

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN DRAFTING YOUR OUTCOMES:

So, you have defined your organization's vision, mission, and values, and have identified the strategic pillars (or areas of focus) for the coming years. Now is the time to decide what you want to achieve in each of those pillars. This is the part where your ambition and aspirations for the future will shine! What do you want to accomplish? These are your outcomes.

You can think of outcomes like a destination. They should be specific and clear and you should know when you have achieved them. Sticking to 2-3 outcomes per strategic pillar will help to keep the size of your overall plan manageable. Ensure that the outcomes align with your non-profit's overall mission, vision, and strategic priorities.

After drafting the outcomes, take some time for reflection and return to the planning process with a fresh set of eyes. Revise the statements to tighten up their clarity. Once you have confirmed what you will achieve, you can then look at how you will achieve them. These are your Major Initiatives and are the next component in your plan.

If you are looking at your plan and realize that you have actually done things in reverse order and have a solid understanding of what you will do (your initiatives), you will need to zoom out and ask yourselves the "why" question. Why do we want to do these things? If we are successful in completing these initiatives, what will be different? Those answers will be the outcomes that you're looking to achieve and haven't yet articulated. Remember, a well-drafted outcome provides clarity, focus, and direction for non-profit leaders, enabling you to effectively drive your organization forward in your mission. This should not be a skipped step in your planning!

USE THESE PROMPTING QUESTIONS BRAINSTORM YOUR OUTCOMES.

What differences do you want to see in your organization at the end of your plan?

Consider your strategic pillar, what aspects of it have room to approve?

CHECKLIST FOR QUALITY OUTCOMES:

Follow this checklist for each of your outcomes.

- We'll be able to tell whether or not our outcome is achieved
- This outcome challenges us to improve but is still within reach
- This is an outcome we can control
- We can reasonably complete this outcome within the timeframe of our plan
- This outcome supports its strategic pillar
- The outcome is focused and not too broad
- We have enough capacity within our team to take the steps to achieve this goal
- The thought of achieving this outcome makes us feel inspired

Other notes on our outcomes: