

## **A.8 Appraising a Strategic Plan**

From: Managing the Professional Service Firm: David Maister

There are only 4 objectives:

1. Get better business
2. Improve Productivity
3. Increase Skill Building
4. Raise Client Satisfaction

For these: Action, Person Responsible, Time required, Due Date, Tracking Indicator

What are the main assumptions on which the plan is based? Which is the most risky? (i.e. if it can go wrong, where will it go wrong?).

And these questions:

### **Capabilities:**

What special capabilities do you plan that your best competitors cannot match?

Why can't they match them?

What actions will you take to put those capabilities in place?

In what way are your investment priorities likely to be different from those of the competitors?

How do you know the clients will like what you are planning? What field-testing have you done?

What client input have you obtained?

What are the staffing implications of your plans? Where from will you get the staff?

### **Leader and Stakeholders**

Who will oversee executing each component of the plan?

Who was involved in the development of the plan? Is everyone in agreement?

Who was not consulted? Do they have a role in executing the plan?

On whom will you be dependent for the execution of the plan?

— Do they have sufficient incentive to do their part?

— Is it in their interest to do what you want?

— Do you have to modify your reward systems to make this happen?

## **Market Growth/Clients and Competitors**

Specifically, which 5-10 clients, by name, represent your most likely source of expanded business for the next few years? What actions do you plan to take to get closer to these clients?

Which new clients are at the top of your priority list? Why? What makes you think you can get their business?

What is the one most significant thing that each of the main competitors is doing that will affect you?

What do you plan to do in response?

In what way do you plan to contribute to the firm wide network? How will what you are doing benefit them?

## **Indicators**

How will we know if the plan is working? What indicators can we agree on, and when shall we review them?

What early warning signals will there be if the plan is not working? What contingencies have you put in place?

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Contrary to what often happens challenge the “green” the area where you are on track. Are you sure that this is sustainable?

And action the “red”. Why are you not moving; what help do you need?