

*Connecting the Dots ...From Planning to
Implementation:
Effective Practices for Putting Your
Strategic Plan to Work – A Case Study*

Presented by

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- The Case Study
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 - Challenges
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THE CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The study was based on De Anza College's 2006 scenario-based strategic planning process
- De Anza Community College was founded in 1967 and located in Cupertino, California, about 45 miles south of San Francisco
- Enrollment is about 25,000 students, with approximately 300 full time and 600 part time faculty
- Presenter is employee of the college as director of Outreach and Relations with Schools

THE CASE FOR PLANNING

- The college engaged in strategic planning to address the following challenges:
 - funding
 - enrollment and changing demographics
 - economics and the labor market
 - technology
 - competition
 - student learning
- Enrollment was down by 8%, from 25,000 students in fall 2003 to 23,000 in fall 2004 and remained flat

THE PLANNING PROCESS

INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES (IIs)

- A scenario-based planning process was employed
- A series of campus wide strategic meetings and discussions led to the development of four Institutional Initiatives (IIs):
 - Outreach
 - Individualized Attention to Student Retention and Success
 - Cultural Competence
 - Community Collaboration
- These initiatives guided institutional priorities and the basis for development of CTAs, funding, and resource allocation

COMMITMENTS TO ACTION (CTAs)

- The Commitments to Action (CTAs) were specific action plans developed by divisions and departments for each of the four IIs.
- This was done through a cascading process that encouraged campus wide participation, and represented division/dept. commitments to the IIs.
- In total, more than 700 commitments (CTAs) were developed campus wide for the four IIs.
- This study identified 125 commitments (CTAs) made to the Outreach Institutional Initiative (OII), which is one of the four IIs and the focus of this study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Although four Institutional Initiatives emerged through the strategic planning process [Outreach, Individualized Attention to Student Retention and Success, Cultural Competence, and Community Collaboration], the purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of the commitments (CTAs) made to one of the initiatives: Outreach.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions were:

- How much of the commitments made to the Outreach Institutional Initiative implemented?
- What were the factors associated with successful implementation?
- What were the challenges and/or obstacles to implementing the commitments?
- What is the perception of administrators about the effectiveness of the CTA process?
- What recommendations would participants offer for future planning?

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to:

- De Anza College
- One of the four Institutional Initiatives
- The implementation aspect of the CTAs
- Administrators

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- A mixed quantitative/qualitative research design method integrating features of case study and ethnographic research was employed
 - A **qualitative case study** is an “intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” Merriam (1998)
 - According to Babbie (2005), while qualitative data is richer in meaning and depth, **quantitative** data helps to make our observation more explicit
 - **Ethnographic** research involves the description of a culture, in this case the culture being a community college and the knowledge individuals and groups have acquired that in turn structures their world view and behavior (Le Compte and Preissle, 1993)

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 16 administrators (deans/directors) from 16 divisions and departments with leadership and oversight responsibilities for the implementation of the CTAs in their area
- All deans and directors for divisions and departments that had CTAs for the Outreach Institutional Initiative participated in the study
- Participation rate was 100%

INSTRUMENTATION

#1- **A survey instrument** was employed to collect quantitative data. Participants provided the following information:

- Identified the Outreach Institutional Initiative CTAs in their division/department
- Completed the implementation status of each CTA
- Provided any additional relevant information about the implementation of the CTAs

INSTRUMENTATION Cont...

#2 - In-depth Interviews were utilized to collect the following qualitative data:

1. What factors led to success in implementing the CTAs that were implemented?
2. What were the challenges and/or obstacles to implementation?
3. What were the factors for not implementing the CTAs that were not implemented?
4. What is your perception about the effectiveness of the CTA process for implementing the strategic plan?
5. What recommendations would you offer for future strategic planning efforts regarding the CTA approach?

STUDY FINDINGS

■ **Implementation data:**

- Of the 125 Outreach CTAs that were identified, 80 CTAs were implemented and 45 CTAs were not implemented.
- Overall, 64% of the CTAs were implemented.
- The implementation rate by divisions and departments ranged from 30% to 100%.
- Divisions and departments in Student Services reported a higher overall implementation rate of 95% compared to 61% for Instruction.

STUDY FINDINGS Cont...

- **Factors associated with successful implementation:**
 - Availability of funding – 50%
 - Collaboration – 50%
 - Leadership – 31%
 - Institutional commitment – 31%
 - Partnerships – 25%
 - Clear goals, shared vision and purpose – 19%

STUDY FINDINGS Cont...

■ **Challenges identified:**

- Lack of funding – 69%
- Lack of time – 50%
- Lack of integration and coordination – 31%
- Unclear goals and process – 31%
- Communication problems – 19%
- Lack of commitment – 19%
- Lack of staff – 19%

STUDY FINDINGS Cont...

- **Perception of administrators about the process:**
 - Most participants felt that the CTA process was not very effective:
 - The process was not well defined – 63%
 - The process was not clear – 44%
 - The process was time consuming – 44%
 - The process lacked integration across the institutional initiatives – 38%

STUDY FINDINGS Cont...

- **Recommendations by participants:**
 - Develop clear, well-defined, and measurable goals – 31%
 - Connect strategic planning to the institutional master plan and mission – 31%
 - Include implementation in the planning process – 25%
 - Follow up and integration – 25%

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

- Overall, De Anza College had a 64% implementation rate for its Outreach CTAs compared to 10-30% reported in most related literature
- The implementation rate by division/department ranged from 30% to 100%
- The number of CTAs per division or department ranged from 3 to 21
- Of the 125 Outreach CTAs, 85 or 73% were developed by instructional divisions and 34 or 27% by student services. The remaining 6 were by Marketing & Communications

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS Cont...

- More CTAs were developed by instructional divisions (73%) compared to student services (27%)
- More CTAs were implemented by Student Services (95%) compared to Instruction (61%)
- In addition to having fewer overall CTAs, Student Services had fewer CTAs per division, but higher overall implementation
- Five of the six divisions/departments in student services reported 100% implementation
- The findings show that areas with fewer CTAs reported a higher overall implementation rate

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS Cont...

■ Challenges:

- Lack of funding
- Lack of time to get things done
- Lack of integration across programs
- Unclear goals and process
- Lack of coordination and a point person in charge
- Broad goals
- Lack of focus
- Communication problems
- Lack of commitment
- Lack of facilities
- Slow start to implementation
- Limited staffing

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS Cont...

■ **Success Factors:**

- Adequate funding
- Leadership
- Collaboration among departments
- Commitment by faculty and staff
- Institutional commitment
- Participation at all levels
- Shared vision, purpose, and mission
- Partnerships across programs and the community
- Clear goals
- Follow through

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS Cont...

Perception about the CTA process:

- Negative:

- Not well defined
- Not clear
- Time consuming
- Lacked integration
- Lacked coordination
- Ineffective communication
- Sustainability concerns

- Positive:

- The process brought positive institutional change
- Gave people opportunity to participate in the planning process

IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSION

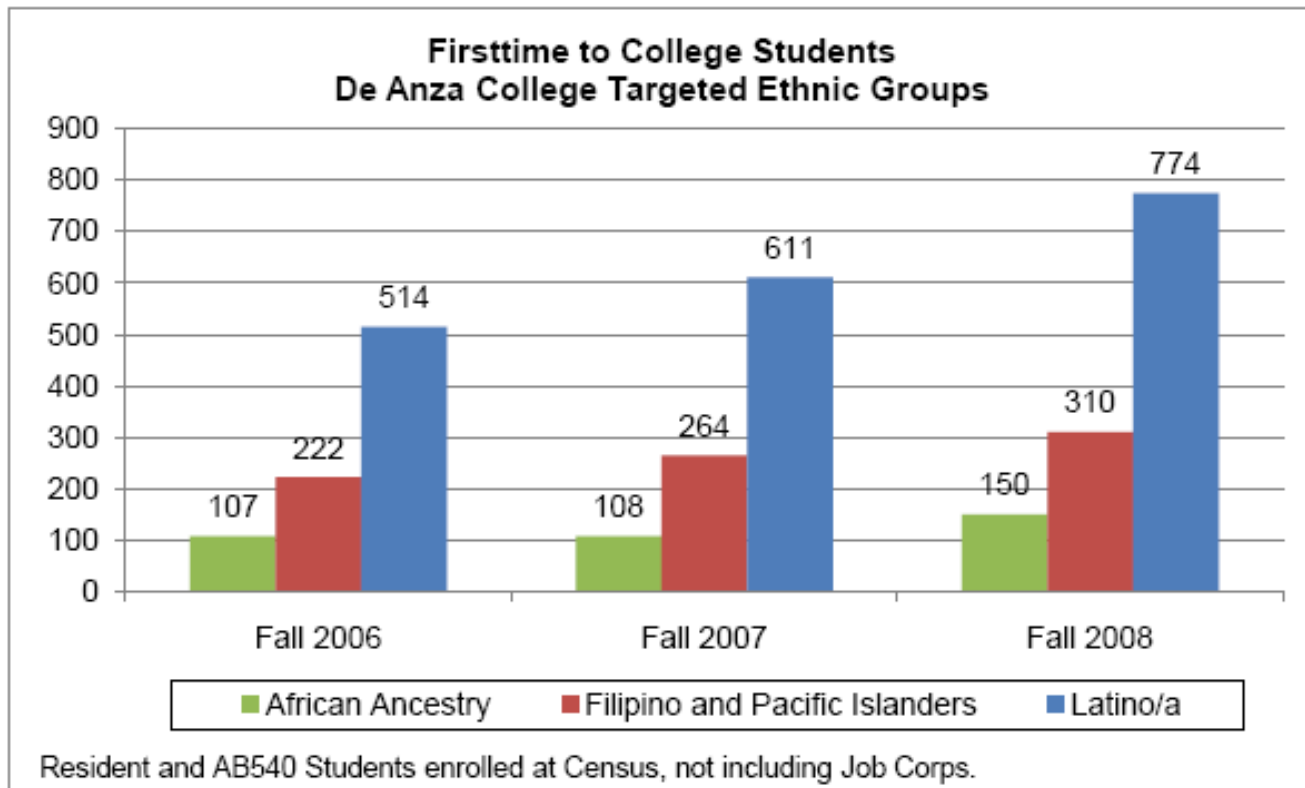
- Strategy implementation is complex and difficult, but organizations can achieve a higher success rate by applying effective practices identified in this study and related literature.
- While the overall implementation rate at De Anza College was high (64%), it is important to note that more than a third (36%) of the CTAs were not implemented.
- There was quite an overlap between many of the challenges and/or obstacles associated with the implementation process and reasons why some of the CTAs were not implemented.
- Many of the success factors and challenges identified in the study are consistent with the findings in related literature.
- The CTA process was not perceived to be very effective by most participants (more than 60%).
- Overall, the strategic planning process has brought positive institutional change to De Anza College.

IMPLICATIONS Cont...

- The Outreach Institutional Initiative has succeeded in increasing student enrollment at De Anza.
- From fall 2006 to fall 2008, enrollment of all student groups targeted by the Outreach Institutional Initiative increased significantly:
 - African American students up 30%
 - Latino/a students up 77%
 - Filipino/Pacific Islanders up 29%
- During the same period, overall enrollment increased by nearly 9% from 23,500 students in fall 2006 to 25,600 in fall 2008.

DE ANZA ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Source: LaManque, A. (2009). De Anza College Institutional Research.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

- A broader study including all four Institutional Initiatives and more members of the college community (faculty, staff, and students) can be helpful in providing a much broader understanding about the implementation and CTA process.
- Further study is needed to better understand why De Anza College had a higher than average implementation rate.
- Additional study is needed to understand potential differences in the implementation rate between scenario-based planning and other strategic planning models.
- Further study is needed to better understand differences and/or similarities in implementation of strategic plans across different industries and institutions, including differences between the private and public sector, organizational structure, organizational culture, leadership, process, and the impact of other institutional differences on strategy implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

- Strategy implementation is **hard work** (Hrebiniak, 2006; Bossidy, & Charan, 2002; Morgan, Levitt, & Malek, 2007).
- **Less than half** of the strategies planned by organizations actually get implemented (Mintzberg, 1994).
- **Only 10%** of well planned strategies translate into action (Morgan, Levitt, & Malek, 2007).
- Success rate in strategy implementation is **10 to 30%** (Raps, 2004).
- **About 95%** of people in organizations do not even understand the strategy of the organization (Kaplan, & Norton, 2005).
- **Overemphasis on planning** and lack of knowledge about how to implement strategy are reasons for poor execution (Hrebiniak, 2006).

TOP TEN CHALLENGES IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Speculand (2006, p. 35) identified the following **top ten challenges** in strategy implementation:
 1. Gaining support and action
 2. Communicating the change
 3. Overcoming resistance from staff
 4. Support of senior management
 5. Aligning processes
 6. Tracking success of implementation
 7. Changing rewards and recognition
 8. Acquiring customer feedback
 9. Implementing new technology
 10. Acquiring budget

SIX “SILENT KILLERS” OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

In a study of 150 different units in 12 companies, Beer and Eisenstat (2000, p. 31) identified the following six “**silent killers**” of strategy implementation:

- Top-down or laissez-faire senior management style
- Unclear strategy and conflicting priorities
- Ineffective senior management team
- Poor vertical communication
- Poor coordination across functions, businesses, or borders
- Inadequate down-the-line leadership skills and development

FIVE SUCCESS FACTORS IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Clear goals and priorities** (Bossidy & Charan, 2002; Gergen & Vanourek, 2008).
2. **Vision and Leadership** (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Van Der Heijden, 2005; Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Beckhard, 1996).
3. **Effective communication** (Hrebiniak, 1990; Allio, 2005; Manderscheid & Kusy, 2005).
4. **Empowering and engaging people** (Bossidy & Charan, 2002; Van Der Heijden, 2005; Speculand, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2002).
5. **Dialog at all levels** (Hicks, 2007; Haudan, 2007; Van Der Heijden, 2005).

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Allio (2005, p. 15-20) offered **ten best practices** for success:
 - Keep it simple
 - Establish a common language
 - Delineate roles, responsibilities, and timeframes
 - Devise straightforward quantitative and qualitative metrics
 - Balance short term with longer term
 - Be precise; use action verbs
 - Use a common format to enhance clarity and communication
 - Meet regularly, but in structured, time-limited sessions
 - Anchor implementation activities in the firm's financial infrastructure: budget, metrics, rewards
 - Be prepared to consistently manage the implementation process

SUMMARY OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- **Effective Practices for Putting Your Strategic Plan to Work:**
 - Develop clear, well-defined, measureable goals
 - Connect strategic planning to institutional master plan/mission
 - Include implementation in the planning process
 - Follow up and follow through
 - Integrate plans/activities across different initiatives
 - Have a clear process
 - Appoint a point person for coordination
 - Align funding to strategy and timely allocation of funding
 - Have a clear and shared vision
 - Effective communication
 - Engage people at all levels
 - Establish realistic timelines
 - Develop sustainability plan

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THANK YOU

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