



# Strategic Planning Guide

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Consulting, LLC

# Strategic Planning

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## Introduction

This guide is intended to help meet the challenges we face in preparing for the future using strategic planning. It is important to balance the work of meeting our current public health challenges as we prepare to take on the new work that comes our way. And we must be flexible. Unstable funding and shifting state and national priorities requires us to make strategic adjustments along the way. Some of the areas in this guide have used the Washington Department of Health (DOH) examples.

**Strategic Planning** is the process by which an organization envisions the future and develops goals, strategies, objectives and action plans to achieve that future.



It can sometimes help to identify the things that helped, and hurt, previous planning efforts in order to overcome them next time. List some of the barriers to the strategic planning process that you experienced in the past. Then, list some of the things that aided your success.

BARRIERS	AIDS
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Think of ways to avoid the barriers you identified. Determine ways to incorporate these aids to help benefit this strategic planning process.

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One of the key things you will need to do to ensure your success at planning is identify a **PROCESS OWNER**. The *PROCESS OWNER* is the person who is responsible for participating in the strategic planning process and its output. He or she speaks for the process in the organization.

**Name the possible strategic planning process owner(s) for your area?**

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**What else will you need for this strategic planning process to be successful?**

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**What do you need (expect) this strategic plan to do for you?**

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**TIP:** You have completed 25% of the work for **STEP 10** of the Strategic Planning Cycle, just by completing the activity above. Use the list of needs and expectations as a starting point for defining your evaluation indicators when evaluating the success of the strategic planning process.

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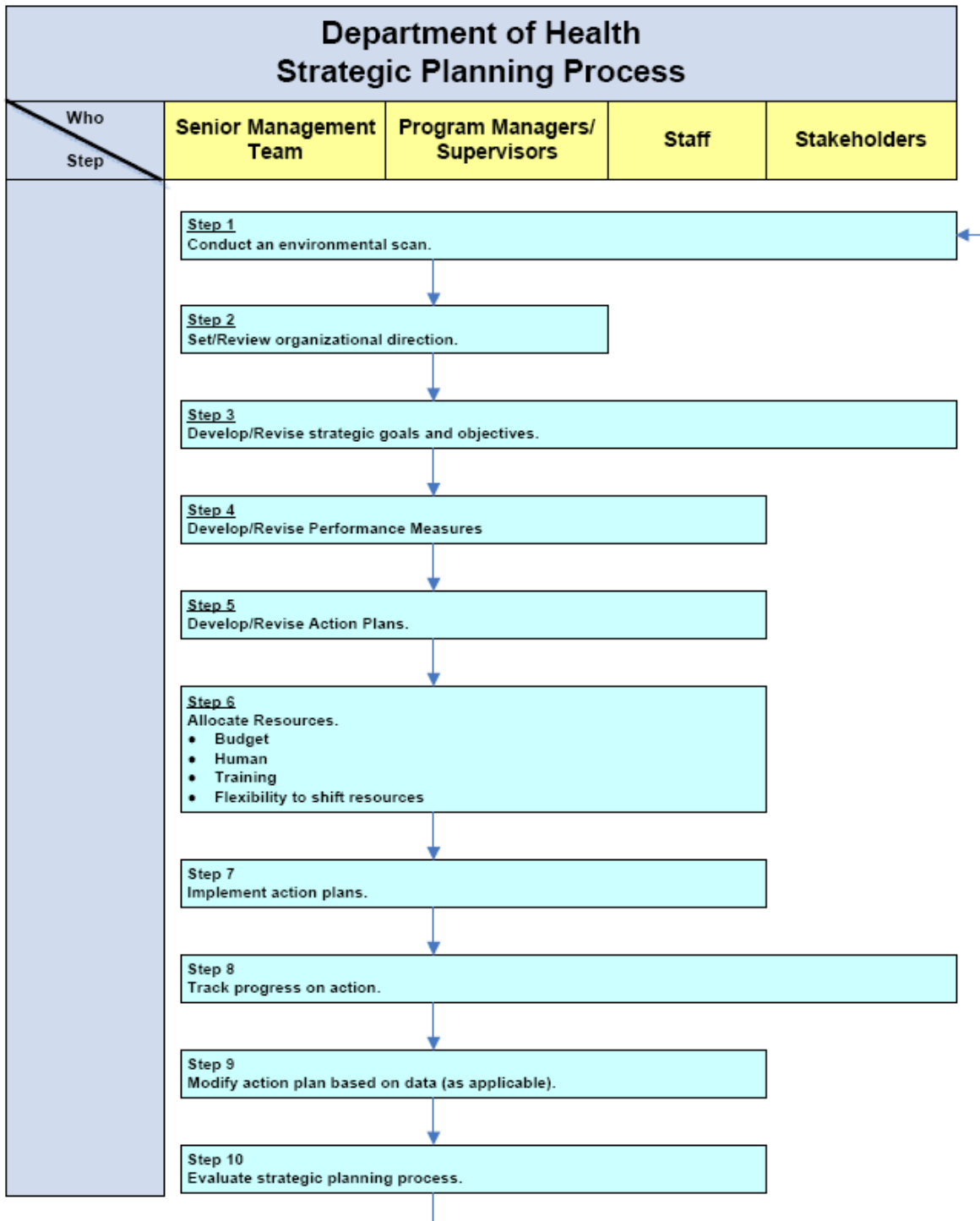
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## **EXAMPLE STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE OVERVIEW – PHAB 5.3.1a, 5.3.1b**

It's important to define a strategic planning cycle. Often seen are cycles that coordinate with budget periods June 30 to July 1. Strategic plans should be considered living documents where reviews are done on a periodic basis. It is recommended they be done at least on an annual basis after the initial implementation.

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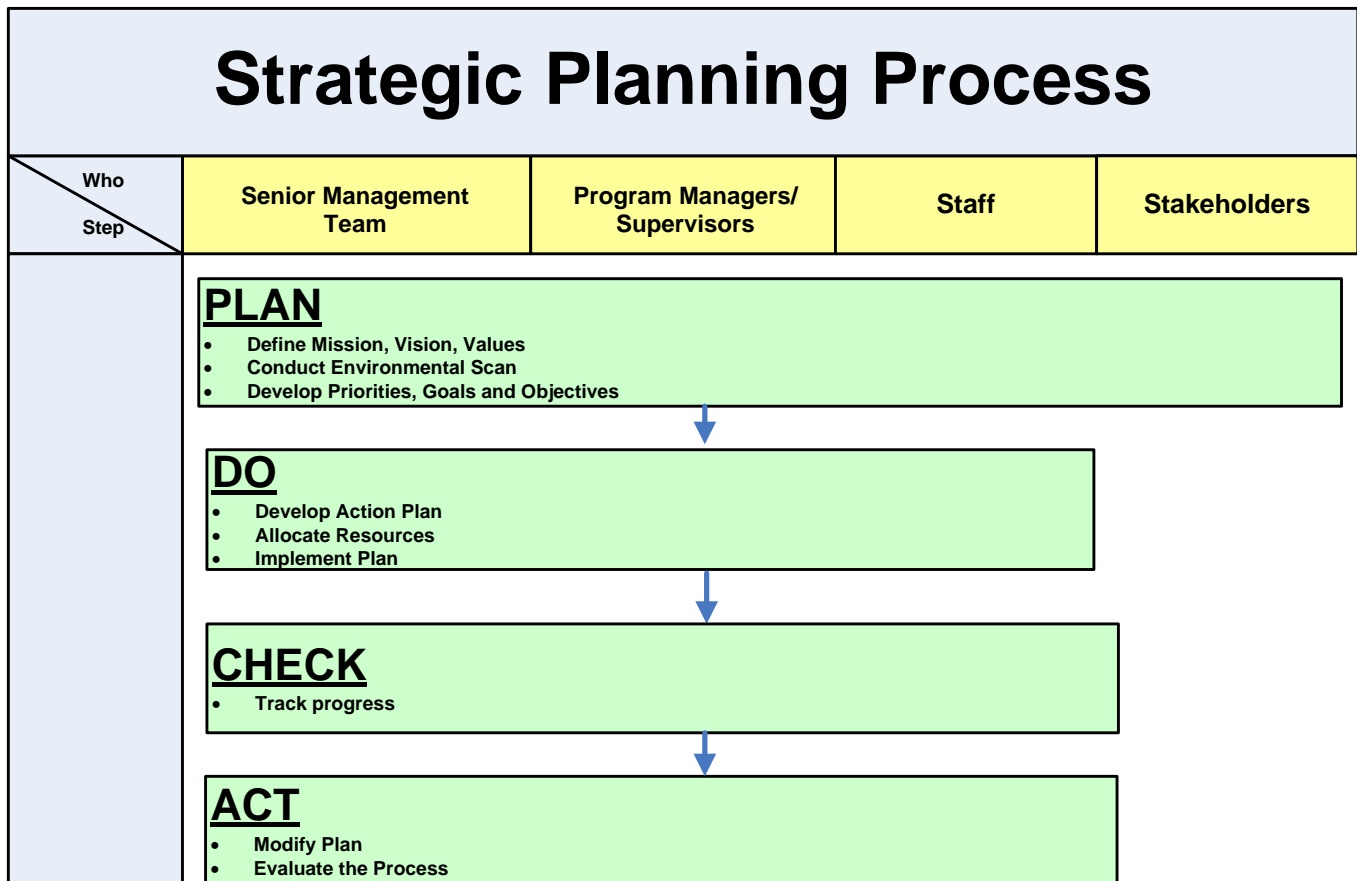


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While the ten steps of the Strategic Planning Cycle can seem daunting, it really is just a detailed version of activities you are already familiar with. Ever heard of PDSA...**Plan, Do, Study, Act?** Quite simply put, you *Plan* your work; *Do* the work; *Study* the results of what you did; then, *Act* on the results you've obtained.

Take another look at the Strategic Planning Cycle:



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**PLAN**

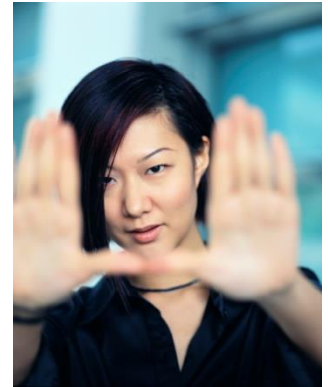
DO

CHECK

ACT

## STEP 1: Conduct an Environmental Scan – PHAB 5.3.2d and 5.3.2e

An **Environmental Scan** is the identification and monitoring of factors from both inside and outside the organization that may impact the long-term viability of the organization. During this step you are essentially attempting to develop the “big picture”.



Areas of Environmental Scan	Description of Area
<b>SWOT Analysis</b>	In the SWOT, the organization utilizes the assessment of the following five categories to help determine the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
<b>Market Forces</b>	An assessment of competition the organization must face, including industry trends and competitive analysis.
<b>Stakeholder Analysis</b>	The identification of stakeholders and delineation of their needs.
<b>Technology</b>	An internal and external assessment of technology to find opportunities for potential innovation.
<b>Internal Capability Analysis</b>	A detailed view of the internal workings of the organization, with a focus on resources, skills and process capabilities.



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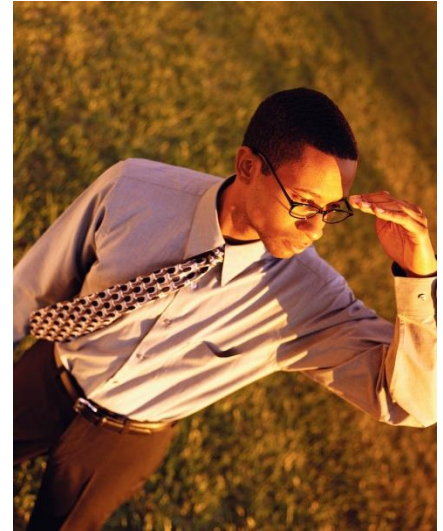
<b>Legal and Regulatory Factors</b>	A view of how the organization can favorably address legal and regulatory factors and minimize any threats by relevant legislation and regulation. A review of regulations that impact/guide your work prior to setting the strategic direction, i.e. – federal laws, statutes, and regulations,
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# SWOT

## What's SWOT?

A SWOT analysis is a quick way of examining an organization's process(es) by reviewing its (internal) strengths and weaknesses and matching these to its (external) opportunities and threats. Compiling this information together into one place enables you to see the bigger picture, identify all major factors affecting your organization's operations, and act as a decision-making aid to formulate an effective response strategy. Each organization will have its own specific SWOT profile. This process needs to be repeated frequently to reflect the ever-changing internal and external relationships.

SWOT analysis is an effective method for identifying Strengths and Weaknesses, and examining the Opportunities and Threats facing the organization. Often carrying out an analysis using the SWOT framework reveals changes that can be useful.



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To carry out a SWOT Analysis, write down answers to the following questions:

## **Strengths:**

- What are your advantages?
- What processes are working well?

Consider this from your own point of view and from the point of view of your customer. Don't be modest, be realistic.

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## **Weaknesses:**

- What could be improved?
- What was done poorly?
- What should be avoided?
- What didn't work?

Again, this should be considered from an internal and external basis – do other people perceive weaknesses that you don't see? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

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## **Opportunities:**

- What did you learn in order to be more effective in the future?
- Are there ways to capitalize on your strengths?
- What would you or can you do differently in the future?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- Changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale
- Changes in government policy related to your field
- Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, etc.
- Local issues

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## **Threats:**

- What are the barriers in responding to an event more efficiently the next time?
- What obstacles do you face?
- Has your role or responsibility changed as a result of the event/incident?
- What are the things that need to be done in preparation for the next time?

Carrying out this analysis will often be illuminating – both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done, and in putting problems into perspective.

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Your **Strategic Advantages** are the aspects of your organization that you do well and facilitate your success. They are also things that you will probably want to maintain, build on, or leverage. These are directly related to your identified Strengths from your SWOT analysis.

For Example:

- SWOT= Low Turnover, Family atmosphere, Committed Staff
- Advantage= "Employee Satisfaction"

List your **Strategic Advantage** statements along with the corresponding SWOT items.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____

Your **Strategic Challenges** are the aspects of your organization that you may need to improve or overcome. They are also things that you will likely want to prioritize, optimize, fix or remove. These are directly related to your identified Weaknesses and Threats from your SWOT analysis.

List your **Strategic Challenges**:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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**PLAN**

DO

CHECK

ACT

## STEP 2: Set/Review Organizational Direction PHAB 5.3.2a

Someone once said if you don't know where you want to go any road will get you there. During this step it is important to decide where you want go. Your defined Vision, Mission and Values focus the energies and resources of your entire organization. They also serve as a checkpoint to return to whenever you feel yourself going off course. Because part of this step involves communicating the vision, obviously you have to know what that is before doing so. So, what do you want to look like in the future?



Term	Definition	DOH Example
<b>Mission</b>	An organization's purpose.	<i>The Department of Health works to protect and improve the health of people in Washington State.</i>
<b>Vision</b>	An overarching statement of the way an organization wants to be; An ideal state of being at a future point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do we want to go?</li> <li>• What do we want to be?</li> </ul>	<i>We are trusted and innovative public health leaders committed to working for a safer and healthier Washington.</i>
<b>Values</b>	Values are the guiding principles that state how the employees, beginning with management, intend to conduct their behavior and do business. These values will determine what kind of organization will develop and become the foundation of the organizations culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We value and respect the diversity in our employees and partners and recognize the benefit it brings in understanding and serving all people.</i></li> <li>• <i>We honor the public's trust and work hard to maintain and improve that relationship.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our employees are our most valuable resource. We support their professional growth.</i></li> <li>• <i>We provide timely and credible health information.</i></li> <li>• <i>We work collaboratively with staff, partners, and local communities to support a strong public health system.</i></li> </ul>

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## **STEP 3:** Develop/Revise Strategic Goals and Objectives PHAB 5.3.2b, 5.3.2c

Your **Goals** are broad statements describing a future condition or achievement without being specific about how much and addresses the question: "How do we get there". Goals focus on outcomes or results and are qualitative in nature in a specific priority area.

Your **Objectives** support the goals and will be a specific statement of a desired short term condition or achievement that includes a measurable end result to be accomplished by specific teams or individuals within time limits. Objectives answer the question: "What do we have to do to get there?"

Your *Objectives* should be **SMART!**



**S**pecific  
**M**easurable  
**A**chievable  
**R**ealistic  
**T**imed

Select one priority. Using the Action Verb List (Appendix A) practice writing associated goal statements.

### **Priority**

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3

Goal 4

Goal 5

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Next, select one of the goals above and practice writing objectives for that goal.

## Goal

Objective 1

Objective 2

Objective 3

Objective 4

Objective 5

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📌 Don't forget to be "SMART"!

## Checklist:

- *Did you include a deadline or time frame?*
- *Can you realistically achieve what you are proposing given time and resources needed?*
- *Can you measure it? How will you know when you've gotten "there"?*
- *Don't be vague. Are your statements specific, clear and to the point?*

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Strategic Choices:

## Strategies

- Stated methods to achieve Goals and Objectives
- Indicators of action, the "How to" achieve the goal or objective
- Serve to guide budget activities used to achieve goals

## Example of a strategy

- *Regulate, educate, and provide technical assistance to users on the access of care*



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## STEP 4: Develop/Revise Performance Measures PHAB 5.3.2c

Managing performance is about articulating clear expectations, paying attention to what is going on, and providing actionable feedback to decision-makers up and down the value chain. Your communication about expectations and results is stronger when it is clear. These definitions are intended to help you be clear in communicating concepts related to performance measures, so you can engage others in getting the support and performance results you need.

**INPUT:** Inputs at the agency or program level are more than FTE's and dollars – they include authorizations, statutes, executive orders, constraints and limitations. For any given process there are specific inputs (resources) a work group needs to carry out their work – staff skills, equipment capacities and limitations, physical space, data, data processing capability, policies, etc. When you think about what you need to get the job done, be process specific - don't overlook all the various inputs that you need.

**ACTIVITY or PROCESS:** If you watched your staff in action, what would you actually see them doing? (HINT: You would NOT see them 'ensuring,' 'regulating,' 'providing,' 'administering,' 'implementing' or 'supporting.') You might see them 'inspecting,' 'training,' 'auditing,' 'contracting,' or 'negotiating.' If you're stuck trying to come up with an activity - check out the job titles of the people doing it. Convey activity with an action verb that ends in '-ing.' Ex: "Inspecting food processing facilities", "recruiting qualified staff."

**OUTPUT:** An effective activity is one that converts inputs into a tangible, useful product or service that is given directly to some recipient. Avoid using the same word to describe the activity and its output. EVERY activity has an output. Ex: The activity of 'auditing' produces 'findings,' 'reports,' 'certifications,' etc. Policy analysts produce 'recommendations,' 'options,' and 'proposals.'

**OUTPUT MEASURES:** Outputs are very 'countable.' Most of the time, our output measures can be phrased as "number of..." (ex: number of recommendations made, number of sites visited.) Sometimes we have a unit of measure Ex: number of miles of road striped, number of pounds of beef inspected.

**OUTCOME:** An outcome is a change in the situation, which can be attributed – at least in part – to an activity. Activities are only valuable to the extent that they either improve a situation or keep it from worsening. To identify the immediate outcomes, ask yourself, 'what has changed – or not changed - because we did that activity?' or 'What did we leave in our wake" Ex: "Farmers have the information they need to apply pesticide safely," or "Motorists are reminded of the speed limit."

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**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME:** is one over which we have less 'control' – the changes in behavior that happen on the side of the recipient. Troopers patrol the highways (activity) and issue tickets to speeders (output). The immediate outcome is that speeders are reminded of the speed limit and are temporarily removed from the road. Did they change their behavior – and slow down? That would be an intermediate outcome. And, if they did that, did the number of collisions - or the number of fatalities or the cost of the damage done – go down? We can identify many intermediate outcomes, but ultimately, the outcome we seek are highways that are safer.

**OUTCOME MEASURES:** Outcomes are not hard to measure, but it is often difficult to determine the extent to which we contributed to that outcome. We can measure the number of drivers reminded to slow down, the percent of people who are speeding, the fatality rates on highways. It's not so clear from the measures alone how much we contributed to those outcomes...but without those measures, we cannot perform any analysis to determine what factors do influence the behaviors we seek.

For that reason, the only outcome measures that are really measures of individual or workgroup 'performance' are those that can be clearly attributed – in whole or in part – to their work.

**BASELINE:** The value of the measure when the observation period started.

**TARGET:** The value to be achieved by a date certain.

Performance measures are a quantifiable indicator of performance able to assess progress toward achieving the objective. They are practical and understandable data providing for consistency and reliability. Performance measures are used to timely and meaningfully compare performance. They have a numerator and denominator and are the driver for letting you know how successful or unsuccessful you are. They can be completed for each strategic objective. Performance measures are vital for driving decisions in the Action Planning Process. For a performance measure planning template, see Appendix B.

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## **STEPS 5-7:** Develop/Revise Action Plans; Allocate Resources & Implement Action Plans PHAB 5.3.3

### Step 5: Developing the Action Plan

Action planning is where the rubber meets the road and the point at which a Strategic Plan either becomes "credenza ware" or an operational document.

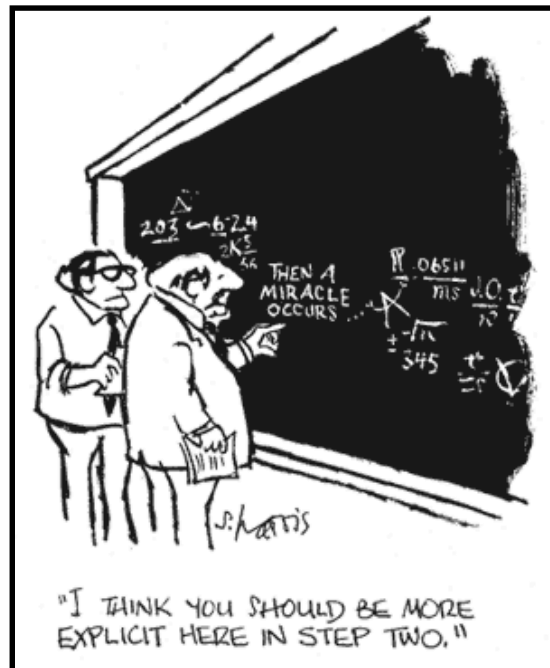
A basic action plan tells you who, what, and when and is the driver for putting your plans into action. Plans can be completed for each strategic objective. The action plan is a vital document for the Process Owner, whom you have already identified. As a sort of "project manager", the process owner will ensure that all activities outlined in the action plan are moving along as planned and on schedule. For an action planning template, see Appendix C.

### Step 6: Allocating Resources

The key to allocating resources is being realistic. If you have eighty hours of work for an activity, do not allow yourself to be a slave to the timeline and overestimate the human resources you have available to do the job. On the flip side, while "padding" timelines for contingencies is always wise, try not to underestimate your available resources and lose valuable momentum carrying out your plan. Having an action plan can maximize even limited resources, by the mere fact that it focuses sometimes scattered resources.

### Step 7: Implementing the Plan

As some old, wise Olympian once said, "Just do it!" Don't be afraid to begin implementing your plan. Once the who, what, and when are identified and everyone understands their role, the only logical next step is to try it out. Implementing your plan also becomes critical due to the fact that it is based on time limited data and information. Times are constantly changing. To wait too long to move might mean having to re-visit the environmental scan for significant changes. You will not know what doesn't work until you try to do it, but you will definitely learn what does work once you've started.



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## **STEPS 8 & 9:** Track Progress & Modify Action Plan Based on Data PHAB 5.3.3

### **Step 8: Tracking Progress**

Once you begin to carry out your plan, you will want to know if activities are being implemented as planned; if they are on schedule; and, if you are still heading in the right direction. When tracking progress, indicators can provide evidence of what reality is.



### **Step 9: Modifying the Action Plan Based on Data**

The key idea here is, "based on data." When making changes, it might be tempting to make a lot of little changes all at once. Be sure that the changes you are making directly relate to what the data is telling you as you track your progress.

## STEP 10: Evaluate the Strategic Planning Process PHAB 5.3.3

At this point, after planning the plan, doing the plan, checking your plan, and acting on what you found out from checking, you will want to take a step back to evaluate your strategic planning process. This type of evaluation is called a “process evaluation”. Essentially you are checking the process of strategic planning to see how well it worked so that you may identify areas that may need improvement for next time. Your process evaluation may focus on whether the process was delineated, or be more open-ended, describing the nature of delivery and successes or problems encountered.

You may recall, during Step 1, you identified a list of items that you “need” or “expect” from this strategic planning process. That list of items can be used as the starting point for your evaluation. The next step would be deciding if those items were really important to defining the success of your process; and determining a way to measure that particular item. For instance, if one item under “needs” was that the process needed to be clear to all staff, then after deciding if this was an essential need to the success of your process, you would want to explore how to measure that. How do you know if the plan and/or process were clear to your staff? You might want to ask them, via survey, or interviews.

Your process evaluation does not have to be a formal research project. It can be as simple as asking a group of people in a staff meeting, what worked or didn't work, based on what we wanted this process to do. Here are the primary things you want to include in your evaluation:

1. Identify the primary purpose for the strategic planning process. (You may begin with your list of needs and expectations and add to it as needed.)
2. Determine which items were essential for your definition of having a “successful process.”
3. Brainstorm ways to measure each item. This may be a matter of a few question items on a survey to get to the heart of your question or quick “fire side chat” evaluation asking staff for input during a meeting.
4. Develop a method for obtaining answers to your questions, e.g. survey, observation, interview, document reviews, general meeting etc.
5. Administer whatever data collection method you have decided on, collect the data and see how well your results aligned with your original list of “success” indicators.
6. Lastly, incorporate your lessons learned into your next planning cycle.

## Appendix-A Action Verbs

The following list (which is by no means exhaustive) offers some action verbs that you may consider as you develop your *Goal* and *Objective* statements.

### Action Verbs List

Category	Verbs
Program, Service Development or Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinate</li><li>• Enhance</li><li>• Develop</li><li>• Diversify</li><li>• Joint venture</li><li>• Produce more</li><li>• Produce less</li></ul>
Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase</li><li>• Decrease</li><li>• Divest</li></ul>
Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand</li><li>• Penetrate</li><li>• Divest</li><li>• Diversify</li><li>• Specialize</li><li>• Analyze</li><li>• Segment</li></ul>
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hire new</li><li>• Terminate</li><li>• Enrich</li><li>• Rotate</li><li>• Train</li><li>• Reassign</li></ul>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educate</li><li>• Inform</li><li>• Persuade</li></ul>

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## Action Verbs List

### Category

### Verbs

Information

- Develop
- Research

Leadership

- Change
- Expand
- Include

Technology

- Develop
- Divest
- Invest

Facilities

- Build
- Expand
- Divest
- Relocate

Organization (radical change)

- Reorient
- Revitalize
- Transform
- Turn around

Organization (no change to)

- Maintain

## Appendix-B

### Performance Measure Template

**Outcome Measure(s).** List and define quantifiable measures used to evaluate program effectiveness. Include a goal or target for each measure. Add sections for additional outcome measures as needed.

<b>Outcome Measure #1:</b>	
Numerator:	
Denominator:	
Source of data:	
Target or Goal:	
Who will collect this information:	
What tool will be used to collect these data?	
How often will the data be analyzed and reported?	
Baseline measurement dates:	
1 <sup>st</sup> re-measurement dates:	



## Appendix-C Action Plan Template

<b>Strategy Name:</b>		<b>Accountability Link</b>	
<b>Strategy Number:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Name</li> <li>▪ Title</li> <li>▪ Phone Number</li> </ul>	
<b>Goal Number:</b>		<b>Executive Sponsor</b>	
<b>Objective:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Name</li> <li>▪ Title</li> <li>▪ Phone Number</li> </ul>	
<b>Partners:</b>		<b>Team Members:</b>	
<b>Customers:</b>		<b>Stakeholders:</b>	
<b>Agency:</b>			
<b>Performance Measure 1:</b>			
Numerator:			
Denominator:			
Source of data:			
Target or Goal:			
Who will collect this information:			
What tool will be used to collect these data?			
How often will the data be analyzed and reported?			
Baseline measurement dates:			
1 <sup>st</sup> re-measurement dates:			

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**Strategy Description & Purpose:** *(Briefly describe the strategy and what it is going to do and how you are going to get there)*

**Start Date:** *(first task date)*

**Estimated Completion Date:**

**Strategic Linkages:** *(Is this program/activity essential to implementation of any of the following?)*

Budget Activity Inventory

Agency Dashboard

Public Health Standards

Governor's Directive or Priority

Secretary/Director of Health's Priority

Other:

**Describe Constraints To Completion:** *(Resources, Political, Social, Technology, etc. Is there anything that will stop us from completing this? List all possibilities)*

**Plan to Address Constraints:** *(How will you overcome the constraints listed above?)*

**Accountability Link Signature:** *(Signature gives approval to proceed)*

**Date:**

**Executive Sponsor Signature:** *(Signature gives approval to proceed)*

**Date:**

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## Detailed Action Plan and Timeline

Major Tasks	Task Owner	Estimated Start Date	Estimated Completion Date	Actual Completion Date	Progress Status

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## Evaluation

Was the target met within the expected timeframe? If not, please provide brief explanation of why.

Are there any next steps?

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## Project Name Here Action Plan – Financial Impact Statement

<b>Detailed dollar savings for this FY:</b> <i>(Ensure measurement taken prior to implementation (first task) to compare after completion. Savings would be placed here)</i>	<b>Detailed staff time savings for this FY:</b> <i>(Ensure measurement taken prior to implementation (first task) to compare after completion. Savings would be placed here.)</i>	<b>Detailed revenue to be generated this FY:</b> <i>(Please ensure tracking process set up prior to implementation to track generated revenue)</i>
<b>Other impacts anticipated:</b> <i>(These may have been realized after completion of strategy and not anticipated prior to starting.)</i>		
<b>How have the savings (dollars &amp; staffing) been redirected?</b> <i>(What did you do with the savings and revenue?)</i>		