

Marketing Strategy

Start at the Start

*“Marketing is not a department. It
is your business.”*

—Harry Beckwith, *Selling the Invisible*

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Many architects make the mistake of thinking that marketing has only a peripheral relationship to what their firm does. In fact, marketing works best when it is totally integrated into the operations of your firm, when it's a part of everything you do.

You can't create a plan for how to improve your marketing and increase your business without first considering your long-term goals—not just in terms of fee revenue or winning work, but in terms of who you want to be and where you want to go, both as a firm and as a professional.

There are a number of ways strategic planning can help your firm:

- ▶ Build a shared vision for the firm's future.
- ▶ Articulate your vision so that it can be communicated to others.
- ▶ Get approval and support for the vision from senior leadership and, ultimately, your entire staff.
- ▶ Create a framework for all future decision making.
- ▶ Figure out (and agree on) how much you're going to spend on marketing and other initiatives to make it happen.

The discussion of strategic planning and marketing planning are divided into the following five areas, each with its own chapter in this book:

Chapter 1—Strategic Planning: Getting to the Starting Line

- ▶ Where do we want to go?
- ▶ Who do we want to be?

Chapter 2—Branding: We Used to Call It Reputation

- ▶ What do we want people to think of when they think of our firm?

Chapter 3—Positioning: Finding Your Place in Your Markets

- ▶ What kind of work do we want to do?
- ▶ How do we position ourselves to get it?

Chapter 4—Marketing Planning: Deciding How to Communicate to Your Markets

- ▶ What does a yearly marketing plan contain?

Chapter 5—Budgeting: Knowing What You Can Spend

- ▶ How much should we spend on marketing?
- ▶ How do we plan and track our expenditures?

Clearly, strategic marketing planning on this level can be a challenge, and many firms avoid doing it, or consider only some of these issues, or involve only some of the key players in the process. The mind-set is often, “We know who we are and where we want to go. We don’t need to talk about those things. We just need to bring in more work!” But for a marketing plan to be successful, it has to start with an understanding of the firm’s vision and direction. The process of defining the firm’s vision and direction has to be shared by all the senior leaders in the firm, in order to get their input and approval. It can’t be delegated. If the leaders don’t understand it or believe in it, how can they possibly serve the plan?

Strategic Planning

Getting to the Starting Line

Strategic planning is the process of developing a vision of who you are as a firm and what your long-term goals are. It's about more than just marketing; it can influence everything: human resources, finance, information technology, operations, hiring, promotions strategy, design process, client relationships, the design of your office, and absolutely anything else that affects your firm and its performance. Firms typically engage in strategic planning at defining moments in their practice, when the firm's leadership changes or when the practice undergoes some kind of profound transformation. The strategic planning process enables the firm's leadership to build a shared vision for the firm's future, articulate the vision so that it can be communicated, and create a framework for all future decision making. When you're ready to engage in strategic planning, it's important to open your mind as much as possible. Get ready to think big.

Because strategic planning is a *process*, not a document or a report, it isn't effective for a small group of leaders to issue a fat document as the strategic plan for the firm. It will probably go unread. It will certainly not achieve approval and support from the

people who need to understand it and act on it. Strategic planning is best conducted as an open process, one that involves all your firm's key leaders.

To begin the process, set up a strategic planning meeting, either as a retreat outside the office or as an extended in-house meeting. (You may want to bring in a marketing consultant to help you with this.) Figure out who should be there to give input to the vision for your firm's future. Keep the group as small as possible, but don't leave anyone out. Ask everyone to commit half a day for the meeting (two hours just isn't enough), and to come relaxed and prepared to focus on the firm's strategic direction.

Give everyone an agenda in advance and ask each person to bring historical data based on his or her area of expertise or interest (financial data, hiring or retention info, win/loss reports, client feedback, etc.). Gather any existing documents that attempt to define the firm or its vision, such as mission statements, a firm description, marketing materials, articles that have been written about the firm, and so on.

Plan to spend about half the meeting talking about where you are now (your firm, your markets, your competitors, etc.) and the other half talking about where you'd like to go (your mission, your vision, the action plan). Your agenda for the meeting could look something like this:

Strategic Planning Meeting Sample Agenda

1. Who are we?
 - ▶ What makes us who we are?
2. What markets do we serve?
 - ▶ Who are our clients? What are we good at?

3. What are our strengths?
 - ▶ What's special about us? What makes us great?
4. What are our weaknesses?
 - ▶ What could we do better?
5. What are our opportunities?
 - ▶ How can we grow?
6. What threats do we face?
 - ▶ What scares us?
7. What's our vision for the firm?
 - ▶ Who do we want to be?
8. What's our mission?
 - ▶ What do we want to change?
9. What are our goals?
 - ▶ How are we going to achieve them?
10. How do we communicate the results of this meeting:
 - ▶ to our staff?
 - ▶ to our clients and prospective clients?

Notice that these agenda items are all questions. Questions are effective conversation-starters, because they require an answer. Questions like this also convey a certain level of openness. It's not a trick, or rhetorical. The answers really are unknown, and the purpose of your meeting is to find them.

Think carefully about how to facilitate this meeting and how to capture the ideas that people have. Use flip charts to write down the things that people say so that they're recorded and so that everyone in the meeting can see them, process them, and respond to them. Let everybody know that you'll be recording the meeting in this way, and will distribute notes to them within a day or two of the meeting.

**TIP**

Questions are good for getting the conversation started. Keep your questions open-ended. Yes-or-no questions don't further the discussion.



REMINDER

Remember to treat your colleagues with the respect they deserve. Listen, ask questions, and don't talk too much. You're working together to forge a common vision; give everyone a chance to contribute equally.



TIP

Be honest about what your firm is all about. At this point, it's not about how you sell the firm; it's about what the firm is.

Remember that the strategic planning meeting isn't about looking smart or showing that everything's fine just the way it is. You want to create a new vision together, and it must be based on honesty and trust. Make everybody feel comfortable, appreciated, and a part of the process. Ask a lot of questions. Ask stupid questions. Listen carefully to the answers. Discuss them, record them, and learn from them.

Who Are We? What Kind of Firm Do We Have?

First things first: It's important that your key leaders are in agreement about who you are as a firm and what you stand for. It may seem simple, but the most fundamental issues are sometimes the hardest to agree on. Who are you? What are you all about?

It's not easy to frame a broad discussion like this or to determine beforehand what the answers to these questions are going to be; you have to stumble upon them. Just be as honest as possible. You're not trying to build a marketing case or define how your clients see you—that comes later. At first, you're only trying to determine how you see yourself as a firm and how you explain what you're all about.

You may want to start by asking each person in the room to say how he or she describes the firm to friends or colleagues (*not* to clients or prospective clients—you don't want to know how they sell the firm, but how they think of it). As they talk, write a few key words on your flip chart as they come up. The flip chart then becomes the documentation of

the discussion—the closest thing you have to the real identity of the firm.

Once everybody has had a chance to speak, you may want to ask, “Does everybody agree with what’s up here on the flip chart?” Then discuss whatever seems “meaty” or interesting, making additional notes along the way.

In some cases, a discussion like this could go on for quite some time. Within the framework of a half-day strategic planning session, set a limit for this discussion (half an hour or an hour) and then summarize. It’s okay if you don’t get to a “final answer” in this session. Identity is a complex issue. It may not be easy to find a neat and tidy definition of “who we are” that sounds right to everyone in the group. Expect differences of opinion. Don’t ignore them; face them openly and try to integrate them and find the common threads between them.

In your discussion, feel free to mention other firms as models or benchmarks. “We’re like Big Firm A, but we’re smaller and more focused.” “We’re like Small Design Firm B, but our design style is more driven by the client than our own tastes.” These comparisons help you to categorize your firm and to figure out where you fit within the solar system of your competitors.

An *identity map* is a great tool for deciding how you compare with your competitors. Select two factors, and map one on the X-axis and one on the Y-axis. (The example in Figure 1.1 uses size and a design/specialty firm as the two factors.) Put your competitors on the map and put your own firm on the map. (In the example here, the given firms are placed more or less randomly on the map; this is not to be construed as any kind of statement about these firms.)



TIP

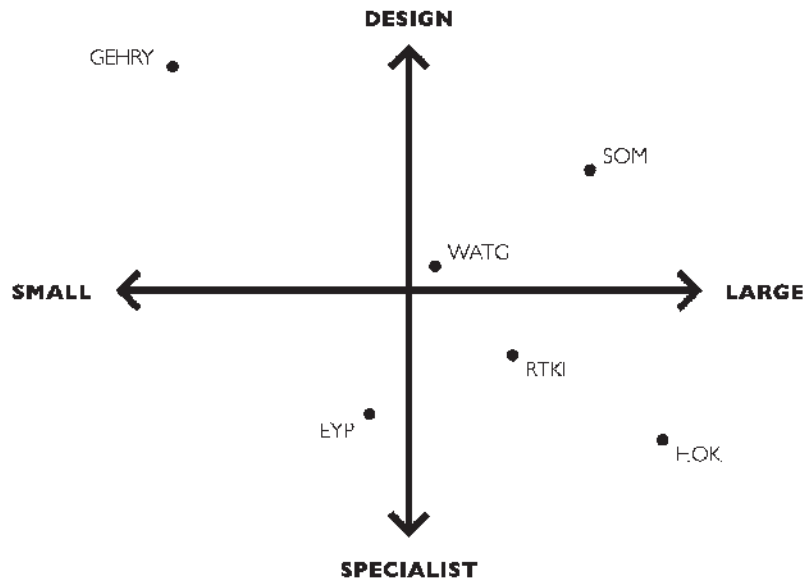
You may need to establish time limits for discussing each question. Otherwise, you may not make it through the entire agenda.



RULE OF THUMB

Expect differences of opinion. Try to find common ground between differing opinions.

IDENTITY MAP



Recognize that there are different categories of architecture firms, and that you probably fit into one of them. There are a number of ways to define the categories, but for the purpose of this discussion, let's say that there are three major categories:

- Design firms
- Specialist firms
- Large firms/matrix organizations

In the discussion of what your firm is really all about, don't be afraid to be personal, even a little bit selfish. Unless your firm is a sole proprietorship, or is strongly led by one principal visionary, everyone in the room should have a say. The vision for the firm should be the *shared* vision of the entire group. It should reflect their passions and the things that are most important to them.

Defining the Categories: Where Do You Fit In?

Design Firms

- ▶ Generally have a recognizable design style.
- ▶ Usually led by a single signature designer.
- ▶ Clients come to them because they're looking for high-impact design.
- ▶ Compete on the strength of their overall design portfolio rather than on their specific experience with a given project type.

Specialist Firms

- ▶ Can make the claim that they are the experts in one (or more) discipline, facility type, or industry.
- ▶ Clients come to them because they're looking for a high level of experience in a given area.
- ▶ Compete on the strength of their specific experience and their deep knowledge of the specific project type or industry.

Large Firms/Matrix Organizations

- ▶ Have expertise in many different disciplines, facility types, or industries, spread over multiple offices.
- ▶ May be internally structured by either practice or office.
- ▶ May compete on the basis of expertise, resources, and/or geographic reach.
- ▶ Culture, competitive advantage, work styles, and so on may be different from practice to practice or from office to office.

The strategic planning meeting will be more effective if people are comfortable talking about their passions, what's personally important to them for the firm. The questions "Who are we?" and "What are we all about?" shouldn't be addressed lightly, nor without a little soul searching. The answer needs to represent a firm that everybody in the room is proud to work for.

But this big-picture definition of who the firm is needs to be balanced with a healthy dose of realism.

Acknowledge the reality of your firm's business in light of the discussion you're having. Do your financial, human resources, and marketing efforts truly serve who you are? For example, if you're a firm that professes to be all about design, but most of your revenue comes from projects that don't include much opportunity for design, there may be an incongruity between your aspirations and your practice that you'll want to address later in the session.

Which Markets Do We Serve? Who Are Our Clients? What Are We Good At?

Next, define your markets. Markets can be defined by geography, service, client industry, and facility type. Members of one firm could define its market by saying, "We provide architectural and interior design services for academic clients in the Midwest, with a special emphasis on dormitory projects."

Title a page for each parameter: Geographic Reach, Services We Provide, Client Industry, and Facility Type. With your group's help, list the markets you serve on each sheet. Be careful to focus on the markets you work in now—not the markets you'd like to expand into (see the "Our Markets" sidebar).

Look at the listing you've made. What does it tell you? Are you highly diverse? Do you have a strong market niche? Where are the areas for investment and growth? Are there new areas you'd like to move into?

Looking at the "market map" you've created, are there key areas in which you are clearly the leader? Are there markets that you believe that you serve better than anyone else? Build a consensus from your plan-

Our Markets (Example)

Geographic Reach	Services We Provide	Client Industries	Facility Types
New England	Architectural Design	Academic	Offices
Mid-Atlantic States	Interior Design	Government	Classroom Buildings
Midwest	Master Planning	Aerospace	Warehouses
		Pharmaceuticals	Production Labs
		Chemicals	Research Labs
			Dormitories

ning group of which markets are core to your practice and which markets you're just entering.

Consider your competitors. Who are your key competitors in each market? Are there competitors that are truly formidable across the board? Are you coming up against the same key competitors all the time? Make a list of your key competitors, and briefly discuss the strengths or weaknesses of each.



Rule of Thumb: Generalization versus Specialization

There are real advantages and disadvantages to the strategies of being either a firm in diverse markets or a niche specialist. A strategy of *generalization*, of pursuing work in diverse markets, can enable your firm to grow through pursuing new kinds of work, and is generally more stable, as the downturns in one market may be offset by the upswings in others. A strategy of *specialization*, of pursuing work in very few markets, while not usually enabling the kind of growth or stability of the generalist strategy, can be incredibly profitable. If you “own” a market—that is, you're the obvious leader—you need to invest a lot less time and money in bringing in new work, and your profitability can soar.

**TIP**

Have a “lightning round” in which each person in the room contributes one issue to the SWOT diagram. Do it as quickly as possible to force out whatever is on the top of each person’s mind.

SWOT Analysis: Start from Now

Once you have a shared understanding of who you are as a firm and what you do, you can begin to dig a little bit deeper with a classic *SWOT analysis*, standing for *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats*.

The SWOT analysis is a time-honored business tool used to assess a company’s current situation both internally and externally, with a view toward developing a plan for the future. That said, the SWOT analysis is somewhat misnamed, in that it isn’t really particularly analytical. It’s a tool for capturing your beliefs and perceptions about your firm and the context in which you’re functioning to paint a picture of your current situation. It helps you see where you are, where you could go, what you need to fix, and what you should watch out for.

Divide a piece of paper into four quadrants, and label these Strengths (upper left-hand), Weaknesses (lower left-hand), Opportunities (upper right-hand), and Threats (lower right-hand). The left side of your paper (Strengths and Weaknesses) is internal, issues within your company that you believe are either strengths or weaknesses. The right side (Opportunities and Threats) are both focused outside: What are the opportunities out there that you can take advantage of, and what are the threats that you need to watch out for?

What Are Our Strengths? What’s Special about Our Firm?

Start with your strengths. What is truly special about you? Here are a few general possibilities to get you thinking, in the rough categories of design, service, and knowledge that you offer to your clients:

- ▶ Design
 - ◆ Distinctive style
 - ◆ Recognition
 - ◆ Innovation
- ▶ Service
 - ◆ Responsiveness
 - ◆ Communication
 - ◆ Speed
- ▶ Knowledge
 - ◆ Expertise in a given market
 - ◆ Specific body of knowledge (foreign building codes, etc.)
 - ◆ Relationships with key consultants, contractors, suppliers

These are only a few ideas. Brainstorm with your planning group until you come up with a list of strengths that feels complete to you.

Bear in mind that most of your competitors can probably also claim the majority of strengths that are on your list, so focus on those that are truly unique to your firm or those that are easily quantified or proved. Saying “We’re responsive to clients” isn’t really a useful strength, unless you can back it up with a few killer examples.

What Are Our Weaknesses? What Could We Do Better?

Be honest about this. What are the things that you don’t do as well as you think you should? What are your liabilities? You may need to coax the group to be forthcoming; this isn’t the time to be gentle or polite.

List everything that might affect your firm’s performance, or the perception of your firm’s performance,

both internally and externally. Here are a few areas for discussion, and questions to get you started:

1. Design
 - ▶ Is it as good as it could be? If not, why?
2. Experience
 - ▶ Do we have enough experience in all our markets?
3. Staff
 - ▶ Do we have the right staff mix for our firm?
4. Process
 - ▶ Is our design process fluid?
 - ▶ Does everyone understand it and their part in it?
5. Human Resources
 - ▶ How is our turnover?
 - ▶ How is our recruiting?
 - ▶ How are our employee communications?
 - ▶ How is our promotions strategy?
6. Marketing
 - ▶ Are we satisfied with our marketing efforts?
 - ▶ Are we happy with our marketing staff?
7. Finance
 - ▶ Is our accounting system as efficient as it could be?
 - ▶ What about our collections?
8. Risk Management
 - ▶ Are we reviewing our contracts carefully?
 - ▶ Are we agreeing to terms that we shouldn't?
9. Recent Events
 - ▶ Has anything happened recently (staff departure, bad PR, lawsuit) that might affect our performance?

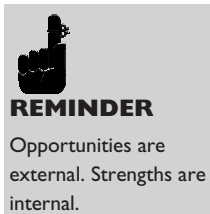
Again, this is just a list to start you thinking. Your weaknesses are what you and the group think they are. Acknowledge and record them in the meeting so that everybody can start thinking outside of the meeting about what they can do to fix them.

What Are Our Opportunities? How Can We Grow?

Opportunities are external to your firm. Looking at your markets, what are the opportunities either for growth into new markets or for developing greater depth in your existing markets? Are there trends in your markets that you can capitalize on to achieve growth?

Here are a few questions to get you started:

- ▶ What are the broad social or economic trends that we can take advantage of (people moving into/out of the cities, growth of assisted-living facilities, reuse of military facilities, etc.)?
- ▶ Are there any recent project wins or current projects that open a new market for us?
- ▶ Are there opportunities for convergence between our markets (for example, mixed-use facilities combining office, residential, and entertainment facilities)?
- ▶ Do we have any new relationships that can be leveraged to provide increased opportunity?
- ▶ Is there any new legislation that may affect our markets? Are there any new or proposed government spending programs?
- ▶ Are there any issues with any of our competitors (lawsuits, problems on projects, leadership transition) that may be opportunities for us?



Keep the discussion focused on your markets (or markets you'd like to move into) and the opportunities within them.

What Threatens Us? What Scares Us?

It's easy to talk about positive things (strengths and opportunities); and if you're honest with yourself and each other, you can also grapple with issues close to you that might be negative (weaknesses). But it's very difficult to talk about those issues that are *negative* and *external*—the threats to your business. This is the most conceptual of the four areas, and the group may not have the same perception of what the real threats are. In fact, each member of your group may see totally different threats. All you can do is raise the question, start the conversation, and record the results.

Here are a few questions to get you started:

- ▶ Are there any broad social or political trends that may affect our business negatively?
- ▶ Is the business of architecture changing in our markets (for example, through the increased role of owner's representatives in the process)?
- ▶ Are any of our markets shrinking or drying up?
- ▶ Are our fees being forced down by intense competition?
- ▶ Are we losing a lot of work to one particular competitor?

If you can be honest about the threats you're facing, this information will be invaluable to you in choosing your future direction.

What's the Plan? Where Do We Go from Here?

So now what? You've defined who you are as a firm, what your markets are, and what your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are. It's time to make a plan, one that enables you to capitalize on your strengths, mitigate (or remediate) your weaknesses, take advantage of the opportunities in each of your markets, and respond to (or eliminate) the threats you're facing in each market.

The plan requires three things: a *vision statement*, a *mission statement*, and an *action plan* that outlines your goals and how you propose to achieve them. The vision and the mission are related, and complementary. The vision is a statement of what the firm aspires to be, while the mission guides the direction of the action that comes out of the strategic planning meeting. The vision is an internal and, possibly, external tool. The mission is a statement that is only for internal discussion.

Business consultant Herb Cannon describes the difference between vision and mission in terms of trying to assemble a jigsaw puzzle: the vision is the picture; your mission is to complete it.

What's Our Vision for the Firm? Who Do We Truly Want to Be?

Think big. Okay, now think bigger. The vision statement is the place to use superlatives: best, leading, largest, most, finest. In your wildest fantasies, what is your firm all about? Design? Innovation? Efficiency? Service? How do you improve the lives of your clients? How does your firm change the world for the better with every project you complete?



AT HAND

The vision and mission are complementary statements that guide your firm's actions. Your vision is a statement of who you aspire to be as a firm. Your mission is a summary of your plan of attack.

A vision statement could be something like this:

AB&C is a design firm that improves the lives of hospital patients and medical professionals by taking a fresh look at healthcare design and applying the best practices from around the world to our projects.

Clearly, you could go on and on, especially if you're active in many markets. Try to say it as concisely as possible. Write it out first, then cut things that aren't critical or that only support your main idea. See if you can get it down to one key idea. Make it as active as possible; use active verbs. Here's a better one:

DE&F designs the most successful hotel and resort properties in the world.

It can be very challenging to write a statement like this in a group. You may not get to your final answer in the session, but try anyway. Begin with a blank piece of paper. Ask the group to throw out words that describe what they think the firm is, at heart, all about—not the realistic, earthbound stuff, but the truly aspirational and inspirational. How do you impact the world?

Once the ideas start rolling, you'll be able to see which rise to the top. And after you've accumulated enough raw material, prompt the group to pick what they think the absolutely most important things are; then take a pass at writing down the vision statement. Ask the group to edit it. Move on when you feel that you've accomplished all you can in the meeting. You may need to rework it after the meeting before you send it out for the group to review.

What's Our Mission? What Do We Want to Change?

A mission statement is much more directed than the vision statement. It describes not who you are, but where you're going. It describes how you plan to change the company—not the world. Think big, but create a mission that is within the bounds of reason. The mission statement should be followed by an action plan that describes exactly how you will achieve the mission. Here's a sample mission statement:

We intend to transform our company into the most respected laboratory design firm on the West Coast. We will accomplish this by hiring the best staff, rigorously improving the quality and accuracy of our design, and delivering on our promises.

Start developing your mission statement by asking the question, "Where do we want to go now?" Is there a market that you'd like to dominate? Is there an area of your practice that you'd like to improve? Be as specific as possible. This is a mission: It needs to be focused. Look at your weaknesses and threats from the SWOT analysis. What is it that you want to fix? What is it that you'd like to improve in order to truly fulfill your vision? Look at the opportunities, as well. What current trends or changes in your markets can you take advantage of to transform your company for the better?

Just as with the vision statement, recognize that you may not be able to complete the mission statement while you're in the meeting. Everybody may need to give it some thought. Let it go when you feel that you've gone as far as you can. Remember that what's most important isn't the final product of a

**TIP**

Give out notepads to each person in the room. Encourage them to write down ideas and take notes throughout the meeting.

neat and tidy plan, but the process of working together with the key minds in your firm to get there.

What Are Our Goals? How Are We Going to Achieve Them?

The goals come directly from everything you've talked about so far. What did the SWOT analysis indicate that you should work on? In which markets are you the strongest? The weakest? Think about how each area of your practice supports your mission, and develop goals for each area:

- ▶ Design
- ▶ Technical
- ▶ Management
- ▶ Human Resources
- ▶ Finance
- ▶ Legal
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Office Operations
- ▶ Other

Each goal should have an action plan that accompanies it. For example, under legal, you may have a goal like, "Update our standard contract language." The action plan might be something like this:

1. Check what the latest AIA contracts are.
2. Find out what other firms are using for standard contracts.
3. Review what contract terms clients have asked us to agree to lately.
4. Talk to our lawyer.
5. Revise standard contract.

Because of the detailed nature of the action plan, it may be difficult to develop this fully in your group.

**TIP**

Don't let the discussion end when the meeting ends. Set in motion an ongoing dialogue about the issues that have been raised in the meeting. Make a plan to continue the conversation in a follow-up meeting.

You may want to agree on the goals in the meeting and then assign someone from the meeting to develop the action plan in each area.

Before you adjourn the meeting, set a date for a follow-up meeting in a few weeks or a month later. Indicate that you will distribute notes from the meeting. These notes are, essentially, a rough draft of your strategic plan.

Strategic planning is an ongoing process. In the next meeting, you'll need to revise the action plan and make sure it represents everything you must do to fulfill your mission. Check back at a quarterly meeting to make sure that you're on track: that the vision statement still reflects your aspirations, that the mission statement still reflects the direction you're moving in, that the action plan is still valid, and that you're making progress.

How Do We Communicate the Plan to Our Staff? To Our Clients and Prospective Clients?

As noted earlier, a strategic plan isn't a fat, bound volume that sits on your shelf, unread. It should be a concise and *living* document that reflects who you are, where you're going, and what you propose to do to get there.

As soon as possible after the meeting, compile all of your notes into a document. The organization for the document could be something like this:

1. Who We Are
2. Our Markets
3. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
4. Our Vision



TIP

Don't let it die. Once you've revised your action plan and you have a strategic plan, check back at a quarterly meeting to make sure that you're on track.



TIP

Don't let your notes from the meeting sit on your desk. Compile them immediately after the meeting while they're fresh in your mind.

5. Our Mission
6. Action Plan

While you're compiling, feel free to edit and fill in the blanks to make this a more complete document. Circulate this document to all of the attendees at the meeting, asking for comments. If it's appropriate, supplement the action plan with supporting materials (a draft marketing plan for target markets, for example, or a detailed financial analysis). In your follow-up meeting a few weeks or a month later, validate the strategic planning document and discuss how to share it with the other members of your firm.

If you've got a culture that supports it, share the entire revised strategic planning document with your firm. Or, if there's sensitive information in the document, share an edited version. You may want to take out the SWOT analysis, for example, and edit the detailed action plan down to just a set of goals. But keep in mind that the more of the plan you share, the greater understanding there will be at all levels of the organization, and the more support

Old Vision, Old Future

One firm went through a strategic planning initiative at the highest levels, and invested a great deal of time and resources in the process, but unfortunately failed to communicate it down to the staff level. The only evidence of change to the average member of the staff was a new internal and external marketing slogan: "Bold Vision, Bold Future," which was posted on the wall and inserted in marketing materials. But the new slogan (and the mysterious new bold vision) didn't have support from the staff, because they didn't *share* the vision. How could they? It had never been communicated to them. And so the new slogan became something of a joke. "Old Vision, Old Future," one staff member quipped while walking by the giant slogan in the hallway.

you'll be able to earn to make the strategic changes that fulfill your mission.

One word of caution: The strategic plan is not a marketing tool. There is very limited value in sharing any of the information (except, perhaps, the vision statement) with clients, prospective clients, or anybody outside your firm. The strategic plan is a product of the collective soul-searching of your firm. It should inform all of your actions and communications, but it doesn't need to be shared with anyone outside your organization. It's for internal use only.