



EXECUTE



We have all heard stories about plans that sit on the shelf and are never referred to again. You have just done a lot of work to set the strategic direction of your organization and get everyone on the same page. Be sure to continue to utilize the plan framework and hold yourselves accountable to reach your goals.

When an organization uses their Strategic Plan as a guide:

- People and resources are focused, aligned, and results-oriented. Everything moves faster.
- Goals are fulfilled, people are motivated, momentum and energy grow, and morale increases in your organization.
- Faith in your ability to be an outstanding steward and to make an impact increases among your key stakeholders.
- You will still have the power to adjust and change your strategy along the way, and what you learn can be incorporated into your next plan.



Strategic Planners at the EXECUTE stage know that:

1. **It's critical to align your resources to accomplish your plan.** You are thoughtful about your capacity, appropriate staffing levels, fundraising, tools and training needs.
2. **Mid-course corrections are allowed and expected.** Your plan is your best guess about how things might unfold and how to reach your goals, but conditions can change and new opportunities and challenges can arise. Don't abandon your plan outright, but do adapt to changing conditions and course-correct as needed during the implementation phase.
3. **It is important to celebrate accomplishments.** Too often, we are so busy that we move on to the next project without taking the time to appreciate all the work that went into achieving a goal. Work to create a positive culture in your organization. Congratulate contributors and share your success with supporters as well.



Strategic Planners demonstrate what they know in these ways:

- A. Champions within the organization proactively connect the work to the mission and plan goals, acknowledging both successes and failures and helping others learn from experience.
- B. Staff and volunteers report back that they have the necessary tools, resources and time to get critical work done.



Strategic Planners produce these documents at the EXECUTE stage of planning:

- An announcement to your community celebrating completion of your plan and sharing your strategic priorities
- Thank you notes for all the stakeholders who contributed input during your planning process

There are a few key **tools** that might help you produce these documents:

- Alignment and Accountability Handout
- Tools for Aligning Your Board and Strategic Plan



These ideas have worked for other Strategic Planners:

- Create a short public version of your plan with some photos and a message from your board president and executive director and mail it to your funders and key partners and/or post on your website.
- Organize the Executive Director's monthly report to the board so that it corresponds to the strategic priorities and shares progress in each area.
- Create a culture that celebrates success by acknowledging progress at board and staff meetings. Some groups even have a standing agenda item called "Appreciation, thanks and good news."
- Review the Board's committee structure and committee goals, and revise to align more closely with your strategic priorities.
- Return to your collaborators and competitors. How can you use your strengths to strengthen the overall network to ensure that more people are better served? What types of collaboration will help you achieve your objectives?

Congratulations! You're ready for the next stage...EVALUATE.