

# The Mission Driven Strategy Map

The cornerstone to an effective Balanced Scorecard, or any strategic measurement system, is to identify strategic priorities and clarify the cause and effect linkages among them. Too many organizations become bogged down with a serial list of goals without an understanding of their relationship to one another, making it impossible to anticipate the downstream effect of performance trends.

The Balanced Scorecard Strategy Map makes explicit the key strategic objectives and the relationship among those objectives, allowing leaders to focus on performance drivers rather than just hoping for outcomes.



Figure 1: The Mission-Driven Strategy Map<sup>1</sup>

The process of developing a strategy map requires looking at the strategy map from multiple perspectives and asking how the strategy will be achieved. (Please see Figure 1.) The mission should be at the top of the strategy map, in order to frame the ultimate strategic goal of the organization.

## Customer

Satisfying the needs of clients, customers, or beneficiaries is critical to achieving the mission. Beware of thinking that your

organization does not have “customers.” Instead, think about who benefits from the services, advocacy, or funding that your organization provides, and what is it they expect of you. It is helpful here to consider who your target constituents are and what their alternatives are to using your products, services, or funding. If you interviewed your customers and asked them what they expect from your organization, you might get answers like the following:

- Easy access to services
- Knowledgeable resources
- Timely service
- Affordable products, information, or services

## Financial

Mission-driven organizations all have a financial perspective. Financial strength also is an essential outcome for any organization. The nature of your organization will determine your financial obligations. You should isolate the financial obligations that reflect your particular situation. For instance:

- Generate sufficient funds to remain a going concern
- Comply with regulatory requirements
- Satisfy the expectation of donors and/or funders

## Internal Process

With the outcomes defined, it is time to shift your focus to the drivers of the outcomes that are the major internal processes driving the strategy. The challenge here is to identify critical strategic processes that will drive mission success. Several more processes and activities must be well executed, but the strategy map should highlight only the critical few processes.



**Figure 2: Mission-Driven Organization Value Chains**

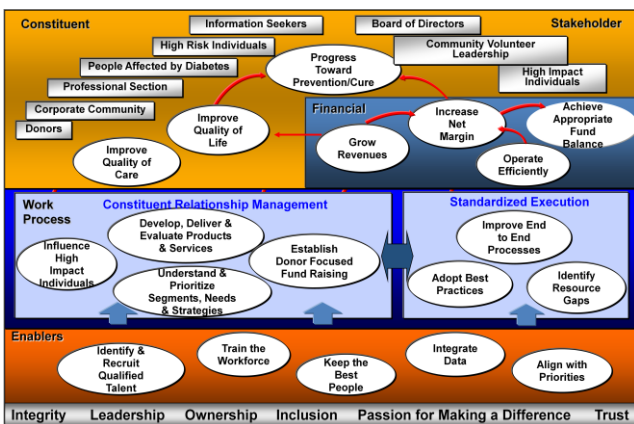
Ultimately, the internal objectives should be structured into strategic themes (a collection of activities that can be managed as a set). Strategic themes often align with the major elements of the value chain. High-level value chains for non-profit organizations can be seen in Figure 2.

Of course, the themes and strategic objectives must be customized to use language common in your sector and organization. For instance, a social service charity’s internal themes might be:

- Program Management: “Make an Impact”
- Advocacy: “Voice for the Poor”
- Operations Management: “Operational Excellence”

A foundation’s internal themes could be:

- Grant Making: “Select High-Impact Players”
- Program Management: “Prove Impact”
- Advocacy: “Magnify Impact”



**Figure 3: American Diabetes Association Strategy Map<sup>ii</sup>**

## Learning and Growth

The foundation of any organization’s strategy is its ability to provide the infrastructure, culture, and skills necessary to achieve the objectives in the internal perspective, which will satisfy the customers and meet financial obligations.

Figure 3 is a strategy map from American Diabetes Association (ADA). As you can see, ADA customized the customer perspective to reflect its outreach mission. ADA also customized its two internal themes, which correspond to the generic program management and operations.

## To Learn More

The Balanced Scorecard has been the subject of four articles in the *Harvard Business Review (HBR)*; two best-selling business books that have been translated into 19 languages; and numerous case studies and public conferences worldwide. The editors of *HBR* identified the Balanced Scorecard as one of the most significant management ideas of the past 75 years.

Learn more about the Balanced Scorecard and join the global Balanced Scorecard community at [www.bscwiki.com](http://www.bscwiki.com) and [www.bsccommunity.com](http://www.bsccommunity.com).

## Ascendant Strategy Management Group

Ascendant Strategy Management Group is a professional services firm dedicated to helping associations, foundations, government agencies, and charities drive breakthrough results with the Balanced Scorecard. Founded by professionals with more than 30 years of combined work experience with Drs. Kaplan and Norton, originators of the Balanced Scorecard, Ascendant is uniquely qualified to help organizations manage strategy.

Ascendant offers training, consulting, facilitation, and technology services to clients directly or via a Collaborative Network that encourages group knowledge sharing, learning, and networking. With a singular focus on strategy management, Ascendant’s goal is to transfer knowledge and capabilities to improve the management capacity of the not-for-profit sector.

Please visit our website and read Ascendant Strategy Management Group’s blog at [www.ascendantsmg.com](http://www.ascendantsmg.com).

<sup>i</sup> Kaplan and Norton, *Strategy Maps: Converting Intangible Assets Into Tangible Outcomes*, Harvard Business School Publishing, 2004

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.