

FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS AND DIFFERENCES IN STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL PLANNING

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WHY PLAN?

- Planning invents the future.
- Planning both defines and avoids problems.
- Planning produces both effectiveness and efficiency.
- Planning creates a common language that permits faster and more accurate communication, fewer misunderstandings, easier coordination, and mutual cooperation.
- Planning tests ideas, strategies, tactics, and actions in thought before committing errors in operation; it is the cheapest way there is to make mistakes.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS/GOALS

(Time Frame: Present to 5 years – *General, far-reaching*)

- ◆ Strategic Directions clarify the position of the system in the world, community, context.
- ◆ Strategic Directions define or re-define the nature, purpose, and direction of an enterprise.
- ◆ Strategic Directions inform the vision of future success.
- Strategic Goals define desired states in the future.
- Strategic Goals lead to motion in the strategic direction.
- Strategic Goals unite and focus people and resources.
- Strategic Goals define success.

Strategic goals require wide input and deep perspective.

TACTICAL OBJECTIVES (Time Frame: Present to 24 months – *Clear, orienting*)

- Tactical Objectives sharpen the focus for action.
- Tactical Objectives specify what actions should be taken, when, and by whom.
- Tactical Objectives, taken together, align the efforts of the organization to pursue goals.
- Tactical Objectives enable continuous evaluation of progress toward goals.

Tactical objectives require strong leadership, information sharing, participation by all relevant resource people, application of experience and expertise, standards, and measurements.

ACTION PLANS (Time Frame: Present to 9 - 12 months – *Specific, defining*)

- ✓ Action Plans guide specific behavior, allocation of resources, and production of detailed outcomes.
- ✓ Action Plans stimulate creative thinking of options and alternatives for effective action.
- ✓ Action Plans focus the daily activities of technical experts, staff members, and workers.
- ✓ Action Plans can be graphically illustrated in time-lines, calendars, Gantt charts, etc., to guide and coordinate the activities of many people working simultaneously on multiple Objectives.

Action plans require the technical expertise and focused energy of many people producing short term results that, taken together, help to achieve tactical objectives and can be quantitatively measured by percentages, volume, deadlines, documents, etc.