



Turn Vision Into Strategies

Duration: 3 hours **Group size:** full group and small groups of 5-8 people

“The future can't be predicted, but it can be envisioned and brought lovingly into being.”

– Donella Meadows

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to identify several diverse strategies that are in alignment with the ideal future of this organization and show promise of helping fulfill it.

Outputs

- An agreed list of 3-5 strategies that are the best fit for this organization, matching its strengths and weaknesses with emerging opportunities

Preparation

- This activity will build on the outcomes of the Preferable future activity so prepare to review them as an introduction to this session.
- Decide which format of the worksheets (printed or enlarged to flip chart size) you will use and get them ready.
- Set up the room to accommodate both small groups of 5-8 people and the full group.

Materials:

- √ Several copies of the Back casting worksheet
- √ Several copies of the Planning forward worksheet
- √ Flip chart
- √ Colored markers

Guidelines

The Turn vision into strategy activity consists of the following steps:

Step 1 – Back casting

- Form small groups of 5-8 people

- In the far right column of the Back casting worksheet, write the agreed upon Preferable Future.
- In column 2, write a variety of descriptions and examples of the preferable future. By faith, what are some desirable aspirations for this organization that would give life and substance to our ideal future?
- Next, in column 3 brainstorm what it will take to achieve the preferable future. What will need to change?
- Finally, in column 4 make a list of things it is possible to do now that would move you toward the preferable future.
- Reassemble the full group.
- Give a spokesperson from each small group an opportunity to highlight the main points of their Back casting exercise.
- Capture themes, patterns, and strategy ideas on a flip chart.

Step 2 – Planning forward

- Return to small groups of 5-8 people.
- Using ideas from the Back casting exercise as a catalyst begin to populate the Planning forward worksheet with your best 8 strategies for achieving the preferable future.
- Discuss the strategy ideas and develop 2 additional ideas to support each of the 8 strategies.
- From your 8 strategies choose the three your team considers the best options for your organization.
- Reassemble the full group.
- Ask the groups to present their top 3 strategies to each other and discuss them.
- Capture the results on a flip chart.
- When all the groups have presented, work for consensus on the 3-5 strategies that show the most promise for achieving your preferable future.

Tips for facilitating group activities

- Consider changing the usual meeting environment to stimulate creative thinking.
- Keep the end goal of decisive action in mind for the duration of the activity.
- Open with a brief overview of the activity so participants know what to expect.
- Be careful and consistent to maintain pre-set boundaries of time and task.
- Encourage small group self-management; suggest that each group select a recorder, a reporter, a time keeper, and a discussion leader.
- Work with the people, ideas, and motivations you have to find enough common ground to act rather than being bogged down or sidetracked with an attempt to resolve “deeper issues”.
- Seek global perspective on issues by allowing all opinions to be expressed, validating polarities, and by agreeing to disagree on issues that cannot be resolved quickly.
- Encourage people to stay engaged in spite of differences. Resist the urge to intervene unless you observe movement toward ‘fight or flight’. Allow the group to resolve its own differences or agree to set them aside.

- Provide plenty of easily available nutritious snacks and beverages
- Consider using a Church Futures consultant to add depth and breadth of experience.

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