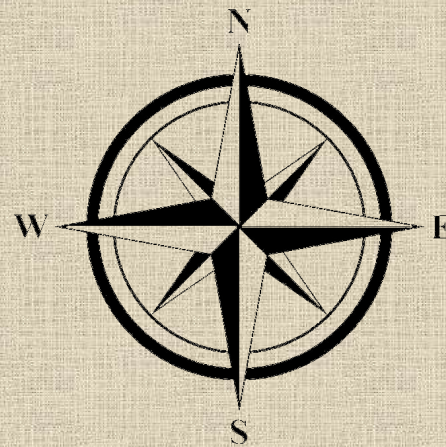


# Strategic Planning: A Brief Overview of Consensus Best Practices and Alternative Views

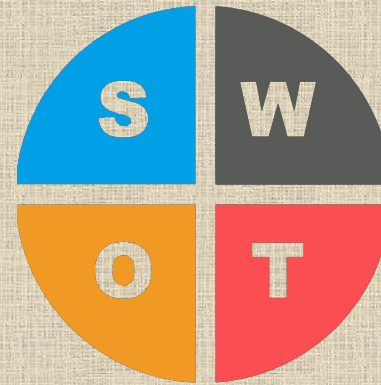




**Measurements & Feedback**



**Mission / Vision / Values**



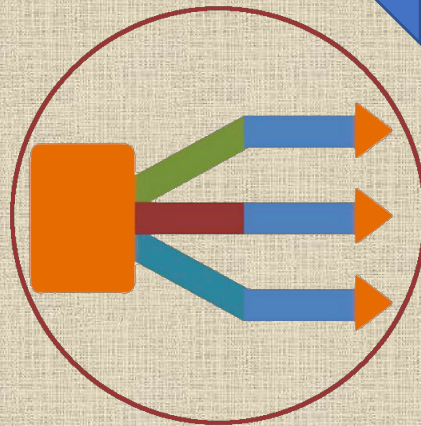
**SWOT & other Analysis**



**Stakeholder Buy-In**



**Objectives**



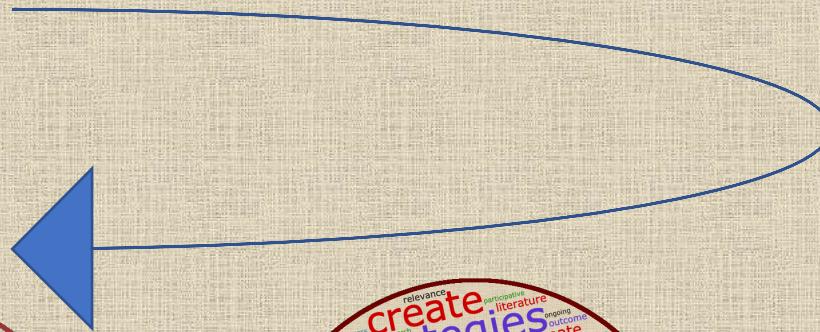
**Implementation**



**Operational Plan**



**Goals Setting**



# Strategic Planning Process



## **Generic process *in theory***

- Proceeds through discreet stages starting from mission / vision / values statements to measurement of outcomes

## **Real world process *in practice***

- Stages are deeply intertwined, often iterative and not always linear; e.g.- measurement provides feedback for operational planning and implementation, and communication with stakeholders is ongoing throughout process



# When to Make a Strategic Plan

- New executive leadership
- New Board of Directors
- Old plan needs to be extended / refreshed
- Significant change in environment or competitive landscape
- Practical problem solving
- ‘You plan to find out what it is you are doing’ (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 362).

# Characteristics of Strategic Planning

## **Strategic decisions express strategy formation**

According to Hunger & Wheelen, the salient features of strategy include the following:

- “Rare. Strategic decisions are unusual and typically have no precedent to follow.
- Consequential. Strategic decisions commit substantial resources and demand a great deal of commitment.
- Directive. Strategic decisions set precedents for lesser decisions and future actions throughout the organization” (2002, p. 11).



# Value of Holistic Strategic Planning



- “A deliberative, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions [can] shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why” (Bryson, 2010, p. S256).
- “Strategies can be rich visions, intricately woven images that can create deep-rooted perspectives” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 338).
- “[If] done well and implemented consistently, [strategic plans] have the potential to transform an organization” (Rosenblum, 2018, p. 244).

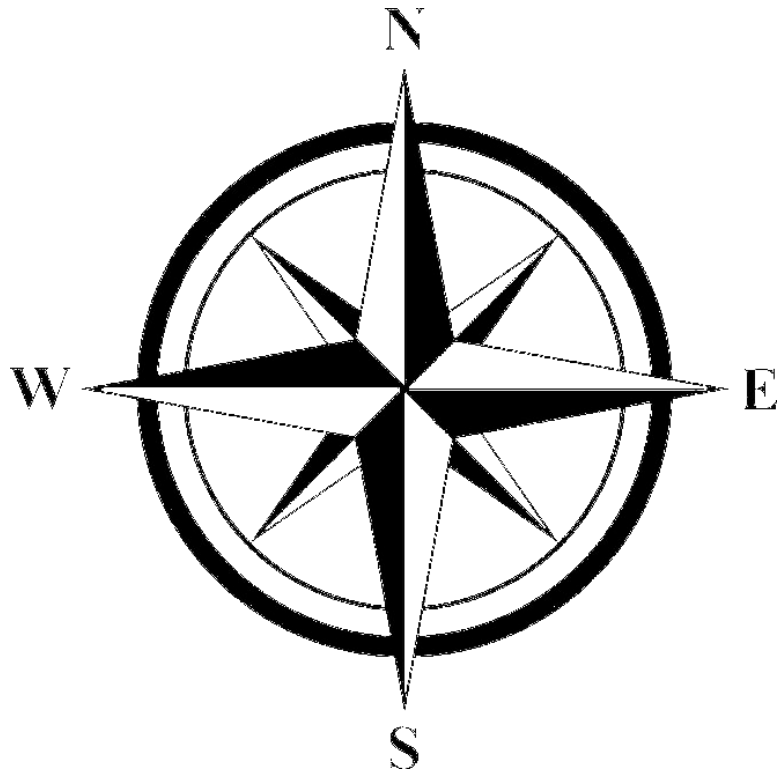
# Strategy as Sacrifice

## Look before you leap

- Generate alternative strategies to consider and adopt or reject
- “The essence of strategy is choosing what *not* to do” (Porter, 1996, p. 70).
- “A choice is not a choice until we decide what we will give up. We must subtract first, then multiply” (Pieterse, 2017, para. 5).



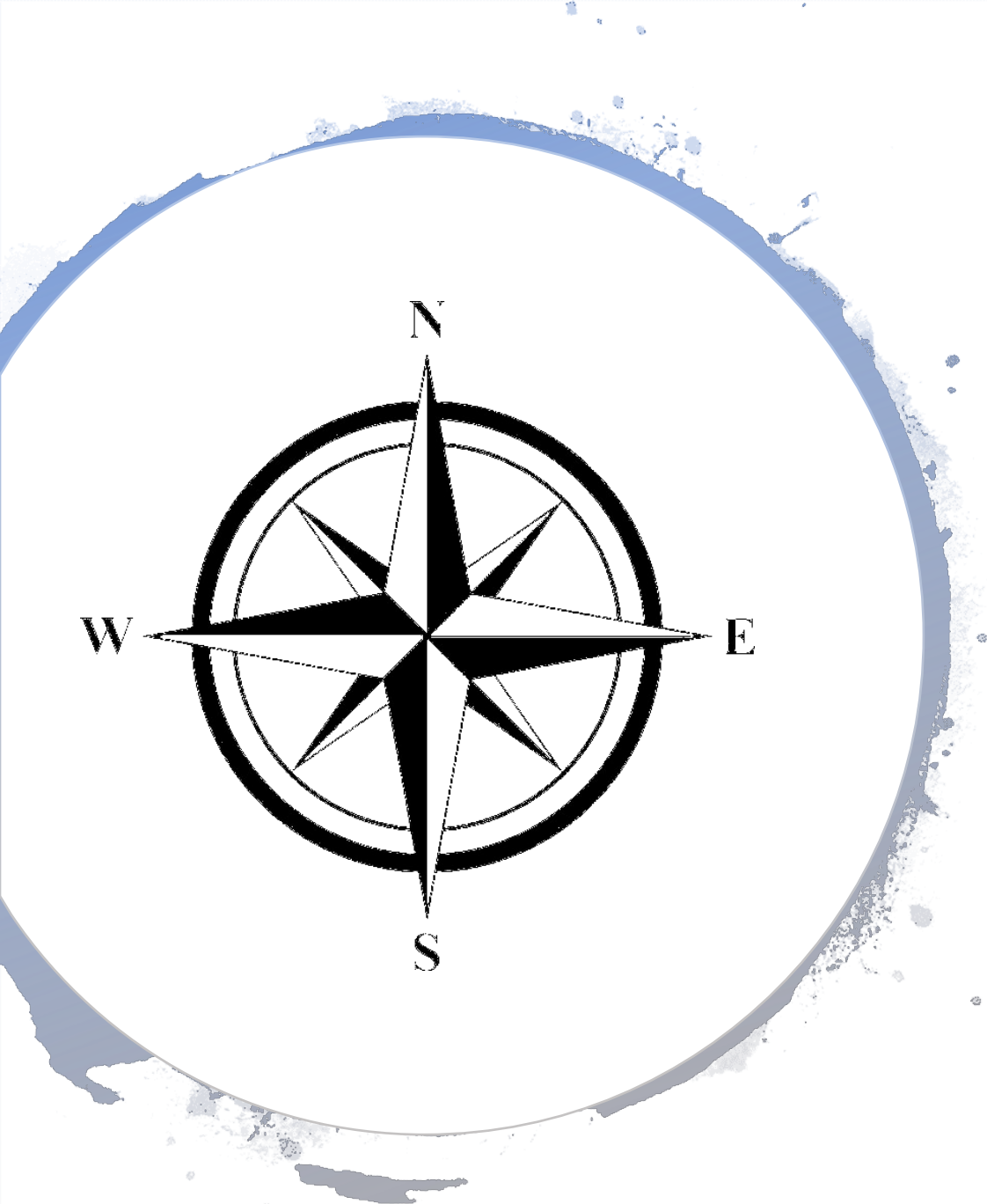
# Mission and Vision Statements



## Critical uses of Mission & Vision Statements

- Distillation of organization's purpose and identity
- Unifies policies, programs, and procedures
- Creates accountability and sets expectations for stakeholders
- Can enable deeper alignment and collaborations with partners
- Helps define long term goals

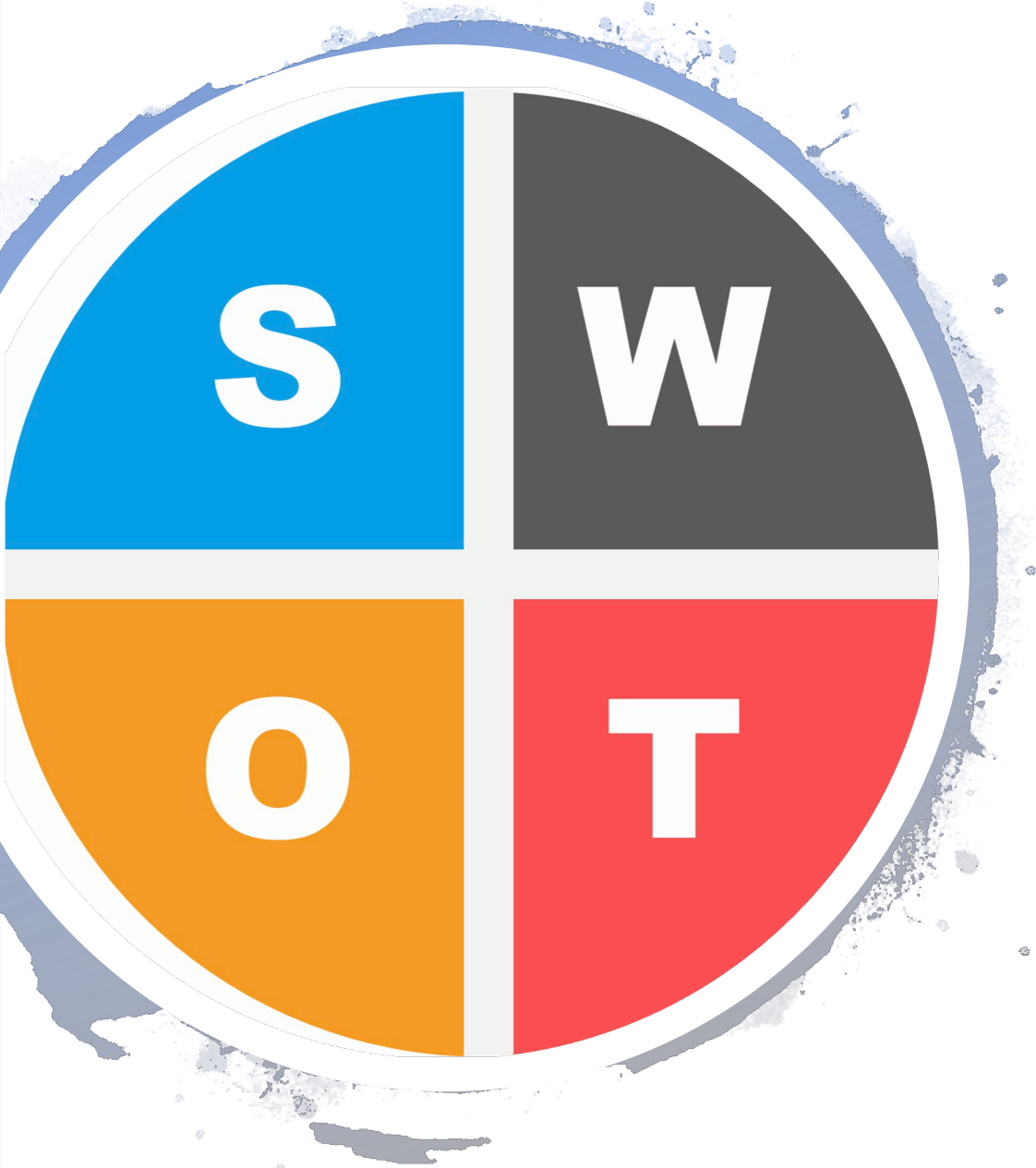




# Values Statement

## Values Reflect Ethics, Principles & Priorities

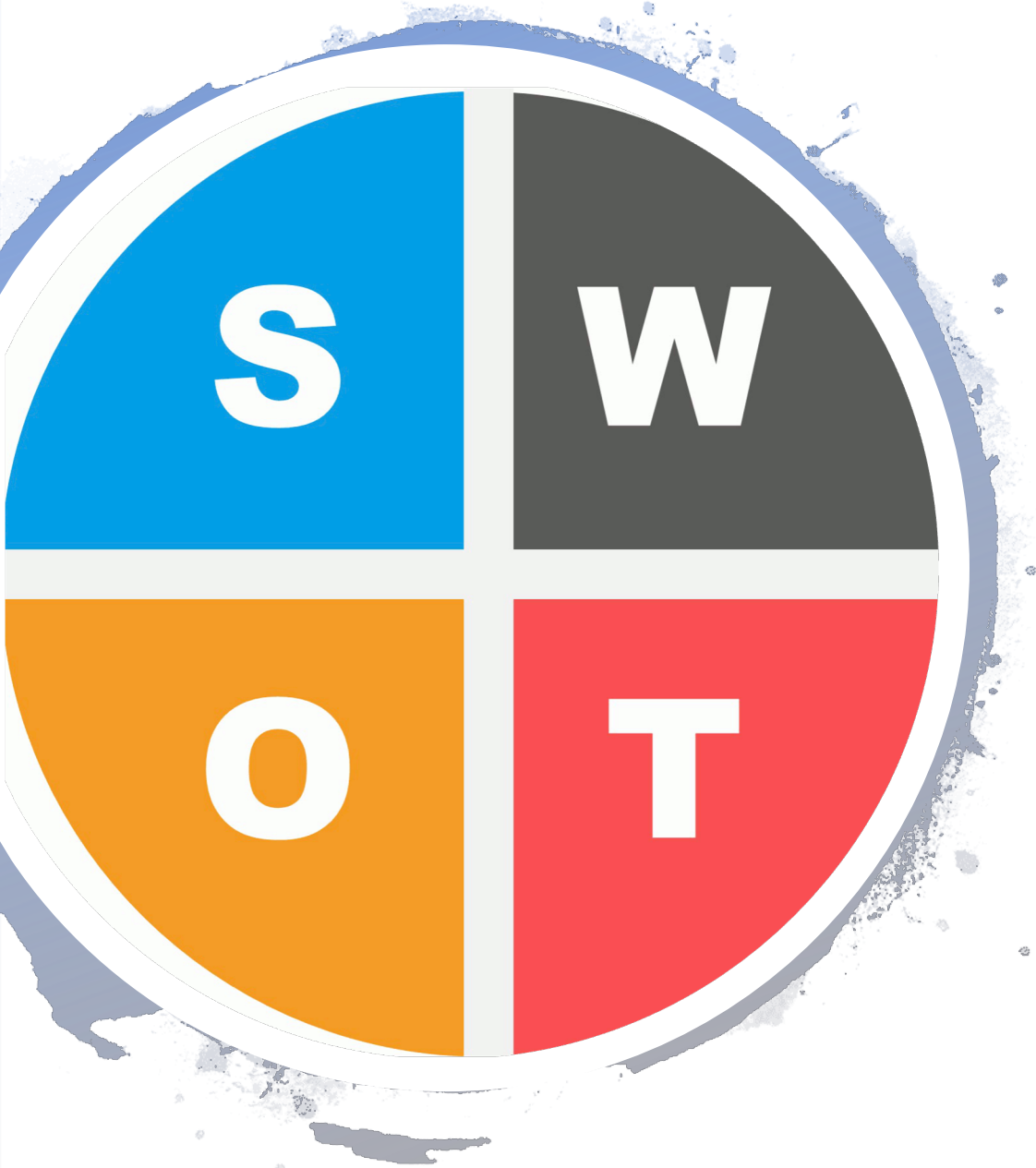
- Often foregrounds commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity
- Briefly outlines justification of above
- Supports desired culture
- Provides guidance for future issues / conflicts
- Informs planning in terms of program priorities



# SWOT & other Analysis

**Myriad analytical frameworks exist for looking within and outside the organization**

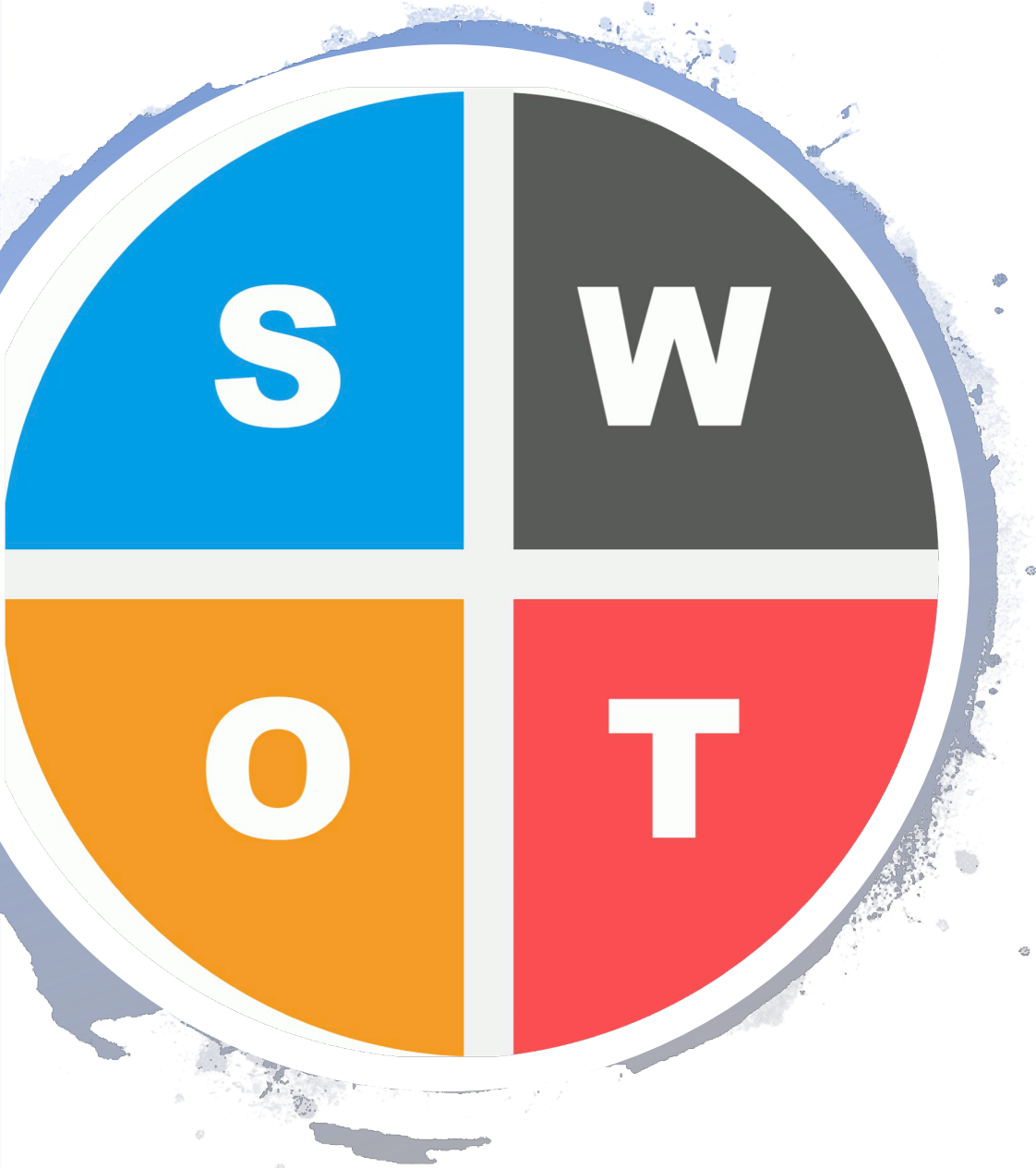
- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
- Environmental scan
- Internal audit of capabilities
- Competition research
- Forecasting
- Scenario planning
- Gap analysis



# SWOT & other Analysis

## Mintzberg & Gosling's "Analytical Mind-Set"

- “[The analytic mind-set] analyzes the analyses of others... [digs] out other sorts of information that didn't make it into the conventional analyses ... [and recognizes] biases in their own thinking.”
- “[Goal of analytic mind-set is to get] beyond the superficialities of obvious analysis, into the essential meanings of structures and systems” (2003, p. 58).



# Analysis & Synthesis

## Mintzberg on tempering analysis with synthesis:

- “Analysis may precede and support synthesis, by defining the parts that can be combined into wholes. Analysis may follow and elaborate synthesis ... but analysis cannot substitute for synthesis” (1994, p. 321).
- While speaking of management, this quote applies to organizational strategy as well: “A key purpose of managing is to strive for synthesis, continuously ... effective managers not only work deductively and cerebrally, from reflection to action ... the conceptual to the concrete. They must also work inductively, insightfully, from action to reflection ... with implementation feeding back to formulation, the concrete to the conceptual” (2013, p. 161).

# Stakeholder Conversations

**Gather input from critical internal & external stakeholders**

- Staff / Management
- Board of directors
- External partners
- In many cases, customers and communities served



# Stakeholder Buy-In

## **Participative strategy**

“Everyone affected by a designed change must be made cognizant of that change, must be asked for input, and must agree to it before implementation, ensuring integration” (Roth, 2015, p. 11).

## **Stakeholder Circle methodology**

“... [offers] a flexible approach for defining the stakeholder community, applying the right level of engagement and identifying the information and communication needed to influence each stakeholder’s perception, expectations and actions, to building relationships within and around the project” (Bourne, 2016, p.433).





# Goals Setting

- Relatively long horizon (dependent on industry)
- Congruent with mission / vision / values
- Follows from sharing analysis with stakeholders and engaging in ongoing dialogue
- Concerned with outcomes & effectiveness rather than outputs & efficiency (the domain of objectives)
- Must transcend mere quantification of plan as a means of control (Mintzberg, 1994)

# Goals Setting: Make Time for Creativity



- “Many of the greatest advantages come not from analysis, but from entrepreneurial creativity and insight .... The final step in the analysis ... is to find favorable options. The generation of options is ultimately a creative act” (Duggan, 2013, p. 116).
- “the very nature of that process [of top-down, analytical planning], based on formalization, often undermined creativity and so promoted strategies that were more generic than unique” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 362).





## Transitioning from Strategy to an Operational Plan

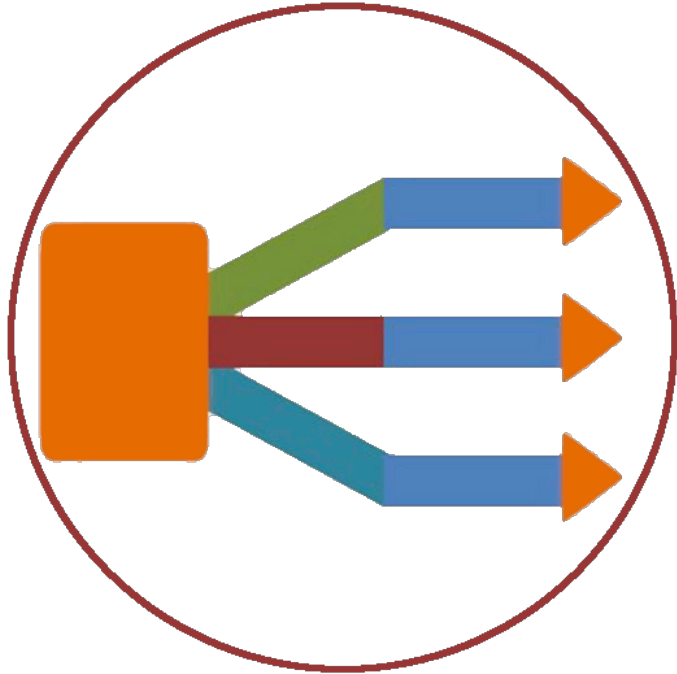
- Link strategic goals to projects, products & objectives
- Allocate resources: budgeting and departmental responsibilities
- Determine timelines for specific projects / goals
- “The heart of the strategic planning process [involves] defining the specific goals and objectives that support the mission, selecting a planning horizon, assessing available resources, and identifying and describing key projects” (Rosenblum, 2018, p. 240).

# Plan Roll-Out & Communications



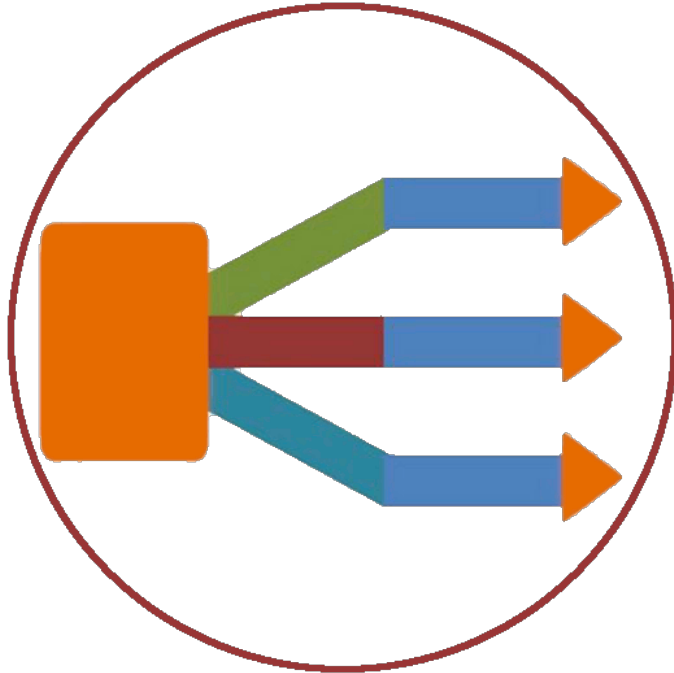
- “The strategic plan should be considered a ‘living document’ ... featured front and centered on the organization’s website, and management and staff should refer to it often” (Rosenblum, 2018, p. 243).
- Plan must be communicated to external (customers and communities) and to – *as well as by* - internal stakeholders (staff).
- “Every intended strategy must be interpreted by a great many people facing a wide range of realities” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 285).

# Implementation Results



- Standard operating procedures and policies
- Integration of processes, staff efforts and messaging
- Co-ordination of and controls on activities
- Staff commitment to and ownership of goals and objectives, enabled by continual learning

# Implementation Risks



- “[The claim] that ‘fewer than 10% of American corporations’ implement their intended strategies was deemed ‘wildly inflated’ by Tom Peters” (Mintzberg, 1990, p. 184).
- Roth warns that “while most people focus on the definition of the objectives and goals phase of a planning effort as the most difficult and challenging, implementation rapidly becomes the most demanding” (2015, p. 7).
- “Taken together, these activities pose numerous cognitive (e.g. information overload), social (e.g. coordinating multiple groups and hierarchic levels) and emotional (e.g. achieving staff buy-in) challenges for a business manager” (Eppler & Platt, 2009, p. 43).

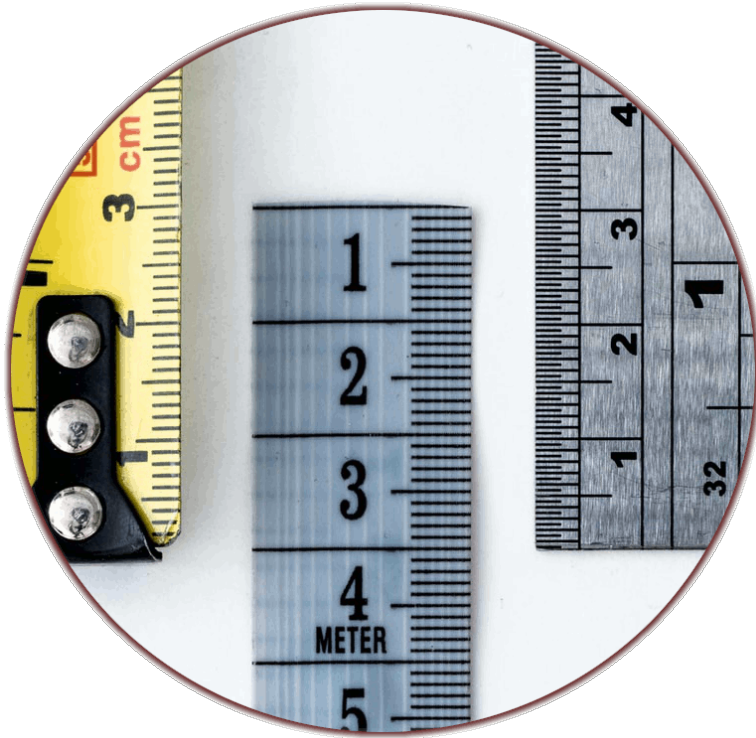


# Objectives

- Goals are broken down into measurable objectives and objectives are broken down into actionable steps and tasks
- Objectives are instruments of control and performance expectations
- Applied concretely at the departmental and individual staff level
- Can be broad but must be clear (Rosenblum, 2018)

# Measurement & Feedback

- Metrics applied to objectives help determine efficiency of work done to achieve results
- Measurement (output) of objectives is used as feedback to inform goals setting, operational plans, implementation, and budgeting
- Determining success of strategic goals uses more qualitative rubrics to examine desired outcomes and changes
- Added transparency can facilitate deeper stakeholder buy-in
- Measurements relatively easy to change without disrupting plan (Rosenblum, 2018)



# Post-Script: Hazards of Strategic Planning

- **Diverse theories and debates abound in the literature on strategic planning. Mintzberg and others voice contrarian viewpoints – at times, radically so - on the hazards of strategic planning, and offer alternative approaches.**

“... the conventional assumptions of planning, namely that strategies should emanate from the top of the organization full-blown, that goals can be clearly stated, that the central formulation of strategies must be followed by their pervasive implementation, that the workers will (or must) respond to these centrally imposed strategies ... are wrong ...” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 405).



# Post-Script: Hazards of Strategic Planning

- “Planning brings order to strategy ... but decomposed and expressed formally, in precise words, or, worse, numbers – which may be necessary for communication through a dense bureaucratic hierarchy – the rich imagery and intricate interconnections can be lost” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 337).
- “Creativity, by definition, rearranges established categories. Planning, by its very nature, preserves them. That is one reason why planning does not easily handle truly creative ideas” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 180).
- “Make sure not to carry your analysis forward into the [creative strategy idea] itself – that is, don’t lay out your analytical framework and then fill it in with strategic actions” (Duggan, 2013, p. 130).



# Post-Script: Alternative Approaches

- “The whole process of how strategies are created in the first place has to be reconceived. Instead of the formulation-implementation dichotomy so long promoted in the prescriptive literature, we believe the strategy making process is better characterized as a process of learning – formation in place of formulation” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 286).
- Mintzberg describes a less formulaic approach as “an irregular, discontinuous process, proceeding in fits and starts. There are periods of stability in strategy development, but there are also periods of flux, of groping, of piecemeal change, and of global change” (1976, p. 56).



# Post-Script: Alternative Approaches

## **Duggan offers process for creative strategy, albeit not planning**

- 1) Rapid Appraisal: summarize the problem you're working on, and break it down into smaller parts
- 2) What-Works Scan: search the world examples of organizations that have solved elements of your problem in different contexts
- 3) Creative Combination: take the best elements discovered during your scan and lead a workshop with innovation implementers where the elements are selected and combined to arrive at the innovation and outline a plan for how to implement (2013).

# Post-Script: Alternative Approaches

**Mintzberg proposes “emergent strategy,” not as a universal solution, but a concept which should be given a seat at the strategic planning table**

- “Organizations cannot always plan when their strategies will emerge, let alone plan the strategies themselves” (1994, p. 288).
- Emergent strategy is not “fully deliberative” or analytically controlled
- Emergent strategy can develop, unintentionally, anywhere in an organization, shaped by learning and an interplay of thought and action



# Post-Script: Alternative Approaches

**As Shakespeare's Hamlet says to Horatio:  
"There are more things in heaven and  
Earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your  
philosophy" (Folger Digital Texts. n.d.)**