

## Tools and templates



### How to set strategic planning goals

Setting strategic planning goals can be an intimidating task. Your goals will be used to guide the direction of your business, from deciding which tasks to prioritise to how resources are allocated.

How do you decide what your strategic goals should be and which ones to focus on first? To help answer these questions, here's an outline of what strategic planning is and how to set goals for your business.

#### Setting strategic planning goals

A strategic goal should give you a measurable objective that is representative of your long-term vision. Here are some things to bear in mind when setting goals:

##### 1. Reflect on your purpose and values

The first step is to look at your company's purpose and values. Do you have a clear vision for success? These factors should guide the development of your goals.

##### 2. Don't mix up short-term objectives with long-term strategic goals

Strategic planning goals should reflect your long-term vision, but you'll set short-term objectives along the way – don't confuse the two.

For example, your strategic goal might be to break into the export market in Europe. A short-term operational goal could be to create an export strategy – something that gives you a smaller milestone on the way to your bigger strategic goal.

##### 3. Think about actionable steps

Leaders need to be forward thinking and ambitious when setting strategic goals, but don't pick an idea out of thin air. Make sure there are actionable steps your team can take towards your ultimate goal – if you can't identify those short-term objectives, your time and resources may be better spent elsewhere.

##### 4. Define how progress will be measured

It's important to consider how you'll measure progress towards strategic goals and determine when you've achieved them. Avoid creating goals that are fluffy or vague – define a clear metric for success and what data you'll need to measure.

#### Prioritising your strategic goals

Once you've established strategic goals, the next step is to decide which one to focus on first. This can be easier said than done, with different stakeholders having different priorities.

Calculating the estimated return on investment (ROI) for each option can help to take personal opinions and emotions out of the equation.

Break down each goal into smaller tasks that you'll need to complete, thinking about areas which will accrue extra costs (eg. time spent creating a strategy, extra resources or equipment that will be needed). Then, use a formula for calculating ROI, like the one below:

$$\text{ROI} = (\text{net profit} / \text{cost of investment}) \times 100$$

Not all strategic goals will result in a high return on investment, but this comparison should help you to start prioritising which one to work on first.