

# Strategic Doing in a Nutshell

Our economy is undergoing fundamental shifts. The integration of global markets, coupled with the explosion of the Internet in the late 1990's, has created a "perfect storm" of deep economic change. To thrive in this environment, regional economies need balanced strategies that encourage new conversations, networks, and investments. Yet, the old approaches to strategy -- strategic planning -- do not work very well. The reason is simple. Strategic planning works in hierarchical organizations. It does not work in loosely connected networks where no one can tell anyone what to do.

**Strategic doing is the alternative.**-- Strategic doing enables networks of people to collaborate on complex projects. By following a discipline of guided conversations, a loose assembly of people can quickly generate a strategic action plan to keep their collaborations focused and on track. Strategic doing involves answering four simple (but not easy) questions.

**What could we do?**-- In networks, opportunities emerge when we connect our assets. Strategic doing begins with careful listening to uncover the assets in our network and explore how we could "link and leverage" these assets in new and different ways. As we conduct these conversations, new opportunities emerge.



**What should we do?**-- We pursue every opportunity. We need to start our collaborations by focusing on one. Deciding on what we should do involves defining a clear outcome with concrete characteristics that we can measure. In this way, we can agree on what success looks like. We forge agreement on what we should do.

**What will we do?**-- Translating ideas into actions involves defining a project with clear milestones to mark our path. Also, in a network, execution is a shared responsibility. By making our commitments transparent, our network becomes resilient. We know quickly how we can adjust our actions when we run into obstacles.

**When will we get back together?**-- Strategy is an ongoing leadership responsibility. It never ends. Defining how our strategic doing process will evolve represents a commitment to continue our "learning by doing". Only by committing to this continuous learning and adjustment can we figure out what works.