

# A New Year, a New You: Take Your Organization to the Next Level

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Do you make resolutions or set goals for yourself at the beginning of each year and then struggle to accomplish 100% of them? Are you faced with needing to adapt your products or services to meet the changing demands of customers or funders or simply wish to offer something “new and different” to capture attention and market share? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, you are in good company. Many people use the beginning of the year to take stock and set goals. However, many later realize that they actually accomplish only between 50 and 75% of the goals they set.

What can you do to improve your ability to take your organization to the next level?

1. Focus on your mission. Identify the energy that drives your company and what you do.
2. Research industry best practices and compare yourself. Find out what is emerging and determine if you can meet (or exceed) current innovations,
3. Identify the new products, programs or services that you would like to offer by asking the question, “What would we do if we had no fear?”
4. Determine what it would take to implement the “new” and seek the resources (human, capital and operating) required to accomplish your goals.



This is a simple formula, but a challenging one to follow, especially for small organizations and those whose management teams are stretched thin. Several critical success factors that make it more likely to be successful include:

- **Recognize and address “immunity to change.”** Both personal and organizational ITC is rooted in assumptions that are based on fear. Some fears are legitimate, based on environmental threats. Others are psychological, based on self-protective instincts. To overturn ITC, it is necessary to identify and challenge the assumptions that keep people stuck. The words “we can’t afford it” are a good signal that ITC is a problem in your organization and that your organization doesn’t have a sustainable business model.
- **Identify the “right” development skills.** Thin management teams sometimes lack research and facilitation skills or the capacity to spend time working on developing the new project. Don’t hesitate to contract with an outside firm or consultant to provide these needed skills.

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- **Create development “discipline.”** Good product and program development follows a disciplined “stage/gate” model where the development team quickly and efficiently evaluates opportunities and makes “go or no go” decisions based on the potential return on investment. Create a schedule and accountability structure for progress reporting and be relentless in your commitment to meet deadlines.
- **Seek collaboration(s) to fill competency gaps.** New programs and services often require new skills. Collaborating with other organizations whose strengths are the core competencies you need can be more effective strategy than building staff capacity. This is especially true with technical skills that are challenging to evaluate.

While it may be difficult to admit that your organization may be “stuck” in some way, the best goal you can set for yourself is to diagnose what underlies the challenges that are preventing your organization from getting to the next level. If you have difficulty figuring it out on your own, don’t hesitate to ask an organizational development firm such as Strategy Solutions to assist you. Understanding and embodying these critical success factors can lead to a happy, prosperous new year!



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**Founded in 1998, Strategy Solutions, Inc., is dedicated to facilitating creative solutions to ensure the sustainability of public, private and nonprofit organizations and create healthy communities.**

**Our unique process of combining analytical research capabilities, group process techniques, and planning tools blended with enthusiasm, energy, and total dedication to each client’s success has resulted in hundreds of clients who have achieved remarkable outcomes.**

**Our projects and clients have been recognized as best practices by the PA and NY Departments of Health, PA Department of Education and Welfare, the US Department of Health & Human Services, PA Partners, MD Workforce Development Association, and the International Economic Development Council. We are certified as a Women’s Business Enterprise in PA, WV, VA, GA and FL.**

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