

## Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is essentially about creating a roadmap to the future. Understanding where you are today, knowing where you want to be in the future, and choosing the appropriate route to your destination are the three dimensions of a great plan. With a comprehensive, inclusive process and diligent implementation, the potential to energize your organization becomes enormous.

The strategic planning process is not only for big companies. It is a process for any type of business involving a key group of people responsible for the success of the company. Regardless of your organization's rate of change, meaningful steps must be taken to secure a successful future. Deciding what you want to be in the future and translating that decision into today's action is a critical need.

The first step in strategic planning is committing to the process of planning for the future and initiating steps to make the process happen. Getting started involves a decision to plan and convening key people who can make the plan a reality. Then, designing the process so that it fits the unique culture of your business ensures that your efforts will meet the specific needs of the organization.

After designing the process, conducting the effort in a way that includes the best thinking of your best people is a key to success. Meeting dynamics, brainstorming, teamwork and open dialogue are components that bring out the best of what your colleagues have to offer. A meaningful planning process also allows for ownership and accountability of those involved.

Don't wait for a crisis to rear its ugly head. You should plan for the future when you have the financial strength and resources needed to achieve optimum success. It is a challenge committing the time and resources to a strategic planning process. But with the practical application of a vision, set of goals and action plans, you can rest assured that investing time to form a roadmap for the future will contribute to your organization's effectiveness.