

Planning Terms and Definitions

by Tom Cramer
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The meaning of planning terms varies from group to group. What is one leader's "mission" is another leader's "vision." For this reason, it is wise for a leadership group to apply a "close-enough rule" for the purposes of planning together. The goal is for leaders to agree upon a specific set of definitions and stick with them. Here are some suggestions:

Identity	The origin, location, history, language, demographics, values, styles, and ideology that make a group unique (up to this moment in time). Similar to "culture" (see below). Answers the question: " <i>Who are we?</i> "
Culture	Similar to identity, but includes the <i>shared</i> beliefs, customs, values, dress and behaviors that <i>unite a group</i> of people and <i>distinguish them</i> from others. Culture includes explicit and implicit rewards and punishments <i>that cause people to determine when they "belong" and when they don't.</i>
Teamwork	The ability of individuals or teams to adopt a set of common goals and measurements, and then use them to make collective decisions and implement them on a daily basis.
Vision	A specific and motivating description of what the group will look like at a given point in the future (focus is on preferred self). For example, vision answers the question: " <i>What do we want to look like in three years?</i> "
Mission	Describes the specific impact the group feels called to make in its community and world (focus is on impact on others). Answers the question: " <i>Why do we exist?</i> "
Values	Commitments that are <i>expressed as behaviors</i> in every activity of the group.
Goals	A broad description of what a group or subgroup <i>plans to accomplish</i> consistent with its mission.
Strategies	A description of the priority and high-impact <i>activities</i> a group will implement to meet a specific goal.
Priorities	<i>Where the first dollars and/or staff calories are spent to make a strategy happen</i> and to support the group's objectives (some groups prefer to focus on building on existing strengths, others prefer to focus on improving weaknesses).
Objectives	<i>Time-specific and measurable targets</i> for which a person or group is held accountable.
Metrics	A standard that uses figures or statistics for the purpose of measuring or evaluating something, for example, the value of an item or the progress of a group.
Process	The <i>sequence of steps and habits required to reach maturity or accomplish a stated mission or goals</i> (applies to personal processes as well).
Structure	The <i>network of reporting relationships</i> whereby roles are clearly defined, direction is given, communication is facilitated, people are nurtured and equipped, and resources are distributed for the sake of the mission.
Span of Care	<i>The number of people for whom a given person is responsible to supervise or lead</i> (in terms of skill development, relational support, teaching, or providing direction and accountability).

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Slogan/Motto A brief motivating phrase or sentence that *expresses the heart of the vision.*