

Planning your strategy – what protocol are you using?

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Most learning organisations use a protocol to help direct the strategy development process. As a facilitator involved with helping organisations plan their future training priorities, I have found that the standard marketing analysis tool alone doesn't go far enough to achieve a comprehensive approach to planning and strategy development.

The SWOT, Pestle and Porters analysis tools are all very effective weapons in helping organisations understand the challenges they face and the skills they need for the future. But what else do we need to consider as we analyse our environment and plan our future development activity and resource deployment?

Typically, organisations use these protocols to review their current situation from an inside-out perspective. I have found it useful to help strategic teams consider their organisational skills requirements using an outside in approach.

Internal	External
Strengths	Opportunities
Weaknesses	Threats

To achieve this, I use an Innovator process that combines an exploration and analysis process with a decision making tool to help secure honest opinions and process the data and secure consensus in a more meaningful and effective way. As you all know, critical to the success of a planning process is the ability to gain honest and accurate input. By combining voting technology combined with a sound questioning protocol you can quickly and effectively get to the heart of the organisational objectives and allow participants to have their say without fear or influence.

These critical factors include:

1. Understanding what's changed and how this has impacted the business
2. Defining and securing consensus around a vision for success and how to measure performance
3. Clarifying and prioritising the critical success factors that need to happen to achieve success
4. Identifying and prioritising potential barriers to success
5. Developing action items and delegating responsibility
6. Securing commitment and timeframes for results

Here are some questions and suggestions you may find useful:

- ❓ Has your organisation been working with a consistent vision for many years and experiences trouble seeing new possibilities?
 - We suggest that you explore Opportunities first as a way to spark new thinking.
- ❓ Does the organisation have trouble creating clear well crafted shared visions of success?
 - Put Opportunities first to help shape the elements of future success.
- ❓ Does the organisation seem to have too many possibilities and conflicting ideas about what to do?
 - Create a shared Profile of Success first and identify Opportunities that exist within in that future world.
- ❓ Does the group consist of highly visionary people from a broad spectrum within the organisation?
 - Develop a Profile of Success first and then work towards finding those Opportunities that will provide the most value to the organisation.

Topics that need to be covered when applying an inside out approach include:

- Current situation
- Desired situation
- Vision for the future
- Barriers to success

Further information on the Innovator can be found at www.wilsonlearning.com.au/solutions.