Strategic Thinking

What is it?
Why do it?
How to do it!
STRATEGIC THINKING

“We get caught up in producing glossy plans and forget to spend the time to improve the quality of the thinking that goes into the plan.”
ACADEMIC DEFINITION

• Strategic thinking is the process of collecting, interpreting, generating and evaluating information and ideas to shape organizational sustainability and competitive advantages.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

• Increase membership
• Appeal to a new demographic?
• Acquire new members?
• Add more events?
• Attract more corporate sponsors?
• And the ultimate goal – to identify new donors!
WHY THINK STRATEGICALLY?

• Strategic thinking informs the development of strategy. Strategy is about the future. Strategic thinking is about the future.

• Thinking about the future does not discount the past and present, but it does require you to move beyond today’s status quo.
AND, THEN –

• Look at the competition. And not other museums and cultural institutions unless the institution is innovative.

• Theme parks, ropes courses, ski resorts... look at those companies, organizations that are going after demographic groups that you want.

• Look at their best practices.
AND, NEXT –

• Think Different! Don’t think like a museum professional.
• What would attract new members and engage existing ones? Do ask questions – of yourselves, your neighbors, friends, vendors, the mailman, current members (of all ages).
• Don’t ask the President, members of the board, or colleagues who have been around for many years.
RESISTANCE

• Redirect fears about your new ideas/plans to one or more threats that could loom larger if your innovation does not come to fruition.
• Break the steps to accomplishing your mission into small ones.
• Involve a naysayer directly in developing the plan.
• Provide case studies from other orgs.
FEAR

• Get the fears out in the open, talk about them, innovate around them.

• Present facts and logic.
Gentle Reminder

- CUSTOMER CENTRICITY
  - Why do customers come to this org?
  - What value do we provide?
  - What are the customer’s needs? Have their needs changed? How and why?
  - What customer needs do we meet/exceed today?
  - Who is competing with me to meet needs?
• What can we do differently or better to uniquely meet the needs of the customer?
• Are we willing to put customer needs at the center of our decisions and processes?
• Are we willing to change? Really?
• What can we do to create more value for customers?
TAKING A LOOK IN

• Take a look at the experiences you now offer to members.
• Which of these are the most popular, the most well attended?
• What demographic group are you currently attracting?
• Is your membership stable or growing year over year?
• How long do you retain members
LOOK AT THE FUTURE

• What will the world, your world, look like in 3 years? Five years?
PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

• Another presentation!
DELIGHT IN WHAT YOU DO

• Don’t ask yourself what keeps you up at night.
• Ask yourself what gets you out of bed in the morning.

• Questions? ablack@strawberybanke.org