

# Planning Terms and Definitions

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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: "*Who are we?*"
- Culture** Similar to identity, but includes the *shared* beliefs, customs, values, dress and behaviors that *unite a group* of people and *distinguish them* from others. Culture includes explicit and implicit rewards and punishments *that cause people to determine when they "belong" and when they don't*.
- 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: "*What do we want to look like in three years?*"
- 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: "*Why do we exist?*"
- Values** Commitments that are *expressed as behaviors* in every activity of the group.
- Goals** A broad description of what a group or subgroup *plans to accomplish* consistent with its mission.
- Strategies** A description of the priority and high-impact *activities* a group will implement to meet a specific goal.
- Priorities** *Where the first dollars and/or staff calories are spent to make a strategy happen* 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** *Time-specific and measurable targets* 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 *sequence of steps and habits required to reach maturity or accomplish a stated mission or goals* (applies to personal processes as well).
- Structure** The *network of reporting relationships* 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** *The number of people for whom a given person is responsible to supervise or lead* (in terms of skill development, relational support, teaching, or providing direction and accountability).
- Slogan/Motto** A brief motivating phrase or sentence that *expresses the heart of the vision*.