FACTORS AFFECTING PLANNING IN

BOTANIC GARDENS AND ARBORETA

By

William M. LeFevre

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EPIGRAPH

I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and constitutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times.

Thomas Jefferson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

In the latter half of the twentieth century, concurrent with rapid advances in technology and economic globalization, the private sector embraced the concept of strategic planning in order to secure competitive advantage. In the current economic environment, reduced public support places many non-profit institutions in competition with each other for the finite resources available from the private sector. To face this challenge, many botanic gardens and arboreta have entered into strategic and long-range planning as a means to capitalize on strengths, address weaknesses, chart the future, and obtain the resources needed to make it all happen.

As more and more botanic gardens and arboreta initiate planning, a study of factors affecting planning becomes timely and useful. Utilizing qualitative case study analysis, this research examined the factors influencing recent planning at selected botanic gardens and arboreta. The researcher conducted interviews of directors, staff, and board members to identify factors having a significant impact on the planning process. He then summarized the interview responses and ranked the factors in order to identify their impact and variance in effect on the planning process.

Based on this research, the factors having the greatest influence on planning at botanic gardens and arboreta are: leadership, commitment of the organization to change, effective communication, involvement of the entire organization, the use of consultants, and the allocation of adequate resources to the planning process.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHOD

<u>Introduction</u>

Planning is a process that has received a great deal of attention in the past three decades. Planning first developed in the private sector as a tool for managing organizational change, and a means by which businesses and corporations could secure competitive advantage, manage growth, and improve the bottom line. Many non-profit organizations such as botanic gardens and arboreta, though not measured by a bottom line, have recognized the need to operate in a business-like manner.

In the current economic environment, botanic gardens and arboreta compete for limited resources and face the challenge of doing more with less in order to survive. To face this challenge, many botanic gardens and arboreta initiate a planning process, and a study of factors affecting planning becomes timely and useful.

Efforts to define planning have resulted in the creation of an often confusing and conflicting terminology. The titles of plans examined in this research include the words strategic, long-range, and master. Researching this topic exposed the researcher to many plans from which a definitive terminology for the various planning processes contained in them can not be extrapolated. The word strategic is derived from the Greek strategema meaning leader of an army. Fittingly, post World War II American corporations coined the phrase strategic planning to describe

corporate planning and it has often been used to describe short term planning of a specific nature in other organizations as well. The term long-range is often applied to planning of a more general nature describing goals and objectives farther out into the future. Master plans are often more physical in scope.

> "Planning" may be so elusive because its proponents have been more concerned with promoting vague ideals than achieving viable positions, more concerned with what planning might be than what it actually became (Mintzberg, 1994, 6).

For the purpose of this research planning is defined as "The process by which an organization assesses its resources, sets goals for the future, and determines a means to accomplish these goals" (Longwood Graduate Program, 1990, 16).

This research tested the supposition that the following factors, identified by the researcher during the preliminary literature review, are interrelated and influence planning in botanic gardens and arboreta:

- development of mission and planning objectives,

- alignment of mission and planning objectives,

- leadership,

- commitment of the organization to change,

- effective communication,

- involvement of the entire organization,

- use of consultants,

- training in the planning process,

- allocation of adequate resources,

- stresses on the organization, and

- tracking and evaluating progress.

2

This paper focuses on the influence these factors have on the overall planning process in an organization. Much has been written regarding the planning process and many models for developing strategic and long–range plans have been developed, particularly since strategic planning "was introduced at the General Electric Company thirty years ago" (Worssam, 1997, 38). However, the review of current literature revealed little written specifically concerning the factors affecting planning. The literature included a doctoral dissertation titled "Organizational Factors Affecting Implementation of Strategic Planning: Four Variables Identified in a Two-Site Case Study", written by Maria A. Castillo at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1991. The factors examined in that study were: level of participant empowerment, presence of responsive leadership, presence of neurotic (internally unsettled) culture, and level of organizational stress and resource availability. A second dissertation, "Implementation of Strategic Planning in a Public School Setting: A Case Study", written by Mark D. Baldwin at Northern Arizona University in 1994 identified six factors enhancing planning. These factors were: professionalism of staff, cohesiveness of staff, leadership of the principal, openness of the staff to change, effective communication, and district office support.

Research Method

The researcher conducted a preliminary literature review. This review assured the author that the topic of factors affecting planning in botanic gardens and arboreta had not been previously studied in-depth. The literature review led to a research proposal outlining the purpose, background and rationale, objectives,

3

procedures, and timeline for completing the thesis. The proposal was submitted to the University of Delaware Human Subjects Review Board and a waiver was granted provided the research as conducted followed the method outlined in the proposal. A thesis committee guided and advised the researcher and approved the completed work.

At the first thesis committee meeting in December 1997, the researcher and committee selected a qualitative, case study approach as the best method to develop this research. The researcher next conducted an initial survey of potential case study sites. One hundred institutions within a one hundred fifty-mile radius of the University of Delaware received a one-page questionnaire. Membership lists of the American Association for Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA), the American Association of Museums (AAM), and the Mid–Atlantic Association of Museums (MAAM) formed the basis for selection. The initial survey questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

Case study institutions qualified for this research were non-profit, classified as 501(c) 3 charitable institutions by the Federal tax code, and possessed an interpreted horticultural component. Further requirements included completion of a planning process within the past ten years, implementation of planning in whole or in part, an annual operating budget of at least $250,000, performance of fundraising to cover the costs of planning and implementation, and utilization of consultants in plan development. Of fifty responses to this mailing, twelve institutions qualified for further consideration as case study sites. Six of the qualified institutions declined to participate in further research, leaving a final pool of six sites from which to choose the three to five sites desired for this study.

Discussion of the results of the initial survey occurred at the second committee meeting in May 1998. The researcher and committee reviewed proposed

case study interview questions and procedures, and selected the case study sites. The researcher then contacted the directors of the selected sites and made arrangements to conduct interviews with three to five representatives of each institution including the director, and members of the staff and board of trustees who played a significant role in the planning process. The researcher conducted fourteen case study interviews at four botanic gardens and arboreta during July and August 1998. The case study interview questions are presented in Appendix B.

Upon completion of the interview process, the researcher summarized interview responses using hand written notes and tape recordings taken at the time of the interviews. The case study interview summaries are presented in Appendix C. The researcher next sorted the responses from all four sites by the eleven factors affecting planning, and identified similarities and differences. The researcher similarly sorted responses to the final interview question, "What factors do you believe enhanced or inhibited planning at your organization?"

The researcher compared the sorted responses from each site and ranked the factors in relation to their impact on planning at each site. The researcher then ranked the factors by assigning each a score from one to five, one being of least impact and five being of greatest impact on the planning process at each institution. A variance in ranking for each factor was calculated and evaluated.

The data gathered in the case study interviews and a review of current literature form the basis of the following discussion, conclusions, and recommendations regarding planning in botanic gardens and arboreta.

Chapter 2

CASE STUDY SITES

The researcher conducted interviews at four case study sites: the Awbury Arboretum, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, the Queens Botanical Garden, and the Tyler Arboretum. The interview questions are presented in Appendix B. For reasons of confidentiality, interview respondents are not identified; however, interview summaries combining responses from all respondents at each site are presented in Appendix C.

The planning processes embarked upon by the case study institutions included strategic, long–range, and master plans. As stated previously, the terminology of planning is often confusing. The researcher's focus in this study was the overall planning process, and not the specific objectives or time frame of planning. In order to orient the reader to the case study sites, a brief description of each institution, its mission, and its planning history is included at this point in the thesis.

Awbury Arboretum

The Awbury Arboretum Association is located on a fifty-five acre site in the Germantown section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Awbury's mission statement reads:

> We are a non-profit organization that preserves and manages an
> arboretum located in historic Germantown, comprised of a significant
> historic house and landscape.

6

We use and interpret the buildings and grounds to serve our community by providing a broad range of educational services and with due regard for the site's historic, aesthetic, and horticultural significance.

We preserve and interpret the last remaining Germantown Victorian country estate.

We are a "green anchor" to our community, stabilizing it against decline by maintaining a beautiful, peaceful, and safe open space.

We use the history and environment of Awbury as the foundation for a broad range of enriching educational programs.

In 1852 Henry Cope, a Quaker businessman and philanthropist, acquired the site to construct a summer home. Several houses built on the grounds between the 1850s and 1920s include the Francis Cope House, a fine example of Victorian Gothic architecture, which remains today as the headquarters for the Awbury Arboretum Association. The establishment of the site as an arboretum in 1916 preserved the grounds, laid out in the 1870s in the English landscape style. Awbury is one of the few remaining intact examples of a nineteenth century estate encompassing both house and grounds.

In 1996 Thomas Mishler became Executive Director of the Awbury Arboretum and he immediately entered the organization into a planning process. In fact, the agreement by the Awbury's Board to plan was a condition of his acceptance of the position. Immediate concerns and issues led to the Board's adoption of the Strategic Plan of the Awbury Arboretum Association in May of 1997. A more comprehensive, long-range planning process followed, resulting in the Awbury Arboretum Master Plan, in final review before adoption at the time interviews were conducted in August 1998.

Though the organization is comparatively small, it has embraced planning in a big way. The executive director was educated as a landscape architect and is knowledgeable of, and comfortable with planning. A concerted effort was made, with the help of a board member, who is also a landscape architect, to identify consultants who would "collaborate with, not dictate to", the board and staff of the Awbury Arboretum (Case Study Interview).

Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania

The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania occupies a ninety-two acre site in the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Brother and sister John and Lydia Morris acquired the site in 1887 and developed it into their summer home, "Compton." The mission statement of the Morris Arboretum reads:

> The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania is a historic public garden and educational institution. It promotes an understanding of the relationship between plants and people through programs that integrate science, art and the humanities. The Arboretum conducts four major activities: teaching, research, outreach, and horticultural display. As the official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania provides research and outreach services to state agencies, community institutions, and to citizens of Pennsylvania and beyond.

The planting of the grounds by the Morrises included an outstanding collection of Asian trees, many of which remain to this day. Upon her death in 1932, Lydia bequeathed the estate to the University of Pennsylvania as a public arboretum and center for research and education.

The Morris Arboretum today serves as an interdisciplinary resource for the University, is the official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and is actively involved in horticultural and botanical research, education, and outreach.

Paul Meyer, the F.Otto Haas director, assumed his role in 1991, but has been with the Morris since completing the Longwood Graduate Program in 1976. The Strategic Plan (1994) is a continuation of a planning process begun in 1977 when Andropogon Associates of Philadelphia consulted on a comprehensive Master Plan for the arboretum.

The 1977 Master Plan guided the physical development of the site. Current planning focuses on financial and programmatic aspects of the organization, not fully addressed in prior planning.

Queens Botanical Garden

The Queens Botanical Garden began as a five-acre exhibit at the 1939-1940 World's Fair in New York City. In 1946, then Park's Commissioner Robert Moses initiated the formation of the Queens Botanical Garden Society. By 1960 the garden had expanded to twenty acres. In 1964 the World's Fair returned to the same site as in 1939 and the garden was in the way. Commissioner Moses suggested another available site in Queens, formerly an ash dump, and the garden relocated to its present home in 1963. The mission statement of the Queens Botanical Garden reads:

Our mission is to demonstrate our vision through:

Research— to elevate the connection between botany and cultures

Collections— to create permanent landscapes and changing displays that reflect cultural traditions

Education– to stimulate a sense of wonder and encourage an awareness
of the universality and enjoyment of plants by cultures around the world

The garden now covers thirty-nine acres. It is a quasi-municipal corporation funded in part by the City of New York, and in part by grants, private donations, and memberships.

The present executive director, Susan Lacerte, began her duties in July 1994. The current strategic planning process began for this organization with an all day retreat in January 1997 and continued during the rest of 1997. The executive director and president of the board collaborated on the vision and mission statements published in October 1997. This planning team presented the plan to the board and staff in March 1998. Interviews occurred just one week prior to the first scheduled progress report to the board in August 1998.

Tyler Arboretum

The Tyler Arboretum encompasses a 650-acre natural setting in Delaware County, Pennsylvania that has remained undeveloped since 1681, when William Penn signed a "lease and purchase" agreement with Thomas Minshall. Seven generations of the Minshall, Painter, and finally Tyler families lived on the site until 1944, at which time Laura Tyler bequeathed the property to the public as an arboretum. The Tyler Arboretum came into being in 1946. The mission statement of the Tyler arboretum reads:

To preserve, develop and maintain the plant collection and natural
environment in order to encourage the study and enjoyment of
horticulture and natural science.

The arboretum collection was started in 1825 by two brothers, Jacob and Minshall Painter, who began the systematic planting of over 1000 trees and shrubs in rows laid out in a radial pattern. Twenty-two of the original Painter trees remain today and efforts are underway to propagate these in order to preserve their heritage.

Apart from the Painter trees, the Tyler Arboretum contains collections of both native and exotic plants, and over 450 undeveloped, natural acres that are accessible through a system of twenty miles of marked trails.

The present director, Rick Colbert, has been on the job since 1991. The current planning process began with the Long-Range Plan (1994) which led to the Strategic Master Plan (1996). The next step in the continuing planning process at Tyler is a five-year review and re-examination of the Long-Range Plan.

It is interesting to note that at the Tyler Arboretum, the Strategic Plan followed the Long-Range Plan, whereas at the Awbury Arboretum, the Strategic Plan preceded the Master Plan. This raises the question, should strategic planning occur before or after master planning? One professional planner, in an article decrying such linear thinking, stated:

> Rarely are individual tasks and results arranged in linear, continuously reinforcing sequences, much as our minds may cry out for such a scenario. So rather than try to create processes that depend linearity, why not take a step back and see if we can't set up systems that invite serendipity, continuous communication and the cross–fertilization of ideas? (Hanson, 1997, 37)

The following findings will demonstrate the order of completion of these phases of planning to be not as important as their content, and the process utilized in their creation.

Chapter 3

CASE STUDY FINDINGS

The four case study institutions entered into the planning process to achieve varied objectives and to facilitate positive change in their respective organizations. Each recognized a need to plan and took action to initiate the planning process. Each had developed plans and had begun plan implementation by the time interviews were conducted. The following findings evaluate and identify interrelationships among the factors affecting planning.

The findings demonstrate the impact of the factors on the planning process, rather than the effectiveness of planning at the individual institutions. The planning objectives and processes differed at each case study site, but in each case the planning process served as a means to identify goals and effect change in the subject organizations. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the issues raised during the interview process, and in respect for some respondents requests for anonymity, the following findings are presented in a format that combines data gathered from interviews conducted at all four sites.

During the interview process, the researcher identified certain similarities and differences regarding the planning processes at the case study sites. Table 3.1 summarizes these similarities and differences. Following the table the researcher presents a discussion which expands upon these similarities and differences.

Table 3.1 Similarities and Differences

Similarities and Differences are listed under factors to which they refer.
Similarities at all four case study sites are followed by the notation (4). Differences are followed by a notation (1–3) denoting the number of sites to which they apply.

Development of Mission and Objectives
- written mission and planning objectives (4)
- plan both strategic and long-range (3)
- strategic plan preceded long-range plan (1)
- long–range plan preceded strategic plan (2)

Alignment of Mission and Planning Objectives
- written mission in alignment with objectives (4)
- mission revised during planning (1)

Leadership
- director provided primary leadership (4)
- director and board shared leadership (4)
- director shared leadership with senior staff (3)

Commitment of the Organization to Change
- reluctance to change in organization (4)
- attrition during planning (4)

Effective Communication
- plan published and made public (4)
- director as communication link with board/staff (4)
- copy of plan to all board and staff (1)
- public meetings during plan development (1)

Involvement of the Entire Organization
- director, board, and some key staff involved (4)
- all supervisors and above involved (3)
- input solicited from every staff member (2)
- director collaborated closely with the board (2)
- plan presented to staff as a "done deal" (1)

Use of Consultants
- consultants utilized (4)
- consultants paid for their services (2)

Training in Planning Process
- no formal training in process at time of planning (4)
- director sought pre–planning training (1)

Allocation of Adequate Resources
- adequate resources allocated for planning (4)
- concern over time commitment (4)
- completion of plan attracted grants (1)

- difficulty retaining development person (1)
- contingency fund for future planning (1)
- inadequate development efforts by board(1)
- additional staff needed for implementation (1)

Stresses on the Organization
- organizational and financial stresses present (4)
- interim directors at site prior to planning (2)
- prior board ousted before planning (1)
- state funding reduced prior to planning (1)
- director on job less than one year prior (2)

Tracking and Evaluating Progress
- tracking of progress performed (4)
- annual goals used to track plan progress (2)
- annual plan updates (1)
- published formal board review of progress (1)

Discussion of Similarities and Differences

Similarities

Development of Mission and Planning Objectives. Each organization drafted a written mission statement prior to their objectives for planning. Each organization included their planning objectives in their completed planning documents.

Alignment of Mission and Planning Objectives. All cases used their mission statement as a benchmark against which they measured their planning goals and objectives. In each case the cross-referencing of the mission and planning objectives assured their alignment.

Leadership. The director or executive director, hereafter referred to collectively as director, assumed the leadership role in planning at each of the case study sites. Others shared the role to varying degrees in each organization, but the director provided primary leadership in each case. The board shared in the leadership

of the planning process at each site. Interview respondents characterized directors as "forward thinking", "creative", and "non-judgmental." In all cases the director actively led all phases of the planning process from initiation to implementation.

Commitment of the Organization to Change. All sites dealt with a reluctance to change by some members of the staff, board, or other user groups during the planning process. Each institution lost members of the board or staff who were reluctant to accept the organizational changes brought about by planning, but in all cases respondents stated this was for the good of the organization and part of the process.

Effective Communication. Each case study site has a written plan, which is available to the entire organization. Each institution took their plan public utilizing newsletters and/or local newspapers and media. In all four case study organizations the board communicated primarily with the director and the director communicated primarily with the staff in matters relating to planning. Responses from each institution indicate communication regarding planning can be improved and more done to communicate the plan to staff, board, and user groups.

Involvement of the Entire Organization. Each case study institution involved the director, a board planning committee, a board planning chair, and some staff from the supervisor level and above in the planning process.

Use of Consultants. Each organization utilized consultants during the planning process.

Training in the Planning Process. None of the case study organizations provided or received formal planning process training prior to or during planning.

Allocation of Adequate Resources. All four case study sites allocated adequate, if not optimal, human and financial resources to initiate and develop their planning processes. Each site demonstrated either the possession of adequate funds for implementation, or the long-term strategies to attract them. However, each site expressed concern over the sizable commitment of time, effort, and human resources required by fundraising.

Stresses on the Organization. Each case study institution entered into the planning process at a time when each was under stress organizationally and financially. None of the institutions was in a state of crisis severe enough to endanger the continued existence of the organization. Respondents at each case study institution stated that their organization was either stagnant or in a state of decline prior to planning. In each case there existed a combination of internal and external stresses on the organization.

Tracking and Evaluating Progress. While all case study sites demonstrated various methods for measuring the progress of specific projects or programs, not one included a formal process for tracking progress in the development phase of planning. Respondents from all sites expressed a desire to perform more frequent overall tracking and review of planning progress. One respondent mentioned tracking changes in attendance and overall receipts. Another stated the planning priorities were incorporated into the organization's capital campaign, which is in turn carefully tracked. Respondents at three sites reported tracking implementation progress through ongoing and annual reviews of individual, organizational, and departmental goals.

Differences

Development of Mission and Planning Objectives. In three of four cases the planning process included a strategic or short-term component as well as a long-range or master plan component. In one case development of the master plan followed that of the strategic plan. In this case the strategic plan addressed immediate threats and opportunities and was followed two years later by a detailed, comprehensive master plan. In two cases development of the strategic plan followed that of the master or long-range plan. In one of these cases the strategic plan updated and supplemented a master plan that preceded the strategic plan by almost twenty years. In the other case the long-range plan set the mission and vision for the organization and was followed two years later by a strategic master plan, which detailed specific actions and programs to carry out the mission and vision. The key here is not the labeling of the planning process by the terms strategic, long-range, or master, but rather the use of the planning process to identify and address the "strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats,"(Mintzberg, 1994, 36) facing the respective organizations.

Alignment of Mission and Planning Objectives. In one case the development of planning goals led to a refinement and revision of the original mission statement. In one case a respondent described the mission and planning objectives as being in alignment, but stated the plan did not adequately provide for the added "physical and staffing capacities of the organization" required to implement them.

Leadership. In three cases the director shared leadership with all senior or key staff members. In the fourth case all key staff were not involved in the development of the plan.

17

Commitment of the Organization to Change. While all case study organizations experienced a resistance to change, each experienced varied success in dealing with it. At one site a board member had a "separate agenda and has still not bought in" to the plan. One site reported "users (members and visitors) have a problem with change more than staff." One site noted "some entered into it kicking and screaming, some still are." At one site it was reported "some staff are still suspicious, resentful."

Effective Communication. One site never held a full staff meeting to go over the plan. One site distributed a copy of the plan to every board member and employee.

Involvement of the Entire Organization. In two cases the director acted in close collaboration with the board. In the other two cases the director led the process and kept the board advised of progress. One site held public meetings during plan development. Two sites solicited input from every staff member, not just supervisors and above. Respondents at one site described the plan and its presentation to the staff as "a done deal."

Use of Consultants. Though the use of consultants was a criterion for inclusion in this study, each institution utilized them during varied phases of the process and the respective consultants did not work with the entire organization at all sites. Two sites utilized paid consultants. At the other two sites the consultants provided services pro bono.

Training in the Planning Process. One case study site director received training in the planning process immediately prior to initiating planning at his organization.

Allocation of Adequate Resources. Each site reported a degree of inadequacy of either human or financial resources available and committed for implementation of planning at their organization. At one site completion of their plan made it easier to attract funding, especially grants. One site experienced difficulty retaining a development director, which impacted fundraising. One site set up a contingency fund for future planning. One site reported a need to add staff in order to implement their plan. One site reported inadequate progress with getting their board involved with fundraising.

Stresses on the Organization. Interim directors led one site for ten years prior to the hiring of the present director. One site experienced the ouster of its entire board by the State Attorney General prior to the formation of a new board, hiring of a new director, and commencement of planning. One site experienced the loss of a significant portion of its operating funds due to a cutback in state appropriations. Two sites entered into the planning process within a year of the present director's arrival.

Tracking and Evaluating Progress. Two sites used their annual goal setting process as an informal means to review the progress of planning. One site published annual updates of the plan listing progress to date. One site scheduled a formal board review of planning progress to take place a week after the completion of interviews.

Factors Enhancing or Inhibiting Planning

At the close of each interview, the researcher asked each respondent to offer their opinion on which factors most enhanced or inhibited planning in their organization, or could enhance or inhibit planning in other organizations. The

following lists combine their responses and group them under factors to which they apply. Due to interrelationships among the factors, responses that could apply to more than one factor are only listed once. The list of factors is incomplete due to the limited range of replies to this question. The following replies are quotes with all references to specific institutions and persons deleted.

Factors Enhancing Planning

Development of Mission and Planning Objectives.

"a proper sense of timing and prioritization"

"completing the process, having a vision for five to ten years"

"continuing the process into the future"

"a passion for the planning process"

Leadership.

"a forward thinking executive director"

"consistent leadership"

"director as leader and moderator"

"leadership, both by the director and the board"

"remaining open to input and non-judgmental"

"a commitment to change"

"staff and board buy-in"

"getting buy-in of diverse user groups and stakeholders"

Effective Communication.

"communication with emotion and feeling"

"community meetings which invigorate the process"

"involvement of the community at large"

"strong communication at all levels in the organization"

Involvement of the Entire Organization.

"a creative, involved board with planning experience"

"closely knit staff working with the director and board"

"dedication and commitment of the staff, particularly senior staff"

"good consensus and input from all staff, board, and committees"

"sense of plan ownership by all stakeholders, staff, board, and users"

"strong board member or committee working with the director"

"the commitment of the staff, board, and public to the organization"

"a mutually supportive and family atmosphere"

"the process gave the board focus, a role to play"

"the staff feels empowered"

Use of Consultants.

"a consultant familiar with the context of the organization"

"a true collaboration between the organization and the consultant"

Allocation of Adequate Resources.

"having (potential donors) involved in the planning process"

"funding, otherwise it is all pie in the sky"

Factors Inhibiting Planning

Development of Mission and Planning Objectives.

"as times change and new opportunities arise, we haven't done our best job modifying the plan to accommodate change"

"failure to refer to and measure against the plan when implementing projects"

"inability to reach a broad consensus"

"not having a clear view of the organization early on in the process"

"the fluidness of the process can inhibit planning if the day-to-day focus shifts to immediate needs that conflict with the plan's objectives"

"time constraints, balancing planning with day to day needs"

Leadership.

"designing in a vacuum without knowing the board's preferences"

"lack of fairness or evenhandedness in prioritization"

"inexperience with the planning process"

"a perception of the plan as the director's or the board's plan"

Commitment of the Organization to Change.

"lack of staff buy-in to planning"

"non-participation and lack of commitment by the board"

"personal agenda(s)"

Effective Communication.

"a lack of community involvement"

"lack of stakeholder, staff, and board support"

"a lack of visibility and wider community support"

"unshared vision"

"ineffective orientation of new staff and board"

Involvement of the Entire Organization.

"lack of staff involvement in the planning process"

"lack of staff involvement in after planning decision-making"

"a lack of professionalism among the staff"

"management goals not shared by the staff"

Allocation of Adequate Resources.

"lack of fund raising, development"

"no cost analysis performed for the recommendations of the plan"

"weakness of the board, lack of technical and financial resources"

Ranking of Factors

The researcher subjectively ranked the eleven factors affecting planning using data from the case study interviews and summaries, and evaluated each factor for its impact on planning using the method previously described in Chapter 1. The following table illustrates the ranking of factors for each institution using this method. A total score and variance for each factor was calculated and evaluated. The variance in rankings demonstrates the relative effect of each factor on the planning process at each case study site.

Table 3.2   Ranking of Factors Affecting Planning

Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Total	Variance
Mission and Objectives	5	5	4	5	19	(1)
Alignment of Mission	4	4	4	5	17	(1)
Leadership	4	5	3	5	17	(2)
Commitment to Change	2	4	1	3	10	(3)
Effective Communication	3	3	2	4	12	(2)
Involvement	3	5	1	3	12	(4)
Use of Consultants	5	3	2	4	14	(3)
Training in Process	1	1	1	2	5	(1)
Adequate Resources	4	3	1	2	10	(3)
Stresses on Organization	4	4	4	4	16	(0)
Tracking Progress	2	3	3	2	10	(1)

The researcher scored the factors on a scale of 1–5, with 5 having the greater positive impact on planning at each site. The variance is the difference between the high and low score for each factor across the four case study sites.

A high total score (16–19) identifies factors having the greatest impact on planning at all sites. A moderate score (10–15) identifies factors having lesser impact on planning at all sites. The low score (5) for the factor "Training in the Process" identifies it as having the least impact.

A low (0–1) variance identifies factors having relatively equal influence at each site. A moderate (2–3) to high (4) variance identifies factors demonstrating increasingly disproportionate influence.

The total score and variance of factors among the four case study sites will be examined in the following discussion.

Discussion of Factor Impact and Variance

Table 3.3   Factor Impact and Variance

Factor	Total of Impact Scores for All Four Sites	Variance Among the Four Sites
Development of Mission and Objectives	19	1
Alignment of Mission and Planning Objectives	17	1
Leadership	17	2
Stresses on the Organization	16	0
Use of Consultants	14	3
Effective Communication	12	2
Involvement of the Entire Organization	12	4
Commitment of the Organization to Change	10	3
Allocation of Adequate Resources	10	3
Tracking and Evaluating Progress	10	1
Training in the Planning Process	5	1

Development of Mission and Planning Objectives (Impact 19, Variance 1)

All four case study sites included a written mission statement and planning objectives in their planning documents.

> Identifying the mission; however, does more than merely justify the organization's existence. Clarifying purpose can eliminate a great deal of unnecessary conflict in an organization and can help channel discussion and activity productively. (Bryson, 1988, 49)

The impact of this factor was the highest of all considered. The planning objectives at one site were less specific than at the other sites, accounting for the low variance.

Alignment of Mission and Planning Objectives (Impact 17, Variance 1)

Interview responses at all four sites revealed a correlation and alignment between the mission statements and planning objectives. In each case the mission statement formed the basis for the planning objectives, accounting for the high impact. In one case a revision of the mission statement resulted from the planning process, accounting for the low variance.

Leadership (Impact 17, Variance 2)

Each institution's planning process included collaboration between the director and one or more board members or staff.

> Indeed, key decision-makers might wish to form themselves into a permanent strategic planning committee or cabinet. Temporary task forces, strategic planning committees, or a cabinet can work, but whatever the arrangement, there is no substitute for the direct involvement of key decision-makers in the process. (Bryson, 1988, 65)

Though shared, leadership in planning was found to be primarily provided by the director, whose duty it was to "organize and energize the planning process." (Tolles, 1991, 107)

The most difficult problems strategic planning must deal with can be solved only through institutional transformation. Such transformations cannot happen without strong leadership. (Bryson, 1988, 200)

Each director interviewed demonstrated an enthusiastic commitment to the planning process, accounting for the high impact. While all directors interviewed collaborated with their boards in planning, it was the level to which they involved and inspired other staff members that accounted for the variance in this factor.

Stresses on the Organization (Impact 16, Variance 0)

The high impact reflects all sites reported their organizations faced internal and external stresses, or threats, prior to entering into the planning process.

A major purpose of any strategic planning exercise therefore is to alert an organization to the various external threats and opportunities that may need a response in the foreseeable future. In other words, a major purpose of strategic planning is to prepare an organization to respond effectively to the outside world before a crisis emerges. But any effective response to external threats and opportunities must be based on an intimate knowledge of the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses. (Bryson, 1988, 118)

All sites reported similar levels of stress, resulting in no variance.

Use of Consultants (Impact 14, Variance 3)

The timing and level of involvement of consultants involved in the planning process is the basis for the high variance and moderate impact for this factor.

Outside consultation and facilitation can help. Often organizations and communities need some consultation, facilitation, and education from outsiders. (Bryson, 1988, 228)

At one site several consultants worked on both the strategic and long-range plans. At one site the director facilitated the first phase, long-range plan and then brought in a

consultant to collaborate on the second phase, strategic plan. At one site a consultant collaborated on the initial master plan with follow up planning handled in-house. The final site utilized a consultant in the early plan development but completed it in-house.

Effective Communication (Impact 12, Variance 2)

Respondents from all sites stated communication regarding planning was good, but could be improved to be more effective, accounting for the moderate impact.

> Plans, as they emerge from strategic programming as programs, schedules, budgets, and so on, can be prime media to communicate not just strategic intentions but also what each individual in the organization must do to realize them. (Mintzberg, 1994, 352)

During the course of follow up questions on the topic, many mentioned various methods and media utilized in their desire to get the word out about planning. The formality and regularity of communication regarding planning determined the variance in this factor. Two of four sites demonstrated formalized methods for communicating their plan such as scheduled meetings and publications. The other two sites used informal, word of mouth methods.

Involvement of the Entire Organization (Impact 12, Variance 4)

The largest variance occurred for this factor. The basis for ranking this factor was solely the inclusiveness of the planning process. One case study site involved all staff, most board members and the outside community in the planning process. Two sites involved senior staff early on in the process and solicited input from front line staff later on. One site did not involve staff below the supervisory level in the process.

28

> Major internal transformation rarely happens unless many people assist.
> Yet employees generally won't help, or can't help, if they feel
> powerless. Hence the relevance of empowerment. (Kotter, 1996, 102)

The varied levels of involvement in the planning process accounted for the high

variance and moderate impact for this factor.

Commitment of the Organization to Change (Impact 10, Variance 3)

The definition of planning in Chapter 1 implies a commitment by an

organization to positive, meaningful change. Commitment to change is required

throughout the organization in order for even the best thought out plan to succeed.

> People will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status
> quo, unless they think the potential benefits of change are attractive and
> unless they really believe a transformation is possible (Kotter, 1996, 9).

The relatively high variance associated with this factor reflected the reluctance to

change expressed and observed during the interview process. Resistance to change

existed to some extent at all of the case study organizations, accounting for the

moderate impact.

Allocation of Adequate Resources (Impact 10, Variance 3)

Respondents at each site commented on the adequacy of resources

available and committed to both developing and implementing planning at their

organizations. The majority of respondents stated resources were adequate for plan

development, but not optimal for implementation, accounting for the moderate impact.

> Development should be accepted and treated by the staff and trustees of
> an institution as a long-term, on-going process, not a series of stunts to
> raise money to pay next month's or next year's bills. (Klyberg,
> 1991,124)

The basis for the high variance in this factor was the difficulty reported by respondents at each institution in regard to funding plan implementation, including the funding of additional staff. Three sites reported a need for additional staff to implement their plans.

Tracking and Evaluating Progress (Impact 10, Variance 1)

Each site demonstrated various methods of tracking and evaluating the implementation of planning. Respondents stated these methods were effective, but acknowledged were not formalized in the planning process, accounting for the moderate impact. Two case study sites completed their plans within three months of being interviewed. These sites had not proceeded far enough into implementation to demonstrate the same level of tracking and evaluation observed at the other two sites, accounting for the low variance. Respondents at each institution acknowledged the need to track implementation to review planning progress and the belief that such tracking leads to a continuation of the planning process.

Training in the Planning Process (Impact 5, Variance 1)

The low impact for this factor reflects the observation that not one of the case study institutions provided or received formal organization-wide training in the planning process. The low variance is based on the fact that at one site, the director attended a training workshop conducted by the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA) in preparation for the commencement of planning.

Summary of Findings

The researcher conducted fourteen interviews at four case study sites. He then summarized these and sorted the responses by the factors supposed to affect planning. The researcher next identified and presented similarities and differences among the factors as they impacted planning at the case study organizations. Additionally, he presented factors identified by interview respondents as enhancing or inhibiting the planning process. These added another dimension, the respondent's opinions, to the findings.

The researcher evaluated the preceding data resulting in a ranking and discussion of the factors affecting planning. Lastly, he presented the impact and variance for each factor, which form the basis for the discussion presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this research reveal disparity among the eleven factors affecting planning at the four case study sites. The interrelationship of the impact and variance of factors shown in the table below leads the researcher to make the following conclusions.

Table 4.1   Grouping of Factors by Impact and Variance

<u>High Impact (17) and Moderate Variance (2)</u>
Leadership

<u>Moderate Impact(10–14) and Moderate to High Variance (2–4)</u>
Use of Consultants
Effective Communication
Involvement of the Entire Organization
Commitment of the Organization to Change
Allocation of Adequate Resources

<u>High Impact (16–19) and Low Variance (0–1)</u>
Development of Mission and Planning Objectives
Alignment of Mission and Planning Objectives
Stresses on the Organization

<u>Moderate Impact (10) and Low Variance (1)</u>
Tracking and Evaluating Progress

<u>Low Impact (5) and Low Variance (1)</u>
Training in the Planning Process

The variance was moderate (2) and impact high (17) for one factor. This factor interrelated with all other factors.

Leadership

Interview responses in all cases identified leadership in planning was supplied by the director and shared by others in the organization to varying degrees. Whether the inspiration for planning originated with the staff, board, or director, the director took on the primary leadership role in the development and implementation of planning.

The director's role in leading the organization through the planning process touched on and was interrelated to all of the other factors affecting planning. The director created and maintained a guiding coalition or planning team in each organization, communicated the vision, and led development efforts to acquire funding for continued planning and implementation.

> Among the requisite talents and skills are diplomacy, persuasiveness, consistency, flexibility, resoluteness, integrity, and openness. Close relations, on an informal basis, should be maintained with the president and the full board of trustees; implementation will not go smoothly, or may even fail to achieve its goals if the director does not religiously attend to this. The same may be said for staff members, whose confidence in the planning outcome must be continuously reinforced in order to assure their complete dedication to the implementation tasks that they will be called upon to perform. (Tolles, 1991, 119)

The leadership role included the challenge of maintaining an appropriate balance between practical planning grounded in reality and encouraging the organization to stretch, think outside of the box, and push the envelope.

The interrelationship between the directors' leadership and their role in developing the mission, communicating the vision, involving the entire organization, securing a commitment to change, and allocating adequate resources, combined to most affect planning at the case study sites.

The variance was moderate to high (2– 4) and the impact moderate (10–14) for the following five factors.

Commitment of the Organization to Change

The interview process identified securing the commitment to change by diverse members of each organization as necessary to achieve planning goals, but problematic.

Commitment to change was required at the onset of each process in order to obtain open input from the members of the organization. It was also necessary to develop and maintain this commitment during plan development and on into the implementation phase. Fostering a commitment to change helped keep the process on track, encourage open communication, achieve desired results, and make the desired changes a part of the organization's culture.

In no one organization was a universal commitment to the planning process found. All case study organizations encountered resistance to change.

> To some degree, the downside of change is inevitable. Whenever
> human communities are forced to adjust to shifting conditions, pain is
> ever present. (Kotter, 1996, 4)

In some cases this resistance led to changes in the makeup of the staff and board, which when dealt with openly and honestly, proved to be healthy for the organization and the planning process.

Effective Communication

As in the case of leadership, effective communication among the members of each organization and with other interested parties was a factor found to interrelate with all of the other factors influencing planning.

The researcher observed the director to be at the center of communication in the case study organizations. The staff, at the bottom of the organization, and the board, at the top, both communicated primarily with and through the director regarding planning. The director, in this pivotal position, had a great influence on the effectiveness and tone of communication.

Effective communication will not correct the deficiencies of poor planning, but ineffective communication can undermine a well developed plan. Kotter offers the following list of the elements of effective communication.

Simplicity: All jargon and technobabble must be eliminated.

Metaphor, analogy, and example: A verbal picture is worth a thousand words.

Multiple forums: Big meetings and small, memos and newspapers, formal and informal interaction—all are effective for spreading the word.

Repetition: Ideas sink in deeply only after they have been heard many times.

Leadership by example: Behavior from important people that is inconsistent with the vision overwhelms other forms of communication.

Explanation of seeming inconsistencies: Unaddressed inconsistencies undermine the credibility of all communication.

Give-and-take: Two-way communication is always more powerful than one—way communication. (Kotter, 1996, 90)

Not included in the above list, is the observation by the researcher that openness and honesty in communication bore directly on the commitment of members of each organization to change and on their willingness to become meaningfully involved in the planning process. The researcher observed the actual, or merely perceived, exclusion of staff members from participation in the planning process created a breeding ground for rumor and discontent.

Respondents from each site, reflecting on the effectiveness of communication, offered the observation that more time could be devoted to communicating their plan.

> Sufficient time and energy are never invested in communicating a new
> sense of direction to enough people—not surprising in light of a history
> of simply handing direct reports the latest plan. (Kotter, 1996, 29)

The leadership of the planning effort in an organization, whether it be provided by the director, a board or staff member, or a coalition, needs to allocate the time and effort to fully communicate planning to all members of the organization as well as interested outside parties.

Involvement of the Entire Organization

The extent of involvement by members of each organization accounted for the greatest variance among all the factors considered. Involvement also interrelated with the factors of leadership, effective communication, allocation of adequate resources, and commitment of the organization to change.

The case study sites that involved all members of the organization in the planning process demonstrated the most effective communication and the highest levels of commitment to change. Involvement in plan development by potential donors from

the outside community including charitable foundations was observed to positively influence the ability of one case study site to attract funding for plan implementation. Involving all levels of the organization thus appears to be a desirable element of the planning process. The difficulty in this regard is to what extent and at what phase in planning is this involvement sought.

> For strategic planning efforts focused on an organization, it may be advisable to involve (in addition to key outsiders) people from the three levels of the organization: top policy and decision-makers, middle management, and technical core or frontline personnel. (Bryson, 1988, 79)

At the four case study sites, involvement of frontline personnel accounted for the greater part of the variance in this factor. Respondents expressed a reluctance to involve frontline personnel partly because their input was viewed as less informed and because doing so removed them from the day-to-day operation of the organization. These are valid concerns, but are perhaps shortsighted.

> They are in charge of the day-to-day use of the core technologies contributing to, or affected by, strategic change, and so they are likely to be either hurt or helped by change. Early involvement may be necessary to assure that strategic changes can be made operational, or at least to minimize resistance. (Bryson, 1988, 79)

Thus, the potential benefit of early involvement in planning by all members of the organization, including frontline personnel, should outweigh any concerns for expediency or the validity of input from frontline personnel. Involvement by the entire organization is desirable, if only to help secure the commitment of the entire organization to change.

37

Use of Consultants

In all cases consultants initially aided in orientating the organization to the planning process, and later in facilitating the process. Consultants chosen possessed planning expertise, technical expertise, or a combination of both. Case study institutions obtained this expertise through the use of single, multi-disciplinary consultants or through the use of a team of consultants with each addressing specific issues and aspects of planning. It is important to note each organization utilized consultants for specific expertise and as facilitators of the process. The consultants worked in collaboration with the subject organizations. Respondents stated that consultants understood the mission and objectives of their organization. In no case did the consultant or consultants dictate a plan; rather they facilitated and assisted the organizations in plan development. The outside perspective consultants brought to the planning process helped insure that plans addressed the needs of all constituencies. Consultants, as outsiders, were able to address difficult and sensitive issues

> The advantage of the (consultant) is that a person not regularly associated with an institution is often in a position to make strong statements about the need for planning...without fear of shortened tenure at the institution. (Hartman, 1995, 18)

If the planning process is entirely delegated to a consultant, the resulting plan is one-dimensional. Without a truly collaborative effort between organization and consultant, achieving a relevant plan that addresses the needs of the organization is virtually impossible. The researcher's observation, which spurred development of this research, of many such well meaning but one-sided and unimplemented plans on the shelves of some botanic gardens and arboreta can attest to this fact.

Allocation of Adequate Resources

Each case study organization allocated resources, which in the opinion of interview respondents were adequate to initiate the planning process. However, during the development of planning, respondents noted the significant time and effort required by the process was not always fully appreciated. Respondents noted balancing the demands of planning with the day-to-day operations of the organization might result in a lessened commitment to the process. The continued allocation of human resources and the ability of the organization to fund the actions called for by planning are necessary to keep the process moving forward.

One respondent stated without funding, "it is all pie-in-the-sky." One reference listed the following elements of a successful development program.

A clearly defined mission statement and a well-articulated set of institutional goals and programs.

A multi-year (long-range) plan.

Reports, reviews, and appraisals rendered by independent outsiders attesting to management's ability to run the place, and a validation of the institution's integrity. These can be financial audits, accreditation certificates, MAP (Museum Assessment Program) reports, public press notices, or peer reviews of programs, preferably all of the above.

The ability to state and document a compelling case of need, including what the proposed project seeks to accomplish, who is going to carry it out, over what period of time and at what cost, and who will be the beneficiaries.

A community representative support group or board.

Competent professional staff. (Klyberg, 1991, 124–125)

Funding, or more correctly development, efforts were observed at the case study sites as not separate to, but rather as a continuation of the planning process. Development is required in order to implement the actions and programs called for in planning. As with other aspects of planning, leadership in development is the responsibility of the director acting in collaboration with the board.

Development of Mission and Planning Objectives,

Alignment of Mission and Planning Objectives, and

Stresses on the Organization

The variance of factors was low (0–1) and the impact high (16–19) for these three factors. Respondents from all organizations stated they began the planning process with an examination of their present circumstances and desired goals. This examination led to the development and alignment of their mission, vision, and planning objectives. Each entered into the process under conditions of internal and external stress that predicated the need for the organization to plan and effect change. The high impact of these three factors identifies them as factors required for planning. The low variance among these three factors suggests they are important pre-requisites to the planning process.

Tracking and Evaluating Progress

The variance was low (1) and impact moderate (10) for this solitary factor. Respondents at each site acknowledged the importance of tracking and

evaluating the progress of planning, but tracking did not occur until the implementation phase, and thus did not greatly influence plan development.

> A well run organization doesn't complete a plan and put it on a shelf. It uses its plan as a management tool to guide the development of its annual operating plans and budget allocations. It reviews the strategic plan yearly, assesses progress against goals, and adjusts the plan to meet current circumstances. (Worssam, 1997, 38)

Continual review of the planning process serves to continue the process and make it an integral part of an organization's culture. The responsibility for insuring this review occurs falls to the director and board.

> It is the *obligation* of the director and board of trustees to make duly certain that the master plan remains a live document, always responsive to new internal and external influences as they may arise and impinge on the institution. (Tolles, 1991, 120)

Training in the Planning Process

The variance was low (1) and impact low (5) for this, the only factor scoring low for both impact and variance. Many respondents had prior knowledge and experience in planning. Respondents stated the process itself was a learning experience for all involved and each planning process was a unique experience. Consultants provided an orientation to the process at three of the four sites. The researcher concludes formal training in the planning process is desirable but not necessary to achieve positive results.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The following six factors demonstrated a moderate to high impact on planning coupled with a moderate to high variance in effect.

- leadership

- use of consultants

- effective communication

- involvement of the entire organization

- commitment of the organization to change

- allocation of adequate resources

These demonstrated the most influence on the planning process at the case study sites.

Three factors demonstrated a high impact but no or low variance on planning at each site.

- development of mission and planning objectives

- alignment of mission and planning objectives

- stresses on the organization

Each of these was found to be a prerequisite of planning at all four sites. As such, these factors did not influence planning as much as allowed it to occur.

Two factors demonstrated low to moderate impact and low variance on planning:

- tracking and evaluating progress
- training in the planning process

These factors had the least influence on planning; the former being a means of continuing the process, and the latter being found to occur only informally.

Recommendations

Develop a Strong Leadership Coalition for Planning

I recommend that botanic gardens and arboreta assemble a guiding coalition, which possesses the "power, expertise, credibility, and leadership" (Kotter, 1996, 57) to direct the change effort, when developing the mission, vision, planning objectives, and plan for an organization. Strong leadership is the key to developing this coalition. Whether the leadership role in planning is assumed by the director or board does not matter as long as the director and board are mutually supportive and able to secure the commitment of the entire organization to the change effort. Additionally, the director and board should work closely on the development efforts required to fund plan implementation and continue the process.

Commit the Organization to Continual Change

I recommend that when making a commitment to a planning process, be it for a strategic, long-range, or master plan, botanic gardens and arboreta would be well

served to remain aware of, and focused on planning as a continuous process. Each part of the process reviews and improves upon the last.

> Developing an effective strategic management system is never a one-time effort. Rather, constant learning and continuous improvement is the guiding concept. (Koteen, 1997, 96)

Each organization's leadership is responsible for securing the commitment of the organization to change. A thorough assessment of the internal and external conditions and stresses facing an organization precedes planning. This assessment leads to the development of a clearly defined mission, vision, and planning objectives.

Embracing planning as a fluid process, and remaining open to a diversity of input and opinion, is essential to successfully leading and managing change in an organization. The challenge for the planning process is to be flexible, creative and able to "push the envelope" while also providing for the more inflexible needs and constraints of the organization.

Communicate Openly and Honestly

I recommend that organizations entering a planning process take the time and effort to openly and honestly communicate the mission and objectives of planning to all staff, stakeholders, and potential donors. In this way skepticism, resentment, and resistance can be identified and addressed. Communication loops, with the director at the center, run throughout and between the organizations, people, and communities involved in the planning process. As stated by Strother Martin in the film *Cool Hand Luke*, the phrase "what we've got here is failure to communicate," describes what can befall even the best planning efforts if such a breakdown in communication occurs.

> Gaining understanding and commitment to a new direction is never an easy task, especially in large enterprises. Smart people make mistakes here all the time, and outright failure is not uncommon. Managers undercommunicate, and often not by a small amount. Or they inadvertently send inconsistent messages. In either case, the net result is the same: a stalled transformation. (Kotter, 1996, 85)

Planning is a vehicle for communicating proposed changes to the entire organization. "Employees represent the single most important group to bring into the loop" (Morrisey, 1996, 92). Failure to communicate, first during plan development and later during plan presentation and implementation, resulted in a demonstrated level of resentment and distrust at one case study site severe enough to threaten the attainment of the planning objectives.

Involve Everyone

The importance of involving the entire organization in the planning process and in securing a broad-based commitment to change can not be stressed enough. No matter how valid are the objectives and actions called for in planning, the failure to involve and commit the entire organization including outside stake-holders and potential donors to the planning process will lead to the organization falling short of its goals.

Utilize External Consultants

The addition of external consultants to this coalition is recommended to broaden the perspective on planning and to obtain technical and professional expertise not found in the organization. Consultants, acting as the initial facilitators of the

planning process, also allow the director to step back and maintain a more neutral stance during the early development phase of planning.

Allocate Adequate Resources

I recommend that organizations look at planning as a method to lead and manage continual change and not as a chore to be completed in a few weeks or months. The outcomes of planning are worth the considerable time, effort, and resources required by the planning process. In addition to allocating adequate resources to enter into the process and draft a plan, I recommend that implementation and development plans be developed as the process moves forward. Directors and boards, in addition to leading the planning process, are obligated to assume the leadership role to identify and obtain the resources required to implement planning.

I further recommend that consideration be given, early on and throughout the planning process, to determining whether plan objectives are realistically achievable and dramatically stretch the organization, or are overly ambitious, unrealistic, and just so much "pie-in-the-sky." The plan must be exciting and compelling but tempered with a plan for fiscal sustainability. This needs to be based on a thorough assessment of existing and potential sources of funding.

Potential donors, including sources from outside the organization as well as board members, should be invited early on to participate in the planning process. Active participation in planning by potential donors makes them a part of the process, allows them to buy-in, gain an understanding of the objectives, and become more inclined to provide funding.

Continue the Process

Several interview respondents offered the insight, "the plan *is* the process." When interviewed shortly after completing one cycle of planning, a board member at one site professed having developed a "passion for the process."

I recommend that the leadership of botanic gardens and arboreta bear in mind the following when entering into a planning process. Strong leadership, open and honest paths of communication, involvement of the entire organization including outside stakeholders and external consultants, and the willingness and ability to allocate adequate resources to the process, will inspire the commitment of an organization to change.

Appendix A

INITIAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Is your organization a non-profit and classified as a 501(c)3? Yes___
No___

2. Does your organization include a horticultural component?
Yes___ No___ Garden____ Arboreta___ Other (Identify)___

3. Approximate operating budget for your organization.
<250K___ 250–500K___ >500K___

4. Has your organization undertaken a planning process in the last ten
years? Yes___ No___

5. If yes, has the plan been implemented in whole or in part?
Yes___ No___

6. Authorship of the plan was:
Internal (staff)___ External (Consultants)___ or both____

7. Does your organization raise funds to cover the costs of planning and
implementation? Yes___ No___

8. Would your organization consider participating in further research as
a case study site if found to be a suitable subject by this initial
survey? This would entail one or two days of interviews with
staff, board members, and/or other parties involved in the
planning process. Yes___ No___

9. Please enclose a business card with your reply and provide the
following: Name, Title, Institution, Address, Phone, Fax, email,
Best method/time to reach you

10. Do you have any questions or comments?

Appendix B

CASE STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please furnish a copy of your organization's mission statement.

2. What were the planning objectives at your organization?

3. How do planning objectives align with the organization's mission?

4. Who played the leadership role in instigating, performing, and implementing planning?

5. What changes have occurred since planning commenced, what concerns do people have about change?

6. Was this your organization's first plan, is planning performed at regular intervals?

7. How has the plan been communicated, do you understand it, and were you given an opportunity to offer feedback?

8. Describe the effectiveness of communication and describe how it could be improved?

9. Describe staff involvement in planning. Was everyone involved in the process?

10. Describe your involvement in planning and implementation.

11. Describe the director's involvement in planning and implementation.

12. Describe the board's involvement in planning and implementation

13. Did your organization utilize the services of outside consultants in planning?

14. If consultants were utilized, how were their recommendations reconciled with staff input? Describe the working relationship between consultants and staff.

15. Have you previous experience in planning and/or were you or others given training in the planning process at this organization?

16. How does your organization track and evaluate planning implementation?

17. Describe the human and financial resources available and committed to planning and implementation? Were these resources adequate and if not, what was lacking?

18. What internal and/or external stresses prompted your organization to enter into a planning process?

19. How did the planning process, and any associated stress, impact planning and implementation?

20. What factors do you believe enhanced or inhibited planning at your organization?

21. Do you believe planning has been a success at your organization, why or why not?

22. Is there anything you wish to add in closing?

CASE STUDY INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

Awbury Arboretum

Planning Objectives
- Refer to the *Strategic Plan of the Awbury Arboretum*, 1997 and the *Awbury Arboretum Master Plan*, 1998

Alignment of Mission and Objectives
- "First identified the needs of the organization."
- "Created the mission statement early on."
- "Objectives relate directly to mission, are intertwined and based on the mission."

Leadership
- "The director cultivated the board's involvement, especially the Planning Chair."
- "Teamwork between director, board, and committee chairs" (education and planning).
- "Director initiated, Planning Chair was instrumental in development, then the Director (led) implementation."

Commitment to Change
- "The plan changed the program focus, not organizational."
- "One board member had a separate agenda, still has not bought in."
- "Some older board members think we are changing too fast and are resisting change."
- "Staff was small, (only 2 ½ positions), two people left, one wanted more growth then organization could offer, the other couldn't grow."
- "They (staff) are excited but sometimes overwhelmed by the scope of it all."

Communication

- "The process, public participation, stakeholder participation, follow up meetings with stakeholders."
- "Community meetings."
- "Newsletter."
- "Verbally, I use the plan in dealings with my staff."
- "Everyone on staff given a copy, but no meeting held with everyone to go over it."
- "Unsure of workers input from bottom up."
- "A danger of such an open process is people see early thinking and think it's real."
- "Could do more with public relations, flyers, newspapers, public TV, the web."

Involvement of Entire Organization

- "The Planning Committee consisted of the director, board Planning (Committee) Chair, and about 12 others on the committee. All supervisory staff members except the landscape manager were involved and he will be involved in the Master Plan that follows the Strategic Plan."
- "A conscious effort was made to involve the entire board."
- "Emphasize the importance of an open planning process that allows all stakeholders to understand and take ownership of the plan. This is not (the director's) plan."

Use of Consultants

- "Dennis Leach of Trans Management Associates, Washington, D.C. was involved early on, got the key issues developed and helped with responses to these issues."
- "The committee of 15 met with Dennis, not the entire staff."
- "Dennis asked questions, got staff thinking, did not make recommendations."
- "Dennis got the staff involved in the process."
- "Initial hiring requirement was the ability of the consultant to listen to and work with the board."
- "Dennis introduced and facilitated the strategic planning process."
- "The developing Master Plan is utilizing more consultants –The Delta Group as well as technical expertise provided by PURP (the Philadelphia Urban Resources Partnership) who have a stronger relationship with the board on physical issues, while the staff has more programmatic input."

Training

- "The staff received no training except for an introduction to the process by the consultant. The Director is trained as a landscape architect and has planning knowledge and experience. The current planning co-chair is also a landscape architect and planner."

Tracking and Evaluation of Progress

- "Planning committee is charged with that, but has been absorbed with the Master Plan. We will take time after Phase One of the Master Plan is built to take stock and revise the Strategic Plan as needed."
- "No formal tracking– we are doing it, but not measuring."
- "Jumped right into Master Planning after the Strategic Plan."

Adequate Resources

- "We did the Strategic Plan for free basically, the facilitator was pro bono (friend of director), had board members with planning experience. Park Service volunteers helped with community meetings, utilized volunteer PURP expertise."
- "To implement we will need more staff– a development officer, two in landscape, maybe five in all. We also need someone to relieve the director of grant writing responsibility."
- "A Penn Grant is paying for consultants and costs of master planning."
- "We are paying a consultant to do a capital campaign feasibility study before we launch a campaign to implement the Master Plan (need $5,000,000)."
- "Have received Pew (Pew Charitable Trust), PURP, and Penn (William Penn Foundation) grants, capital campaign to follow."

Organizational Stress

- "Hadn't had a director in years (only acting-directors), there was no plan, the stress was not having a plan."
- "The organization was flat, barely afloat with no vision of the future."
- "Good stress was new director, more staff, the time was right and funding was becoming available at a larger scale than some board members thought possible."
- "The board, which is aging, recognized a need to grow and change in order for the organization to prosper, saw need to hire a permanent director."

Factors Enhancing

- "Continuing the process past the Strategic Plan to the Master Plan."
- "A creative, involved board with planning experience."
- "Professional services (primarily volunteers)."
- "Funders involved in the process (Pew and PURP)."
- "Held three community meetings which invigorated the process."
- "A forward-thinking executive director."
- "Staff commitment."
- "Strong communication at all levels."
- "Surveying board members desires, a give and take."

- "A consultant whose heart is in their work (not just a job to do) and familiar with the urban context of the organization."
- "The community supports the organization and was part of the process."
- "Because we serve a disenfranchised, diverse, urban community as well as an affluent community, more funding was available."

Factors Inhibiting
- "Outside awareness of Awbury, lack of visibility and wider community support."
- "Weakness of the board, lack of technical and financial resources."
- "The human factor, a problem personality, took them through process step by step, they listened, but never bought in. It is a part of the process."
- "The fluidness of the process can inhibit planning when the day to day focus shifts to immediate needs that conflict with the Strategic Plan's objectives."

Morris Arboretum

Planning Objectives (Vision)
- "The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania is a historic public garden and an education institution. It is an important resource for extending an appreciation of the world's ecology, and an understanding of the importance of plants to people, in a biological, cultural, historical, and aesthetic context. As Advisory Board members and staff, our vision for the Arboretum's future is formed by its major activities: teaching, research, outreach and garden display. It is developed further by the Arboretum's relationship with the University of Pennsylvania and its position as the official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and by our responsibility as stewards of its historic structures and landscapes. Our vision is tempered by a realization that priorities must be established, and that we must operate within the context of fiscal stability. It is, nonetheless, a vision of the possible, and a call to review long-range goals and immediate priorities."

Alignment of Mission and Objectives
- "Objectives codify the goals of the organization."
- "All are measured against the mission."
- "The objectives came first then the mission was revised from an earlier version by" the former director, Bill Klein."

- "The mission had essentially been there, but previous planning had not utilized the mission in creating goals, especially non-horticultural education and programming goals."

Leadership
- "The director's office, the director and assistant to the director."
- "The director, and he involves, at all stages, not only the board, but all key staff."
- "Initially leadership came from the staff who felt a need to define the mission programmatically."
- "The director led the development and implementation of the plan and provided continuity with the 1977 Plan, a process of which he was a part."
- "Implementation leadership comes from the director with the advice and consent of the board and their help in fundraising."
- "The director is the absolute leader, especially in fund raising, and he builds confidence in the board of the staff's ability to get the job done."

Commitment to Change
- "The organization was stagnant, infrastructure was eroding, visitation was low. This has all changed."
- "As a result of the Strategic Plan there is a greater focus on public programming."
- "Donors feel the institution has its act together."
- ."No concerns about change from the board. Would have been ten years ago when many on board had romantic ideas about the Morris and did not want it to change."
- "The board has evolved; it now represents a wider community."
- "A change is that the board vice-president got the marketing idea going."
- "Users have a problem with change more than staff."

Communication
- "Full staff meetings"
- "It is a key component of board meetings"
- "Newsletter and local newspapers"
- "I look to the plan as my marching orders– lower level staff don't use it the same way, but they have it and discuss it as it affects them."
- "We need to communicate the plan to all constituencies, keep it at the forefront, improve it by repetition, make sure new employees get it and understand it."
- "Is moderately effective– we need to regularly communicate with staff how we are going to accomplish goals, how goals and vision may have changed. The Paper Mill Run project was not part of the plan, but it works well with the goals of the plan."

- "We should meet more often as a board, perhaps six instead of four meetings per year."

Involvement of Entire Organization
- "Senior staff basically wrote it with the director and board."
- "All other staff (were) asked for input."
- "Large group planning meetings were held."
- "Held day long roundtable with board, director, and senior staff with an outside facilitator."
- "Held another roundtable with former assistant director facilitating for the entire staff."
- "Everyone had input in the original document."
- "It was a collaboration between the staff and the board, but the staff set the agenda."

Use of Consultants
- "Original 1977 Plan developed with Andropogon Associates– the 1994 Strategic Plan was done in-house, but architects and landscape architects are brought in on a case by case basis for projects."
- "The University of Pennsylvania Fund Raising Department has helped."
- "Yes, the outside facilitator for the first roundtable meeting with director, senior staff, and board. He was not there to make recommendations, just gather information and format for the committee, just a facilitator, not there to plan."
- "The consultant was really a facilitator, elicited responses, did not dictate, and worked with the board and not the staff."
- "A step by step collaboration."

Training
- "No prior training for the staff and we got off to a slow start. The first session educated us on the job and the second session went better."
- "We did not have training as an institution."
- "I have had prior experience at other organizations, the process is the same, ask the same questions, helps one focus."
- "No prior planning; learned on the job."
- "I have been involved in planning here since 1977."
- "At the first meeting the staff was not prepared for the process of looking at the broad picture initially, and later moving on to the details; the staff was looking for specific detail."

Tracking and Evaluation of Progress
- "I review the success of individual projects, not the plan as a whole."
- "The director updates progress at annual staff meetings and senior staff meetings."
- "Through the annual goal setting process."
- "Numerical and financial indicators, such as attendance, are looked at monthly and quarterly."
- "Projects completed are a barometer of money raised in the capital campaign."
- "Ideally should look at it once a year, it would be an invaluable discipline for all boards."
- "Measurement is in the updates to the plan, Appendix B (lists) goals completed 1996-1997 so the plan is revised as goals are reached."
- "We do an internal review annually and tie it back into the plan."

Adequate Resources
- "Most came from in-house and were adequate."
- "Early funding for planning was a challenge, we now have a contingency fund for planning."
- "The director is a genius at raising money, and in utilizing the board in the effort."
- "The plan develops the process for procuring the needed staff."
- "Other duties were stretched thin by the time required by the planning process, but the product was better for it."
- "The funding to plan was adequate and funding for implementation is going well."
- "We have some open positions, but funding is being sought to pay for them."

Organizational Stress
- "The Arboretum was stagnant and deteriorating (1977)."
- "A large deficit was followed by the loss of a substantial annual state appropriation which caused a financial crisis for the institution (1991)."
- "The staff felt the vision was not completely illiterated."
- "The University of Pennsylvania enacted a requirement for all of its subsidiaries to have a fund raising campaign."
- "There was a need by the staff for role definition and a feeling that the 1977 Plan was no longer relevant."
- "Planning creates creative tension in prioritizing within the organization."
- "Staff here is small and busy. Planning time required adds to their stress."
- "Stress is part and parcel of the process. It is a good process."

Factors Enhancing
- "Board involvement."
- "Staff and board buy-in."

- "Director as leader and moderator, steps back and lets process take on a life of its own"
- "Good consensus and input from all staff, board, and committees."
- "Continually referring back to the document."
- "Closely knit staff working with the director and board."
- "The mutually supportive and family atmosphere at the Morris."
- "Funding, otherwise it is all pie in the sky."
- "A proper sense of timing and prioritization."
- "Completing the process, having a vision for five to ten years."
- "The staff feels empowered."
- "In the past goals were seen as the former director's goals, but that has changed with the present director."
- "Sense of ownership of the mission by all stakeholders, members, staff, board, users."

Factors Inhibiting

- "Lack of fund raising, development"
- "In 1977 we depended on a small part of the board for a large part of our financial support."
- "No cost analysis was performed for the recommendations of the 1994 Strategic Plan."
- "Not having a clear view of the general view early on in the process."
- "As times change and new opportunities arise, we haven't done our best job modifying the plan to accommodate change."
- "Lack of staff involvement in the after planning decision-making process and in translating needs into programs."

Could Inhibit

- "Inability to reach a broad consensus."
- "Lack of fairness in prioritization (and) evenhandedness."
- "Lack of stakeholder support."
- "The lack of any of the above enhancing factors."

Queens Botanic Garden

Planning Objectives (Vision)

- "To be the botanical garden noted for presentation of plants as unique expressions of cultural traditions."

- "The Strategic Plan document includes specific goals to support the vision in the areas of research, collections, and education."

Alignment of Mission and Objectives
- "The vision statement defines the goals for education, collections, and research."
- "The mission and vision were drafted first: then the Strategic Plan was developed to reach the vision and the mission."
- "The vision and the mission go beyond the physical and staffing capacities of the organization, i.e. the present greenhouse can not accommodate what the plan calls for."

Leadership
- "The board initiated and developed the plan under the leadership of the board chair."
- "The executive director acted in support of the board chair in planning."
- "Executive director initiated, developed, and implemented planning (staff view)."
- "The plan needs a driving force."

Commitment to Change
- "Had staff problems before planning. The staff wanted more help, but felt threatened when help came."
- "The staff really doesn't see it (the value of the plan) yet, has a show-me attitude– show me how this will make my life better and not add to my already overburdened load."
- "Management is now more goal oriented."
- "Some staff are still suspicious, resentful."

Communication
- "Senior staff attends board meetings."
- "Executive director met with entire staff."
- "Executive director met with managers and supervisors."
- "Is mentioned at staff meetings."

Involvement of Entire Organization
- "Board chair and executive director surveyed the board for issues."
- "Board chair and executive director held a couple of working sessions with the board committee (the balance of the board was not actively involved)."
- "Board chair and executive director met several times and wrote the plan."

- "First draft given to all supervisors and above for input."
- "The staff was not involved below the top level."
- "The board chair interacted with the board, the executive director interacted with the staff."
- "The executive director, deputy director, and a core group of the board wrote the Strategic Plan and presented it to the rest of the staff as a done deal."

Use of Consultants
- "The board chair arranged for a pro bono facilitator from his company who met with the executive director, deputy director, and the board committee and never met with the rest of the staff except in her initial orientation visit to the garden."
- "The facilitator was great to work with, she met with board chair and (executive director)– mostly (executive director), not the entire staff."

Training
- "The only training was from working with the facilitator."
- "Board chair has experience in corporate planning."

Tracking and Evaluation of Progress
- "Performance reviews."
- "Data tracking at events."
- "Board evaluation of progress scheduled for next week (August 1998)."
- "Membership and donation records."
- "Program participation and diversity numbers are gathered."

Adequate Resources
- "Working on adding staff, could use more for plan implementation as well as to improve the general operation of the garden."
- "We had no funding for the planning process, but in kind services were provided (facilitator)."
- "We need a development person (position recently vacated)."
- "The people were there, the finances are coming."
- "Could use an outside consultant to keep the process going."
- "There is always more money needed for implementation."

Organizational Stress
- "The garden had a history of problems from the 1980s, the Department of Cultural Affairs ousted the previous Board, the present executive director was hired, a new board was elected, and now the community is coming back."
- "Three years prior to planning the organization was in decline, the directorship had been vacant, and interim directors had been in place for ten years."
- "The State Attorney General had investigated and removed the prior board, the present board was formed, a new Director was hired, a new board chair joined the board, and planning commenced."

Factors Enhancing
- "The fact that it was done at all."
- "Matching Funds program from the city."
- "The board's involvement."
- "The Cultural Challenge Project."
- "Hired a cultural specialist to work with the community."
- "Strong board member or committee working with the executive director."

Factors Inhibiting
- "Professionalism (lack of) of staff."
- "Lack of funds (and a) development person."
- "Community involvement (lack of)– local, cultural, and professional."
- "Lack of staff involvement."
- "Staff perception of the plan as the director's or the board's plan."

Tyler Arboretum

Planning Objectives
- Refer to "Guiding Principles" and "Key Institutional Directions," *Tyler Arboretum Long-Range Plan* (1994) (LRP) and *Strategic Master Plan for Tyler Arboretum* (1996) (SMP) for detailed, organization-wide objectives.

Alignment of Mission and Objectives
- "Close, the development of the SMP is leading to a refinement and revision of the mission statement developed in the LRP."
- "SMP is an outgrowth of the LRP."

Leadership
- "Basically, it's the executive director with board support."
- "Originally a board member and the director initiated and developed the LRP."
- "After the LRP they brought in Andropogon Associates for the SMP."
- "Director leads implementation with the senior staff."
- "Director led all phases."
- "Senior staff (director, assistant director, education director, and director of grounds)."

Commitment to Change
- "Planning has had a significant impact, elevated the bar, set goals and objectives."
- "We have restructured departments, efforts are now coordinated, increased accountability."
- "Some staff had a hard time adjusting to the new ways. We lost some, kept some."
- "The process brought out all the special interest groups, allowed them to voice their concerns and fears."
- "Some old time board members left after the LRP process, but they stuck it out during the process. It was the result, not the process they couldn't live with. The former organizational culture was used to the planning process. Some entered into it kicking and screaming, some still are."
- "Many staff wanted to keep the status quo; some board members had a country club mentality about the organization."

Communication
- "Plan is presented twice a year at membership events."
- "Each department has a copy for staff to review."
- "We refer to it regularly in the decision making process."
- "The mission statement is posted everywhere."
- "Publications are used to share the vision."
- "Full staff meetings have been devoted to the SMP."
- "I try to bring it up in my weekly staff meetings."
- "Could make new employees more aware."
- "Could make full staff presentations more regular."
- "Communication is good but could be improved."
- "(I give it a grade of) B minus, could dedicate more resources to it."

Involvement of Entire Organization
- "The LRP did not have much staff input, but the staff is being offered the opportunity in the update."

- "Senior staff (during MP) met with Andropogon Associates, hashed out issues, then took the issues to the rest of the staff for feedback."
- "Public meetings were held."
- "Everyone had the opportunity to participate in the SMP process, but not all exercised the option."

Use of Consultants
- "Andropogon Associates for the SMP, the LRP was in-house."
- "A truly collaborative effort."
- "Exceptionally good rapport."
- "Andropogon held a mirror up to the institution and put muscle behind the staff's beliefs. They validated the staff."
- "Sometimes a bit over the top, but the results were great and I would use them again."

Training
- "Board president had corporate planning experience."
- "At Tyler we had no training and I feel it probably would not have made a difference. The process is on the job training and common sense."
- "No formal training, but Andropogon gave us an orientation into the process."
- "The director did go out for training on leading the process."

Tracking and Evaluation of Progress
- "Have not evaluated progress on the SMP yet. We have implemented 25%-40% of the recommendations and it is time to take stock of our progress."
- "Success in fundraising is a tangible measure."
- "Need to make the formal recognition of successes an agenda item for meetings."
- "We evaluate progress on our yearly goals against the LRP."
- "Project by project review, mostly informal."
- "It is time to do it again, recharge, get zapped, now that three years has passed."

Adequate Resources
- "The money is out there for implementation. The limiting factor is our ability to raise it and the board's (lack of) involvement. We have $420,000 of the $750,000 needed to complete the first phase of the SMP."
- "We spent a large sum on consultant (SMP). They were not the low bidder, but within our budget for planning. Now our greatest challenge is getting the board to participate in fundraising to implement projects."
- "Five-year plan may take fifteen to complete based on current fundraising."

- "Retention has been a problem in a small organization with limited room for advancement, relatively low pay, and no incentive program. People use Tyler as a training ground and move on."
- "We devoted a significant amount of staff time to the process, sometimes at the expense of day to day needs. Now we are reviewing the LRP without a consultant on the clock and the time commitment is more difficult. The development of our board is still inadequate."
- "We could use a project manager to supervise major project implementation."
- "What is really lacking is time and energy to not only raise funds for the projects, but to manage them."

Organizational Stress
- "The organization was stale and needed to reinvent itself."
- "The time was right, it was the next logical step."
- "Not an external stress but rather an internal realization of an organization in decline."
- "The stresses go back to when the current director was hired. The board realized a need to change leadership. The organization was not growing."
- "Growing pains, the organization was decaying, basic issues were being addressed and next steps required a plan for change and a need to reach consensus with diverse user groups."

Factors Enhancing
- "Communication with emotion and feeling."
- "Passion for the planning process."
- "Involvement of the community at large."
- "Remaining open to input and non-judgmental."
- "Dedication and commitment of the staff, particularly senior staff."
- "Consistent leadership."
- "The use of and true collaboration with the consultant."
- "Getting buy-in of diverse user groups/stakeholders, seeing common ground."
- "The process gave the board focus, a role to play."
- "The incredible commitment of the staff, board, and public at large to the organization. Tyler is valued and loved deeply."
- "Leadership, both by the director and the executive committee of the board"

Factors Inhibiting
- "Lack of funding."
- "Time constraints, balancing planning with day to day needs."

- "The ultimate factor is the board's support of, involvement in, and knowledge of the planning process."
- "Lack of staff buy-in (subtle, but it's there)."
- "Unshared vision (miscommunication)."
- "Inexperience with the planning process."
- "Non-participation and lack of commitment by some on the board."
- "Failure to refer to and measure against the plan when implementing projects could side track the organization."

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