**Planning- Sustainable Planning**

**Keeping to a plan**

Strategic plans, operational plans and individual performance plans. Where does the planning end? It doesn’t. The more you plan, the more you will achieve. Planning, monitoring and evaluating should become part of your routine at work.

**What is planning?**

Planning is one of the most important management techniques in existence. Planning is preparing a sequence of action steps to achieve some specific goal.

If you do it effectively, you can reduce much of the necessary time and effort of achieving the goal. The advantage of planning activities is that you have already put the thought into the steps you need to take. A plan is like a map. It allows you to check on your progress and see how far you are from achieving your goals.

All good planning involves the following steps:

* Clarify your goal. Your goal has to be achievable. Think about the time and resource restraints you might encounter and take them into consideration.
* Write a list of actions. Write down all actions you may need to take to achieve your goal.
* Prioritise your action list. Look at your list of actions and decide what is absolutely necessary to achieve your goal. Cross out the actions which are not necessary.
* Organise your list into a plan. Decide on the order of your actions and set timelines.
* Delegate the actions to teams or individuals. Make sure you’ve identified who is responsible for what.
* **Monitor the execution of your plan and review the plan regularly**. How much have you progressed towards your goal by now? What new information you have got? Use this information to further adjust and optimise your plan.

**Strategic Plans**

Strategic planning is about putting your mission statement into action, setting priorities and delegating responsibilities. It is a visionary statement which can be used to promote your station and get support. Having at least one strategic planning session a year is a way of getting everyone onto the same page. This is the time where everyone develops and commits to the big picture.

Strategic plans:

* serve as a framework for decisions or for securing support/approval
* provide a basis for more detailed planning
* explain the business to others in order to inform, motivate & involve
* assist benchmarking & performance monitoring
* stimulate change
* clarify, adapt or reinforce organisational culture and values

Operational Plans

Strategic planning should feed into your operational plan. The two should not be confused. An operational plan is much more detailed internal document which can be shorter-term, more focused and measurable. This is where you record every team’s responsibilities and the planned outcomes with timelines. These are often done annually.

**Individual Workplans**

Operational plans then feed into individual workplans for everyone in the station. If you have never developed workplans at your station, start by developing some for various key people and groups. Having a workplan template which anyone can use will be helpful. In most cases committees should be able to draft their own workplans for individual members. Workplans require supervisors, so you need to make sure that a manager or a committee is responsible for each plan that is written.

Workplans can be focused and short-term or they can be long-term. As a manager you will find them helpful because rather than ask the open question “how are you going with your project?”, you can evaluate a person’s performance by going through their workplan with them. You can check in on what they have done, problems encountered and even start working on solutions. Workplans also encourage workers to manage their time effectively. Remember workplans should have agreed outcomes (agreed between worker and supervisor) so every worker “owns” their own plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN



OPERATIONAL PLAN



INDIVIDUAL WORKPLAN  INDIVIDUAL WORKPLAN INDIVIDUAL WORKPLAN

Other plans you might use from time-to-time are business plans. These are much more detailed statements which argue a case for a project or activity at the station. You can find templates for business plans on the Internet.

The planning process and organisational life cycles Like most things in life, effective organisational planning will follow a cyclical pattern. Every station has set things that drive the planning and annual timeframes of an organisation.

For example:

* financial year cycle for preparation of budgets, auditing, etc.
* licence renewal
* regular radiothon time-frame
* the summer slow down
* particular cultural or political events (festivals, special days, elections)
* annual general meeting and the election time-frames
* grant application and reporting deadlines
* newsletter and program guide deadlines

So write them all down on a calendar and make the organisation’s work life function in sympathy with these cycles. Go with the flow – it’s usually easier that way.

The actual planning process has its own cycle too. Plans tend not to happen overnight. They require a bit of work and commitment from the whole team.

The planning process would follow this cycle:

* Identify: First up, the organisation identifies, or hopefully in most cases, clarifies its values, mission and goals. Then develops a wish list, identifies needs and figures out what it wants to achieve in the time period of the plan.
* Develop: The details of the plan are then developed, noting the what, why, who, how and when.
* Implement: During the allocated time period, the station gets down and does it - working towards achieving your goals.
* Evaluate: Then, before you make you next plan, you check on how you’ve gone with this one. Identify areas that didn’t work, figure out why and come up with other strategies next time.

Celebrate your successes and acknowledge everyone’s work in keeping the place ticking.

