

# INTEGRATING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

**SPECIAL  
SECTION**

**INTO YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY**

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**N**avigating business growth is a multi-faceted process. Leaders need to consider how today's organizational messages can serve as a platform for a transition from an organization's current market position to the desired future position.

Communicating today's messages without regard for how they fit into the leader's vision for future growth is a common business error. Folks get so busy implementing today's work and messages that they often overlook how these fit and support future strategies identified in an organization's strategic plan.

Smart executives are constantly considering how today's messages help transition their organizations into where they want to be in three to five years.

The CEO and senior team members of any organization know that it takes time, energy and committed attention to what matters to create systemic progress to achieve goals. Many organizations have learned that a strategic plan is a must-do process to clarify the overall vision and evaluate the many paths of opportunity facing them. However, most organizational leaders stop there.

Pushing the strategic plan's future considerations into today's marketing and communications is a course of action that can create a stronger brand and marketing platform to support achieving those very goals. Smart marketers are familiar with the strategic plan and take the future desired goals into account when developing marketing plans and message maps.

Integrating the elements identified in the strategic plan is a critical step for developing and honing the marketing strategy.

## **THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION**

The process of integrating the strategic plan into marketing and communications is straightforward. Looking through the lens of what the organization has identified as future goals in the strategic plan, the leadership team can work through the "seven P's" of marketing:

**1 PEOPLE** - Will you need different talent? Will you be emphasizing different talents among existing staff? How will your culture need to shift to accommodate any new directions for growth? How are you preparing your current talent for the organizational changes to come?

## **TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

The key to integrating the strategic plan into the marketing strategy is to take time to think through how you will manage the transition through each phase of the seven P's of marketing. Developing messages that transition the organization from today into the future requires thoughtful attention and alignment:

Craft message maps that show the movement of messages through each stakeholder tied to the changes in the strategic plan timeline.

Consider where the organization is at risk of losing employees, customers, or clients, and plan for preventative actions and messages.

Consider where the organization has opportunities to attract new employees, customers, and clients based on the expanded or changing strategy.

Be fluid and flexible in order to adapt the marketing plan and message maps to any quickly changing or unanticipated market responses.

Test messages and, when possible, create processes to measure message effectiveness.

**INTEGRATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENTS INTO THE MARKETING STRATEGY OF AN ENTERPRISE IS A BUSINESS STEP THAT IS LIKENED TO ADDING THE WINNING SPECIAL, SECRET SAUCE.**

**2 PRODUCT** - What changes will be made in your product? In the benefits your products produce for customers? In quality or value?

**3 PRICE** - How you will your strategic direction change price? What messages need to be embedded now and in the future to position the new pricing structure in order to retain existing clients and attract others?

**4 PLACE** - What changes will you make now and in the future to address and change place messaging — if your strategy is to be exclusively through the Internet in the future, for example, what messaging needs to take place now to support that transition without a client loss?

**5 PROCESS** - What changes in service delivery, customer service, dealing with complaints, and

response times both proactive and reactive will need to occur? What systems and messaging will be needed to support that?

**6 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE** - How will you use the power of client referrals, recommendations and testimonials to support your new forward-thinking strategy in positioning the organization? What messaging will you use in your current physical location (if you have a storefront where customers come to you) to support that transition?

**7 PROMOTION** - What messaging do you need to do now in order to layer the change messages at a later date in a manner that will create consistency and relevancy?



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