

Essentials to Leadership: Strategic Planning

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Course description: Strategic Planning– part 2

In this lesson we continue to focus our attention in the area of strategic planning. The necessity of goals is critical to the success of the church. Too many congregations coast along hoping that everything will be different with a new preacher or once they have elders. As essential as vision is to the growth and development of the church, so is strategic planning.

Course Objectives: By the end of the class students will have:

- A. Constructed a strategic planning cycle that is based on five questions.
- B. Defined the meaning of goals and discussed why goals are so essential to the planning cycle.
- C. Examined several thoughts regarding goals.

Outline of the class:

- A. As we construct a strategic planning cycle, we must keep in mind that strategic planning is laser focused on a clear understanding of the “why” for the church.
 - 1. Take a moment to review the information discussed in the vision lessons about the why.
 - 2. When we understand the why, our vision comes into full view. Once we have a full view of our vision, then we can put more into the development of the strategic planning cycle.
 - 3. It is possible the why may change or be somewhat adapted as we learn and grow.
- B. There are generally five questions asked when constructing a strategic planning cycle.
 - 1. Where do we want to go? (Why do we want to go there?)
 - a. This where we think about short-term and long-range goals. Both are critical to success.
 - b. Here is where we dig into desirable outcomes. Think about the THEN we reviewed in last week’s lesson.
 - 2. How do we get there? (Will this strategy align with why we are involved in this work?)
 - a. We are now talking about specific strategies that must be developed, the plans that are implemented to achieve the goal(s).

- b. Each goal that is constructed (short-term and long-range) will have specific plans for reaching that goal.
 3. How do we measure success? (Will measuring success this way work in cooperation with the why of our vision?)
 - a. We do not often think about how we measure success. We tend to think in terms of numbers, but numbers are not the only way of measuring success.
 - b. Ask the class overall to share other ways we measure success and write them on the whiteboard.
 - c. Establish benchmarks along the way that will help everyone see the progress made and how these measure successes for the church.
 - d. The common thought here is, “What gets measured, gets done.”
 4. How did we do? (If the results are not directly related to why, then we may not have the right results.)
 - a. One of the most critical pieces in this cycle is the fourth question. Now we are looking at the results.
 - b. This is an evaluation step. Did we achieve the goal(s)? If not, where did we fall short? If we surpassed them, how should the goal(s) be adjusted for the future.
 5. How can we improve? (Any improvement must be considered in light of the why, or we need to change it.)
 - a. After we have evaluated where we were at the beginning and what we accomplished throughout the period under evaluation, we must brainstorm ways that we can improve.
 - b. This step in the cycle allows for creativity to improve the amount of time, the changes desired in the lives of those involved, and the necessary resources to continue the cycle.
 - c. After this question is answered, the cycle starts over, and we examine new goals.
- C. Consider the five thoughts below and discuss how these relate to setting the kind of goals we need for the church.
1. BHAG: “Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals” – Jim Collins *Good to Great* and *Built to Last*.
 2. Divine goals keep us on our knees.
 3. Goals need a “champion” – Bill Hybels.

4. Goals need to be clear, challenging, and God-honoring.
5. Goals require total *community* commitment (everyone needs to be “all in”).

Conclusion:

- A. Before any strategic planning occurs, we must ask and answer five important questions. The answers to these questions provide the basis for establishing a strategic planning cycle for the church.
- B. We also need to consider the nature of the goals that become a part of our strategic planning cycle. In the next two weeks, we will examine several areas that relate to how we set goals and achieve them.
- C. Next week, we will continue our discussion about strategic planning and goal setting. We will focus on reasons to have goals and how we can achieve them.

Recommended Reading:

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great*

Collins, Jim. *Built to Last*

Clinton, Bobby. *Bridging Strategies*

See the following link: <http://bobbyclinton.com/store/books-manuals/bridging-strategies/>

Hybels, Bill. *Courageous Leadership*

Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner. *A Leader's Legacy*

Maxwell, John. *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*