

## THREE CRITICAL GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

If we (Performance Solutions Technology) were consulting with you today, and looking at your Strategic Plan, we would be emphasizing three important constructs that dramatically improve the ability of your Strategic Plan to deliver business results. They take it from being a plan, to something you can put into place and execute... all year long. Let's go over what we emphasize:

1. **The Strategic Plan is about "must have" growth - nothing else.** Bottom line, all of your strategic goals should be about growth, example: growing sales, growing people's effectiveness, growing internal efficiencies. Growth is what we are after; not mission statements, not organizational philosophy, not politically correct statements (to insure every group has a line item in the Strategic Plan) - just growth.

And not just any growth. Not just nice-to-have growth, "wouldn't it be nice/good/we really should" growth - you want to keep your Strategic Plan very lean and mean, and limit it to just the areas of growth that will power the business forward. Be thinking in terms of the opportunities given your strengths and the market landscape that are mandatory for the growth of the business.

2. **Aside from tracking financial returns as part of your strategic plan, every goal has to have a plan, represented as initiatives. Every initiative supporting a growth goal has to stand two tests.**

If your strategic goals and initiatives don't link to goals and projects in your business operations, they will typically be under-supported in the day-to-day work process and shouldn't be in your Strategic Plan. This is our working definition for alignment. But what about those tests?

1. The first test we use when looking at initiatives is – "Do they represent a compelling plan for achieving the strategic goal?" They should represent a believe-able, testable, sequence for achieving the strategic objective while minimizing risk of lost time, missed opportunities and incorrect use of resources. Initiatives represent your game plan. How good to you want your plan to be?

2. The second initiative test is embraced by the following question, "Is that (initiative) really required to reach the strategic goal?" If the initiative is not critical to reaching your strategic goal, don't keep it in your plan. Keep your plan light and focused, you want to carry and drive this through-out the year. Sacrifice or trade comprehensive descriptions for targeted, punchy sentence stubs.

Note: All non-critical initiatives should be in your Operations section, not your [Strategic Plan](#). Don't fill up your Strategic Plan with multiple layers of initiatives, many, if not most, of them should be represented as projects under different business, product and service initiatives in the Operations area of your business in a strategic management software tool like ManagePro.

### **3. If a goal isn't measured, it doesn't belong in your strategic plan.**

If you haven't figured out a meaningful way to measure each strategic goal and supporting initiative - it doesn't belong in your plan. If you're not tracking it via your [scorecard](#), don't keep it. Said another way, if it's not worth the time to measure and track, it doesn't belong in your Strategic Plan. It's that simple. Whether or not a strategic goal is measured and tracked is one of the best for predicting what you will actually execute through the year.

Conclusion: To construct a strategic plan that can really empower your entire organization, focus on three areas:

- 1. Make sure the strategic plan is focused only on Growth**
- 2. Every strategic goal has to have an action plan of initiatives**
- 3. Whatever is worth including, is worth measuring – regularly**

The author of this series, Rodney Brim, is CEO of Performance Solutions Technology (PST). PST develops and assists organizations in deploying performance management software solutions, and presents these guidelines based upon our work with 1,000's of companies to help ensure your success in the pursuit of strategic and performance management. Performance Solutions Technology is found on the web at <http://www.PerformanceSolutionsTech.com>