

Strategic Plan Facilitation

Creating an effective and energising strategic planning experience

Gain consensus and define direction

The strategic planning process means different things to different organisations. But the one constant is the desire to gain consensus and define the direction of future efforts.

Strategic planning is rational *and* emotional

It's tempting to think strategic planning is a purely rational process focused on facts, figures and logical consideration of options. However, in reality the strategic planning process, whether that is updating an existing plan or creating something new, can be an emotional and challenging journey for those who are participating.

Strategic planning facilitation by Stuart Ayling

Stuart is an accomplished facilitator, consultant and workshop leader with over 20 years experience working with a diverse range of executive groups and their teams. He holds a Bachelor of Business (Marketing, University of Western Sydney) and a Graduate Certificate in Management (International Business, University of Queensland).



Stuart has experience working with leading companies in many industry sectors including:

- Business-to-business products and services
- Health and community services
- Manufacturers of equipment, industrial goods and food products
- Distributors of industrial products and technical goods
- Commercial trades services such as electrical contractors
- ICT service providers such as managed services and unified communications
- Education providers such as RTO's and adult education
- Professional services such as consultants, engineers and accountants

The objective was always clear to create a plan that we could grow with, and at every point of the process we felt the professional guidance provided was focused and relevant to our needs. Importantly, we felt that our time was always very well utilised during the planning meetings.

BRETT HOLDSWORTH, CEO
TPS GROUP, QLD

The Vectis approach to strategic planning

Effective facilitation of the strategic planning process is based on some important underlying principles:

- **Understanding your goals** for the process including the key questions to be answered.
- **Having the right participants**, combining senior decision-makers, key staff and other stakeholders relevant for your organisation, and understanding group dynamics.
- **Reviewing relevant information** in advance such as previous strategy documents, Board minutes, annual report, financial reports or management meeting reports.
- **Preparing an effective agenda** to ensure the main focus remains the main focus.
- **Getting input in advance** of the planning session (or sessions) from a range of stakeholders and collating that for discussion at the session.
- **Using practical analytical frameworks** such as SWOT, PESTLE and Value Disciplines to stimulate thinking and gain insights.
- **Ensuring all participants have an equal opportunity for input**, without individual personalities taking control.
- **Capturing key outcomes and priorities** with related notes and action points for future follow up or further operational planning.



The strategic planning process is a program of work, not a one-off event. Some of the work is done before a group session is held, some is achieved during the session, and other actions are taken afterwards to refine ideas, confirm important concepts, and clarify appropriate next steps. We will work alongside your team, or undertake work as required, to ensure you achieve an actionable outcome.

Stuart was patient, flexible and knowledgeable. He took the time to truly understand our business. He cares about implementation and is dissatisfied with producing a plan that merely sits on the shelf. Without Stuart's guidance and involvement, we would still be undertaking our ad-hoc efforts.

HELEN ZWICKER, EXECUTIVE OFFICER
KIAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NSW

Without Stuart's knowledge and guidance, we would never have been ready for the next step in growing our business.

ANTHONY FENSOM, CEO
CONSULTING IT, QLD