

Creating and Writing Strategies

Strategies tend to be relatively short documents that list **good methods** for achieving a specific goal or end state.

Implementation Plans are related to strategies, but are much different documents. An implementation plan is much more tactical than a strategy and lists **specific actions** (which are in keeping with the good methods listed in the strategy) which will be taken to achieve the goal or end state.

For example, if the goal is to reach 95% of persons in trouble within 2 hours of their “Mayday” broadcast, one of the good methods in a strategy might be to have a mix of helicopter and boat units at appropriate points along the coast. Specific actions in an implementation plan might be to place a helicopter unit at Astoria, OR, a boat unit at Neah Bay, WA, and have at least one asset and crew at each location be on immediate standby at all times.

It is sometimes appropriate to publish a strategy and an implementation plan at the same time, or even together, as the strategy provides the conceptual framework for the specific tasks in the implementation. Conversely, publishing a strategy before developing the implementation plan can get early stakeholder agreement on goals and methods before more contentious discussions over specific actions begin.

The below is one format for a strategy:

1. TITLE –

- The name by which the strategy will be known.
- Include name of organization and effective period dates (see #7 below).

2. GOAL(S)

- The desired outcome the strategy supports
- Why the desired outcome is better than the current state
- Who will be affected/ notice.

3. BACKGROUND

- The impetus for the strategy.
- How the strategy is related to the organization’s values, priorities, national/state/local directives, etc.
- Links between this strategy and other strategies, plans, priorities, initiatives, etc.

4. METHODS (main body of the document)

- List of the good ideas for achieving the goal(s)
- Include short explanation them and why they are good ideas

5. EXECUTION

- Roles & Responsibilities - Whose strategy this is and who is to help carry it out (ex: Is the whole organization supposed to get on board and help where they can?)
- Will there be an implementation plan? If so, who will draft and who will execute?

6. CONSULTATION

- Who was consulted in development of the strategy. These should include stakeholders and those likely to be affected by the strategy and implementation plan.
- Who was consulted to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the strategy. These should include senior leaders, technical experts, legal reps, etc.

7. APPROVAL AND REVIEW DATES

- The date when the strategy was approved and the approval authority
- How long the strategy will be in effect / when it will be renewed or cancelled (should be no more than 3 years)

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