

## Activate your Strategy!

Sometimes it feels as if just getting the darn plan written is the accomplishment! And, it is. Now you have created an agreed-upon road map for the near future. It is an essential start. So take a deep breath and realize that now you have a plan – you can activate it!

You have a document. It may be a “plan on a page,” a popular approach for its accessibility, or it may be 250 pages. Either way, the document doesn’t implement itself.

If it’s a [strategic plan](#), consider it a two part process: first, you need to communicate the plan itself and, second, the objectives within the plan need to be activated.

For instance, how are you going to present the final result? Keep in mind you probably have multiple markets or what many organizations call *stakeholders*. Some of these are likely the folks that helped pull the plan together; these collective authors are also your would-be ambassadors. They can include internal and external groups. In business, these audience groups can be customers, but also prospective customers, employees, suppliers, trade groups and possibly government agencies.

And then there are the prioritized strategic objectives. How will these be met? For instance, it’s possible one of your objectives is, “better communication with stakeholders.” But how does that actually happen?

An **Activation Plan** details the HOW of your Plan. *How* will the plan itself be delivered to your stakeholders? And, *how* will your organization move forward with its stated directives?

Activation planning takes into account not only your financial resources, but your time and personnel resources too. Planning uses a calendar and a calculator to map the tactics that will be used to implement your plan. The tactics that are used to activate the plan must support the strategy. If not, they are not the right tactics. In detailing your plan, be specific. Remember the time-honoured [SMART rule?](#) (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) Use it now.

The people you call upon to communicate and support the plan should be asked to play to their strengths. For example, professional communicators are expert at communicating ideas, information and image; while committees of volunteers can be very helpful with brainstorming, as brand ambassadors, in the planning stages and doing legwork. But don’t ask them to perform technical tasks or services that require specialized knowledge, such as web design, logo design, poster design – okay, any kind of design.

And, again especially in volunteer-run groups, ensure you track and diarize your tactics and details for your own review – and for the next guy. Internal capacity and sustainability, while recognized by almost every group as valuable, are hindered by a lack of knowledge succession. You can’t build on your organization’s experience when you need to keep reinventing the wheel. Non-profit organizations need to plan for knowledge succession. That way, when a member leaves his or her knowledge relating to the organization, doesn’t go with.