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# So You Have to Write a Strategic Plan: Why Not Make It Interesting?

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# So You Have to Write a Strategic Plan: Why Not Make It Interesting?

Anne Marie Casey

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# Your Experiences

- ▶ Good
  - ▶ You had input
  - ▶ The Library realized the majority of the goals
  - ▶ It was a fun process
- ▶ Not so Good
  - ▶ Nobody asked your opinion
  - ▶ The plan was shelved as soon as the ink dried
  - ▶ The process was painful
- ▶ Neutral



# Strategic Planning 101

- ▶ Vision – Where we aspire to be a few years down the road
- ▶ Mission – What we do/Why we exist
- ▶ Values – What we stand for
- ▶ Priorities – What is most important to us
- ▶ Goals/Strategies – Big picture steps that will get us to the vision
- ▶ Objectives/Activities – Specific tasks, procedures, etc. related to goals
- ▶ Measures – What tells us we are successful
- ▶ Responsibility – Who owns it
- ▶ Timeline – When do we plan to accomplish it
- ▶ Annual Report – How much we actually accomplished



# Common Strategic Planning Processes

- ▶ Library develops an environmental scan
  - ▶ Literature Review (Horizon Report, ACRL Trends, etc.)
  - ▶ Conducts surveys
- ▶ The plan is drafted (tends to be top-down) by:
  - ▶ Senior management
  - ▶ All management
  - ▶ Representative Committee
  - ▶ Librarians



# Potential Outcomes

- Advantages

- Process is faster
- Consensus may be easier
- High-level issues covered

- Disadvantages

- Less opportunity for organization-wide input
- Lack of buy-in or shared vision at all levels



# Importance of Buy-in

- ▶ General Dunwoody's comment
  - ▶ "Engaged in visioning"
- ▶ Everyone contributes to the plan
  - ▶ GWU Libraries
- ▶ Everyone owns a piece of the plan
- ▶ Everyone is invested in achieving the goals
- ▶ More likely to have a positive outcome
- ▶ Without it – there can be resistance to the entire plan
  - ▶ Dissertation example



# Buy-in the Hunt Library Way

- ▶ Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Hunt Library
  - ▶ Supports Residential campus (ca. 5800) in Daytona Beach
  - ▶ Also supports ca. 23,000 distance learners all over the world
- ▶ Organizational Structure
  - ▶ Director
  - ▶ Four associate directors
  - ▶ 15 librarians
  - ▶ Two non-MLS professionals
  - ▶ 12 library technicians





# Strategic Planning 2010: Grassroots

- ▶ Management Team (director and associate directors)
  - ▶ Drafted a vision statement related to the university vision
  - ▶ Reworked the mission statement to reflect current organization
  - ▶ Adapted values statements from ALA examples
  - ▶ Planned a mandatory all-staff retreat
- ▶ Retreat activities
  - ▶ Pink card/white card exercise
  - ▶ Readings and discussion
  - ▶ Adopting vision/mission/values



# Digitizing the Media Instruction Books (or how the 2010-11 strategic plan developed)

- ▶ Pink card/white card ideas categorized into broad concepts
- ▶ Concepts from retreat discussion added
- ▶ Goals drafted from broad concept areas
- ▶ Activities/objectives developed from ideas brought by all staff
- ▶ Responsibility/metrics/timeline added for each activity
- ▶ But who owns the ideas that do not fit departments?
  - ▶ Push-back from department leads
  - ▶ Cross-departmental teams
- ▶ Results?



# Steering around Bumps in the Road

- Resources
  - Successfully advocated for discovery-tool funding
  - Did not receive new ILS funding
- Campus space constraints
  - Losing the third floor
  - Massive weeding project
- Losing staff positions to attrition
- Extending the one-year plan to two
  - Added in activities from retreat not in first year plan



# Planning for three years – phase one: SOAR

- ▶ Has anyone heard of SWOT
  - ▶ What does it stand for?
    - ▶ **Strengths**, Weaknesses, **Opportunities**, Threats
- ▶ Have you heard of its relative, SOAR
  - ▶ Can name the components?
    - ▶ **Strengths**, **Opportunities**, Aspirations, Results
- ▶ Appreciative inquiry + strategic planning = SOAR
- ▶ Appreciative inquiry involves “the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential” ([appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm](http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm))




# SOAR Retreat, 2012

- ▶ Director met with each department to explain SOAR
- ▶ Departments developed a worksheet with their ideas for each category
- ▶ At retreat, management team compiled departmental lists
- ▶ In open discussion, lists were finalized
  - ▶ Great deal of similarity
  - ▶ Provided early discussion of new broad categories for three-year plan
- ▶ Good start to an environmental scan ...
  - ▶ Still had work to do



# Scenario Planning – the Next step

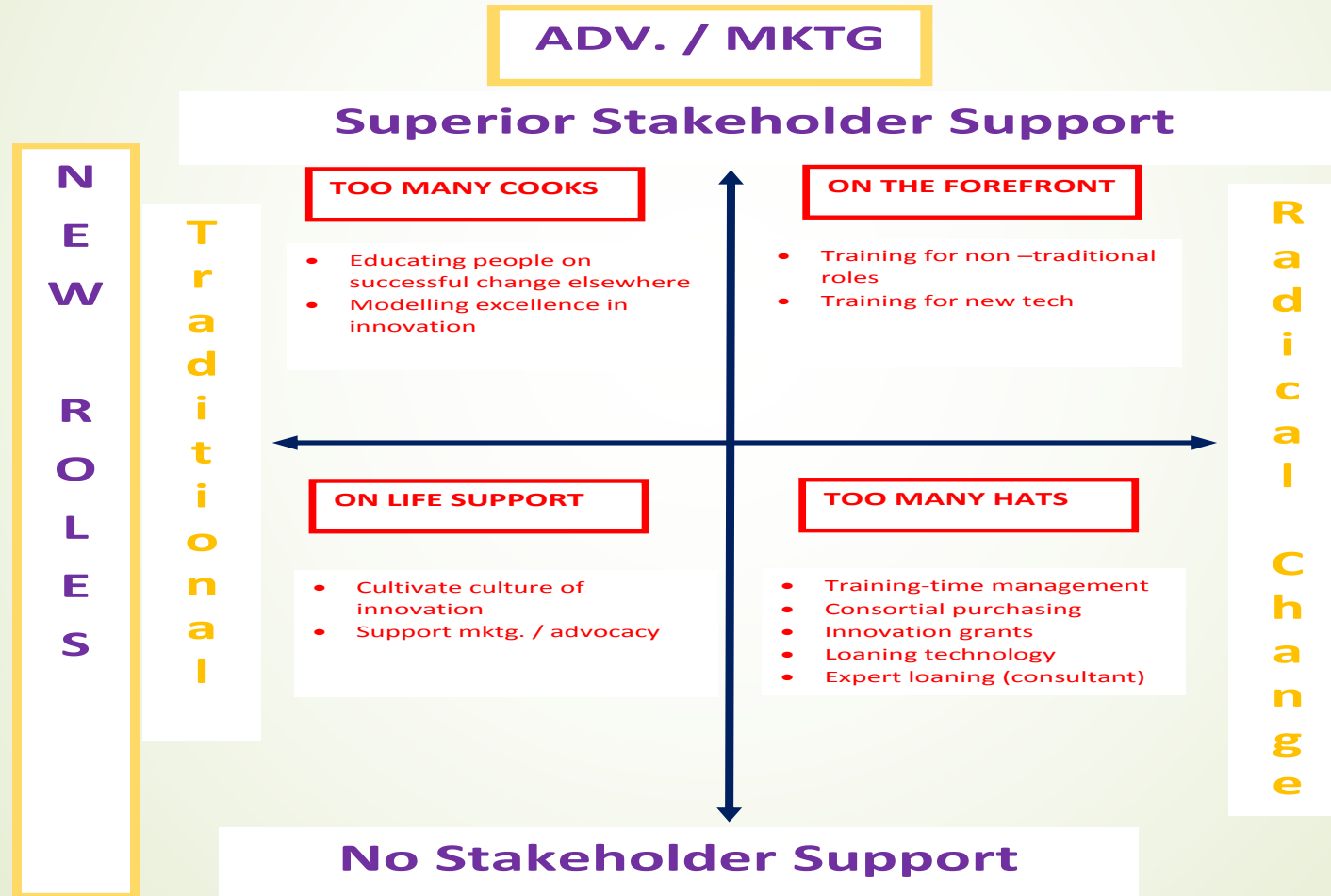
- Scenario planning is a way to envision the future
- Scenario planning steps
  - Determine the key forces in your library's environment
    - For example: Funding, New building, Staff attrition
  - Develop a quadrant displaying most important and most uncertain forces
  - Identify aspects of each area of the quadrant
  - Write scenarios (stories) to illustrate the aspects
  - Ask stakeholders to discuss and select the most appealing scenario
  - Develop plan from results of their discussions
- Hunt Library had some missteps, so the next chapter features NEFLIN



# NEFLIN 2016-2018 Strategic Plan

- ▶ Board developed quadrants
- ▶ Board wrote very brief scenarios (stories) that reflected each quadrant
- ▶ Regional focus groups
  - ▶ Hired a consultant to facilitate groups
  - ▶ Held four around the region in early 2015
  - ▶ Participants placed into four groups
    - ▶ Read and discussed one scenario
    - ▶ Reported back to entire group
  - ▶ Entire group voted for top scenario
  - ▶ Consultant captured discussion point and prepared cumulative report

# Quadrants – NEFLIN 2016-2018 Plan







# Developing the Final NEFLIN Plan

- ▶ Board members read the report
- ▶ Developed goals from member feedback at focus groups
- ▶ Crafted objectives from feedback
- ▶ Added a small number of organization-specific objectives
- ▶ Board member feedback
  - ▶ Was very positive
  - ▶ We enjoyed the process as much as the final product



# This is all very interesting, but how do I incorporate some of these ideas?

- ▶ You are not a library director
  - ▶ Talk to your director – suggest new ways of planning
  - ▶ If you are a manager, try some ideas out on your department
- ▶ Wish I had started taking notes at the beginning!
  - ▶ A brief list of references is on the next slide
  - ▶ This presentation will be posted to [commons.erau.edu](https://commons.erau.edu) by next week
  - ▶ Contact me (or other planning geeks for ideas/guidance)
- ▶ Take a chance – it just might work
  - ▶ And if it doesn't, maybe you can get a publication/presentation out of it!



# Brief Reference List

- ▶ Inclusive Planning

- ▶ Hill, S. E. K., Thomas, E. G., & Keller, L. F. (2009). A collaborative, ongoing university strategic planning framework: Process, landmines, and lessons. *Planning for Higher Education*, 37(4), 16-26.

- ▶ Appreciative Inquiry

- ▶ If you Google appreciative inquiry and strategic planning, you will find several good presentations and publications. My favorite is a presentation located at <http://www.cpsen.ca/images/2012/presentations/2a.pdf>. (Slide 9 has the worksheet Hunt Library adapted for our retreat.

- ▶ Scenario Planning

- ▶ Giesecke, J., Cawthorne, J., & Pearson, D. (2015). *Navigating the Future with Scenario Planning: A Guidebook for Librarians*. ACRL, 2015.

- ▶ Hunt Library strategic plans

- ▶ <http://huntlibrary.erau.edu/about/strategic-planning/index.html>



# Questions





# Thank You!

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