

Strategic Planning: Its Objectives, Benefits, Requirements

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Abstract:

Its benefits include creating a unified vision and improving performance. Goal setting requires the use of data, the formation of a dedicated team, and a responsible leader. Planning management tasks include setting goals, analyzing the market, developing strategies, and providing guidance and support. Strategic planning is an indispensable tool for all organizations seeking to stay competitive in a highly competitive market environment. This process is used by all small and large companies in virtually all professional sectors, as it determines the goals each company seeks to achieve, as well as the resources and opportunities available to achieve them. If you want to know what strategic planning is and its importance, read on. In this article, you will learn about the concept of strategic planning and its main objectives, as well as its benefits, steps, requirements, tools, and obstacles.

Keywords: strategic management, Scientific organization, Policy, Making Institutions, developing.

Introduction:

Strategic and its planning is a fundamental process that aims to define an organization's long-term goals and direct efforts and resources toward achieving these goals in an effective manner. This is achieved by applying a set of strategies and utilizing a number of tools, such as the SWOT analysis, to identify the key factors driving its current performance [1]. This enables information on the most effective strategies for future change. Strategic planning involves a comprehensive analysis of the organization's external and internal environment to understand the challenges and opportunities available, assess the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, growth opportunities, and potential threats from the external environment. Based on the strategic planning analysis, the organization's vision and mission are

developed, and strategic objectives are identified that reflect the organization's future direction. Strategies and sub-plans are then developed to achieve these objectives, and the required resources and timelines for implementing these plans are identified [2].

Planning is a fundamental process in project management, defining project objectives and determining how to achieve them. • Describing the "how" and "what": In the planning phase, describing "how" the project will be implemented and exactly "what" will be accomplished is described. • An iterative process: Planning is not a static process; rather, it is an iterative process that requires continuous review and updating as the project progresses. • A comprehensive vision: Planning provides a comprehensive view of the project, identifying the key steps, timelines, and resources needed. • Precedes Scheduling: Planning is a fundamental stage that precedes scheduling, defining the project scope and objectives before determining the schedule details. • Planning Outputs: The outputs with the planning processes include the projects with respect to managements plans and the schedule management plan. The projects managements plans are the primary references for projects implementations. Scheduling: • Part of Planning: Scheduling is an integral part of the planning process, defining the project schedule details. • Determine "When" and "Who": In the scheduling phase, the "when" and "who" of each activity are determined. • Focus on Calendars and Timelines: Scheduling relies primarily on project calendars and timelines to determine the start and end dates of activities. • Decision-Making Aid: Scheduling helps make decisions regarding the timing of activities and the resources needed to complete them on time. • Productivity Driven: Scheduling relies on productivity, which can vary from organization to organization, as productivity affects the duration of activities required to complete them[3].

Strategic Plans and its elements:

Strategic plans must contains a set of keys elements, such as: • Principles and appreciation to frame the document's context. • Timelines for strategy implementation to monitor progress. This requires careful project management planning, which is where the PMI-SP® Project Management Scheduling Certification comes in handy. This prestigious certification provides its holder with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop

accurate and effective schedules, identify necessary resources, and minimize the risk of delays, ensuring the strategy is implemented on time and within budget. • Objectives to guide progress toward annual goals. • Data sources used to track progress. • Information on the individuals or offices responsible for each strategy. It is worth noting that all organizational processes require an effective strategic planning process. Whatever the organization's goal, a performance improvement plan can be created to streamline its operations and promote organizational growth. The plan should be flexible enough to allow for re-adjustment and redeployment of resources when necessary based on internal and external forces[4].

Types of Strategic Planning:

Types of strategic planning include corporate planning, which focuses on organizing and directing the business as a whole; business planning, which highlights competitive aspects and creates competitive opportunities; and functional planning, which focuses on managing specific departments, such as marketing, human resources, and finance, in a way that aligns with the company's overall strategies[5]. These types of planning involve setting goals, allocating resources, and implementing policies and processes to ensure sustainable success. Objectives of Strategic Planning Through strategic planning, organizations seek to achieve a set of objectives, which are explained below:

1. Defining specific goals for the organization in the future. Organizations conduct and implement strategic planning because it highlights the objectives they seek to achieve, whether short-term or long-term.
2. Extending the Organization's Lifespan Strategic planning provides organizations with insight and helps them see the future by helping them make better, more informed decisions, which prolongs their lifespan in the market.
- 3- Building Team Spirit When the goals an organization seeks to achieve are clear based on its strategic plans, each individual understands their role and the tasks they must perform. This creates a desire to work together to achieve these goals, which helps build team spirit.
- 4- Achieving Effective Communication One of the most prominent goals of strategic planning is achieving effective communication between the

organization's teams and members, and opening the doors to communication and dialogue between them.

5- Measuring Performance Companies seek to implement strategic planning because it is a reliable means of measuring performance within them. The plan includes specific goals and timelines, which companies benefit from in identifying areas that need development and the methods that contribute to this.

Tasks of the Strategic Planning Department:

Companies need to establish a dedicated strategic planning department to determine the right strategy that best suits the company, based on the products or services it produces and the goals it seeks to achieve[6]. The tasks of the strategic planning department include the following:

- 1- Defining the vision and mission of the organization The strategic planning department in organizations is responsible to understanding the goals of organizations, its vision, and values. The monitoring and their alignment with established procedures.
- 2- Developing the Strategic Plan When the Strategic Planning Department is able to identify the organization's objectives, it uses a set of tools to arrive at the best strategy to follow, which must be aligned with the organization's objectives. It also identifies the required actions and timelines for implementing the strategic plan, and assigns roles and responsibilities to employees.
- 3- Implementing the Strategic Plan The Strategic Planning Department implements the organization's strategic plan and ensures its efficient implementation.
- 4- Allocating Resources According to the strategic plan developed by the Strategic Planning Department, the resources required for its implementation are identified, and management is responsible for allocating these resources efficiently to ensure the plan's effective implementation.
- 5- Monitoring the Business Environment and Market Growth Rate One of the most important tasks of the Strategic Planning Department is to understand the organization's position in the business environment by monitoring the business environment and market growth rate. For example, management can determine the organization's capabilities by

comparing market size with its current market share and determining the extent of its ability to penetrate the market.

- 6- Studying the Factors Affecting the Organization The strategic planning department in organizations studies all internal and external factors that affect the organization and the implementation of its strategic plan.
- 7- Developing Organizational Structures The strategic planning department is tasked with achieving the organization's goals by developing its organizational structures. Therefore, it improves the organization's recruitment policies, enhances coordination between the organization's internal departments, and develops its capabilities.
- 8- Determining Fund Spending Areas The strategic planning department in organizations is responsible for determining the organization's fund spending areas. Therefore, it conducts an analysis of cash flows to determine potential gains, required receivables, losses, and debts.
- 9- Developing Performance Indicators The strategic planning department develops performance indicators to measure the organization's success in achieving its defined goals and to identify areas for improvement in the strategies adopted and plans implemented, with the aim of developing

Strategic planning and its benefits :

The planning's are essential for every organizations seeking success. Therefore, to develop a plan with goals, target dates, and a purpose. This process helps determine the current state of the business, the desired goals, how they can be achieved, and the obstacles to avoid. The importance of strategic planning is as follows:

- 1- Creating a single vision focused on the future One of the most prominent benefits of strategic planning is that it enables the creation of a single vision focused on the future, which can align the organization and its partners. It provides everyone with the necessary awareness of the organization's goals, how and why those goals were chosen, and what can be done to achieve them. This creates a sense of responsibility within all employees.
- 2- Combating Cognitive Bias Many decisions made are tainted by some form of bias, but participating in the strategic planning process forces the decision-maker to examine and explain the reason for each decision and support it with data, forecasts, or case studies, which combats this bias.

3- Tracking progress based on strategic objectives: With a strategic plan, progress toward defined objectives can be tracked. This occurs when each department and team understands the organization's strategy, and their progress can directly impact its success. This leads to a top-down approach to tracking key performance indicators.

4- Improving Strategic Planning Skills At the individual level, strategic planning helps improve the future skills required to undertake this process when participating in it. Online courses are useful in developing the knowledge and techniques necessary to lead a team and organization. Through them, you can learn how to formulate an effective and compelling strategic plan, not just for your career. Courses such as the PMI-SP® Project Scheduling Management course provide the knowledge and techniques necessary to lead a team and organization toward success. In this course, you can learn how to formulate effective and compelling strategic plans and develop your project management skills, increasing your organization's chances of success.

5- Gaining a Competitive Advantage Developing and implementing a strategic business plan helps a company achieve its goals and objectives ahead of its competitors, thereby gaining a competitive advantage. Strategic planning includes studying market conditions, researching competitors' next moves, creating innovative product ideas, and ensuring customer satisfaction.

6- Making the Organization Proactive One of the benefits of strategic planning is that its implementation within an organization makes it more proactive in achieving its goals and objectives, rather than being reactive to future issues and problems.

7- Increasing Sales and Profits The importance of strategic planning for organizations lies in the fact that it increases their sales and profits when implemented in every aspect of their business operations. For example, if a company fails to reach its target customers, it may seek the help of a company that can implement digital marketing strategies and help it gain online visibility to its potential customer base, thus ensuring the desired profits.

8- Increase Employee Motivation One of the benefits of strategic planning is that it increases employee motivation and enthusiasm, as following a

strategic planning approach makes employees well-informed and informed about how to achieve specific goals in the short and long term.

9-Reduce Risk Following a strategic planning approach helps companies anticipate potential futures, which reduces potential risks[7].

Strategic Planning Steps:

Strategic planning steps include several basic stages. The first stage involves understanding the need for a strategic plan by examining the industrial environment and internal processes. Objectives are then defined based on the desired purpose, with a focus on improving performance and achieving gains. This is followed by establishing assumptions and future projections, while developing the organization's internal and external environments. Next, appropriate means are sought to achieve the identified objectives, with a focus on effective and flexible solutions. This is followed by selecting an appropriate action plan, taking into account potential consequences and adaptability. Finally, the strategic plan is implemented and regularly monitored to evaluate performance and adjust objectives in line with market and organizational developments. Strategic Planning Requirements Successful strategic planning requires a set of factors, which are explained below:

- 1- Defining the goal of planning and implementation: The purpose of planning must be remembered, along with a clarification of the actions to be taken and the desired results. The plan must be linked to specific business objectives, as these objectives clearly drive the plan.
- 2- Relying on Data: Obtained facts and data, including data on business performance, the competitive landscape, market assessments, or public attitudes, should be used. This information shapes the process and should be referenced in the plan.
- 3- Weighing Options: When considering multiple options, weigh the pros and cons of each. This process provides a way to easily identify projects with the greatest potential and need the most resources.
- 4- Involving Employees: Employees should be involved in the strategic planning process, as they witness daily problems and have ideas about how to innovate at the operational level. This involvement increases their sense of belonging. It is preferable to enhance communication between employees and various members of the organization to

successfully complete strategic planning, through meetings and group discussions. All ideas raised by employees should be considered, taken seriously, and how they can be implemented, even if they require significant changes. Employees at all levels of the organization should be involved in the strategic planning process to ensure its success. This includes training and developing their skills in this area. The PMI-SP® Project Management Certification Course plays a crucial role in empowering employees to effectively manage projects and successfully implement strategic plans.

- 5- A Dedicated Team and a Responsible Leader: The strategic plan should clearly outline who within the team is responsible for actions, outputs, and outcomes, as well as the implementation timeline and key milestones for reporting progress. This enhances performance and results. A dedicated team must be formed to manage each project, as this will help create an organization-wide plan for implementing each project. Strategic Planning Department Tasks The strategic planning department is responsible for setting goals and timelines for achieving the company's objectives[8].

The tasks of the strategic planning department can be detailed through the following points:

- Studying the company's objectives
- . • Developing a written strategic plan that defines success goals, objectives, and metrics.
- Identifying areas of the company that need improvement and development.
- Conducting market research and analyzing market and industry trends.
- Preparing strategic reports and presenting them to senior management for evaluation.
- Deliver presentations on research and its findings.
- Monitor the effectiveness of plans and make adjustments as needed.
- Identify new products and geographies the organization needs to explore. • Align operations, resource planning, and departmental objectives with the overall strategy.

- Educate senior executives in making effective decisions.
- Provide support and insight into important organizational changes, such as shifts in strategic focus and mergers and acquisitions.
- Develop methods to meet customer needs and expectations to improve the company's competitive position.
- Recommend changes in organizational structure or culture to improve performance.

Evaluate new technologies to determine their future use.

Strategic Planning Tools:

Strategic planning tools, such as SWOT analysis, strategy mapping, analysis, balanced scorecard, OKR, Hoshin mapping, VRIO framework, affinity chart, portfolio analysis tool, and gap mapping, are used to analyze the current situation, set objectives, and implement strategies that increase PEST the company's profits and strengthen its market position. These tools help understand influencing internal and external factors, identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, develop plans and tactics to achieve set objectives, analyze performance, identify gaps, and close them. Read more about strategic planning tools. Strategic planning obstacles: Strategic planning obstacles include a lack of focus, resources, and knowledge. Managers may struggle to formulate and implement strategies due to certain environmental and internal conditions. This is accompanied by a lack of cohesion between units and confusion in understanding terminology. This is compounded by a lack of follow-up, flexibility, and support from the leadership team. Difficulty in developing plans, failure to address existing problems, and resistance to change add to the challenges. Additionally, challenges include the inability to set goals, resistance to change by some elements, and a lack of employee understanding of the nature of plans. What is the difference between strategic planning and strategic management? Strategic planning refers to the process that focuses on setting goals and developing plans to achieve them effectively, while strategic management goes beyond simply developing plans to achieve them.

Conclusion:

Strategic planning is essential for organizations to survive in a competitive market, as it defines appropriate objectives and strategies. Strategic planning relies on a SWOT analysis to identify key factors, resulting in a strategic plan that guides the organization. The plan includes elements such as mission, vision, timelines, and objectives. The benefits of strategic planning include creating a unified vision, improving performance, and increasing productivity. Planning requirements include setting goals, using data, and relying on a dedicated team and a responsible leader. The responsibilities of planning management include setting goals, analyzing the market, developing strategies, and providing guidance and support. 1. Strategic planning aims to achieve the best areas of work and competitiveness based on our capabilities and potential, market and external variables, customer demands, and competitor analysis. 2. Strategic planning can directly contribute to achieving continuous improvement in public and private institutions. 3. It has been shown that there are a number of obstacles and problems facing strategic planning, the most important of which are problems with follow-up and plan implementation. Many well-formulated and integrated plans are not successfully implemented by those in charge of departments, for many reasons, most notably a lack of awareness of the importance of strategic planning and a lack of administrative experience and qualifications related to strategic management tools.

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