

Strategic Planning and Objectives - Track It and Measure It to Make It Work!

[In our last article](#), we discussed some essentials for creating strategic planning objectives using the SMART system. Now it's time to give your strategic objectives some teeth by putting systems into place to measure (remember the "M" in smart) and track those objectives (**metrics**). Then you will have the solid foundation you need to build a more detailed strategic plan for your business...and we'll get into that in the next article...

Remember -- whether you're using **strategic objectives** as a starting point or creating



an entire *strategic plan for your business* – the whole point behind strategic planning objectives is to improve performance in every area. To improve performance, you have to know where you are so you know whether you've actually improved once you get there. Verify that everyone in your organization is [clear about your strategic objective](#) before you jump into metrics.

If you are confident that everyone is clear about the strategic objectives, then you can start looking at metric systems to keep the objective on track. There is a saying that is probably as old as entrepreneurship itself: "You can't manage (or track) what you can't measure!"

Strategic Planning Outline

Your initial goal should be to set up a game plan for what to measure and how to measure it. But there is something that is perhaps even more important to the overall outcome. You must be able to answer this question: "Who is actually going to be responsible for the process?" You'll not only need someone taking the lead role in the tracking and measuring process, but to have a successful outcome, you'll also need to have everyone responsible for the activities that will be measured enrolled in the process too. For example, it might be the bookkeeping or accounting department that is responsible for tracking those increased sales you set in your strategic objectives, but it's the sales team that will be creating the core activities you'll be measuring, i.e.,

the actual sales to measure. The tracking systems are going to vary depending upon the nature of your strategic objectives, but here are a few guidelines to help you create an overall plan that will enroll everyone involved in the process, so they are all headed in the same direction...creating the momentum you need to guide your business forward:

- Create metrics that are tied to specific outcomes based on strategic objectives and strategic planning.
- Start at the top, from C-level executives on down, and be sure that everyone involved with each strategic objective is on board and understands their role in the process.
- Focus on the right metrics to effectively track the strategic objective without being bogged down by the system you created to track it – find the “sweet spot” on what to measure to assure that you’re meeting the objective. Not too much, just the most important elements.
- Use tools like graphics and visual displays so everyone involved can see where you are in meeting the objectives.
- Use a reward system with milestones. Instead of setting up a reward for simply meeting the end-game objectives, consider milestone rewards to keep motivation high and maintain that increased level of engagement in the process.
- Create objectives and metrics around more “intangibles” in your business too...not just the objectives that are directly tied to revenue or compensation.

Since you’ll have everyone involved in meeting your strategic objectives enrolled in the process, it is also important to consider how you can create systems (both tracking and reward systems) that accommodate the communication styles and key personality traits of every member of the team. Make it fun for the sales team and the big outgoing personalities in your business, but make it solid and tangible to those who are motivated by the numbers. In the end, you will create more momentum with your group engaged and all heading the same direction to meet your company’s overall strategic objectives.