

# Strategic Planning Made Simple

This is a good picture of what a STRATEGY is. Most simply put, it's the PATH that you are following. OR you could say it is what you do. Whether it is an INTENTIONAL plan or an UNINTENTIONAL set of activities, your church does have a strategy, because you are doing many things that are taking you somewhere.



However, like this picture, you may not be able to SEE where your strategy is taking you. But the path may look attractive and pain-free. And it is definitely negotiable.

A STRATEGIC PLAN is an intentional strategy to get you from where you ARE to where you WANT TO GO. In this picture the foreground detail helps you know where you are, and



you can also see your destination, one of the specific mountain peaks in the distance. It will not be an easy trip, even in good weather. If (or perhaps WHEN) the weather turns bad, it may even be a treacherous trip, and there may be expensive losses along the way.

So the differences between an intentional strategic plan and an unintentional strategy of whatever we happen to be doing include these factors:

- **We must determine where we want to go.** In the Church, that destination should absolutely be where we believe God wants us to lead His Church. And that includes who He has already made us and all of our uniquenesses at this stage of our history. No two

churches that I have worked with have come up with the exact same destination, because no two churches are identical.

- **We must determine where we are.** When I enter a new shopping mall to find a particular store, I don't know whether to go straight, right, left, up, or down until I see the map with the little "X" that says, "You are here." So we must be brutally honest about where we now are before we will know

which way is in the direction of our destination. When I facilitate a church planning team to come up with it's real Core Values for today, I emphasize that they have some true values that they will like and some others that they won't like. Whether you like it or not, who are you?

- **We should study the optional ways to get from where we are to where we want to go.** Some paths are faster but more difficult. Others are more indirect but safer. Some are more expensive to travel. They take different skills, different supplies, and different guidance. Which way is best for your church?
- **We must know our strengths, weaknesses, resources, barriers, and other needs before choosing our best path.**
- **We should determine what kind of support we need to plan our trip and then to execute it.** A guide who has taken this or a similar trip many times could be a great kingdom investment.
- **We must plan our specific path.** The picture of the path is only visible if the pathway is specific. In the case of a Strategic Plan, that means SMART goals, action steps for each goal, resources required for each goal, etc.

I hope this takes some of the mystery out of Strategic Planning for you. it's simply determining where we should go, where we are, and how we will get from here to there.

Of course, there is a lot more in the "how to" area, and we'll cover some of that in future newsletters.

Oh, and one more thing. The planning part is much easier and more fun than the execution part. That is why I now insist that any strategic planning assistance includes at least 6 months of execution assistance.