**Approaches to Strategic Planning**

I was asked this week to give someone some fresh ideas to doing strat planning with different ministry teams for a new year of ministry. I came up with the following suggestions:

**1. Ten Rules of Strategic Planning**

See the Ten Rules of Strategic Planning article for a set of guidelines for strategy planning.

<http://www.ymresourcer.com/documents/10_Rules_for_Effective_Strategic_Planning.doc>

**2. SWOT Exercise**

I recently led a non-profit youth ministry team through a strategic planning process and incorporated a SWOT and Transformation analysis exercise. I know SWOT is old, but I made sure that we identified Critical Success factors arising out of the analysis and then creating an Action Plan (as in, “who will do what by when”). There is a fun exercise in the handout where people look at the letters to the churches in Revelation as sample SWOT analyses. You will find a handout and a presentation for this exercise at my website – on the Strategy page – it is the first item mentioned on the page. The website is: http://www.ymresourcer.com.

**3. Transformations Exercise**

The Transformation exercise looks at what transformation is taking place in our ministry, what is causing it, what is hindering it and what we must do to see even greater transformation take place. You will find a handout and a presentation for this exercise on the Strategy page of my website – it is the second item mentioned on the page.

**4. The Balanced Scorecard**

This may be a bit too complex an exercise, but it is a 7 level strategy planning process that is ultimately focused on Performance Measurement. It is called Performance Measurement and there are links to the resources on the Strategy page of my website.

**5. The 7 Practises of Ministry**

I presented a session on the 7 Practises of Effective Ministry some time back at our church and believe that it could be used to guide a strategy planning session – ie. you start by identifying what is the win for the ministry; then you think through the steps you are working on to reach your strategy; then you start to narrow the focus of all that you do; etc. You will have to read the outline and look at the Improving Your Game items for each of the 7 practises to use it as a strat planning tool. It is what I used to create the original igniteYOUTH strategy when I arrived at the church that I now work in some five years ago. The resource for this is also on the Strategy page.

**6. The GTD Mind Sweep**

I have used the David Allen idea of a Mind Sweep (or mind dump) and we would spend about 45 minutes just getting everything possible that has been running around in our heads out and onto a couple of sheets of butcher paper. It is not a brainstorm but rather just a clearing of every incomplete loop, any ideas we have had that have not been put on the table, or acted on recently, any areas that need to be developed. We were allowed to look back and forward in dumping out thoughts – but it was not a review of event that have taken place. It should be followed up with an Action Plan session where we make a decision as to what to do with each item that was raised and complete a Who will do What by When action plan for each item.

**7. Sonlife Strategy Planning Process**

There is also the strat planning process I have taught to thousands of leaders across the continent of Africa with great results. It is aimed at getting a ministry to write a ministry vision with goals. They write a ministry purpose statement, identify KRA (the Key Result Areas that they need to work on to ensure they achieve their mission), write a descriptive statement of each key result (it is what that key result area looks like when it is fully functioning); then they do a SWOT analysis on each KRA (what are the strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats that will impact on the achievements of results in each area); then create goals for each KRA (both faith goals that go in their prayer journal and work goals that go in their calendar. There is a worksheet that is created for each Key Result Area. Look at this document for a template to use: http://www.ymresourcer.com/documents/Sonlife\_Strategy\_Planning\_Process.doc

**8. The Ground Zero Strategic Planning Process**

The document Strategic Planning presents an approach to strategy planning that I have not personally used, but it looks like a comprehensive process as well as a document that have fresh ideas for different parts of the planning process: http://www.ymresourcer.com/documents/Strategic\_Planning.doc

**9. The P.L.A.N. Strategy by the Crossroads Consulting Group**

I came across this approach to strat planning a while back – it has 4 steps using the PLAN acronym:

A. Priorities (What we want to accomplish)

\* What are the most important things we need to do in our key ministry areas to move our mission forward?

\* What are things we need to do and complete in the coming year?

B. Lasting Results (Setting the targets for performance)

\* What will be the results that will help us know we have accomplished our priorities?

\* How will we set these targets so that they become an exercise in faith as well as effective leadership?

C. Action Strategies (Setting the stage for execution)

\* How will we go about accomplishing what we want to see happen?

\* What are the appropriate strategies, or best practices, that we might employ?

D. Next Steps (Making our “to do” lists)

\* Who will do the work?

\* When will it be accomplished?

**10. The 3 Horizon Strategy by Diann Feldman**

See the document 3 Horizon Strategy that has a detailed approach to strat planning: http://www.ymresourcer.com/documents/3\_Horizon\_Strategy.doc

**11. The GTD Horizons of Focus**

The 6 Horizons of Focus that David Allen created for the Getting Things Done approach to action management is a great resource for strategy planning: http://www.ymresourcer.com/documents/Horizons\_of\_Focus\_Strat\_Plan.doc