

Local School's Strategic Plan

The Executive Service Corps (ESC) was engaged to help the Tallgrass Sudbury School create a strategic plan. The team of ESC consultants included Tom Lamb, Joan Parrott-Sheffer, and Chris Hauri. The Tallgrass team described the ESC team as, "very professional and pleasant to deal with, and kept us accountable throughout the process, the first part of which was fairly chaotic on our end."



Strategic planning is principally an alignment process. It provides a nonprofit with an incorporating tool. When stakeholders are all rowing the same direction, the organization is in the best position to achieve its mission.

"What moved me most of this process was the commitment from the participants to the planning process and the follow-through. Everyone shared their ideas, opinions and concerns freely and was met with respect and consideration. This made consensus on the strategic plan easy to reach with everyone committed.

The planning group represented all stakeholders -- parents, staff, board members, former parents and, most importantly, current students. The youngest participant, Tom who was 14, had his voice heard and respected as much as the founders and executive director. His perspective was very important.

They were facing some tough decisions! As an unbiased resource, ESC was able to ask the tough questions, make sure everyone's voice was heard and lead the group through these decisions.

As a consultant, I learned so much



about other types of schools for different types of learners. Each consulting experience immerses you in a world you never knew about. Great way to keep learning!" - Chris Hauri, ESC Consultant

As a management tool, a good strategic plan can assist an organization with measuring its progress and staying on track. A strong strategic plan helps the

organization leadership marshal the limited resources, especially with money and time management.

"We worked with ESC to put together our school's first ever strategic plan. ESC's support and the energy created by the planning process truly helped us turn our organization around. A year later, we have already met our three-year goals and have grown our student body by 30%. This wouldn't have been possible without the time and skills from ESC." - A Tallgrass staff member

ESC's most popular consulting service is the three-year strategic plan. If you would like to have ESC's help in developing a strategic plan or for any of our other consulting or coaching services please complete the short form at www.4org.org.

ESC Consultant Spotlight: Richard Basofin

Prior to joining ESC in 2006, Rich worked with Hewitt Associates, one of the largest global providers of human resources consulting and outsourcing services. As a Partner with the Firm, he managed its Cincinnati Office, overseeing marketing and business development and served as the primary contact for key clients. In addition, during a five-year sabbatical from ESC, Rich served as CFO of Turning Point Behavioral Health Care Center. He currently heads The Basofin Group, advising nonprofit organizations.



Rich has skills in areas including strategic planning, board development, finance, mergers and acquisitions, human resources, and focus group facilitation. Rich's ESC clients have included the American Indian Health Service of Chicago, Aspiritech, Chicago National Association of Dance Masters, Family Service of Lake County, Senn High School, Theraplay Institute, Turning Point Behavioral Health Care Center, and Villa Park Public Library. Rich has completed ESC training in Consulting, Board Development, Strategic Planning, Fund Development, Engagement Management, Coaching, and Coaching Skills for Consultants. Rich is a member of the Board Development, HR & Succession Planning, and Coaching Practice Groups.

Rich currently serves as a board or advisory board member of the Highland Park Public Library, Family Service of Lake County, the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, the Civic Leadership Foundation, and Turning Point Behavioral Health Care Center.

Previous board service has included the American Refugee Committee, City Lit Theater, the Cancer Wellness Center, the Hewitt Associates Foundation, the American Indian Health Service of Chicago, the Association of Consultants to Nonprofits, and the Skokie Public Library. Rich is a member of the Society for Nonprofit Organizations.

Rich's educational background includes a BA from the University of Illinois, an MAS from the University of Michigan, and an MBA from the University of Chicago. He holds a certificate in the Nonprofit Leadership Program offered by the University of Notre Dame.

[Click here to connect with ESC.](#) To engage a consulting team go to [4org.org](#).

10 Ways to Avoid Unnecessary Meetings

Timing is Everything

Hold attendees to the scheduled agenda. Ensure that you conclude at or before the scheduled end time. Respecting the time of those in attendance is always appreciated.

Dodgeball

Only include those in the meeting who need to be there. You'd be surprised how happy people are to be excluded from meetings when they don't need to provide input.

Kitchen Rules

Preparation is the key to success. Ensure that materials and the agenda are distributed far enough in advance for them to be reviewed by busy professionals. Collaborate formats, like google docs, can spare attendees from forwarding around multiple versions of documents they are all editing.

Noted

Determine who will take notes and to what extent before the meeting. For example, you might want a list of deliverables, responsible parties, and deadlines or you might want a list of all reports and motions approved. Have a plan before you come in so that time isn't wasted while everyone claims to have handwriting too illegible to be considered English.

Donor Shout Out

Close by thanking your most recent significant donor. If that person isn't there but is known to the group, that's an excellent opportunity to say, if you see so and so, please join me in thanking him or her for such generous support.

Highlight Reel

Remind attendees in one brief statement all of the things that were accomplished at the meeting or the best things achieved since the last time the group gathered. Keep it short, sweet, and happy.

Gratitude

Conclude by thanking those in attendance for contributing to recent success. This works great if you're thanking volunteers or staff.

Feast

Conclude with an invitation to drink or eat together onsite, pitch in, or catered. If participants are sharing food family style, labels make it easy for people of different diets to dine and share.

To Your Corners

If the meeting included a passionate debate, conclude the session by thanking everyone for caring so much about the mission of the organization that they would be willing to acknowledge all sides of the issues.

Kidding

When all else fails, end with a joke. Bonus points for concluding with a joke credited to the humor of another attendee. Remember to keep it clean (that means not only avoiding jokes that are blue but also avoid the ones that are at the expense of another person).

To learn more about nonprofit best practices and to work with ESC visit 4org.org.

www.ExecServiceCorps.org

[Click Here to Engage ESC in Helping Your Nonprofit Achieve Your Mission!](#)

