

## SECTIONS OF THIS TOPIC

Sections of This Topic Include

[Choose the Best Model — and Customize It as You Go Along](#)

[Model One – Conventional Strategic Planning](#)

[Model Two – Issues-Based Strategic Planning](#)

[Model Three – Organic Strategic Planning](#)

[Model Four — Real-Time Strategic Planning](#)

[Model Five — Alignment Model of Strategic Planning](#)

[Inspirational Model of Strategic Planning](#)

[To Begin Customizing Your Approach to Strategic Planning ...](#)

[For the Category of Strategic Planning:](#)

en  
3c

SHARE



Get the latest Business News

Your email address

Sign Me Up

[Home](#) / [Business Resources](#)

# Basic Descriptions of the Different Strategic Planning Models

Written by johntalaguit

Last updated on Sep 21, 2023



Learn Strategic Planning Without Incurring Travel Costs!

The Series [Facilitating Strategic Planning](#) from the Consultants Development Institute provides virtual courses and numerous downloadable tools to learn to facilitate strategic planning. Concurrently you customize your own relevant and realistic Strategic Plan and earn a Certificate in Facilitating Strategic Planning.

© Copyright [Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD, Authenticity Consulting, LLC](#). (The reader might best be served to first read the information on the topic of [Strategic Planning](#).)

## Sections of This Topic Include

- [Choose the Best Model — and Customize It as You Go Along](#)
  - [Model One – Conventional Strategic Planning](#)
  - [Model Two – Issues-Based Strategic Planning](#)
  - [Model Three – Organic Strategic Planning](#)
  - [Model Four – Real-Time Strategic Planning](#)
  - [Model Five – Alignment Model of Strategic Planning](#)
  - [Model Six – Inspirational Model of Strategic Planning](#)
- [Be Careful About Just Filling In a Template!](#)
- [To Begin Customizing Your Approach to Strategic Planning ...](#)

**Also, consider**

[Related Library Topics](#)

Learn More in the Library's Blogs Related to Strategic Planning Models

In addition to the information on this current page, see the following blogs which have posts related to Strategic Planning Models. Scan down the blog's page to see various posts. Also, see the section "Recent Blog Posts" in the sidebar of the blog or click on "Next" near the bottom of a post in the blog.

- [Library's Business Planning Blog](#)
- [Library's Leadership Blog](#)
- [Library's Project Management Blog](#)
- [Library's Strategic Planning Blog](#)

## Choose the Best Model — and Customize It as You Go Along

There is no one perfect strategic planning process, or model, to use the same way all the time with every organization. Each organization should customize the best approach to suit the culture of its members, the current situation in and around the organization, and the purpose of its planning.

This Web page briefly describes several different models of strategic planning, along with basic guidelines for choosing each. There is no strong agreement among experts in strategic planning as to which approaches are indeed "models" or how each is best implemented. The purpose of this Web page is to present different perspectives and options regarding strategic planning to help planners ensure their plans are the most relevant, realistic, and flexible.

Planners can select the most appropriate model and then modify it to suit the nature and needs of their organization. For example, different organizations might have different names for the different phases and emphasize certain phases more than others in the model.

This document does not include detailed descriptions and directions for implementing each model. Those are available in the articles and books referenced in the topic "All About Strategic Planning" in the Free Management Library at [managementhelp.org](http://managementhelp.org).

**NOTE:** The following models can be done with different styles. For example, some may prefer a rather top-down and even autocratic way of planning and making decisions. Others might prefer more inclusive and consensus-based planning. Some might prefer a very problem-centered approach, while others might prefer a more strength-based approach, for example, to use Appreciative Inquiry.

---

## Model One – Conventional Strategic Planning

This is the most common model of strategic planning, although it is not suited for every organization. It is ideal for organizations that have sufficient resources to pursue very ambitious visions and goals, have external environments that are relatively stable, and do not have a large number of current issues to address. The model usually includes the following overall phases:

1. Develop or update the mission and optionally, vision and/or values statements.
2. Take a wide look around the outside and a good look inside the organization, and perhaps update the statements as a result.
3. As a result of this examination, select the multi-year strategies and/or goals to achieve the vision.
4. Then develop action plans that specify who is going to do what and by when to achieve each goal.
5. Identify associated plans, for example, staffing, facilities, marketing, and financial plans.
6. Organize items 1-3 into a Strategic Plan and items 4-6 into a separate one-year Operational Plan.

---

## Model Two – Issues-Based Strategic Planning

This model works best for organizations that have very limited resources, several current and major issues to address, little success with achieving ambitious goals, and/or very little buy-in to strategic planning. Using the conventional model of strategic planning for these organizations is a bit like focusing on the vision of running a marathon and deciding the detailed route and milestones — while concurrently having heart problems, bad feet, and no running clothes.

This model might include the following phases:

1. Identify 5-7 of the most important current issues facing the organization now.
2. Suggest action plans to address each issue over the next 6-12 months.
3. Include that information in a Strategic Plan.

After an issues-based plan has been implemented and the current, major issues are resolved, then the organization might undertake the more ambitious conventional model. Many people might assert that issues-based planning is really internal development planning, rather than strategic planning. Others would argue that the model is very strategic because it positions the organization for much more successful outward-looking and longer-term planning later on.

---

## Model Three – Organic Strategic Planning

The conventional model is considered by some people to be too confining and linear in nature. They believe that the approach to planning too often produces a long sequence of orderly activities to do as if organizations will remain static and predictable while all of those activities are underway. Other people believe that organizations are robust and dynamic systems that are always changing, so a plan produced from conventional planning might quickly become obsolete.

That is true, especially if planning is meant to achieve a very long-term vision for many people, for example, for a community or even generations of people. The organic model is based on the premise that the long-term vision is best achieved by everyone working together toward the vision, but with each person regularly doing whatever actions that he or she decides to do toward that vision. The model might include the following phases:

1. With as many people as can be gathered, for example, from the community or generation, articulate the long-term vision and perhaps values to work toward the vision.

2. Each person leaves that visioning, having selected at least one realistic action that he or she will take toward the vision before the group meets again, for example, in a month or two.
  3. People meet regularly to report the actions that they took and what they learned from them. The vision might be further clarified during these meetings.
  4. Occasionally, the vision and the lists of accomplished and intended actions are included in a Strategic Plan.
- 

## Model Four — Real-Time Strategic Planning

Similar to the organic model of planning, this model is suited especially for people who believe that organizations are often changing much too rapidly for long-term, detailed planning to remain relevant. These experts might assert that planning for an organization should be done continuously, or in "real time." The real-time planning model is best suited, especially to organizations with very rapidly changing environments outside the organization.

1. Articulate the mission, and perhaps the vision and/or values.
  2. Assign planners to research the external environment and, as a result, to suggest a list of opportunities and threats facing the organization.
  3. Present the lists to the Board and other members of the organization for strategic thinking and discussions.
  4. Soon after (perhaps during the next month) assign planners to evaluate the internal workings of the organization and, as a result, to suggest a list of strengths and weaknesses in the organization.
  5. Present these lists to the Board and other members of the organization for strategic thinking and discussions, perhaps using a SWOT analysis to analyze all four lists.
  6. Repeat steps 2-5 regularly, for example, every six months or year, and document the results in a Strategic Plan.
- 

## Model Five — Alignment Model of Strategic Planning

The primary purpose of this model is to ensure strong alignment of the organization's internal operations with achieving an overall goal, for example, to increase productivity or profitability, or to successfully integrate a new cross-functional system, such as a new computer system. Overall phases in this model might include:

1. Establish the overall goal for the alignment.
2. Analyze which internal operations are most directly aligned with achieving that goal, and which are not.
3. Establish goals to more effectively align operations to achieving the overall goal. Methods to achieving the goals might include organizational performance management models, for example, Business Process Re-engineering, or models of quality management, such as the TQM or ISO models.
4. Include that information in the Strategic Plan.

Similar to issues-based planning, many people might assert that the alignment model is really internal development planning, rather than strategic planning. Similarly, others would argue that the model is very strategic because it positions the organization for much more successful outward-looking and longer-term planning later on.

---

## Inspirational Model of Strategic Planning

This model is sometimes used when planners see themselves as having very little time available for planning and/or there is a high priority on rather quickly producing a Strategic Plan document. Overall phases in this model might include:

1. Attempt to gather Board members and key employees together for planning.
2. Begin by fantasizing about a highly inspirational vision for the organization — or by giving extended attention to the wording in the mission statement, especially to include powerful and poignant wording.
3. Then brainstorm exciting, far-reaching goals to even more effectively serve customers and clients.
4. Then include the vision and goals of the Strategic Plan.

While this model can be highly energizing, it might produce a Plan that is far too unrealistic (especially for an organization that already struggles to find time for planning) and, as a result, can be less likely to make a strategic impact on the organization and those it serves.

Many experts might assert that these planners are confusing the map (the Strategic Plan document) with the journey (the necessary strategic thinking). However, it might be the only approach that would generate some outward-focused discussion and also a Plan that, otherwise, would not have been written.

## To Begin Customizing Your Approach to Strategic Planning ...

To begin customizing your approach to strategic planning, including the model to choose, see

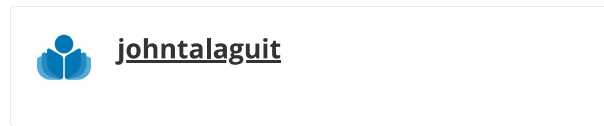
[Always First Do "Plan for a Plan"](#)

## For the Category of Strategic Planning:

To round out your knowledge of this Library topic, you may want to review some related topics, available from the link below. Each of the related topics includes free, online resources.

Also, scan the Recommended Books listed below. They have been selected for their relevance and highly practical nature.

- [Related Library Topics](#)
- [Recommended Books](#)



### Recommended for you



#### [How to Register a Business in Nebraska: A Complete Guide](#)

Starting a new business venture is exciting and fulfilling. However...

[BUSINESS ORGANIZATION INSIGHTS: INCLUDING LLCs](#)



#### [How to Register a Business in Massachusetts: Ultimate Guide](#)

Undertaking a business venture can be an inspiring and gratifying...  
[BUSINESS ORGANIZATION INSIGHTS: INCLUDING LLCs](#)



#### [How to Register a Business in Tennessee: A Complete Guide](#)

Registering a business in Tennessee can be an exciting and fulfilling...

[BUSINESS ORGANIZATION INSIGHTS: INCLUDING LLCs](#)



#### [How to Register a Business in Utah: A Complete Guide](#)

Registering a business in Utah can be an exciting and fulfilling...

[BUSINESS ORGANIZATION INSIGHTS: INCLUDING LLCs](#)

COMPANY

[About Us](#)

[Meet our Authors](#)

[Contact Us](#)

OUR PARTNERS

[Work With Us](#)

[Editorial Guidelines](#)

LEGAL

[Privacy](#)

[California Privacy Notice](#)

[Terms of Use](#)