

In an ideal world, the future is clear, all in the organization understand what to do to achieve the future, and there are no unanticipated obstacles that could impact your ability to accomplish your goals.

You can achieve this ideal world by making a concerted effort to:

- ◇ Define your future.
- ◇ Engage the organization in visualizing this future.
- ◇ Analyze your environment to anticipate the risks, obstacles, and threats facing you.
- ◇ Launch and sustain the initiatives that will realize the future.

Whether you anticipate major strategic changes or incremental improvements, a well-defined plan will increase your probability of success.

The Acorn Planning Process is collaborative, concrete, and tailored to your unique needs. All decision-makers will be engaged, and the resulting plans will be specific and actionable. The planning process consists of three steps:

1. **Research and Analysis** - work with organization members to develop a comprehensive assessment of the organization's current reality and future possibilities.
2. **Plan Development** - bring the decision-makers together to evaluate the possibilities. Working together, define the goals, objectives, strategies, actions, measures, and skills that will enable you to achieve the ideal future.
3. **Implementation** - work with organization members to assess and manage risks, identify needed changes, and ensure understanding and support from all. Prepare your organization to monitor progress and take corrective actions as needed

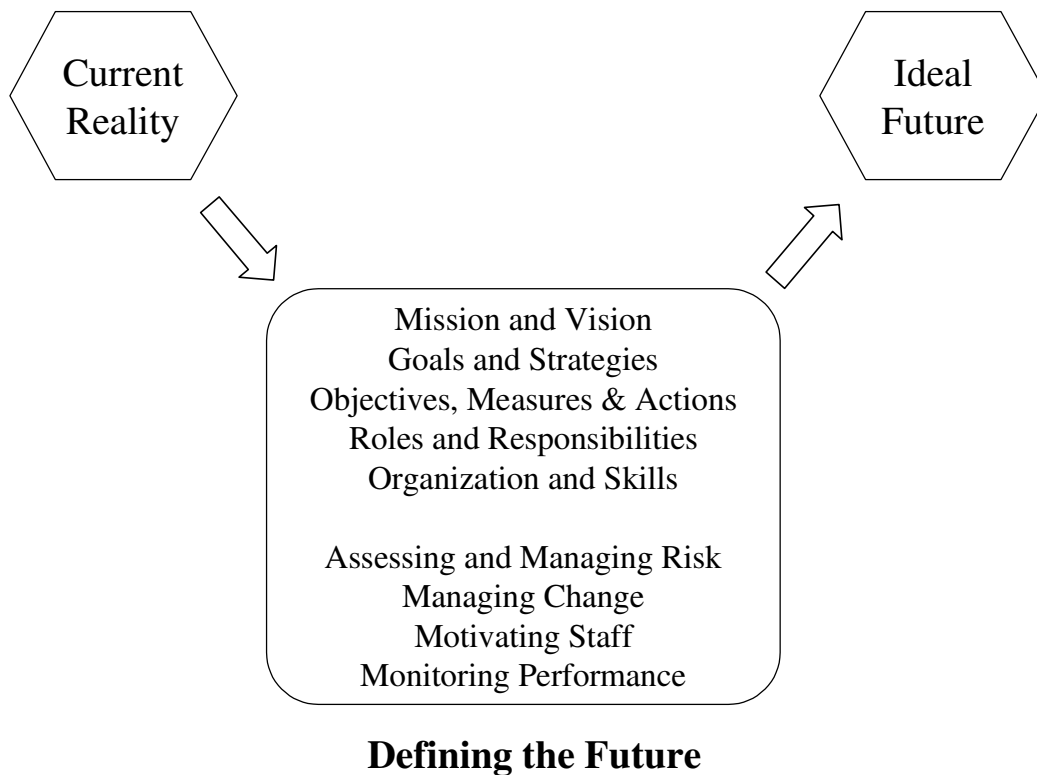
Defining the Future

"Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind."

Seneca the Younger,
Roman statesman



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Approach

While each organization is unique and therefore requires planning activities that match the organization's needs, there are some common practices.

To ensure that the discussion stays at a productive level, Acorn Consulting uses a questioning approach for the development of the Mission, Vision, Goals, Roles, Responsibilities, and Structure.

Mission: Why does the organization exist?

Vision: When you are successful, what will the impact be? How will the organization be different; how will the world around you be different?

Short and long term goals: If the organization is outstandingly successful, what will it accomplish? How will it recognize when it has achieved these accomplishments?

Strategies: What overall approaches will you take to accomplish these goals?

Actions: What must organization members do to accomplish these objectives?

Roles: What are the key roles in the overall organization?

Responsibilities: What are the actions and deliverables required from each role? What skills are needed for each role?

Acorn Consulting also ensures that the goals defined are SMART. SMART goals are:

Specific - The goal is clear and understandable by all.

Measurable - It must be clear how you will know when you have achieved the goal.

Actionable - The actions to take to accomplish the goal must be clear (and articulated in the work plans).

Realistic - Although stretch goals are desirable, goals should still be achievable.

Time-based - The goals must identify expected times for completion.