



The Point of the Purpose in Strategy:

Introduction

Metanoia Consulting Pty Ltd will encourage you and your organisation to review your Purpose as the initial stage of the Strategic Planning process. Your "Purpose" is different from "what you do". While it is true that your activities should be directed to achieving your Purpose, they are distinct areas of concern. The "activities" may be guided by the Strategic Issues you identify through the planning process. They become "Strategic Initiatives" taken for your future success. Other activities are of a more routine; day-to-day; administrative nature. But your Purpose is the foundation for your strategy discussion.

A Note on Language

Many facilitators in the strategic planning area will encourage you to develop key statements as part of the process. These may include: "vision", "mission" and sometimes "purpose" statements. The techniques used by Metanoia Consulting are not about how your published strategy statements look or sound, but about what they mean in terms of your success in delivering your Purpose. This distinguishes our meaning of "Purpose" from the "purpose" statements often seen in documents.

The Steps in Determining Your Purpose

There are two key stages in the review of your Purpose. These are posed as questions to be answered by the planning team:

- What is the benefit? What is it that you deliver which makes you special? This is not about the range of services you offer; products you deliver; and/or the activities you undertake, but the objective of what you do.
- Who is the intended beneficiary? Who are you delivering your benefit to? For whom is it intended?

Make no mistake these can be very difficult questions to answer. The ideal is to bring it down to a single benefit and a single beneficiary group. This is often easier for corporations e.g. "To maximise return on investment for our shareholders": the benefit "return on investment"; the beneficiary group "shareholders".

Does There Have to be Only One Benefit and A Single Beneficiary Group?

Metanoia Consulting Pty Ltd avoids "one size fits all" and "template" approaches. The ideal is a single benefit but for many organisations this is not achievable. Often there are intended beneficiaries but the demands of being accountable for public funding and the history of the organisation create multiple stakeholder groups. The point is to acknowledge who these groups are and to begin to consider how their needs and demands impact on the organisation.

If there are multiple beneficiaries, do they have the same expectations of the organisation? If there are conflicting expectations, how can these be managed.



What is the Point?

Organisations of all types are constantly evolving and changing. The external environment is also in a state of flux. Over time an organisation can drift away from its original beneficiary group; take on new beneficiaries (whether intentionally or not); and, fail to adapt to changes in its operating environment. The discussion of Purpose allows these developments to be reviewed and understood for their impact in the future.

It is also important that if there are multiple beneficiaries, the expectations of these groups and the impact upon the organisation is understood. The objective is clarity about your intentions and your potential. Before you start considering your strategy, you need to be clear about why you are doing it.

A Case Study

A case study has been prepared on "Purpose – the risk of multiple beneficiaries". You can find it in the area that you are currently viewing. Feel free to read it, it will only take you 5 minutes.

The method applied is based on the work of John Argenti who has been refining his Strategic Planning Process for over 40 years. See <http://www.argentisys.com/>