

PPSEL Strategic Planning Workshop 2/4/10: the SWOT Analysis

Workshop Learning Targets

- I can identify the primary SWOTs for PPSEL.
- I can analyze the existing 4 PPSEL strategic initiatives in terms of the SWOTs.
- I can explain the importance of a SWOT analysis in the strategic planning process.
- I can describe the adaptive challenge and technical challenge distinction and how that relates to the SWOT analysis/strategic planning process.

Agenda

1) overview of the strategic planning process and SWOT analysis; 2) small group analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses; 3) whole group share out; 4) either small or whole group analysis of Opportunities & Threats; 5) analyze the existing PPSEL initiatives in terms of the SWOTs; 6) relationship of the adaptive & technical challenges lens to the SWOT analysis/strategic planning process; 7) follow up activity – review and revise initiatives, committee goals & benchmarks using the information from this evening (will follow with email instructions).

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next year or more (usually no longer than 5 years out), how it's going to get there and how it'll know if it got there or not. The focus of a strategic plan is usually on the entire organization, while the focus of a business plan is usually on a particular product, service or program.

There are a number of approaches one can take to the strategic planning process - the general 7 phases in the process include: 1) Establish Vision, Mission, Values (which we have); 2) Conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats); 3) Establish Goals and Strategies to Achieve Them; 4) Establish Benchmarks/Milestones that serve as indicators of Goal Achievement; 5) Build Accountability: Identify People to achieve the goals, their roles/responsibilities, realistic timeline; 6) Finalize and Communicate to Stakeholders the Strategic Plan Document; 7) Acknowledge Completion of Goals and Celebrate Achievements.

SWOT Analysis – Strengths (S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O), Threats (T)

A SWOT analysis involves a scan of the internal and external environment and is an important part of the strategic planning process. Environmental factors internal to the organization usually can be classified as strengths or weaknesses and those external to the organization can be classified as opportunities or threats. The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the organization's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which it operates.

Strengths: attributes of the organization helpful to achieving a given set of goals.

Weaknesses: attributes of the organization harmful in achieving a given set of goals.

Opportunities: external conditions helpful to achieving a given set of goals.

Threats: external conditions harmful to achieving a given set of goals.

S-O strategies pursue opportunities that are a good fit to the organization's strengths.

W-O strategies overcome weaknesses to pursue opportunities.

S-T strategies identify ways that the organization can use its strengths to reduce its vulnerability to external threats.

W-T strategies establish a defensive plan to prevent the organization's weaknesses from making it highly susceptible to external threats.

Current PPSEL Strategic Plan Initiatives (another word for goals; adapted from ANSER)

Initiative 1: Provide a rigorous curriculum within the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound School Reform Model that produces high academic achievement, strong character, and service to others and honors the context of our community.

Initiative 2: Promote the vitality and integrity of the organizational infrastructure, including its culture, community and compliance with all applicable laws.

Initiative 3: Provide the financial resources necessary to establish and maintain the fiscal stability of the school, as well as to pursue the financial resources necessary to pay existing loans and determine future facility.

Initiative 4: Increase school size to meet PPS's long term vision for growth and service.

Source: Field Guide for Non-Profit Strategic Planning and Facilitation.