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# Strategic alignment: Is your utility effectively executing its strategic plan?

Use this guide to evaluate your utility's approach to strategic plan execution and ensure your organization's vision drives daily operations.

## 1. Measuring and tracking operational outcomes

*Building a robust management system confirms whether strategic initiatives are delivering the intended value.*

- + Do you track specific metrics (e.g., response times, main break frequencies, compliance margins) to measure progress toward strategic goals?
- + Do you have a tool/method for compiling and tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) in an easy-to-use and meaningful way?
- + Is the executive team regularly reviewing performance data to identify implementation bottlenecks and allocate resources accordingly?

**THINK:** Are your current performance metrics measuring true outcomes (e.g., improved water quality reliability) or simply tracking outputs (e.g., number of tests performed)? How confident are you in the accuracy and relevance of the data used to track and report on progress?

## 2. Financial planning and closing the resource gap

*A strategic plan without a funding strategy is merely a wish list.*

- + Is your strategic plan tightly coupled with your long-range financial plan and recent cost-of-service studies to close the “resource gap” of funding and staff bandwidth?
- + Are rate adjustments proactively communicated to stakeholders as necessary investments to achieve specific strategic outcomes, rather than just covering rising costs?

**THINK:** Are financial resources proactively allocated to support new strategic initiatives, or is funding primarily consumed by legacy programs and reactive maintenance?

## 3. Communicating and celebrating progress

*Telling the story of your progress and celebrating milestones builds public trust and sustains organizational momentum.*

- + Do you regularly share strategic plan updates, successes, and challenges with residents, your governing body, and internal staff?
- + Are you actively celebrating small wins early in the implementation process to build momentum and demonstrate that the vision is becoming a reality?

**THINK:** If asked today, could a staff member name one or two recent successes resulting directly from the strategic plan?

#### 4. Adapting to regulatory and governing pressures

*Utilities face continuous external pressures requiring agile strategic responses that stay true to its core priorities.*

- + Does your strategic plan include mechanisms to adjust execution in response to new regulations while avoiding “shiny object syndrome” or unprioritized scope creep?
- + Are you consistently evaluating operational risks and updating your annual work plans with new mitigation strategies?

**THINK:** When a major external shift occurs, such as a new water quality mandate, how quickly can your organization realign its strategic resources to meet the challenge?

By proactively addressing these areas, your utility can ensure strategic goals translate into tangible infrastructure and operational improvements. This assessment can serve as the foundation for a more disciplined approach to realizing your long-term vision.

Contact us for a deeper dive into assessing or strengthening your strategic implementation program.



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