



“STRATEGIC PLANNING: Turning Dreams Into Reality”

All groups and communities (whether schools, hospitals, libraries, churches, foundations, Economic Development Corporations, or various other groups) with bold dreams and good plans have the greatest likelihood of success! That’s the way it’s always been; that’s the way it will ever be.

A 1) **Bold vision**, 2) That leads to a **plan** (formal or informal), 3) That leads to **concrete action** has the greatest chance of 4) Yielding attainment, realization, and **accomplishment**.

Perhaps with simpler dreams and in times past this process was more informal. But today, big dreams call for a more formal planning process. Just as you can't throw pieces of hardware into the sky and expect a finely made Swiss watch to fall into your lap, so it is impossible to wander into the achievement of your dreams.

So, let us look at the things necessary to turn bold dreams into reality.

Pull Together Your People – To begin your planning process, 1) Pull together the leaders and members of your community, staff, and people impacted, 2) Design your process with the help of counsel, and 3) Have “champions” or committed people in place to shepherd or drive the process from beginning to end

Dream: The Bolder the Better! – What does your community do? For whom? And what kind of impact do you want to have? As the old saying goes, "Bold dreams stir the blood!" In our lives we've experienced groups and causes with great dreams that captivate us. Great dreams are large, powerful, bold, imaginative, compelling, life-changing, and life-saving. Pull your people together. Dream. Share your dreams with others. Then, dream 10 times bigger than you first thought. Dream 100 times bigger than you first thought! Now you’ve got the beginning of an exciting, heart-capturing, resource-attracting dream!

Start Laying Out the Steps – How do you eat an elephant? Piece by piece! How do you start achieving your dream? By breaking it down into pieces or steps. In your process, put working groups of people together. In each of their working areas, let them chart the way that gets you from the **dream** to the **plan** to **action** to **achievement**!

Expect Problems and Delays – As John Maxwell says, “Failed plans should not be interpreted as a failed vision. Visions don't change; they are only refined.” Of course, there will be problems, obstacles, and delays. If a vision is worthwhile, be "Stubborn about the vision but flexible in your plans!"

Let the Vision Inspire You and Meet Periodically – Always keep your vision in front of you. Let it inspire you. Meet periodically as leaders, as a group, and as staff people to 1) Remember the vision, 2) Hold yourselves accountable, 3) Share information, 4) Assess your plans, and 5) Adjust plans as necessary.

Celebrate – As a community, acknowledge and celebrate your successes, milestones, and achievements along the way. Each step on the journey is getting you closer to the accomplishment of your dreams!

Contact **Mark Filips** today with your questions about a professional and comprehensive strategic planning process.

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