This is a template for a strategic plan. Each section is described, with a few examples and a (hopefully) comprehensive checklist. There is no licence - it is free to use, copy and distribute.

Mission Statement

A mission statement should document the purpose of an organization's existence. It provides the cornerstone of all other strategic planning exercises. Here are a few examples:

- Our mission is to grow the company by becoming the best value supplier. We will do this by leveraging our superior supply chain management expertise.
- Our mission is to increase profits by developing our reputation as the highest quality provider of environmental screening reports. We strive to save our client's many times their investment in via fast, efficient, and cost effective regulatory approvals.
- Our mission is to grow the company by opening more restaurants throughout the region. We will do this by developing brand recognition and by focusing on customer satisfaction. We will serve fast, quality food and responding to customer complaints in a timely and respectful fashion.
- Our mission is to purchase stores throughout the southwest region, and consolidate and modify the supply chain to product higher margins. The preferred exit strategy is an outright sale of the company within 5 years.
- Our mission is to grow the company by hiring and training a strong sales team, which will seek to build relationships for the long term. We will focus on the sales effort which will in turn result in higher production, and lower cost per unit.

Corporate Goals

Corporate goals itemize the individual, concrete things to which the organization will strive in order to achieve its mission. They represent the ways in which the mission statement will be focused. A strategic plan should have 3 – 5 corporate goals. Here are a few examples:

- Lower cost of polypropylene supplies to be the lowest in the industry.
- Increase consultant past performance score.
- Reduce manufacturing waste to produce higher margins.
- Reduce customer complaints below industry average.
- Increase sales of product by 15% per year for 5 years.
- Increase profit by 10% for 3 years.
- Open 10 new restaurants in each state we do business in.
- Add new features to our product.
- Hire a key technical person by a certain date.
- Become debt free and cash flow positive by a certain date.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Every organization has strengths and weaknesses. Just like individuals, you can't be good at everything. Those organizations that focus on strengths to set strategic direction are much more likely to succeed.

This part of the strategic plan talks about past performance and potential future results in certain areas. It is often achieved with the help of a SWOT analysis.

- Product quality
- Product cost
- Reputation
- Supply costs
- Expertise
- Project management
- Reduction of risk for clients/customers
- Low internal risk
- Speed of delivery
- Speed of manufacturing
- Product ease of use
- Communication with clients/customers
- Customer support

Opportunities

This part of the strategic plan presents opportunities the organization can pursue. They can be prioritized and ranked for efficiency and communication.

- Increase quality of product
- Add features
- Reduce manufacturing cost
- Increase selling price
- Reduce bottlenecks in supply logistics
- Hire key people
- Train existing employees
- Add more clients
- Reduce CAPEX or OPEX
- Increase number of units produced
- Reduce, reuse, or recycle waste
- Increase conversion rate
- Add locations / dealers
- Increase quality of dealers
- Increase stakeholder satisfaction
- Reduce schedule variance
- Increase charge out rate
- Build client relationships

Threats

Although the primary focus of strategy should be offensive, not defensive, major threats to a strategic plan should be identified and mitigation plans developed.

- New competitors
- Existing competitors developing new products
- Increasing cost of suppliers
- Decreasing market demand
- Disruption of production
- Customer dissatisfaction increasing
- Quality of work/product decreasing
- Acts of God
- Loss of key people
- Systems and processes becoming obsolete
- Bankruptcy of supplier
- Client dissatisfaction
- Customer inability to pay

External Factors

This part of the strategic plan identifies and prioritizes the external factors that affect an organization. Every day many factors push and pull on a company, some affecting its success more than others. A complete list of all of these factors allows a proper analysis of the strategic direction the company should take.

- Government regulations
- Environmental laws
- Taxes
- Political instability
- Trade restrictions
- Economic growth
- Market demand for product or service
- Inflation
- Interest rates, debt financing, and opportunity cost
- Currency exchange rates
- Demographics
- Population growth
- Changing attitudes towards products
- Products becoming obsolete
- Services becoming unnecessary
- Competitors developing imitation/substitution products
- Forced investment in product upgrades to keep up

Consider using a PEST analysis to summarize this section.

Competitors Analysis

Although strategic analysis should be focused internally, not externally, a good overview of the competitive situation in the marketplace is important. The strategy of the competition can influence the strategic direction of the organization. Changes in future strategy, and likely future decisions by the competition can influence the decision to pursue different markets, develop new products, and so forth.

- Number of competitors
- Strength of competitors
- Ability of competitors to create imitation/substitution products
- Barriers to entry
- Number of suppliers, and their ability of suppliers to raise prices
- Strength of suppliers
- Ability to switch suppliers
- Number of buyers, and their ability to drive prices down

Market Analysis

A good market analysis is essential to an effective strategic plan. This part of the strategic plan focuses on supply and demand for the product/service being offered.

- Market size
- Market size increasing/decreasing
- Profitability of key players
- Logistics and distribution channels
- Cost structure
- Primary success factors

Financial Projections

All strategy is focused on the bottom line. For a private company, this is undoubtedly the only (or main) reason for creating the strategic plan, but for non-profits the presentation of a strong product or service is an equally valid motivator. This part of a strategic plan identifies the anticipated financial rewards from the actions within the strategic plan, or in the case of a non-profit, the financial ramifications of the strategy. Management will return to this as the primary reason for approving the strategic plan and thus it should present financial metrics which are satisfactory to the organization. It should contain a table or spreadsheet for sufficient detail, and have the following information (as required).

- Capital (one-time) expenditures
- Operating (ongoing) expenditures
- Anticipated revenue
- Maintenance budget
- Contingencies
- Salaries/wages
- Office expenses
- Products
- Equipment
- Equipment repair
- Consultants
- Contractors