

Strategic Plan Checklist

Nonprofit organizations exist to help others. But you can't do that if you don't know what your goals are and what you'll do to achieve them. That's why you need a strategic plan. Follow this checklist to help you create your plan of action.



Do Your Research

Define the overall goal you want to achieve so you know what you are working towards. For example, is it brand awareness, more website visits or email subscribers, or new donors?). Then think of all the details that describe your target audience. Who do you want to reach and what do you want them to do? Follow up with a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of your organization.



Set Your Goals

Do this using the SMART format. Make sure your goals are:

- Specific - Example: Increase monthly donor numbers 30% by the end of the year.
- Measurable - Have a goal with qualitative metrics so you can see if you are reaching it.
- Achievable - Do you have the necessary resources to realistically meet the goal in the time period?
- Relevant - Does this goal do something to move your organization forward?
- Time bound - Give yourself a definitive deadline so you stay on track and accountable to the goal.



Define Your Strategy

Think of the overall objective you want to achieve and work backwards from there to determine the strategies and tactics you will use. Strategies provide the road map to your objectives and describe how to reach them. Tactics are the specific tools you will use to put that strategy into action. No matter what your goals are and what road you take with your strategy, remember to implement the plan using quality content.



Measure Your Success

Make a list of what you will measure to determine if you are reaching your goals. What are the key benchmarks you need to hit to make sure you are advancing toward the goal that you set? These will vary based on your individual goal. They could be in a numeric form (amount of web traffic, number of event registrations, email open rates) or they could be more sentiment based (such as your share of voice compared to a competitor organization or your nonprofit's brand sentiment).