



Oh, Strategic Plan

Your favorite love-hate relationship

How would you describe your relationship with your 2015 strategic plan?

- A. That plan had totally unrealistic expectations; I dumped it back in March.
- B. I really loved that plan, but a lack of time and/or money strained our relationship.
- C. My plan and I work as one. With it at my side, I achieved all of my goals in 2015.

If you answered C, we'll let you get back to walking happily into the sunset. Chances are 2015 wasn't a perfect year and, going into 2016, you're feeling some pressure to put your metrics where your mouth is. You're in luck. We're no Cosmopolitan Magazine, but we do know the relationship between your strategic plan and the actions that get your results.

In this Orange Paper, we'll count down the top 5 ways to improve your relationship with your strategic plan. Gone are the days of unkept promises, embarrassment in front of your board and wet towels on the bathroom floor. Oh...wait...maybe it's just my strategic plan that does that last thing.

- 5. **Request a background check:** Before you start looking ahead to next year's goals, take a closer look at your own history. What created the distance between planning and action last year? Were your plans too aggressive, or did they just not inspire your team to action? Having a sense of these gaps will help you avoid them in the upcoming year.
- 4. **Be honest about time and money:** So many plans fail simply because we do not anticipate for the additional dollars and hours a successful execution will require. When your plans include aggressive growth or significant change, you'll need to budget accordingly. In addition to the hard costs for technology, property, or the like, consider what human resources are needed. That new operating system probably needs a dedicated technician and few savvy operators if you're going to meet your launch date and wow your customers.
- 3. **Get everyone on the same page:** This relationship isn't just between you and your plan. Every member of your organization has to be as excited as you are. So how do you get people excited about planning? Give them goals that connect to the results you are seeking. Oh, and while you're at it, see number 4. Goals are better achieved when there is some incentive. Even if you don't pay out cash bonuses, all of those morning meetings with bagels and coffee can add up.
- 2. **Talk about your feelings regularly:** Your strategic plan is 100% focused on you, the least you can do is bring it up in a meeting once a month. Check in with your plan frequently and have open conversations about your progress. What initiatives are on schedule? Which ones need to be re-examined? And, that brings us to #1...
- 1. **Be flexible:** People change, things come up, your market gets disrupted. Be flexible to change. No matter what you wrote in this year's strategic plan, you've got a vision that is 5-10 years out. That is your ultimate guiding light and there will be times you need to change course, even mid-year, to keep heading in the right direction. When you do need to make revisions to the plan, start back at the top of this list. After all, significant changes in your relationship shouldn't be taken lightly.



I love a plan with a sense of humor!

in-FUSE Your Solution:

At in-FUSION Group, LLC, we have decades of experience helping organizations commit to their strategic plans and achieve their organizational goals. Don't stop this year's planning efforts after you've clicked save. Our executive consulting team will work with you to create a healthy eco-system in which your plan can thrive.

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