

CASE STUDY

MISERICORDIA
UNIVERSITY

Misericordia University:

How 660+ Voices Shaped a Strategic Plan Built to Drive Real Change

660+

Stakeholders Engaged

2x

Prior Participation

5 Months

Survey Launch to Final Plan

THE CHALLENGE

The Board Needed a New Plan One Year Early, and the Old Playbook Wasn't an Option

Misericordia University was three years into their five-year "Mercy Thrives" strategic plan and had made enough progress that they needed to start a new plan one year ahead of schedule. President Daniel Myers had been through strategic planning many times before and knew the fundamental tension it creates, especially in university environments. Past planning cycles always seemed to land on the wrong side of that tradeoff. Either participation was limited to keep things manageable, or the doors were opened wide and the team drowned in data they couldn't process. Dan had been through enough of these to know the pattern, and when it came time to plan again, he was looking for a fundamentally different approach.

AT A GLANCE

INSTITUTION

Misericordia University

PROJECT

4-Year Strategic Plan

PARTICIPANTS

660+ across all groups

CONSTITUENCIES

Students, staff, faculty, alumni, board, community

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There's an inherent tension, particularly in university communities, between people participating in the plan and then dealing with all the data and actually somehow consolidating it down into something useful. As you increase the opportunity for people to participate, it starts to get out of control in terms of the data you have to deal with.

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- Dr. Daniel Myers, President, Misericordia University

THE SOLUTION

AI-Powered Listening That Scales Without Losing Depth

When Dan first heard about StratSimple's approach, the appeal was immediate. Unlike a traditional survey that collects surface-level responses, StratSimple's Virtual Interview Survey uses AI-driven follow-up prompts that push respondents to think deeper. And the AI synthesis can handle hundreds of responses without the team spending weeks on manual analysis. The approach also solved the customization problem. Rather than forcing Misericordia into a prefabricated framework, the survey method adapted to the university's specific environment, listening and asking follow-up questions based on what respondents actually say.



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The method molds itself to the environment because it's listening and it's modifying and asking follow-up questions in a way that reflects what the people's perspective and their experience in the environment is. You get more on the front end in terms of a customized approach, and that helps produce better output.

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- Dr. Daniel Myers, President, Misericordia University

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WHY MISERICORDIA CHOSE THIS APPROACH

Inclusive Without Being Overwhelming

The AI-powered survey engaged 660+ participants without burying the team in unmanageable data.

Customized to Their Environment

The process adapted to Misericordia's specific context rather than forcing a rigid framework.

More Cost-Effective

The AI-driven approach cost less than traditional engagements relying on intensive human labor.

Deeper Input, Not Just More Input

AI follow-ups pushed respondents beyond surface-level answers, capturing richer perspectives.

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We found that the AI was doing a terrific job of summarizing what the really important main things were. Almost can't say enough about this. I just thought it was so much more efficient and useful in just about every way.

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- Dr. Daniel Myers, President, Misericordia University

HOW IT WORKED

From Community Input to an Executable Plan

STEP 1

Community Listening & Synthesis

StratSimple's Virtual Interview Survey engaged 660+ people across all constituencies. The AI synthesized responses, surfacing key themes while filtering noise.

STEP 2

Vision Alignment

With StratSimple's analysis presentation in hand, President Myers was able to reflect on what worked and what didn't from the prior plan. The community's voice informed the vision from the start.

STEP 3

Team Retreat: Four-Year Plan

The leadership team met for a full day and debated and prioritized themes, achieving coherence across the full plan. AI-generated suggestions helped define measurable outcomes.

STEP 4

Implementation & Follow-Through

The team took the draft back to the community for a second listen, then built a measurable one-year action plan. The team is now ready to track the progress of their plan inside StratSimple.

From Community Input to an Executable Plan

Hundreds of community leaders, donors, and prospective employers of the university's graduates were invited to participate as well as thousands of alumni – far more than might be handled through traditional methods. The full process, from survey launch to final plan, took just five months, with significantly less disruption to daily university operations than previous planning cycles.

The AI synthesis elevated patterns and filtered out distractions. The team aligned on priorities, defined measurable outcomes with interim indicators, and committed to annual action plans to keep the plan active rather than decorative.



“ *I would introduce StratSimple to other universities by saying, this is going to be so much easier and more efficient. And you're going to come up with something you can use. It's faster, it's cheaper, it's easier. And it's more inclusive. I would highly encourage people to use your company to do this. Absolutely.*

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- Dr. Daniel Myers, President, Misericordia University

Ready to simplify your next strategic planning process?

[Learn More at StratSimple.com](https://www.stratsimple.com)