Planning

Some Basic Terms

1. Goals
Goals are specific accomplishments that must be accomplished in total, or in some combination, in order to achieve some larger, overall result preferred from the system, for example, the mission of an organization. (Going back to our reference to systems, goals are outputs from the system.)

2. Strategies or Activities
These are the methods or processes required in total, or in some combination, to achieve the goals. (Going back to our reference to systems, strategies are processes in the system.)

3. Objectives
Objectives are specific accomplishments that must be accomplished in total, or in some combination, to achieve the goals in the plan. Objectives are usually "milestones" along the way when implementing the strategies.

4. Tasks
Particularly in small organizations, people are assigned various tasks required to implement the plan. If the scope of the plan is very small, tasks and activities are often essentially the same.

5. Resources (and Budgets)
Resources include the people, materials, technologies, money, etc., required to implement the strategies or processes. The costs of these resources are often depicted in the form of a budget. (Going back to our reference to systems, resources are input to the system.)

Basic Overview of Typical Phases in Planning

1. Reference Overall Singular Purpose ("Mission") or Desired Result from System
2. Take Stock Outside and Inside the System
3. Analyze the Situation
4. Establish Goals
5. Establish Strategies to Reach Goals
6. Establish Objectives Along the Way to Achieving Goals
7. Associate Responsibilities and Time Lines With Each Objective
8. Write and Communicate a Plan Document
9. Acknowledge and Celebrate Accomplishment of the Plan

Guidelines to Ensure Successful Planning and Implementation

A common failure in many kinds of planning is that the plan is never really implemented. Instead, all focus is on writing a plan document. Too often, the plan sits collecting dust on a shelf. Therefore, most of the following guidelines help to ensure that the planning process is carried out completely and is implemented completely -- or, deviations from the intended plan are recognized and managed accordingly.

1. Involve the Right People in the Planning Process
2. Write Down the Planning Information and Communicate it Widely
3. Goals and Objectives Should Be SMARTER
   - Specific
   - Measurable
   - Acceptable
   - Realistic
   - Time frame
   - Extending
   - Rewarding
4. Build in Accountability (Regularly Review Who's Doing What and By When?)
5. Note Deviations from the Plan and Replan Accordingly
6. Evaluate Planning Process and the Plan
7. Recurring Planning Process is at Least as Important as Plan Document
8. Nature of the Process Should Be Compatible to Nature of Planners
9. Critical -- But Frequently Missing Step -- Acknowledgement and Celebration of Results
"Actions lead to fulfilling vision. Vision drives today's actions."

Why are you taking this action now?
Ask anyone in the company why they are doing what they are doing and you should get one of two answers:
- In 85% to 95% of the time we are dealing with day-to-day operations. We are dealing with the legacy of commitments to customers - i.e. making payroll.
- The remaining 5% to 15% of the time we are looking to produce Key Results - results, objectives, outcomes that will make the future different - hopefully better.

Why do you want to produce these key results?
Because the impact of accomplishing key results will literally Change the status quo. Strategic goals are strategic because they change the status quo.

Why do you want to change the status quo?
Not change for change's sake but because without a change in the status quo we won't be able to execute our Product / Market Strategy - the articulation of what markets we want to be serving in the future, the products and services future customers will buy, as well as the size, scale, profitability, geographic coverage, technology, and other elements of our future.

Why this Product / Market Strategy?
Because that's how we choose to achieve our Mission - the affirmation of:
- Who we want to be within 3-5 years
- What we want to do within 3-5 years
- Who we want to be doing it for within 3-5 years
- Why we do it.

Why this Mission?
Because that is how we are fulfilling our Vision over the next 3-5 years.

Why this Vision?
Because all great organizations are grounded with vision - a:
- Core ideology that identifies the small set of core values that are shared by all employees and the organization's core purpose that spans the decades.
  ... and an
- Envisioned Future: with an overreaching, big hairy audacious goal that will take decades to achieve - if ever. Along with the BHag is a vivid description of what things would look like should we/when we achieve that goal.

Why strategic planning?
Because tactics without vision doesn't work. Merely working harder doesn't help. Having lost sight of our objective we redoubled our efforts.
Because vision without tactics doesn't work. Merely dreaming doesn't make it so.

Creating a Vision
When you begin the process of strategic planning, visioning comes first. When visioning the change, ask yourself, "What is our preferred future?" and be sure to:
- Draw on the beliefs, mission, and environment of the organization.
- Describe what you want to see in the future.
- Be specific to each organization.
- Be positive and inspiring.
- Do not assume that the system will have the same framework as it does today.
- Be open to dramatic modifications to current organization, methodology, teaching techniques, facilities, etc.
Key Components for Your Vision

Incorporate Your Beliefs

Your vision must be encompassed by your beliefs.  
- Your beliefs must meet your organizational goals as well as community goals. 
- Your beliefs are a statement of your values. 
- Your beliefs are a public/visible declaration of your expected outcomes. 
- Your beliefs must be precise and practical. 
- Your beliefs will guide the actions of all involved. 
- Your beliefs reflect the knowledge, philosophy, and actions of all. 
- Your beliefs are a key component of strategic planning.

Create a Mission Statement

Once you have clarified your beliefs, build on them to define your mission statement which is a statement of purpose and function. 
- Your mission statement draws on your belief statements. 
- Your mission statement must be future oriented and portray your organization as it will be, as if it already exists. 
- Your mission statement must focus on one common purpose. 
- Your mission statement must be specific to the organization, not generic. 
- Your mission statement must be a short statement, not more than one or two sentences. 

Here is an example mission statement: "By providing quality education, we empower individuals to become caring, competent, responsible citizens who value education as a lifelong process."

Benefits of Visioning

- Breaks you out of boundary thinking. 
- Provides continuity and avoids the stutter effect of planning fits and starts. 
- Identifies direction and purpose. 
- Alerts stakeholders to needed change. 
- Promotes interest and commitment. 
- Encourages openness to unique and creative solutions. 
- Encourages and builds confidence. 
- Builds loyalty through involvement (ownership). 
- Results in efficiency and productivity.

Vision Killers: Tradition, Fear of ridicule, Stereotypes of people, conditions, roles and governing councils, Complacency of some stakeholders, Fatigued leaders, Short-term thinking

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next year or more, how it's going to get there and how it'll know if it got there or not. The focus of a strategic plan is usually on the entire organization, while the focus of a business plan is usually on a particular product, service or program. There are a variety of perspectives, models and approaches used in strategic planning. The way that a strategic plan is developed depends on the nature of the organization's leadership, culture of the organization, complexity of the organization's environment, size of the organization, expertise of planners, etc. For example, there are a variety of strategic planning models, including goals-based, issues-based, organic, scenario (some would assert that scenario planning is more a technique than model), etc. Goals-based planning is probably the most common and starts with focus on the organization's mission (and vision and/or values), goals to work toward the mission, strategies to achieve the goals, and action planning (who will do what and by when). Issues-based strategic planning often starts by examining issues facing the organization, strategies to address those issues, and action plans. Organic strategic planning might start by articulating the organization's vision and values and then action plans to achieve the vision while adhering to those values. Some planners prefer a particular approach to planning, eg, appreciative inquiry. Some plans are scoped to one year, many to three years, and some to five to ten years into the future. Some plans include only top-level information and no action plans. Some plans are five to eight pages long, while others can be considerably longer. Quite often, an organization's strategic planners already know much of what will go into a strategic plan (this is true for business planning, too). However, development of the strategic plan greatly helps to clarify the organization’s plans and ensure that key leaders are all "on the same script". Far more important than the strategic plan document, is the strategic planning process itself.
Benefits of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning serves a variety of purposes in organization, including to:

1. Clearly define the purpose of the organization and to establish realistic goals and objectives consistent with that mission in a defined time frame within the organization’s capacity for implementation.
2. Communicate those goals and objectives to the organization’s constituents.
3. Develop a sense of ownership of the plan.
4. Ensure the most effective use is made of the organization’s resources by focusing the resources on the key priorities.
5. Provide a base from which progress can be measured and establish a mechanism for informed change when needed.
6. Bring together of everyone’s best and most reasoned efforts have important value in building a consensus about where an organization is going.

Other reasons include that strategic planning:

7. Provides clearer focus of organization, producing more efficiency and effectiveness
8. Bridges staff and board of directors (in the case of corporations)
9. Builds strong teams in the board and the staff (in the case of corporations)
10. Provides the glue that keeps the board together (in the case of corporations)
11. Produces great satisfaction among planners around a common vision
12. Increases productivity from increased efficiency and effectiveness
13. Solves major problems

SWOT: Strategic Planning Process Worksheet

Strengths Coalition characteristics that allow the coalition to take advantage of opportunities or reduce the impact of barriers.

Weaknesses Coalition characteristics that could stand in the way of the coalition taking advantage of opportunities or reducing the impact of barriers.

Opportunities Factors outside the coalition that allow it to take action to encourage cessation, prevent tobacco use or protect the general public from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

Threats Factors outside the coalition that stand in the way of its efforts to encourage cessation, prevent tobacco use or protect the general public from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

Sources:
http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net
http://www.management.about.com