

Mission/Vision/Values Strategy Templates and Questions

Collected and Collated by Terry Kaufman

2023

“Organizations need a new direction every two to three years.” (Charles Handy, Age of Paradox)

Potential “day retreat” timeline:

- Opening prayer and biblical engagement
- Team connection time
- Explain and agree on expectations of the day, with clear understanding of what each area of discussion means:
 - Possible outcomes: Mission? Vision? Value? Priorities? Strategic Planning? Structures? Systems?
- Discuss what success for your church looks like.
- Possible discussion templates
 - Appreciative Inquiry exercise
 - SWOT
 - APA
- Do a health check -- what is your church’s health like?
 - How are your current strategies working?
 - Where do you want to go from here?
- Assign responsibilities, deadlines, and expectations
- Prayer

Mission Questions:

- What is your mission statement?
- How well is it known?
- Can you support it biblically?

“Visioning” Questions:

- **Top 6 Pre-Vision Process Questions**
 - What vision has preceded us in this church’s history?
 - What are our five-year trends?
 - What is our current state?
 - What is happening around us including other churches?
 - From what do our current members base their identity?
 - Why is imaginative discovery of vision rare today?
- **Top 6 Vision Process Questions**
 - What are the functions of the various leadership levels and congregation in the process?
 - If we need a vision or planning group, who will make-up the team?
 - Who will assess, ascertain, articulate the vision?
 - Will there be a formal process to affirm or approve the vision?
 - Who will facilitate the process?
 - What is our process model and related vision framework?
- **Top 6 Vision Questions**
 - What can we do better than 10,000 other churches?
 - What are we ultimately supposed to be doing? (mission as missional mandate)

- Why do we do what we do? (values as missional motives)
- How do we do what we do? (strategy as missional map)
- When are we successful? (measures as missional life-marks)
- Where is God taking us? (vision proper as missional mountaintop + milestones)

- **Top 6 Vision Rollout Questions**

- How will we build internal awareness of the new vision?
- How do we create understanding and appreciation of the new vision at every level?
- What common questions will need to be answered when the new vision is communicated?
- What tools and resources need to be in place when the new vision is communicated?
- How do we create urgency when rolling out the new vision?
- How will we remind people that this is God's vision?

- **Top 6 Vision Integration Questions**

- Who is ultimately responsible for aligning and advancing the vision?
- How will the vision be integrated into developing leadership?
- How will the vision be integrated into intentional communication?
- How will the vision be integrated into duplicatable processes?
- How will the vision be integrated into compelling environments?
- How will the vision be integrated into conscious culture?

- **Top 6 Questions for Individual Engagement with the Vision**

- What do you like best about the vision?
- What does the vision mean to you?
- What questions do you have about the implications of the vision?
- Would you have any hesitation enthusiastically embracing the vision?
- What ideas do you have toward the realization of the vision?
- Will you give yourself to the vision with us?

Values Questions:

- What is assumed to be important at your church (in other words, it is so basic it doesn't need to be said)?
- What are the best character traits of your church?
- What would new members of your church say they value most about your church?
- What values has the church held for many years that you believe should be held on to?
- What values has the church held for many years that you believe the church should move on from?

Leading Questions for general brainstorming:

- What is your church doing very well?
- What do you see as the top 3 to 5 strengths of your church?
- What is your church not doing very well?
- What do you see as the greatest 3 to 5 weaknesses of your church?
- Where is your city going in the future and what impact should that have on your ministries?
- What are the five most important things your church should be doing?
- What should your focus for mission and ministry be for the next five years?
- What other realities impact your direction?
- What resources do you have?

- What unique resources do you have that other churches may not have?
- What are your core ministries?
 - How do those primary ministry area activities support your key priorities and overall mission?
- What are our biggest obstacles to achieving our mission?
- What is your church's picture of "success"?
 - What are your priority goals for next 3-5 years (no more than 5 goals)?
 - How can we be effective at the above statement over the next 2-3 years?
 - What are the key priorities for the next 3-5 years?
 - What do you need to do successfully achieve success in these priorities?
 - Thinking about what you are now doing -- what are the 3 most important things you are doing to achieve that? Or "How do we make disciples?"
 - Thinking about what you should be doing -- what would be the 3 most effective things you should do to achieve that?
 - How are the outcomes of these priorities measured?
 - What are your church's key metrics?
 - What single metric would be most important for the next 12 months to measure that?
- What are your church's greatest opportunities to achieve its mission?
- What are your church's greatest threats to achieving its mission?
- What are the unique circumstances of your community or church that should impact how you do that?
- If you had to list the 3 – 5 most important ideas that guide the way our church does ministry what would they be?

Specific Analysis Questions for a Church from Aubrey Malphurs (*Advanced Strategic Planning*)

- Life Cycle:
 - Is our ministry growing? Do we know why?
 - How close is our ministry to a plateau?
- Performance:
 - What are our strengths as a church?
 - What are we good at?
 - What are our distinct, unique competencies?
 - Why do people attend our church?
 - What is our church known and respected for in the community?
 - What qualities of the ministry set it off from other ministries in the area? What services do we provide that others do not?
 - What are our weaknesses as a church? What are we doing poorly or what should we be doing that we are not?
 - Why do people leave our church? What reasons or excuses do visitors give for not coming back?
 - What are people saying about the ministry behind our back?
 - What are the weaknesses of the church's staff?
 - What are the weaknesses of the laypeople and volunteers?
 - What are our limitations as a church?
 - What ministries are we attempting without a qualified leader?
 - What ministries are we involved in where the people do not have the talents, gifts, or abilities to do them well?
 - How do our facilities (or lack thereof) and/or community limit our ministry?

- Direction:
 - Does our church have both a mission statement and a vision statement?
 - Are the stated mission and vision biblical?
 - Are the mission and vision statements clear and memorable?
 - Does the church communicate well its mission and vision statements?
 - How well is the ministry accomplishing its mission and vision?
- Strategy:
 - Has the ministry clearly articulated and communicated its strategy?
 - Does most everyone know what it is?
 - Is it working? Is it accomplishing the church's mission?
 - What programs make up the strategy?
 - Do any programs overlap in purpose?
 - Which programs need to be revamped or ended?
- Congregation:
 - Does the congregation consist primarily of Builders, Boomers, or GenXers? If mostly Builders, what does this tell us? If mostly Boomers, what does this tell us? What would it take to reach other generations?
 - Is the church made up of more women or men?
 - Is this congregation well educated? What difference does this make?
 - What do our people do for a living? What does this mean to the church?
 - Is the church made up largely of married couples? Are they with or without children? How many singles attend?
 - Where do our people live? Do most live in houses, apartments, other? How might this affect the ministry?
 - Are our people low, medium, or high income? How might income affect the ministry?
- Culture:
 - Identify some of your church's traditions, both good and bad?
 - Who are our church's heroes? (evangelists, teachers, pastor)
 - What are our people's expectations? (conversions, good Bible teaching, kid's programs, parking, etc)
 - What are the norms and standards? (do's and don'ts)
 - What stories do people tell? What are our myths and memories?
 - What are the church's rituals? (retreats, VBS, testimonies)
 - What are our symbols? (baptisms, communion, pictures, tapestries)
 - What does the church reward?
 - Do we support or resist change?
- Obstacles:
 - What kind of obstacles do we face?
 - What gets in the way?
 - What is preventing great performance?
 - What is not thinkable or even discussable around here?
 - Do we face and deal with our problems? What problems do we avoid?
 - Do we learn from our mistakes? Why or why not?
 - What kinds of behavior do we condone that hurt people?
 - Do we have good or bad morale?
 - Do we have any traditions that are blocking effective ministry?

- What are other people obstacles that we face?
- Is our church organized vertically or horizontally?
- Is the power centralized or decentralized?
- Is the focus inward or a balance between inward and outward?
- Is the church flexible or inflexible? Where is it inflexible?
- Do people know what they are accountable for?
- Does the church effectively collect, manage, and disseminate information? How much is gossip?

Questions/comments around Board role and expectations:

- Please think about your governance philosophy. At one end of the spectrum the congregation is very involved in decision making; at the other end of the spectrum the Senior Pastor is the Board Chair; Where should you be to be most effective at helping your church be successful at this time?
 - What kind of power does the membership give the board?
 - How many ways can we define the board, ministry council, elders, etc.?
 - How are you going to govern to achieve your objectives?
 - What responsibilities does the board want to keep? (Who owns it?)
 - What is included in the Board's role to direct?
- In what areas should the board intentional work to improve?
- What is the board's expectation? Of staff? Of volunteers? Of members? Of attenders?

Communication questions:

- How would you, in 8 words or less, describe the desired outcome or main goal that would define success for you as a church?
- You are at a coffee time with a friend and trying to describe this on a napkin.
- How accurately and clearly does your mission statement articulate your main goal?
- How accurately and clearly does your vision articulate your picture of the future (for your church in this time)?

Definitions and Terms:

- How would you define each of the phrases/terms in your vision statement in one sentence?
- Are all the phrases and words clear and simple in all of your key guiding documents (Mission Statement, Vision, Values, Priorities)? If not, they should be clarified and simplified.

Strategic Planning Discussions:

Strategy came from Greek "The art of the General" – the art of War. General is responsible for multiple units to win the war. Thinking about the whole possibly sacrificing certain things to obtain the victory.

- Where do we compete (market/industry)?
 - Who is the competition for your church? Other churches? Sports? Recreation? Work? Entertainment?
- What unique value do we bring?
- What resources & capabilities do we utilize? What is in our toolbox? (Tangible and intangible)
- How do we sustain our unique value? What do we do? What do we NOT do?
- How does strategic planning in the church differ from "Business"?
- How do we see strategic planning in scripture?
 - Book of Acts – growing and multiplying and building on the original.
 - Acts 6 – look for deacons to look after widows/orphans

- Foreshadowing and prophesying in the OT.
- OT moving from Genesis toward the plan of salvation almost immediately.
- Proverbs 22-24....
- We need to be adaptable – celebrating wins and using them to inspire us to the next step.
- Preventing bad planning
 - Identifying specific changes, with tangible steps
 - Be willing to say “No” (What is your priority? Is this something you have resources for? Is it realistic?)
 - Structure should follow strategy (Structure & Strategy need to be aligned)
 - Avoid too much planning (looking for a perfect plan before starting)
 - Avoid too broad a mandate
 - Avoid making plans concrete, absolute, and universal

Appreciative Inquiry Exercise: (Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a way to engage groups of people in self-determined change. It focuses on what's working, rather than what's not working, and leads to people co-designing their future.)

- Define – establish agreement on what is the desired outcome of this discussion
- Discovery (affirmations) – identifying strengths and what you are doing well
- Dream (aspirations) – Envision positive future results
- Design – create a shared image of the preferred future
- Delivery – agree on ways to create that future

APA analysis:

- It looks like this:

Achieve

Preserve

Avoid

- You simply create lists in each column. What you want to achieve, preserve, and avoid. It helps you focus your discussions.

FAST goals

- A goal-setting method that follows the acronym for FAST, which stands for frequent discussions, ambitious scope, specific milestones and transparency.
- Arrow Leadership’s version of FAST is Faith stretching, achievable, specific, transformative.
- Be sure your goals are the right kind of goals.

Brainstorming Rules:

- Suspend all judgments!
- Quantity not quality!
- Please, no speeches!
- No killer phrases!

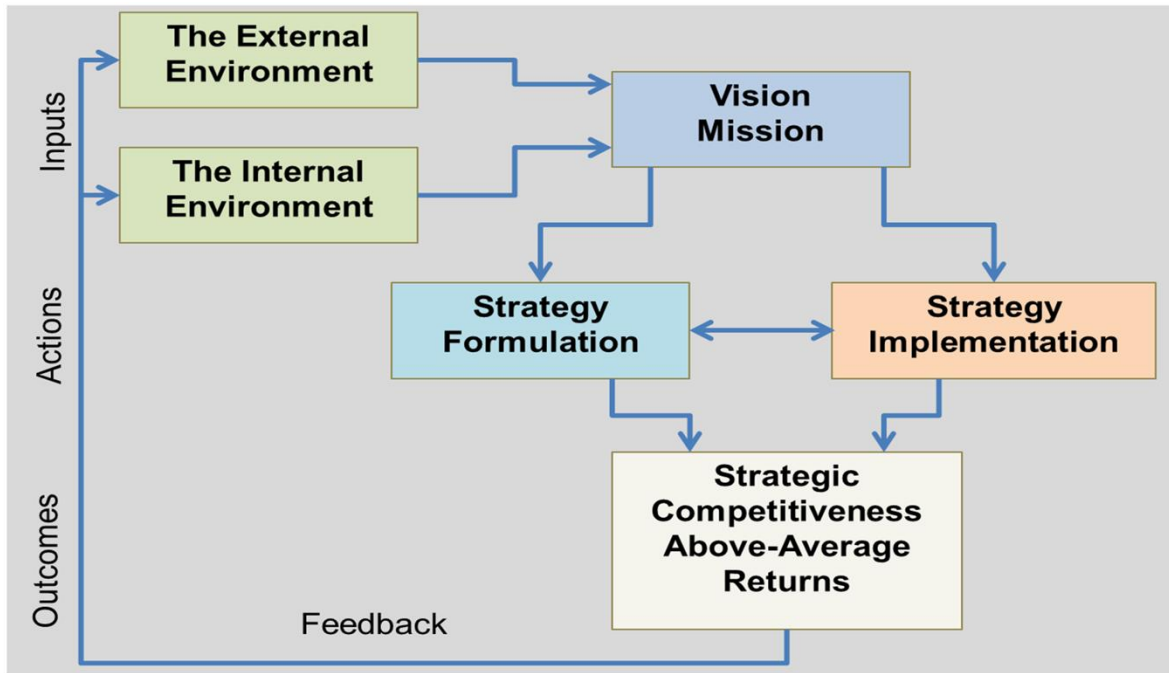
SWOT Analysis:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities (includes within the church and the community)
- Threats

Learning Organizations are defined as skilled at *creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge* and at *modifying its behaviour* to reflect new knowledge and insights.

HOW does an enterprise become a “learning organization?”

1. Systematic problem solving
2. Experimenting with new approaches (failing is expected – failing fast)
3. Learning from their own experiences and from others (we tried that and it didn’t work)
4. Transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently – (the bigger the enterprise the more moving parts)



A fun parable: The plan - Author unknown

In the beginning was the plan – then came the assumption .
 And the assumptions were there without form
 And the plan was completely without substance, and the darkness was upon the face of the kid’s ministry workers.
 And they spake until their superintendent saying, “It is a pot of crap, and it stinketh”
 And the superintendent went into the kid’s ministry committee and sayeth, “It is a pile of dung, and the none may abide the odor thereof.”
 And the kid’s ministry committee went unto the ministry director and sayeth unto him, “It is a container of excrement, and it is very strong, such that none may abide by it.”
 And the ministry director went unto the associate pastor and sayeth unto him, “It is a vessel of fertilizer, and none may abide it’s strength.”
 And the associate pastor went unto the executive pastor and sayeth, “It contains that which aides plant growth, and it is very strong.”
 And the executive pastor went unto the senior pastor and sayeth, “It promoteth growth, and it is powerful.”

And the senior pastor went unto the ministry council and sayeth unto them, "This powerful new plan will actively promote the growth and efficiency of the church and the ministry in genera."
And the ministry council looked upon the plan and saw that it was good, AND THE PLAN BECAME POLICY.