at work or at home but there are internet cafes as well
- Study guides only, produced through desk top publishing equipment as needed, included in enrolment fee

Public University
- Degree granting; undergraduate, graduate and first professional degrees
- Permanent faculty
- Adults, usually working
- Publicly funded

- Computer and internet access by students: most students have access at work or at home and there are internet cafes as well
- Commercially produced textbooks that students buy themselves
- Study guides produced on own printing press, part of enrolment fee
- Vast storage because print on 3-5 year basis to optimize economies of scale

Preparation

Communicating the Vision

If the leadership (President/ Principal/ CEO, management team, board of trustees or head of a department) decides on strategic planning as a course of action, from the outset there should be clear communication to the constituencies of the expected outcomes of the process, its benefits and the potential ill effects if it is not done. The leadership must help constituencies to see the bigger picture, to see what management sees. Sometimes it will be the President/ Principal/ CEO who will have the idea to start a strategic planning process and he or she might first have to convince his or her management team of its value before communicating the idea to the rest of the institution. The leadership must build a shared vision for change and overcome the inevitable resistance, which might be particularly strong if the change goes against the institutional culture. It also depends on how much the institution is transformed through the strategic planning process; it might need to build up completely new structures and teams to implement plans. It will be more difficult than if an existing structure has to implement them. Institutions that use strategic planning as part of continuous quality improvement where the strategic direction is given by management but the strategic planning is done and implemented at budget unit level can implement more easily. A major transformation will probably need new knowledge and skills and these have to be offered well before time to create capacity and give people the tools they will need to implement the strategic plan. If there is no preparation, there will be no understanding and there will be resistance.

The leadership must keep returning to the benefits, following the "What's in it for me?" principle, talking to groups of constituents in language that they understand.

EXAMPLE

For instance, if institutions with little technology, like Home Network, Office College and Public University, decided to go high tech, staff would be nervous as they did not have the computer skills; teachers/ faculty would be resistant because not only did they lack computer skills but designing a course for delivery by CD ROM or on the web is a different from the instructional design needed for printed guides. One selling point, therefore, would be to offer relevant computer training to staff and teachers/ faculty. It would increase their general employability and equip them for the change. Teachers/ faculty could either be trained in

online delivery or instructional designers with the requisite skills could be trained or hired to work with faculty, thus allaying their fears.

The medium of communication is also important in winning people over. General e-mails or lengthy printed documents do not sell ideas. Some communication will certainly be in the form of e-mails and bulletins but that is one-way and does not allow people to develop shared meanings. People need personal communication (Rowley and Sherman 2001). The leadership should communicate directly to key opinion leaders, constituencies and heads of departments. During the process people on the strategic planning committee should use the same approach to give feedback to their constituencies. The process is time consuming but it would ensure more understanding and cooperation.

Another way of developing shared meanings is to conduct workshops and orientation sessions. This can be done at any stage in the process.

A further advantage of frequent communication is the development of a common vocabulary for central concepts. This common understanding is important for the committee as well as the rest of the institution.

Budgeting for the Process

Strategic planning takes both time and money. You need to include the costs of the process in the budget. Some costs could be

- capacity and team building for faculty and staff;
- team building for steering committee;
- hiring of outside consultants and facilitators (if this is really necessary);
- release of internal people for facilitation, support, etc.
- venues, materials, surveys, statistical analysis, general logistics, etc.

The budget is an important mechanism for implementing the strategic plan. Some members of the planning committee must be able to estimate the budgetary feasibility of proposed plans. The institution can decide to devote a certain percentage of future budgets to achieve their strategic vision. It is sensible to have a strategic planning activity before the budget cycle in order to integrate the two efficiently.

Choosing the Planning Committee

Some factors to be considered are

- the necessity of having the President/ Principal/ CEO lead the process if it is institution-wide or the head of the department if it concerns only one section;
- the necessity of having the key decision makers on the committee;

- the value of cross-functional teams for creative synergy;
- extensive participation to ensure buy-in, and what constituencies participants will represent;
  - ❏ inclusion of internal constituencies such as students, faculty, staff, governing body, administrators;
  - ❏ inclusion of some external stakeholders for objectivity;
- the inclusion of a facilitator and support staff.

Bryson (1995:52) recommends that, besides the key decision makers, the committee include middle management, who would have to manage the implementation of the plans, and technical core or frontline personnel, who would have to implement the plans. The top policy makers are important as they have internal and external links, a broad overview of the institution and control of resources. One of the most important people from the point of view of future budgeting would be someone who functions as the chief financial officer.

Small, for-profit institutions with perhaps ten permanent staff members and adjunct faculty will have a very different strategic planning dynamic than a public institution with a thousand onsite faculty and two thousand staff. The small, for-profit institution might be tempted to use a top-down, business model but it would be better if the process were inclusive and contract faculty and students were involved, even if through teleconferencing.

Large institutions might also be tempted to use a top-down committee and include only top management. That is a recipe for disaster as they will want to impose the plan they arrive at and they will meet with resistance. The leadership might want to use this option as it will make the committee containable and will be less time consuming. However, it would be better to adhere to principles of inclusivity. To ensure that the committee does not become too large, you can use subcommittees to extend the participation as data collection will probably involve many people. Inclusivity is also important for effective communication and future institutional alignment to strategies.

One could use a totally different approach in a very large institution: within the broad vision and mission of the institution, each cost/ budget unit could develop aligned strategic plans and submit these to the office responsible for institutional research and planning for approval every three years, with an annual update on how far the unit is in implementing its plan. This office would review and reconcile the reports, ensure that they were all aligned with the mission and vision and that no unit's plan disadvantaged another unit. This decentralized system of strategic planning might work if you were dealing with cost units that controlled their own resources because the definition of strategic planning includes the concept of making decisions about resource allocation. The planning office would have to report to someone very senior in the institution such as the Provost or a Dean of Institutional Research and Planning. The institution could even have a standing committee on strategic planning that reviewed the strategic plans and the annual reports on implementation.

A facilitator with group-process skills, who also understands the strategic planning process, should be appointed to

- focus on logistics;
- establish the ground rules in consultation with the committee, including a dead-lock-breaking mechanism;
- build trust;
- deal with problems in an open, honest way;
- promote positive group dynamics and give positive reinforcement;
- clarify issues in a variety of non-evaluative ways;
- coordinate activities;
- keep records;
- coach on use of tools;
- maintain focus;
- encourage participation, group problem solving and group decision making;
- strive for consensus; and
- surface conflict and use it constructively.

The leader is the person most concerned with substance and vision so he or she cannot be the facilitator, who must be content neutral. The facilitator could be someone external to the institution or an internal person who knows the institution well, knows how to facilitate or can learn, and is sufficiently senior to command respect and cooperation. The facilitator will need a support staff. It is useful to have a laptop and projector on hand to record ideas so that everyone can see them immediately and they are captured for the record. Using a laptop enables the facilitator to print out these ideas periodically so everyone has all the information. However, a system of flip charts or boards can be used instead, or in conjunction with the laptop.

Process

It is impossible to set the time frame from start to finish as the committee's work, once started, could take from three or four months, or even longer, depending on the scale of the initiative and the availability of the data. The committee would, of course, not meet every day during that period. It is useful up front to set a time limit so that you do a good job of the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, and have enough time to generate and consider appropriate strategies but also that you implement chosen strategies while they are still relevant. Bryson (1995) believes that an experienced committee could finish the work in a matter of weeks, not months, including the compilation and analysis of data, the writing of the plan and approvals from relevant bodies such as the governing board. Experience is one important factor and the other is the availability of the data. If the institution has a management information system for internal data collection, and a system for continually scanning the external environment, the strategic planning process can be expedited.

Pre-planning Phase

In fact, the committee's work is not the start of the process. You have a pre-planning phase in which you have to convince everyone of the importance of strategic planning. That could take months if you work in a large institution with conservative traditions. You need to

- communicate clearly the method and the results, including the benefits of changing or the negative consequences of not changing;
- build trust; and
- ensure that people have the skills to implement plan and therefore start training early.

Planning Phase

As mentioned already, the planning phase can last anywhere from three to four months, or longer. It is difficult to maintain motivation and momentum over a long period. It would be better to adopt the approach of making the best decisions you can within a realistic time frame.

The committee would probably need an initial meeting to study its assignment, decide on time frames, evaluate the mission and possibly brainstorm on the stakeholders. The time frames and responsible people would relate to data to be collected. If you have management information systems in place and regularly collect and interpret data, or if you have data from accreditation processes, TQM or other systems, you can save time as data collection can take a lion's share of the time. You can also use public sources of information such as the U.S. Department of Education, the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the American Council on Education (ACE), or similar agencies in your own country, as well as the web to speed up benchmarking activities.

Once the data were available, and the collection could take months, you could plan a two day or even week-long session, possibly a retreat, to study the institutional profile, report on and interpret data, use some of the tools and begin to think of strategic issues some strategies for addressing them. The profile of the unit or institution is used as starting point because it gives baseline information for comparison.

After this core meeting, you will need to a series of shorter meetings to complete the other steps in the process. You might even need to repeat part of the data gathering process if the information is not adequate.

Implementation Phase

Depending on the purpose of the strategic planning, and the urgency, the implementation phase can be short or can extend over a three to five year period. Implementation can also start concurrently with the planning process if a clear strategy is decided on for one issue and goals and objectives drawn up. If you manage to establish a change culture and make yours a learning institution, strategic planning cycles will become second nature.

Five Step Model

STEP 1: Where are We Now?

Step 1 would include:

- a study of the baseline information;
- a discussion of the mission and its function;
- a discussion of the difference between mission, vision and strategy;
- the collection of data;
- the use of an analytical tool such as the SWOT analysis; and
- the use of various data analysis tools that will yield statistical evidence.

Data would be interpreted in the light of emerging patterns and their meaning for the institution. People are often not convinced about the need for change but a fact-based analysis should reveal what is working and what is not and why and how closely the institution is aligned to its environment.

Baseline Information

You could have someone prepare and distribute a folder with the following information, including an objective description of institutional structure, administrative operations, staff-faculty relationships, etc:

- name of institution/ unit;
- purpose or mission;
- student enrolment;
- governance procedures;
- leadership, their qualifications and experience, and their portfolios, including a chart showing reporting lines;
- names, qualifications and functions of teachers/ faculty and staff;
- structure and design, including schools/ colleges, subjects/ disciplines;
- infrastructure: major technologies and facilities, key policies;
- factors determining success;
- current institutional challenges;
- beneficiaries, their relationship to the institution, and their expectations;
- regulatory environment including legislation and standards of accrediting body;
- collaboration partners;
- peers/ competitors/ leaders; and
- competitive position in distance education and in education generally: market share, competitive advantage (cost, differentiation, focus).

Rowley and Sherman (2001) have two short questionnaires that would enable an institution at this stage to place itself relative to other institutions on a grid that cross references resources, institutional philosophy – provider-oriented (create and disseminate knowledge) or consumer-oriented – and risk. This simple exercise would show the institution very quickly which strategies are appropriate. For instance, a public university with a large resource base and broad market could afford to be low cost and provider-oriented. However, a market-oriented corporate university with a narrow focus might have difficulty maintaining quality if it opted for a low-cost leadership strategy. It would be better advised to choose differentiation as a strategy, which would put it in the moderate risk category.

Mission

There is general support for but not consensus on the value of a mission statement or its use as the basis of strategic planning. The problem is that many mission statements are weak. Dolence, Rowley and Lujan (1997) think it better, for instance, to work on a couple of dozen key performance indicators (KPIs) and end with writing the mission once you understand what you are and do more clearly. The following are three of their KPIs, with the relevant definitions:

- Graduation rate: Percentage of full-time undergraduates who graduate in four years.
- Student satisfaction: Composite score from annual student needs and priorities survey.
- Tuition revenue: Tuition revenue collected net of institutional financial aid.

KPIs enable the institution to use the tool of cross-impact analysis: each element of the SWOT analysis, for instance, is cross-referenced to the KPIs to assess the relevance and impact. But, as the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) and other accrediting commissions focus on how the institution aligns its activities with its mission, this model starts with the mission.

Here are two quick checks you can do on your institution's mission:

1. Can any of your staff/ faculty state the mission accurately and completely if asked? If not, it might be too long and complex.

2. Ask your staff/ faculty to sum up in a couple of sentences what it is that your institution does. How closely does this synopsis resemble your mission statement? If it does not, it might be that your mission does not relate to the day-to-day operation of the institution, in which case it is a wish list and not who you are and what you do.
A mission is primarily for internal use and needs to establish the institution's identity

- in one or two sentences or a short paragraph at most;
- by stating core functions, values and direction;

- referring to a specific target group; and
- focusing on strengths and what distinguishes the institution from its competitors.

The mission should be specific and real, not a wish list or so generic so that it could apply to any distance education institution. Rowley and Sherman (2001) recommend that you do not try to be all things to all people. The mission must be clearly communicated to the institution and so much part of employees that they could recite it if asked.

For distance education, there are certain elements that an institution might want to stress:

- level: school level (K12) or post-secondary;
- non degree or degree;
- undergraduate or graduate or both;
- online; and
- particular focus like law or business or health care.

EXAMPLE

Home Network provides a distance education alternative for school age children in the K-12 category whose access to traditional schooling is limited or not a preferred choice.

Office College offers a variety of short secretarial and office courses through student-centered distance education. We provide the material, service and support you need to succeed.

Public University is a distance education institution that offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs to adults who wish to learn while they earn. We offer high quality, cost effective, self-paced degrees in the liberal arts, business, education and law and a full graduate research program.

You might need to revise the mission before you start or plan to revise it once you have finished, especially if it is overlong and impractical. For the moment you could merely highlight the portions that are really pertinent to who you are and what you do.

Difference Between Mission, Vision and Strategy

If your mission is who you are and what you do, your vision is the direction in next three to five years to take you where you want to be. If we link this to the earlier definitions of "planning" and "strategic planning," we can see that we plan on a regular basis in order to fulfill our mission but that strategic planning involves attaining our vision in the future.

A strategy is—

- a technically workable method
- that outlines actions and resources
- connected to specific and measurable goals and objectives
- that will enable you to achieve your vision and mission
- in a way acceptable/ beneficial to the key stakeholders.

To give another perspective on this concept, Bryson (1995:130) states: "A strategy may be thought of as a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, actions, decisions, and/ or resource allocations that defines what an institution is, what it does, and why it does it."

The strategic planning process would generate a number of related strategies to address strategic issues and achieve its purposes. They should relate to one another so that the result is coherent with the mission and vision.

Collection of Data

Strategic planning is a fact-based process for which you need a variety of data, both quantitative and qualitative. You already have much of your baseline data in your institutional profile.

Stakeholders

At an early meeting you could brainstorm to make a list of your stakeholders or beneficiaries if this information is not already included in your profile or if the given information seems inadequate. Your list would probably include students, alumni, faculty, staff, shareholders in the case of for-profit institution, communities, employers, professional bodies (as in law or health care), regulators, booksellers, providers of computers and software, and so on. A department's beneficiaries would include the larger institution. Once the list had been drawn up, you would have to order it in terms of the relative importance of each group. You might make lists of how each group influences the institution, what you consider to be each group's needs, what you need from them, etc. Bryson (1995) considers an analysis of the stakeholder group of paramount importance because ultimately the institution has to satisfy them and judge the institution on their criteria. Such criteria can be elicited in a questionnaire. They can be compared to the list of needs drawn up by the committee to check if the institution meets the criteria or not.

Internal Environment

You need information about your internal environment. You should have existing data from management information systems if these exist, e.g. on staff qualifications, materials and courses, student satisfaction, completion and graduation rates and employability. You need

to describe your current processes or strategies, possibly giving individual descriptions for different functions: How is material produced? How are enrolments conducted? You will need your financial reports of the last couple of years. You should also have existing data from outcomes assessment for DETC or other accrediting body; for example, completion and graduation rates and other outcomes evidence. You might have data from TQM/ ISO processes, if you use them. If you do not have such information, you will have to form subcommittees to gather the data.

When analyzing information on processes, check if they are in line with your mission, if there is an overlap between departments, and so on. Is anything innovative going on in particular departments that could be utilized by other sections of the institution?

External Environment

Other data might need more extensive investigation, especially information about your external environment. If we accept that the main purpose of strategic planning is to align your institution with the external environment, then you need to investigate

- your peers, competitors and leaders in the distance education and traditional education sector;
- education legislation;
- technology development;
- political, social and economic trends
- and so on.

Educational institutions exist to serve external purposes and should therefore focus more than they do on what is going on in the external environment that could affect the way they operate or what they teach. Such environmental scanning should be ongoing, particularly by key decision and policy makers, but also within each sector of the institution, whether administrative or academic. What is new on the human resources front? What does the latest research say about facilitating learning? How does particular legislation impact the institution's operations?

Interpreting Data

The research needs to be rigorous to yield useful data. It would take time to accumulate data if it is not already available, possibly a month or two. The subcommittees would have to report to the main committee. Various tools can be used to extract meaning from data in terms of relevant trends, predictions and patterns (e.g. Pareto charts, run charts, and so on).

EXAMPLE

Public University wants to poll its students for suggestions on improvements. They have 25, 000 students so they randomly select ten percent of this number to keep the data manageable; that is, they ask 2, 500 students to submit five suggestions each. They have a 20% response rate; that is, 500 students respond. In total they thus have 2, 500 suggestions. These suggestions are grouped into categories suggested by the responses themselves and the total number in each category added. A Pareto Chart is drawn, with the number of responses on the left vertical axis and the categories themselves on the horizontal axis, starting with the category with the highest number. An additional vertical axis is drawn on the right, with percentages from 0 to 100. In a way, a line graph is superimposed on the bar graph. A mark is placed on or above each bar, corresponding with the cumulative percentage it represents. The marks are joined. The line graph then rises towards the right. Horizontal and vertical lines are to show where 80% falls. The purpose is to show which suggestions fall into the top 80%.
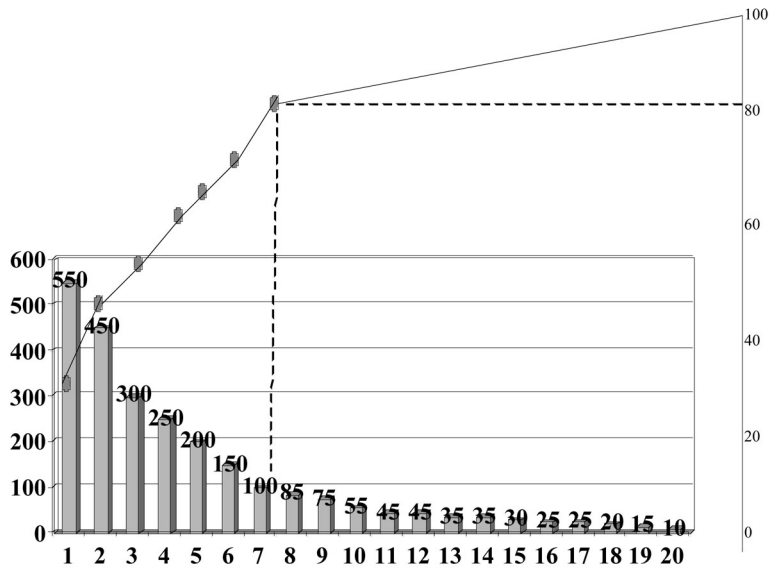
Student Suggestions for Improvements

KEY

1. More contact with faculty	550	22%
2. More timely return of assignments	450	40%
3. Submit assignments online	300	52%
4. Register online	250	62%
5. Contact with other students	200	70%
6. More reference resources	150	76%
7. Access study material online	100	80%
8. Use year mark as final mark	85	
9. Lower fees	75	
10. Internships	55	

11. Credit through RPL	45
12. Timely response to correspondence with staff	45
13. More lenient marking	35
14. Fuller comments on assignments	35
15. Chance to resubmit assignments	30
16. Write exams without meeting minimum requirements	25
17. Tuition refund if you don't pass	25
18. Materials written more simply	20
19. Cheaper textbooks	15
20. Automatic second chance at examination	10

FIGURE 2

Pareto's Principle of 80:20 can be interpreted in many ways but, for the purposes of this analysis, you want to devote most of your energy to the most important issues, not devote 80% of your time to the lowest 20% of the issues. It is, of course, not necessary to draw up a chart to determine which issues fall into the 80% category but a visual aid can sum up a great deal of data. In this case, the first seven categories account for 2000 of the 2500 suggestions (80%) and thus constitute the most important issues. Could these problems be addressed by increasing the use of new technologies in the institution? Yes, they could, although there would also be other ways of addressing them. Computer technology is expensive and soon obsolete so it might not be the best solution in all instances. The needs of the students also have to be considered: some might not have access to computers or the Internet. Could you afford to go completely online and lose those students? You have a teach-out commitment and would have to honor it for students already enrolled.

You can also use evidence to back up quantitative data. For instance, a straight graduation rate says nothing. You can benchmark your graduation rate against that of an equivalent institution. You can say how many graduates receive employment, promotion, etc. after graduating. You can poll employers to find out what they think about the performance of your graduates. You can survey alumni to ask how they think they have benefited from studying with you. This information gives substance to quantitative data.

You can add items later if they crop up. This is not a closed list. If there is new legislation or a new educational technology is developed, it should not be ignored.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

A SWOT analysis is used to plot internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. It can be used either before or after the collection of data. Before the committee had all the data, it could draw up the chart based on current knowledge and perceptions. It would make an interesting point of comparison once the data became available and an analysis conducted. Otherwise, the lists could be drawn up after the data were available. Bryson (1995) recommends that the committee start with the opportunities and threats; that is, it should focus on the external environment first.

EXAMPLE (Home Network)

Internal		External	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
Well resourced and financially sound Teachers have all worked at school for at least five years Efficient production and distribution of material Fulfills demonstrated need	Results lower than those of traditional schools Little parent involvement in planning Little interaction for students Little access for students to additional materials	New technology State building computer capacity in traditional schools	New entrants into market

FIGURE 3

EXAMPLE (Office College)

Internal		External	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
Experienced professionals acting as faculty Excellent desktop publishing equipment 93% completion rate	Relatively small enrolment No experience in electronic or online delivery	New technology Most businesses going online so students have access to computers and internet at work Internet cafes	New entrants using new technologies

FIGURE 4

EXAMPLE (Public University)

Internal		External	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
Well qualified and experienced faculty	Great investment in print technology: conversion costs	New technologies	New technologies
Efficient production and distribution of material	Instructional designers not able to do electronic course design	State keen to promote science and technology education, possibly through grants	New entrants into market
Course completion rates good	Graduation rates not on par with equivalent institutions	Potential partnerships in sector	Generally shrinking funding from state

FIGURE 5

These are obviously abbreviated SWOT analyses. It should be clear that these points need discussion and elaboration. For instance, why are new technologies both an opportunity and a threat for Public University? Clearly they are an opportunity because their use would enable the university to expand its operations. It could be a threat for at least three reasons. First, if they do not embrace the new technologies, they could lose students. Second, their investment in print technology makes the switching costs high. Third, using new technologies does not guarantee success. A scan of the external education environment would have told them that many prominent universities have failed in expensive on-line business enterprises; for instance, in early 2003 Columbia University's on-line learning venture, Fathom, with a powerful consortium behind it, closed after losing millions.

You can ask many questions in order to help you analyze the internal and external environments before you decide whether items are positive or negative. You might decide to discard some answers as irrelevant. When gathering information on the internal environment you need to be objective. In order to achieve a balanced view, you should use surveys to students and alumni as a tool as well as relying on current faculty or staff to produce the answers. You should look for patterns across the data collected.

Some Questions on Internal Environment

Input (resources)

What are the institution's assets? (financial, physical, educational, human, intangible – reputation, connections)

What are the high demand programs and services?

Are there low demand programs/ services?

What is the quality of the human resources?

What are the key competencies of the institution?

What are the fiscal and capital resources?

Is the institution financially sound? (check financial statements using tools to establish profitability, liquidity and leverage)

What is the quality and what are the strengths and weaknesses of leadership and governance?

Process (present strategies)

How does the culture work in the institution? Are there academic and other traditions to consider?

What activities does the institution engage in?

Does the institution have a management information system?

What policies and procedures does the institution have on academic matters?

What policies and procedures does the institution have on administrative matters?

What is the institution's design? (structure – leadership, governance, reporting relationships – functions, infrastructure, integration)

How does the institution communicate with its students and how does it monitor the quality and effectiveness of this communication?

Are students able to access information about programs and services at times convenient to them?

How efficient and effective are student services: assistance, complaints, advisory service, etc.

How is student satisfaction measured? How often? What is the level of student satisfaction with the institution and individual faculty, staff, services, programs, and courses? How is the information used to effect improvements?

How does the institution communicate with stakeholders and how is the quality and effectiveness of this communication monitored?

How does the institution gather information from stakeholder groups and how is it used?

How do people learn about the institution?

Output (performance)

What is the institution's performance like (products, benchmarks)?

General

What are the areas of excellence?

What are areas that need improvement?

What are the key performance areas influencing the institution's success?

What are the internal political realities?

FIGURE 6

Some Questions on External Environment

Forces and Trends

Have there been any changes in the political environment or are they likely to occur?

Have there been any changes in education legislation that will have an impact on distance education?

Have there been any significant economic changes or will there be?

Have there been social changes or might there be?

How has technology changed and how will it change?

Have there been changes regarding knowledge production and use? (distribution of knowledge, new disciplines or multidisciplinary work, broader base of research: applied and pure)

What are the patterns of enrolment in distance education and are they likely to change?

Competitors and Collaborators

Who are the institutions direct and indirect competitors? Are they likely to affect its market? How is

information on competitors and on leading institutions gathered? How is this information used?

Are there any new entrants into the field (i.e. traditional institutions adding distance education) and how will they affect the institution's market?

If the institution is competing internationally, what is the situation in each country in which it operates in terms of legislation, ease of postal delivery, availability of technology, etc.

Key Resources

What are the resources and where do they come from?

Does the institution receive public funding?

Are the students eligible for funding?

If the institution has permanent faculty who do research, what funding do they bring in?

Do alumni contribute?

What donor funding does the institution receive?

FIGURE 7

Remember to start your list of strategic issues as you go along so that good ideas are not forgotten. Pose the issues as questions or challenges.

STEP 2: Where Do We Want to Be?

Step 2 would include looking at the data from analyses already conducted in the light of the vision.

- Look at what could affect you. Thorough discussion is needed at this stage. You need to look for patterns and trends in the data. Are some external factors more important than others given internal strengths, mission and vision?

- Macro and micro levels: Strategic planning is a macro level activity but implementation takes place at the macro level. How prepared are the people who have to implement the strategies? How will the trends identified influence the institution as a whole in future? How will they influence specific operations of the institution?

- Growth and survival: How can you use your present strengths to take maximum advantage of future opportunities and minimize or overcome weaknesses and threats? Do you perceive gaps in the analysis that you could address because of your strengths and thus grow your institution?

At this stage you can begin to make your own future, to be proactive instead of reactive to changes in the environment. You should end up with a list of strategic issues facing the institution, or particular departments in the institution. Once again, issues would be noted as they came up. If sufficient information is available to make a decision on a particular issue without affecting your ability to take later decisions, such a strategy could be implemented immediately. For instance, it might become clear that you need to rewrite your mission statement

at this stage, now that you know more about who you are and what you do in relation to the external environment, as Dolence, Rowley and Lujan (1997) recommend.

Bryson (1995:155) argues that after two cycles of successful strategic planning an institution would be ready to write an idealistic and challenging "vision of success": "how the organization should look when it is working extraordinarily well in relation to its environment and its key stakeholders." The vision itself could be expressed very shortly – "To be the leader in online distance education" – but would include additional information: the mission, the basic philosophy/ values/ culture, goals and strategies, performance criteria, rules important for decision-making, and ethical standards for employees. However, Bryson acknowledges that this vision of success is not necessary for the success of the institution and might be more than the committee is able to produce.

SAMPLE VISION

Home Network will be the leader in multi-media distance education for K-12 students and strive to provide successful home schooling outcomes in collaboration with the state, the community, parents and students.

Such a statement reads much like an ordinary mission statement. Note, however, how different it is from the earlier mission statement, as it now includes references to multi-media, successful outcomes and collaboration with key stakeholders.

STEP 3: Determining Strategic Issues and Appropriate Strategies

Many strategic planning models move straight from the data analysis to the generation of strategies. Bryson (1995) has an intervening step that makes sense: determining the strategic issues to be addressed based on the data. He calls it the most real step in the process as committee members bring together all the knowledge they have acquired from the data analysis in order to make real decisions that will affect the future of the institution. Each person could be given a week to draw up a list of issues. Issues are posed as questions.
EXAMPLE

> Home Network
> > How can we improve students' results?
>
> Office College
> > How can we improve our market share using technology?
>
> Public University
> > How can we retain our market position in the light of new technologies used by new entrants in the sector?

These would then be discussed by the committee and the person proposing the issue should be able to defend why it is strategic. Some criteria would be

- the issue's relevance to the mission;
- the needs and criteria of the stakeholders;
- factors revealed by the environmental analysis;
- the immediacy of the problem;
- the institution's or unit's core competencies and resources;
- whether the institution can, in fact, do anything about the issue; and
- whether anything detrimental would happen if the issue were not addressed.

Bryson states that it is important to focus exclusively on the issues at this stage and not potential solutions.

In the end, the list has to be reduced to a manageable length of the most important issues for the future of the institution. A tool such as multi-voting can be used here.

Once the key strategic issues have been decided, the committee must decide on specific strategies, which are the solutions to the problem posed by the issue. The main tool for this step is brainstorming to generate as many potential strategies as the committee can. It is the most creative step in the process and creativity should not be inhibited by an early extinction of ideas, however impractical they might sound. The facilitator will have to explain the process very clearly and ensure that there is no premature discussion and evaluation of ideas.

It is important not to think small. What would you like to see? What could stop you? How could you overcome this barrier?

 EXAMPLE

    Home Network
    Issue: How can we improve students' results?

    Strategies:
- give every child a computer and internet access
- train every teacher to develop material for electronic delivery
- offer an online library and electronic encyclopedia
- change to an electronic office system

    Barrier:
- funding

    Ways to overcome barrier:
- take advantage of the state's technology drive in traditional schools
- Find a private sponsor/ raise funds some way to buy everyone a computer
- arrange with telephone companies to provide free internet access
- ask a bank to sponsor internet access

You should also add strategies based on more pragmatic actions, such as the following. The more ideas you have, the more likely it is that you will have some very good ones.

Strategies:
- form partnerships with local TV stations
- increase active contact with students on the telephone
- increase assignments
- write supplementary material
- offer CD ROMs as an alternative to print for those with computers
- ask students to attend classes for a week every semester
- coach them directly for the examinations for the high school diploma
- test students periodically and provide remedial material
- contract teachers in schools near to the students to provide help if necessary
- write a teaching guide for parents
- teleconference with parents
- form partnerships with libraries around the country to allow students to borrow material and have it posted to them

It is a good idea to start a strategy with an action verb – increase, acquire, train, etc. – for example, "increase enrolment by 10%;" "reduce budget deficits;" "increase student satisfaction."

In preparation for this session, the committee members could be asked to do some silent brainstorming: that is, write down their ideas prior to the meeting. At the meeting they would call out their ideas, which would be written on a chart or typed in a large font on to a laptop attached to a projector so everyone could see. If you were using charts or a board, one useful method would be for the ideas to be written on post-its, as they could be stuck on to sheets of paper, which saves rewriting. In meeting people could call out ideas at random or the facilitator might conduct a round robin activity. Once the ideas were exhausted, they could be discussed and evaluated. The pros and cons of each idea would be noted. Multi-voting could be used again if necessary.

The committee would then write long-term goals for each, and short-term objectives for each goal that were challenging but reasonable.

In large institutions, it is also possible for the planning committee to delegate the generation of strategies, goals and objectives to task teams at the operation level which would deal with the issues: student services, academic deans or program managers, curriculum developers, registrar's office, IT department, and so on. Their experience and expertise would ensure practical plans and their participation would encourage support for the strategies.

It might seem that all the strategies would be implemented simultaneously but that is not so. It might well happen early in the process that an issue is identified and a very good, practical strategy is approved by the committee and implemented long before decisions have been made on other issues and strategies, if it is practical within budgetary constraints and if it is clear that the implementation will not limit future action. The committee can also choose an incremental implementation option and start with easier strategies first for early successes, which will increase motivation. This is perfectly acceptable and is part of the flexible nature of strategic planning.

STEP 4: Implementation/ Deployment

An important point of agreement in the literature is that success rests on implementation. There is a great deal of value in the actual process: team building, participation, etc. but time and money are wasted if strategies are not implemented. Successful implementation starts with the people and the preparation done before the strategic planning began. Do the people who have to implement the plans understand what has to be done? Do they have the knowledge, skills and resources to do it? Can they see the benefits for them in doing it? Teamwork is important, as are effective communication, delegation and accountability.

One of the tools for the implementation is a chart showing

- each strategy, the associated three to five year goals, and their one year objectives;
- action steps: who is responsible for implementing each strategy, when, with what resources.

EXAMPLE: Public University

Strategies	Goals	Objectives	Person/unit Responsible	Time Frame	Resources
Phase in online courses	Train instruc-tional designers	Enrol five design-ers in 2 semester courses	Director: HR	12 months	Fees of $530 per course per semester: $5300
	Train faculty	Contract expert to write online pro-gram for faculty development in teaching and assessing online	Director: HR	6 months for program development; 6 months for training	$2500
	Identify courses that can serve as pilots				
	Obtain software that will provide an integrated administrative and academic platform	Select five courses	Academic Dean	6 months	Time of faculty, and marketing, design & IT staff
		Elicit demonstrations from companies	Director: IT	6 months to do research	Computer lab for demonstrations and training
		Train staff and faculty in use of preferred program		6 months to conduct training	

FIGURE 8

If there is time, strategies can be piloted on a small scale to test them and "debug" them before they are implemented on a large scale. If this is not possible, the implementation is monitored and strategies or actions are "debugged" if necessary if something is not working. The formative evaluation that occurs every three months should detect any problems that are not immediately apparent. A strategy is not immediately abandoned if a problem occurs or if circumstances change; it is adapted. This adaptive learning is not a weakness, but a strength, and a key characteristic of a learning institution, in which everyone is a change agent. In such an institution, people feel confident to voice ideas, point out something that is not working, and suggest practical changes. They work in teams, often across departmental boundaries, to achieve the best results. Every administrator, manager, member of staff and teacher/ faculty member is aware of the rapid pace of change in the outside environment and seeks to align the institution or particular department with the changes to the benefit of the students, the educational enterprise and any other stakeholders. Furthermore, people's skills – technical, interpersonal and conceptual – are continually improved through training opportunities.

STEP 5: Monitoring and Evaluation

Strategies are most likely to be implemented if they are systematically monitored. Thus, before the strategic planning committee disbands, a monitoring committee or permanent strategic planning committee should be set up to ensure implementation. This committee should comprise the key decision makers in the institution. A specific office might actually gather the information annually and present it to the committee at a meeting. Dolence, Rowley and Lujan (1997) recommend a checklist that will record whether the activity is "on track," "delayed," "completed" or "abandoned." The committee should discuss not only if certain tasks have been completed but also consult the plan to see if completing these tasks has achieved the desired results.

Quarterly reviews are a sensible measure to ensure that plans are on track. These can be conducted by the unit responsible for the implementation and constitute formative evaluation. Objectives are meant to be achieved by the end of a year, and their evaluation constitutes summative evaluation, which must not only reveal outputs and tasks completed, but must also focus on outcomes, larger meanings, whether the tasks or outputs were worth the time and effort and whether they achieved the intended goal or strategy.

List of Tools

Software is available for strategic planning giving tools for analysis and interpretation. It is probably more suited to a business environment but would make drawing flowcharts or Pareto charts easier. A strategic planning exercise would need the services of someone used to working with the statistical processing of hard data. This person would have to coach the committee on the use of relevant tools.

Benchmarking: This tool helps you to compare your institution or unit systematically to similar institutions or units. Use public information first and then personal contact and be prepared to share your information with your partners. Do not use just one institution; look at several (five would be a good number) and look at patterns in the data. You can access strategic plans of other institutions on the web to see how people you might identify as competitors/ peers/ leaders are doing in comparison with your institution.

Brainstorming: This is a structured technique to generate a list of ideas through an interactive group process. Only once the ideas are all recorded is there a critical review of them and they are prioritized.

- Silent individual brainstorm: each person first writes his or her own ideas, probably at home, and then brings them to share with the group.
- Affinity diagram: write ideas on post-its and systematically group them into categories, which are then labeled.
- Group brainstorm: either randomly or round robin people volunteer ideas that are recorded without discussion or evaluation.

Communication: Communication can be in any medium from printed documents to e-mails to personal conversations. Personal communication is advisable in many instances in the strategic planning process rather than broad, impersonal institutional communiqués because it is not business as usual: you want to "win friends and influence people," to involve them and reassure them.

Conflict resolution: A facilitator must have various ways of resolving conflicts, from airing opposition to an agreed-upon deadlock breaking mechanism.

Consensus building: This is a win-win tool whereby an issue is discussed from multiple perspectives with the aim of arriving at agreement. It is also known as "getting to yes."

Criteria matrix: This tool helps team systematically evaluate each proposed idea. A cross-impact analysis is an example of such a matrix as it helps the team evaluate each factor against a criterion such as the mission statement or criteria such as key performance indicators.

Data display: You need to reduce large amounts of data to manageable proportions in a concise visual display that enables you to see trends. There are numerous ways of displaying data such as the following:

- control chart: a line graph that displays data from a process, the average of the data and statistically-determined upper and lower control limits;

- histogram: a bar chart summarizing frequency and distribution of data;
- Pareto chart: a bar chart with data arranged from highest to lowest, highlighting areas of major concern and separating them from trivial matters;
- pie chart: a circle divided to show, for instance, percentage of budget devoted to various functions, where the information adds up to 100%;
- run chart: a line graph showing performance data over time; and
- scatter diagram: a chart showing the possible relationship between one variable and another using paired samples of data, with the possible cause on the horizontal axis and the possible effect on the vertical.

Data collection: Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, etc. can be used to elicit required information. It is valuable to set up data bases and maintain them for future use.

Financial analysis: Look at profitability (return on equity: net income divided by shareholder's equity), liquidity (current assets divided by current liabilities; or acid test), leverage (debt-to-equity ratio: total liabilities or long term debt divided by equity) using financial ratios to analyze income statement (private providers) or statement of revenues and expenses, balance sheet, statement of equity (private providers) or statement of net assets/ fund balance, statement of cash flows.

Goal setting: Goals should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time dimensioned.

Ground rules: This is a way of setting meeting behavior in advance: e.g. start and end on time; stick to agenda; do not speak for longer than two minutes and no second opportunity until everyone else who wants to speak has spoken; listen to others; sensitive issues are confidential, etc.

Meeting management: A facilitator must be able to draw up clear agendas in consultation with the leadership and stick to them. He or she must also be able to control people who would otherwise dominate discussion and create a space for everyone to contribute. He or she must seek to clarify issues through checking and paraphrasing and sum up at appropriate places.

Multi-voting: This tool gives you a systematic way of narrowing ideas after discussion. Each person is given a number of votes and can cast them for any ideas. For instance, each person might be given three red stickers and invited to place them against any three ideas. It might be possible to give each person a larger number of votes, totaling, for example, a third of the ideas. If the list is still too long, the process can be repeated with each person having fewer votes until the list is manageable.

SWOT analysis: This is a listing of the internal strengths and weakness of an institution and the external opportunities and threats in order to provide baseline data for analysis in the light of the institution's mission and vision.

Team building: This tool can be used to make the strategic planning committee more effective or to put in place new structures to implement strategies. It is generally held that teams are no larger than about twelve people.

Resources

Business model

Michael E. Porter, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*, Freepress, 1998.

Non Profit model

John Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement*, Jossey-Bass, (revised) 1995.

Education model

Michael G. Dolence, Daniel James Rowley and Herman D. Lujan, *Strategic Change in Colleges and Universities: Planning to Survive and Prosper*, Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Michael G. Dolence, Daniel James Rowley and Herman D. Lujan, *Working Toward Strategic Change: A Step-by-Step Guide to the Planning Process*, Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Daniel James Rowley and Herbert Sherman, *From Strategy to Change: Implementing the Plan in Higher Education*, Jossey-Bass, 2001

Website of the Society for College and University Planning: www.scup.org.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL

1601 18th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009-2529
(202) 234-5100
http://www.detc.org
e-mail: detc@detc.org