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## Strategy

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### **Strategy = Process**

Your social-sector organization (SSO) may have a strategic plan, but do you have a strategic process? According to BoardSource’s 2017 Leading with Intent Survey, more than one in three social sector organizations have no formal strategic planning process. More than half say their Boards are not good at monitoring and executing on strategy. To maintain a long-term sustainable advantage, strategic thinking and a coherent strategic process must be embedded in the DNA of the organization.

Strategic plan. Strategic process. So what is the difference? A strategic plan is a vision, an idea, a roadmap. A strategic process is the journey, actually doing what is required to keep the organization moving toward its goal. It is bringing people and process into focused conversation on the critical few issues that shape outcomes.

#### **Strategic planning process**

What’s required to create a strategic planning process is remarkably doable. You need a **roadmap** to facilitate **conversation**, a forum where the right **stakeholders** are included, ask difficult **questions**, stir **debate** vigorously, focus on the **critical few** and visually **record** and **communicate** for **actions**. It can be simple and repeatable. What’s often difficult is removing senior leaders from the operational “whirlwind” of daily activity long enough to elevate their thinking.

You probably know the whirlwind. It’s your biggest challenge to being strategic. It’s all the administrative and operational issues that consumes you and your staff’s resources and drives focus away from generative thinking and strategic process.

Creating a framework to move toward strategic process is the work of the board of directors in partnership with the chief executive. Often, it will require a third-seat at the table occupied by an outsider that is not emotionally invested in a particular outcome other than to move the strategic process forward.

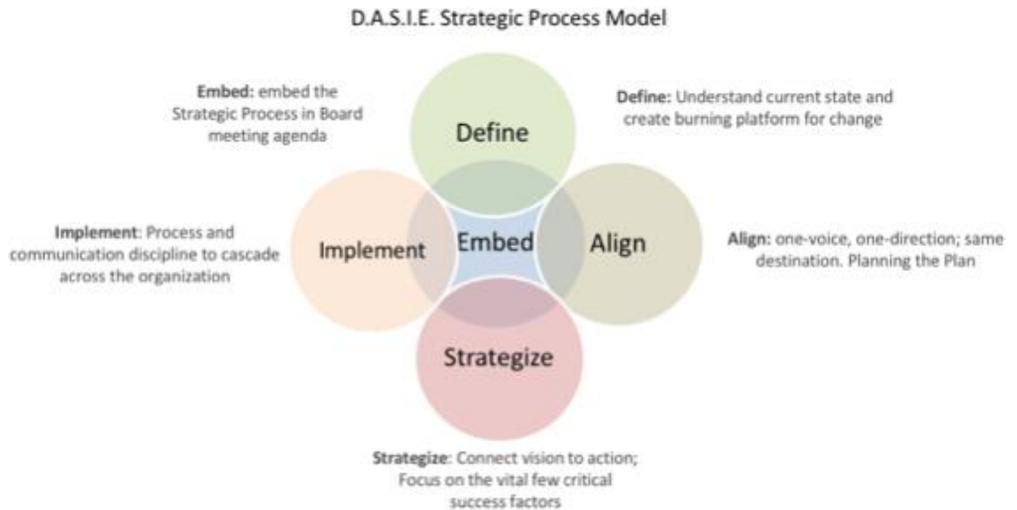
Agile boards know that strategy should not be a one-off annual event saved for the board retreat, but rather an iterative process that is at the core of every board meeting. Getting strategic may be easier than you think. But, it will require deliberate intent from your Chair and CEO to make your strategic process a priority.

#### **3 steps to creating a strategic planning process:**

1. Make executive decision to elevate strategic planning processes as a priority
2. Create a Strategic Process Committee from highly engaged board members
3. Develop Committee Charter outlining milestones, outcomes and timeline

Imagine board meetings that are based around your strategic imperatives. Where diversity of thought is celebrated and vigorous debate is required. Where all voices are heard through various task force and committee assignments.

The DASIE strategic process model can help guide SSO chief executives and boards through the steps to integrate strategic process into their board routine. It is based on 6 Sigma methods and can be used to bring discipline and process to strategy development and execution.



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Your organization’s strategic challenges may be complex and difficult but driving toward a strategic process doesn’t have to be. Strategy can be approachable and accessible.

At Weber Group we bring over 50 years of global experience at developing business solutions that drive social-sector organizations toward transformational change.