

## Strategic Thinking, Planning and Execution



This is a blended programme consisting of a pre-workshop assignment and a three-day practical workshop that leads participants through the phases of identifying the strategic issues, understanding the present, considering the options, and developing and actioning the resulting strategic plans

### Overview

Strategy is about shaping the future. Implicit in this definition is the concept of being proactive, not just responding reactively to events in the here and now but using imagination to make decisions about some future event or state. Also implicit in this definition is that strategic thinking, planning and execution brings about a 'changed' state.

Strategy should not be confused with long range planning. There is a fundamental difference between long range planning and strategic planning. They both look to the future but, while long range planning helps us prepare for responding reactively to a future state, strategic planning is about proactively making the future happen.

Strategic planning and execution is about having the long term strategic goals in our minds whenever we make decisions. In operational roles, it is easy to lose sight of the longer term to meet a short-term need. Taking a strategic perspective means balancing one with the other.

### Format

This programme consists of three parts:

- A pre-workshop assignment preparing the ground by asking participants, through consultation, to identify strategic issues of their own
- A highly practical three-day workshop, working through the phases from issue identification to strategic planning and execution, using participants' own strategic issues
- A suggested post-workshop activity, developing the ideas emerging from the workshop.

South East Training is the trading name of South East Training Network Limited

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of the programme, participants will be able to:

- Define what is meant by the terms strategy, strategic thinking and strategic planning, and explain the strategic thinking process
- Identify strategic issues relevant to the mission, values and vision of the organisation
- Use a range of tools and techniques to investigate and define the current situation regarding strategic issues identified
- Clearly define problems presented by identified strategic issues, and apply creative problem-solving techniques to arrive at an array of options for their resolution
- Apply decision making techniques to alternative options for problem resolution to help select the right, commercially viable approach
- Translate selected change options into a realistic strategic plan by:
  - Defining a programme for the changes required
  - Defining the strategic objectives, goals and actions
  - Stress testing the strategic plan to determine its viability
  - Creating a road map for implementation.

## Pre-Workshop Content

The pre-workshop assignment is an essential part of the learning for this module, which includes:

Reading:

- Definitions of strategy, strategic thinking and strategic planning
- Examples of strategic thinking relevant to participants' experience
- The strategic thinking process

Activities:

- Who should be involved in strategic thinking?
- Identifying, through engagement with stakeholders, current issues that would benefit from a strategic approach
- Assessing the seriousness, urgency and growth potential of the issue(s) identified
- Defining the organisation's mission, values and vision in relation to the issue(s) identified
- Understanding the current situation using PESTLE and SWOT

## Workshop Content

- Introduction - including a review of the pre-workshop assignment
- Identifying strategic issues – understanding the environment, prioritizing issues
- Understanding the present – drivers; SWOT; system thinking; cause and effect; problem restatement and scoping
- Generating the options – problem solving and innovation
- Inventing the future – decision making and validation
- Making it happen – managing change; programme and project management; benefits management; risk analysis; objectives, goals and actions; mapping the strategy
- Next steps

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