



## If You Don't Know Where You Are Going... Does Your Client Know?

The old saying is "If you don't know where you are going . . . then any road will get you there? Not only will any road get you there, so will any logo, any newsletter, any marketing piece and any public relations campaign!

Think about it like Sunday Driving. I can recall that when I was a child, my dad would pile the family into the car for some "Sunday Driving" (yes, I'm 50 years old!). "Sunday Driving" meant that we had no particular destination in mind. It was great fun to drive aimlessly around the neighborhood. It didn't matter what streets we took or what turns we made, as we had no particular destination in mind. We weren't going anywhere so any road was getting us there. This was great fun for me at eight years old and it did not waste any time, energy or money. We were driving around for the pleasure of the drive, the scenery and the time together as a family.

Unfortunately, the imaginary "Corporation ABC" may also be on a Sunday Drive. Everyone in Corporation ABC seems to travel down a variety of paths, making all kinds of twists and turns with no

particular destination in mind. Sure--work is getting done--but employees don't know exactly where they are going or why they are doing what they are doing. There is no destination and no road map. Unlike me at eight years old, Corporation ABC is, however, wasting a great deal of time, energy and money and they are NOT having fun!

The employees and clients of Corporation ABC seem to know that something is not quite right at Corporation ABC. Suddenly, the managers of Corporation ABC ask you to help with this problem. "If there was just a clearer image of who we are, than..." says the managers of Corporation ABC.

Your instincts scream "NOT!!!" but you try to do the job anyway. You try to get the logo just right, the written material to say all that needs to be said, the pictures expressing the 1000 unspoken words... and still the

managers of Corporation ABC are not quite satisfied.

Cheer Up! It's not you. It's Corporation ABC. Until Corporation ABC has a clear picture of where they are going--their vision, how they will accomplish this vision--their mission, and the road map that will help them accomplish their vision and mission--their goals, strategies and action items, they will not be satisfied with your clear logo, words or pictures.

Strategic Planning is the process that often helps companies create this roadmap. According to Stephen George in his book *Uncommon Sense*, "Strategic Planning is a process directed toward making today's decisions with tomorrow in mind..."

In the strategic planning process, a facilitator works with a team so that they can create the components of a strategic plan. These components are Vision, Guiding Principles, Mission, Goals, Strategies, and Action Items. The facilitator encourages the team members to brainstorm--both as individuals and as a team, reframes the issues for the team, asks challenging questions, and holds the team accountable for

the content of their work.

For instance, in order to get clients thinking about their vision, in my role as facilitator, I will sometimes ask "If you accomplished all that you wished to accomplish in the next five years, what would your world look like?" Whether I am facilitating a team at Roche Laboratorites, the international pharmaceutical giant, or WomenFIRST, a local not-for-profit, this question always gets the juices flowing and team participants enjoy brainstorming about their visions as I help them reach consensus as to what they all want it to look like.

Many companies take the output of a strategic planning session and use it as the input to a communications plan. And why not... if done correctly, strategic planning helps you decide where you are going and what roads to take to get there!

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