

## “Strategic Planning: The Key to a Church’s Future!”

*Dear Friend,*

The future will not be like the past. More and more today, churches and school communities need to be engaged in what’s called “strategic” or “pastoral” or “long-term” planning. In years past, organizations could rely on denominational loyalty and inertia to power them forward. No more! Today, many people, especially the young, have a greater choice of religions and denominations and philosophies and communities to which to belong.

Organizations - churches, schools, and non-profits – with strong missions, visions, and plans have the highest levels of performance and success! A master plan is key to 1) setting a direction, 2) creating excitement, 3) attracting people and financial resources, 4) forming a culture, and 5) unifying the community.

So, what is “mission” and “vision”? Your mission is very simply your PURPOSE. What are you charged with doing? Why do you exist? For example, Holy Spirit Church is the family of God (community life) that worships God (worship), spreads the Gospel (word), and serves the needy within and outside our community (service). Short, sweet, purposeful!

Your vision, though related to mission, lets people know your GOALS in each of these areas. What are your goals for 1) community life, 2) worship, 3) education, 4) service, 5) stewardship, and 6) buildings and grounds?

Your vision or goals should 1) be inspirational or challenging, 2) state the outcomes you would like to achieve over the next five to ten years, and 3) paint a picture of success in each area. Some examples would be: Holy Spirit Church seeks to become a 2,500-member church, or Holy Spirit School seeks to enroll 250 new kids each year, or Holy Spirit School seeks to enroll 100% of its students in college. Set some simple, ambitious goals for EACH area of your church, school, or community life!

Sadly, I have to say that most churches or schools don’t see the need for a master plan. That may have worked 10, 25, or 50 years ago, but it is not going to work today or in the future. People have many choices today, and many organizations are “stepping up” their games. That means that if a church, school, or organization does not have a direction and is not building, growing, or improving, it will be in trouble.

Now, with some idea of what mission/purpose and vision/goal statements are, how can you start creating these for your church, school, or organization? Here are some simple ideas to start your process.

- 1) Gather your staff, committees, community leaders, and members together for a series of gatherings/working meetings.
- 2) Make a plan to determine the mission, the vision or goal statements for each area, and the approximate steps and timelines to accomplish each goal.
- 3) Keep it modest! Three to five goals (for the next five years) in each area of church, school, or organizational life may be enough!
- 4) The master plan or strategic plan collects the goals and steps for each area of church, school, or organizational life.
- 5) For each goal, make sure to have project leader or person responsible, an approximate timeline, an approximate budget, and approximate space, facilities, and materials requirements.
- 6) Ratify this as a church board or council.
- 7) Re-visit the master plan every quarter for the next five years.
- 8) **If you are serious, seek professional counsel to lead you through the visioning process and creating a step-by-step, five-year master plan.**

**VisionWorks partners with churches and schools in Strategic Planning, Feasibility Studies, and Capital Campaigns. Contact Mark Filips and VisionWorks today at 402.999.2970 or [markf@VisionWorksCo.com](mailto:markf@VisionWorksCo.com). Let us put our expertise to work for you!**