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An Exploratory Analysis of Post Strategic Plan Implementation Fidelity in Two Urban-Based, Nonprofit Health Education/Advocacy Organizations

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AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF POST STRATEGIC PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY IN TWO URBAN-BASED, NONPROFIT

HEALTH EDUCATION/ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

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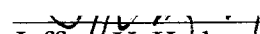Requirement for the Degree of

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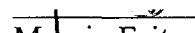
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ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF POST STRATEGIC PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY IN TWO URBAN-BASED, NONPROFIT HEALTH
EDUCATION/ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

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Old Dominion University, 2005
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This research is a multi case study examining the degree of fidelity (adherence)

accorded to strategic plans following implementation in two, urban-based, nonprofit, tax-

exempt 501 (c) (3) health education/advocacy organizationsThe study was focused on the

impetus and goals for strategic planning, the similarities and differences in the

implementation processes, adherence (fidelity) to the plan once implemented, and finally

what factors prompted the fidelity or lack of fidelity to the plan once implemented.

Fourteen respondent participants from the two organizations were interviewed using a

semi-structured interview format. Findings of this study indicated that post-strategic plan

fidelity following implementation did exist. The aspect of post strategic plan

implementation communication between the chief executive officer of the organizations

and the volunteer members of the board of directors reflects an area that suggests further

exploration could be beneficial.

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There are many individuals who have greatly assisted in making this dissertation possible. First, I would like to acknowledge the participants. The two organizations and their diligent volunteer leaders and dedicated paid personnel were inspirations and forever will be a part of me. Without their participation, this project would not have been possible. This was truly a committed group of people who gave freely of their time in order to meet with me. I am indeed grateful for this display of acceptance and collaboration in assisting in bringing this project to a successful conclusion.

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I would like to thank all my friends and professional colleagues associated with the Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work at Norfolk State University. They have

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE
NUMBER

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Nonprofit organizations have been termed the "nation's first line of attack on its social problems," (The Carnegie Corporation, 2004) as they provide both proactive and responsive measures to issues of drug abuse, homelessness, medical care, natural and other disasters, and other crises. The challenge faced by nonprofit organizations to address social ills may be greater now than at any time in the past half-century. According to Bryson (2004) and Lohmann and Lohmann (2002), the funding base of nonprofit organizations has changed dramatically in the past few years, endangering their existence and acting to redefine the structure and practices of those organizations able to survive the threat. Deficits created by dwindling funding sources, the expectations attached to such funding, limited leadership, expanded need, world events, and competition present some unprecedented challenges for nonprofit organizations at this point in their long history of service. These challenges converge to create an increasingly endangered environment that the nonprofit organization must address to continue to offer the responsive, community-oriented services for which they originally were created. In response to these challenges, community-based nonprofit organizations often choose to formulate strategic plans to acquire the funding and leadership to implement their plans.

For-profit corporations long have used strategic planning to meet challenges directly and minimize pitfalls (Bryson, 2004; McNamera, 2000). Nonprofit organizations did not readily adopt the practice of strategic planning either because they associated it with the commercialism of business (Drucker, 1990) or because they lacked the resources to effectively create a strategic plan (The Carnegie Corporation, 2004). However, by the

mid-1980's most nonprofit organizations had adopted strategic planning (Wheelen & Hunger, 2002), and many of the funding sources of today require strategic plans with associated outcomes as a funding prerequisite.

Considering the importance of strategic planning in the nonprofit sector and given the limited resources of the typical nonprofit organization, the level of fidelity to the strategic plan is an important consideration? Specifically, once plans have been formulated and implemented, and funding received, how often do nonprofit organizations, whose specialty is response to crisis situations, diverge from their strategic plans? Fidelity in implementation of strategic planning is a scantily researched subject, and, yet, holds value for the nonprofit sector as it learns about the creation and implementation of strategic planning. For the purpose of this dissertation about nonprofit organizations, fidelity will mean adherence to the strategic plan as it was originally written.

Chapter Overview

This chapter will serve to describe the nonprofit organization and define the issues facing nonprofit organizations as they implement and choose to adhere to or alter their strategic plans. The purpose and significance of the study will be offered and extant research on the topic will be summarized. The research questions for the study generated from the literature will be presented and the methodology and associated limitations are briefly described. Finally, frequently occurring terms are defined.

Characteristics of the Nonprofit Organization

In this study, the term nonprofit organization refers to those legally and formally

organized corporations established within a state's political jurisdiction within the United

States. Such organizations have been established in accordance with that particular state's

Corporation Commission's laws and regulations pertaining to the "public good" mission,

purpose and conduct of charitable philanthropic, nonprofit organizations. Additionally,

the United State's Internal Revenue Service may have recognized such a corporate entity

as a 501(c) (3) charitable corporation. According to Bryce (2000) and Connors (1993),

the Internal Revenue Service recognizes the following criteria for consideration as 501(c)

(3) qualified organizations:

> Those organizations that are devoted to religious, educational, charitable,
>
> scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international
>
> amateur sports competition, or prevention of cruelty to children or animals. These
>
> organizations are exempted from all tax liabilities with the exception of payroll
>
> taxes that they may be responsible for as employers of personnel retained to carry
>
> out the administrative, program and service functions of the organization (p. 33).

Bryce (2000) further states that such organizations are formed solely for the purpose

of serving a public or mutual benefit other than the pursuit of profit. While they are not

mandated by statute, statutes may regulate them. Thus, the purpose of an organized

nonprofit corporation is to carry out an agreed upon mission without the objective of

making a profit and the promise not to distribute the organization's assets to benefit

individuals other than the clients the nonprofit was formed to serve. All excess funds are

retained by the corporation for exclusive use in furthering the charitable purpose of the organization.

The Center for Nonprofit Development and Pluralism (2004) describes nonprofit organizational characteristics within the context of the organization's unique independence of both the public or government sector, as well as the corporate sector. It is this independent, nonprofit sector of American society that often acts as another voice to call attention to problems and needs in a community. Frequently, it is through these nonprofit entities that groups of citizens, seeing a community or national need, can recognize a common mission and form an organization to address that need. Governance by volunteers confirms the belief that the nonprofit organization is based on the concept of voluntarism and citizen involvement.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study was to examine fidelity to strategic plan implementation in two urban-based, nonprofit 501 (c) (3) health education/health advocacy organizations. The study was conducted in two sites in different urban-based political jurisdictions in the Eastern section of the United States. The study examined the impetus and goals for strategic planning, the similarities and differences in the implementation processes, adherence to the plan once implemented, and finally what factors prompted the lack of adherence to the plan in these two purposefully selected nonprofit, human service organizations.

Significance of this Study

There is a paucity of literature pertaining to fidelity of strategic plan implementation in nonprofit, health education/advocacy organizations. The financial survival potential of some nonprofit organizations may be enhanced by the findings of this study. Additionally, the study begins to address some of the confounding complexities of the strategic plan implementation processes and the resulting success or failure of nonprofit organizations in an increasing competitive environment. This information will be of use to curriculum designers of educational and professional training institutions providing programs concerned with the management of nonprofit organizations. Finally, the study of fidelity, or adherence to a strategic plan holds the promise of valuable information for strategic planning in nonprofit organizations. Specifically, the implementation process can be improved with information about how changes to the plan influenced outcomes. Lack of adherence to the plan may indicate important changes to the nature of the organization and its mission emanating from its political, social and economic environment. Also, the feasibility of the plan may be reflected in a lack of adherence following implementation.

Literature Review

The extant literature on nonprofit organizations illustrates significant changes to their environment, particularly on the topic of waning funding sources (The Bearing Point Corporation, 2004; Bryson, 2004; Eadie as cited in Bryson, 2004; Pietersen, 2002) and provides a historical context for these organizations (The Carnegie Corporation, n.d.; Karger and Stoesz, 2002; Trattner, 1989). The use of strategic planning for all types of organizations has been explored, from the reasons that launch strategic plan

implementation to the benefit and criticisms of this type of guiding approach (Bryson, 2004; McNamera, 2000; Mintzberg, 1994; Nutt and Backoff, 1992; Peters, 1994).

The use of strategic planning in the nonprofit sector, though originally thought to be discordant with the inception and spirit of the nonprofit organization, came into use in the 1980's (Wheelen & Hunger, 2002). Research on the implementation of strategic planning specific to nonprofit organizations remains sparse.

The implementation of strategic plans has been explored from a variety of perspectives. Authors Hoppe (2001), Fogg (1999) and Bryson (2004) present three current models for implementation, which reiterate the need for clear accountability, measurable objectives, redelegation of authority if necessary. According to Beer and Nohria in *The Harvard Business School Report* (2003), the goal behind implementation, whether near-term economic improvement or improvement of organizational capabilities, directly influences the implementation process. Successful strategic plan implementation requires distinguishing between the operational changes within the organization and the psychological transitions for personnel involved in the implementation and addressing issues related to each, including providing a venue for conflicts as they arise (Bridges, 1991; Flood, Dromgole, Carroll, & Gorman, 2000).

The view of the organization as a learning entity can provide valuable information for strategic plan implementation. Dixon (1994), Friedlander (1983), and Gillen (as cited in Flood, Dromgole, Carroll, & Gorman, 2000) postulate that successful plan implementation within a learning organization is related directly to the role assumed by the leader in charge of the implementation. Such leaders must possess the skill and acumen necessary to enable a new learning process within the organization. The

assessment of the outcome and progress of strategic planning using performance measures has become a necessity for continued funding and plan review (Dusenbury, 2000; Ginsberg, 2001; Kravechuk & Schack, 1996; Lingle & Schiemann, 1996; Sharman, 1995).

Implementation and fidelity are not often researched (Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco and Hansen, 2003). Other researchers note that planning and resulting adherence may be linked (Picken and Dess, 1996). Changes to strategic plans may be inevitable (Harrison, 1995; Todd, Felce, Beyre, Shearn, Perry and Kilsby, 2000; Wheeland, 2003) and, as such, should be incorporated into the body of knowledge about strategic planning.

Research Questions

Despite the existing literature on the responsive functioning of nonprofit organizations, the issue fidelity to strategic plan implementation remains scantily documented. This study will use the following research questions in an attempt to contribute to the research on this subject.

Research Question 1

What environmental factors did the nonprofit organizations report as the impetus for adopting a strategic plan?

Research Question 2

What broad achievement goals did the nonprofit organizations identify within the organization's chosen strategic plan?

Research Question 3

What type of implementation issues, if any, did the nonprofit organizations report as having influenced the implementation of their strategic plan?

Research Question 4

a) Did the organization adhere to the initial strategic plan after implementation? b) What, if any, changes were made to the initial plan by the nonprofit organization following implementation? c) What was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation? d) If changes occurred, how did the changes following implementation affect the structure and operations of the organization?

Research Question 5

a) Did the organization use the previous year's strategic plan without alteration in the subsequent year? b) What, if any, alterations were made to the initial plan by the nonprofit organization in preparation for implementation in the subsequent year? c) What was the rationale for altering the initial plan prior to implementation in the subsequent year? d) If alterations were made, how did the alterations affect the structure and operations of the organization once implementation had occurred?

Methodology

This is a multi case study of the fidelity to implementation processes used to operationalize a strategic plan in two nonprofit, health education/advocacy organizations located in urban settings in the Eastern section of the United States. The study sites were purposefully selected and are nonprofit, tax-exempt Type I or Type II health education organizations (see *Definitions* below). Participants will be volunteer presidents, paid chief executive officers, and volunteer members of the two boards, who will be contacted in advance. The data will be analyzed by two or more researchers; categories and themes will be established to define the research questions.

Limitations of this Study

This study faced several limitations. For example, it only examined the perceptions of individuals who had been involved in the strategic plan implementation at two organizations. The findings of this study therefore are limited to the population of this study and the characteristics of the organizations, which also suggests the limited generalizability of this study. Additionally, this study faces limitations in scope. The themes and processes identified in this study are most likely only some of the processes and themes that are germane to nonprofit organizations engaged in implementation of a strategic plan. The identified themes and processes in this study are those that are relevant currently of those who participated in this study. The use of interviews and questionnaires as the sole method of data collection presents another limitation. The study relied primarily on the use of interviews conducted by the researcher. The findings of this study may be limited by such a methodological construct.

Definitions

For clarity, the following frequently occurring words are defined:

Environmental Scan

The systematic, ongoing and collaborative effort to search for important cues about how the world or one's sector is changing and how these changes can affect the future of things, including one's business, mission, competitiveness, etc. A broad range of issues should be examined with information gathered from a variety of sources and perspectives (Council on Foundations, 2005). Regarding assessing the external and internal environments, Bryson (2004) stated,

...the planning team should explore the environment outside the organization to identify the opportunities and challenges the organization faces. It should also explore the environment inside the organization to identify strengths and weaknesses. Basically, outside factors are those not under the organization's control, and inside factors are those that are....monitoring a variety of forces and trends, including the political, economic, social, educational, technological and physical environmental ones, can help planners and decision makers discern opportunities and challenges (p.1).

Fidelity

Krathwohl (1998) cites fidelity as "fidelity of treatment" and defines it as "congruence of operational with conceptual definition" (p. 144). For the purpose of this study, the "operational" aspect of Krathwohl's definition will be embodied by the implementation of the strategic plan, while the "conceptual definition" is best represented by the strategic plan. Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco and Hansen (2003) define fidelity in a school-based drug abuse prevention program as five-part: "adherence, dose, quality of program delivery, participant responsiveness, and program differentiation" (p. 237). This study of nonprofit organizations will use adherence as the defining quality of fidelity.

Health Advocacy

Georgia State University, (2004) citing advocacy, states that it may be defined as being a service provided by an organization or it may be provided by a group or a nonprofit entity which offers resource information, support services and/or educational opportunities for individuals or families in need, and makes those needs known to professional caregivers as well as to the general public.

New Jersey Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (2000) states that advocacy may be described as the process of actively speaking out, writing in favor of, supporting, and/or acting on behalf of oneself, another person, or a cause. Advocacy can be any action to assure the best possible services for or intervention in the service system on behalf of an individual or group.

Health Education

The American Association for Health Education (2004) defines health education as the promotion of health and prevention of disease, disability and premature death through education-driven voluntary behavior change activities. It also may consist of the development of individual, group, institutional, community, and systemic strategies to improve health knowledge, attitudes, skills and behavior. Additionally, the Association has also described health education as a process concerned with designing, implementing, and evaluating educational programs that enable individuals, groups, organizations, and communities to play active roles in achieving, protecting, and sustaining health. The purpose of this activity is to contribute to health and well-being by promoting lifestyles, community actions, and conditions that make it possible to live healthful lives.

Health Education and Health Advocacy Organizations

These are organizations that primarily have as their mission the provision of health education to a specific population in a community and/or advocacy services on behalf of a specific consumer population. They do not provide medical, clinical services to the consumer population.

Strategic Plan

Fogg (1999) defines the strategic plan as the road map for impelling continuous change in the organization and ensuring its future. It guides the organization's change effort and its business. It is an entire system that is geared toward continuously detecting changes in the outside world, deciding how to deal with them, and translating these needed changes into programs that produce desired results. This system goes on day in and day out, year in and year out.

Strategic Planning

Bryson (2004) defines strategic planning as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it. Additionally, it is designed to help organizations respond effectively to their new situations. It is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions shaping the nature and direction of an organization's activities within legal bounds. Strategic planning is characterized as "not conceptual, analytic or mental in any way, but rather as interact ional. Its most basic formal requirement is a series of discussions and decisions among key decision makers about what is truly important for the organization" (p. 6).

Type I Health Education Organizations

These are described as "free standing" nonprofit, tax-exempt corporations. These organizations are not owned or operated as direct corporate subsidiaries of a larger umbrella organization. They generate their own revenues and are not affiliated with another organization in a local community. The financing of these nonprofit

organizations may be complex, drawing on multiple funding streams derived from combinations of local private donations, United Way philanthropic dollar allocations, service contracts, fees for services or revenues resulting from special fund raising events throughout a calendar or fiscal year.

Type II Health Education Organizations

These are corporate subsidiaries or a sub-unit of either a local, state or national organization. It may be a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization or it may be a for-profit corporation. The local organization is not a "free standing" corporation in and of itself, but is a branch or chapter of a parent corporation. Their funding may be complex and reflects a mixture of locally generated revenues, nationally provided dollar allocations, service contracts, etc.

Chapter Summary

This dissertation is an exploratory multi case study of the nature and scope of strategic plan implementation in two urban-based nonprofit, health education and health advocacy organizations. The problem of strategic plan implementation and resulting fidelity to the plan has been outlined in this chapter. Additional chapters will present an in-depth review of the literature, methodology and results of this study.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Chapter Overview

This chapter will explore the existing research on nonprofit organizations, including their scope and historical context. Strategic planning, from conception to implementation, as a response to environmental changes, is illustrated further by the literature presented. Little research is available on fidelity to strategic planning, as explained in the purpose of this study

Background

Manzo (2003) confirms that as a result of pervasive environmental challenges, the nonprofit sector is left attempting to accomplish expanded goals with increasingly limited financial resources. Further, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Studies' Institute for Policy Studies *Listening Post Project* (2003) reports that as the twenty-first century begins, America's nonprofit organizations are facing a host of challenges such as the shift in governmental support due to changes in the perceived role of the federal government in the provision of social welfare. As a result, traditional sources of revenue for most nonprofit organizations are unstable at best or highly unpredictable or declining at worst. The nonprofit organization increasingly is being called on to take up slack in the system left by the reduction of public programs, such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families, subsidized day care services for welfare mothers, community-based mental health services for children and adults, but with dwindling resources to do so.

The Carnegie Corporation (2004) notes that, in recent years, the nonprofit sector has undergone significant changes and now faces global challenges that threaten to weaken its influence and compromise its mission in society. Changes in government policies dating to the 1980's, including severe cuts in federal funding, not only have made it difficult for nonprofit organizations to fulfill their mandates, but also forced many of these organizations to begin charging for their services.

Further identification of the challenges facing the nonprofit sector is contributed by Rolen (2003) who reports that, in the aftermath of the mismanagement of donations aimed to alleviate the attacks of September 11, 2001, many nonprofit organizations are facing a heightened level of public scrutiny, a mistrust of corporations, and a reduction in some corporate and philanthropic grant programs. These public perceptions have a direct bearing on the nonprofit sector's ability to fund-raise and attract the level of volunteer leadership necessary to enable the small to mid sized nonprofit organization to survive in a turbulent environment.

The Changing Environment of the Nonprofit Organization

As illustrated above, nonprofit organizations are attempting to provide a greater diversity of services in an environment that is increasingly less supportive. Bryson (2004) notes,

> The environment of the nonprofit organization has become not only increasingly uncertain, but also more tightly interconnected with changes in our society. These changes may be found in the arenas of economics, finance, and policy decision-making that impacts employment patterns. In turn, this results in demand for increased program initiatives in the nonprofit human service sector, while

concurrently financial donor bases are experiencing attrition from economic changes (p. 1).

The Bearing Point Corporation (2004) observed that the nonprofit sector is being driven by rising service delivery expectations and increased pressure from granting organizations to provide more and improved services effectively and efficiently. Within this environment of rising expectations, the nonprofit organization's leadership is struggling to identify solutions to increase efficiency and concurrently strengthen relationships with stakeholders, and minimize operational costs.

Olsen and Eadie (as cited in Bryson, 2004) noted that changing environments put a high premium on flexibility, adaptability, and capability in formulating and implementing strategic directions, plans, and programs. Concurrently, the competition among nonprofit, public sector, and the for-profit business community also is increasing in today's urban settings, as can be observed in education, health, and human services fields.

These heightened expectations, according to Pietersen (2002), have created a different corporate "playing field" that the leadership of all organizations must now strategically address if they are to survive. The challenge this presents to the organization is that it must identify what it does outstandingly well and learn to strategically implement those activities or services in order to survive.

The Scope of the Nonprofit Sector

The nonprofit sector is diverse, comprising an extensive assortment of organizations, associations and groups. It includes most of the nation's premier hospitals and universities, almost all of its orchestras and operas, a significant share of its theaters, all

of its religious organizations, the bulk of its environmental advocacy and civil rights organizations, and huge numbers of its family service, children's service, neighborhood development, antipoverty, and community health facilities (Salamon, 2002).

According to Frumkin (2001), the nonprofit sector plays an increasingly important role in the provision of vital human services in diverse fields such as health, social services, family and children, recreation and education. The size of this important societal sector of society has increased rapidly over the past sixty years from a little more than 12,000 organizations in 1940 to over 1.5 million organizations. The nonprofit sector, according to Salamon (2002), employs close to 11 million paid workers or over 7% of the United State's work force and enlisted the equivalent of another 5.7 million full time employees as volunteers.

Historical Role of the Nonprofit Organization

The Carnegie Corporation (n.d.) reports that the historical importance of the community-based, nonprofit organization long has been recognized as an integral element unique to American society. In addition to providing citizens with opportunities to volunteer or become engaged in helping others, the nonprofit sector provides direct assistance to under served or disadvantaged populations and often serves as the incubators for new approaches to solving problems that the public or the for-profit sectors are either unwilling or unable to address in a timely fashion.

According to Trattner (1989), from earliest colonial days, there has been an American tradition of "people helping people" in communities, both rural and urban. The non-governmental human service sector traditionally has played a critical program development and service provision role in America's communities. American society

tends to let its unique system of nonprofit organizations lead the way in responding to critical public needs. It is frequently the mechanism through which people concerned with a particular social or economic need may respond individually or corporately. Further, it is the nonprofit organizations in our increasingly complex urban environments that have the flexibility, sensitivity, and ability to produce a rapid response.

Karger and Stoesz (2002) suggest that with the initiation of Roosevelt's New Deal programs of social insurance and public welfare in 1935, the federal government assumed a proportionately larger role in the funding, delivery, and direct provision of many key urban and rural community health and welfare services. During this period, the nonprofit sector filled a more supportive and subordinate mission in health and welfare service provision.

With the beginning of the Reagan presidential era in the 1980's, changes occurred that brought about significant philosophic and ideological shifts in the status and roles played by the nonprofit organizations across America. During President Reagan's tenure, the original concept of nonprofit organizations serving as the major provider of health and social services to communities was revived. Under his administration's concept of New Federalism, federal subsidies and delivery of health and human services began a retreat that has continued into the first decade of the twenty-first century. Given this lessening of government support, nonprofit organizations have been forced into a strategic reconsideration of their missions and resources. According to Karger and Stoesz (2002), "…as the twenty-first century begins, human service professionals are reassessing the capacity of the nonprofit sector to meet the nation's health and welfare needs" (p. 143).

Strategic Planning

Choosing to Plan

Bryson (2004) says that to cope with environmental challenges, nonprofit

organizations must exercise as much strategic discretion as possible to ensure

responsiveness to their stakeholders and to deal with their changed circumstances.

According to Nutt and Backoff (1992), organizations undertake strategic plan

formulation and implementation if the leaders of the organization want to align the

organization's direction with the organization's aims and when:

1. There is a need for a process to figure out priorities.

2. There is a need to clarify what the organization does well and do it better.

3. There is a need to better coordinate service with other organizations.

4. There is a need for the organization to plan to meet expected financial reverses.

5. When the number of for-profit and nonprofit competitors are increasing and

shifting the organization's consumer base.

6. There is a need to become more capable in competing for contractual funding

arrangements in the community.

7. When there is a need to educate, re-involve, re-vitalize the organization's

volunteer board of directors and paid staff members (p. 1).

Benefits of Strategic Planning

Regardless of the reason for strategic planning, there are identifiable benefits

common to all organizations. According to Bryson (2004), the most obvious benefit is the

promotion of strategic thought and action, which leads to stronger systematic information gathering about the organization's external and internal environment. Another benefit is in the area of improved decision making. Strategic planning focuses attention on the critical issues and challenges the organization faces. Policy makers and key decision makers can better fulfill their roles and meet their collective responsibilities as they have a clear path to follow complete with measurable benchmarks.

Additionally, McNamera (2000) suggests that there are a variety of benefits to strategic planning. For instance, strategic planning helps clearly define the purpose of the organization and the establishment of realistic goals that are consistent with the mission. Strategic planning can aid in developing a sense of ownership of the plan and the changes brought about through implementation. Strategic planning also provides a vehicle for bringing together the reasoned efforts of all personnel in building and provides consensus about where the organization is going.

According to the General Motors Corporation Annual Report (2001), a strategic plan was formulated to address the enhancement of the company's management of human resources. The strategic response introduced new digital technology to create new communication/education portals for employees. Through the implementation of the strategic response, employees were empowered to gain additional educational experiences that, in turn, enhanced job performance.

Benko and Rowlands (2003) report on a case of strategic plan formulation and implementation in a national financial institution. The institution had undergone rapid growth and expansion but suddenly faced the loss of business as the national economy shifted in the late 1990's. The strategic plan's assessment of both the internal as well as

the external environments revealed that the dispersed nature of the institution hindered decision-making, as it was not integrated with overall mission and leadership decisions. The strategic plan also lacked a central coherence. The strategic response focused on the company's decision-making structure. Decision-making is considered a "trait objective," e.g. a quality that the company possesses to meet changing to the environment in which it functions, rather than long or short term objectives aimed at running or expanding the business. The response acknowledged that corporate decision-making must be driven by information, based on market realities in each product sector and each geographic region of the organization's territory. The restructuring of the company into three strategic customer units allowed coordination, coherence and continued growth.

Criticisms of Strategic Planning

According to Rothschild, Duggel, and Balaban (2004), while senior executives at many major companies consider the strategic planning process to be burdensome, bureaucratic, and divorced from reality, companies persevere with strategic planning because there is no substitute. Without strategy, managers have no guide with which to make decisions.

Peters (1994) is equally pessimistic about the status of strategic planning, citing few tangible results despite the fact that having a plan is viewed as extremely positive. He says that the strategic plan, as well as the process that produced the plan, are detrimental to the organization, as they skip over the "here and now" of immediate problems and devote needless effort to generating more paper reports.

Mintzberg (1994) and Peters (1994) share the perspective that strategic planning schemes are methods of control that ignore the seminal value of spontaneity and

innovativeness in the process of addressing organizational problems. These authors assert that strategic planning fosters a degree of rigidity through its reliance on and required response to voluminous data inherent in its construction. Further cautions come from Perry (n.d.) and Mintzberg (1994), who state that strategic planning should not be considered if the organization is undergoing serious problems, such as cash flow crisis, vacancy of top paid and volunteer organizational leadership, or any serious leadership or basic survival issues. These issues require immediate actions and cannot be deferred until a comprehensive strategic plan is developed, implemented and operationalized.

Advent of Strategic Planning in the Nonprofit Sector

Drucker (1990) argued that for many years, strategic management was an unacceptable term for those involved in nonprofit organizations. To many it implied business, and nonprofits often prided themselves on being free of what they consider the taint of commercialism and having to be concerned with a financial bottom line. Drucker (1990) purports that nonprofit organizations need management even more than businesses, precisely because they lack the discipline of the bottom line.

Wheelen and Hunger (2002) posit that by the mid-1980's, most nonprofit organizations were turning to strategic management and planning and other concepts from business to increase their chances of corporate survival. This was a significant change as most nonprofit organizations traditionally had eschewed business technology as irrelevant to the purpose of managing a nonprofit organization.

According to the Center for Association Leadership, in consultation with Tecker Consultants (2002), the American Dietetic Association was able to move into a more responsive role through formulation of a strategic plan redesigning its governance

system. A more flexible system was sought that could provide faster response to the needs of its seventy thousand members. The plan and the implementation processes redefined and clarified the roles of the organization's governing board of directors, its volunteer organizational leadership, as well as those of the paid staff personnel.

Radtke (2001) provides the case of a nonprofit rehabilitation agency that required a plan to address staff retirements and personnel turnover in general. The strategic plan mandated that the implementing personnel gauge the organization's climate and institute a strategic goal response that ultimately connected the organization's mission, its corporate values and an overall strategic response to the staffing fluctuations.

Some examples of strategic planning being utilized in the nonprofit sector of the United States may be observed in the wide diversity and extremely broad scope of such organizations as: American Bar Association, American Forest and Paper Association, American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, Boys/Girls Clubs of America, Catholic Charities, USA, Child Welfare League of America, Family Services of America, Girl Scouts USA, Hampton Road's Virginia Research Partnership, National Health, Lung, Blood Institute, Salvation Army USA, Society for Public Health Education, United Way of America, YMCA National Office and YWCA National Office.

The Implementation Process

Models of Strategic Planning Implementation

To provide perspective concerning strategic plan implementation, three current models of strategic planning concepts are presented. Hoope (2001) provides a model that

recognizes the difficulty of implementing new ideas. As such, to initiate major

implementation actions with resultant changes, the organization must:

1. Establish a sense of urgency and identify potential crisis or major opportunities.

2. Create a powerful guiding coalition. This is a group within the organization

with enough power to lead the change effort and encourage working together.

3. Conceive a vision to help the effort. To capture the vision, strategies will need

to be developed.

4. Empower others to act on the vision and carry out strategic implementation (p.

4).

According to Fogg (1999), the main focus of the implementation process must be on

establishing clear accountability for those responsible for the process. Specifically, the

leadership of the organization must align actions throughout the organization to address

priority issues and translate these issues into assigned, measurable action plans with

specific accountability systems. This model also advocates attaching rewards to the

performance of the implementation personnel to promote compliance with the objectives

and goals of the strategic plan.

For Bryson (2004), the implementation process is comprised of interrelated steps. The

focus is on creating an "action plan" that details all roles, responsibilities, and authority

of the implementers and oversight committees, or boards of directors. The plan also

provides measurable objectives with specified results, "milestone markers" to gauge

progress, and a schedule of implementation. It is the responsibility of the organization's

leadership to provide the needed resources and to establish an "up and down"

communication protocol. Accountability is addressed through the use of performance measures that permit management to spot implementation problems.

Goals and the Implementation of Organizational Change

The goal behind the strategic plan has a strong bearing on its implementation, as suggested in The Harvard Business School report *Managing Change and Transition.* Beer and Nohria (2003) presented a theory on organizational change within the context of the goal behind the implementation process. The authors state that one of two goals typically drives a change initiative. One is near-term economic improvement in the organization while the other is focused on improving the organizational capabilities. The terms *Theory E* and *Theory O* were coined by to describe these two basic goals.

Theory E is founded on the belief that change aims for a dramatic and rapid increase in shareholder value as measured by improved cash flow within the organization. A financial crisis is usually the trigger initiating the establishment of the *Theory E* approach in an organization. This is known as the economic approach with top management driving the activity and making heavy use of outside consultants to maximize all possible revenue enhancing and cost reducing actions. In this theory, all implicit contracts between the company and its employees, such as lifetime employment, are suspended during the change effort and employee participation and shared decision-making are not included. Individuals and departments whose activities fail to demonstrate tangible value, such as planners and research and development personnel, are particularly vulnerable to dismissal. The theory relies very heavily on cost cutting, downsizing, and sales of products (or services) to meet its objectives.

Conversely, *Theory O,* known as the organizational capabilities approach, aims to create higher performance by developing an organizational culture supportive of learning and a high performance employee cadre. The approach is based on the concept that the most successful and enduring organizations are those with dynamic, learning-oriented cultures and highly capable employees. This requires high levels of employee participation, a flatter organizational structure, and strong bonds between the organization and its people. Employee commitment to change and improvement are vital for *Theory O* to work.

Managing the Changes

The processes developed to implement a strategic plan are, in reality, a series of operational changes and psychological transitions for personnel that require controlling, coordinating, and generally being managed to fruition by the implementing organization. According to Flood, Dromgole, Carroll, and Gorman (2000), the significance of changes and transitions in implementation decisions resides in acknowledging that these decisions occur within the context of an organizational entity in a dynamic environment within a highly complex social system. This social system consists of a large number of inter-connected technical and managerial components and the respective personnel to carry out the myriad of interdependent roles necessary for the organization's survival. Maintaining a dynamic equilibrium within the organization demands continuous attention to the integration and harmonization of each separate department in the organization. Slight changes in any of the components can cause ripple effects throughout the entire organizational system. Such changes must be managed to move the organization to the successful implementation of strategic decisions (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Malott (1999) concluded that, to create lasting organizational changes, the leadership must analyze carefully the total picture by examining the organization's social system by focusing on core departments, by changing processes before changing the structure, and by planning for personnel behavior contingencies associated with both physical changes and mental transitions. In an earlier work, Judson (1990) says that successful implementation requires fundamental changes in the behavior of the organization and its operating departments. Such changes will extend to all of the functions of the organization, including its personnel, technology, policies and procedures.

Zenz (1992) reported on change management in four schools, concluding that, in those organizations where administrative leadership and organization personnel made long-term commitments to organizational change, power and decision-making authority continually were negotiated and renegotiated among all participants, resulting in competition among administrative and service providing personnel as they each struggled to maintain control. The concept of continual negotiation and renegotiation is an important aspect in the management of changes and transitions during an implementation process.

Change management of this type relates closely to the concepts enunciated in Theory O. The goal in this theory is to develop an organizational climate supportive of learning on the part of the employees to eventually foster what Beer and Nohria (2003) view as a high-performance employee organization. These types of organizations work diligently to energize their cultures and enhance organizational capabilities through individual and organization learning. As both Zenz (1992) and Beer and Nohria (2003) posit, this requires high levels of employee participation and strong bonds between the

organizations and its personnel. Commitment to on-going organizational change and negotiation and re-negotiation is a part of the change process.

Concomitantly, Rajah (2001) notes that change is about aligning people, resources and culture with a shift in the organization's direction. The success of the organization's change depends, in large measure, on change agents or implementers, who facilitate, guide and support the change process. The role of these persons requires each being cognizant of and conversant with the targets of the change process in the organization. These targets are described as follow:

1. Personnel – The impact is greatest on the people of the organization, as they have to be "changed".

2. Tasks – The jobs of the personnel of the organization must be updated to reflect the changes. This may involve actually redesigning a job to interface with the changed circumstances within the organization.

3. Structure – The design of the organization itself may require rethinking and reworking insuring coordination and unity of effort on the part of the organization's personnel.

4. Technology – Equipment improvements and facilities may have to be revamped and even updated.

5. Purpose – The mission of the organization generally will require review, renewal and modification. This sets in motion an updating of organizational goals and objectives.

6. Objectives – Due to the changed environment, specific performance standards have to be modified or new performance standards established.

7. Strategy – Strategic plans have to be clarified, modified or new ones created.

8. Culture – Core beliefs and values have to be clarified and modified to adapt to the changing environment (p. 2).

Managing the Transitions

Bridges (1991) suggests that change is a situational experience, while transition is a psychological process people go through to come to terms with a new situation, specifically that "...change is external, transition is internal" (p. 4). Situational change is based on new programs, new policies, and new procedures, whereas psychological transition depends on the personnel letting go of the pre-change reality and their old organizational identities. The failure to acknowledge this aspect of implementation can undermine the process.

Geddes (1992) posits that assimilating and addressing organizational change successfully requires the personnel of the organization to cope with a sense of loss, a psychological need to grieve due to the loss, and a need to complete this internal grieving process and move to closure. Additionally, Test (2000) reports that those organizations that focus on implementing coordinated transition programs tend to provide a more complete array of transition services. Essentially, such approaches tend to help the organization's personnel address their personal sense of loss and the resulting sense of grief and are important concepts in the implementation process. Unless the personnel of

the organization experience successful transition, the changes from the implementation effort will not work.

Bridges (1991) comments that organization leadership may tend to confuse change and transition, misusing terms like "transition teams", "transition plans", "and transition services". However, transition is quite different from change. In transition, the concern is with the inner process people employ to come to terms with changes, as they let go of the way things used to be and develop a reorientation to the new plan. Managing this transition in an organization means helping the personnel to go through the difficult process in a less painful and disruptive fashion.

Bridges (1991) says that the second step in the organization's personnel transition process is acknowledging the "neutral zone," which is described as a "no-man's land" between the old reality and the new and represents the core of the transitioning process. It is the time and place when the old habits and ways of doing business are no longer adaptive to the new situation and are put aside and new, better-adapted patterns of behavior begin to take place.

In relation to the implementation processes that bring about change and require transitions on the part of the organization's personnel, Kimberling and Raphael (n.d.) stress that it is clear that an organization's leadership must proactively manage employees through the myriad organizational changes. A "transition leader" or "implementation leader" is required to lead the personnel and should have the following characteristics:

1. The individual must be able to gain support from and confidence of others. Change will not be accepted and work will not be done without the "buy-in" of key stakeholders.

2. The individual must listen and collaborate effectively. The key way to secure this sense of ownership and trust on the part of employees is through listening and collaboration.

3. The individual must assume accountability. Successful implementation transition leaders take accountability for their own work as well as that of the entire organization.

4. The individual must provide constructive feedback. This type of feedback enables employees to be more effective in adapting to and accepting changes.

5. The individual communicates openly, early, and often. Change and transitions can be complex and fearsome for some personnel.

6. The individual inspires and motivates. To manage change effectively in the organization, implementation transition leaders need to have inspired employees and stakeholders.

7. The leader provides clear direction. In order for the organization to achieve its corporate goals, employees and stakeholders must understand where they are and where the organization is going in the future.

8. The leader models the way for the organizational team. Successful implementation transition leaders lead by example to build credibility and trust (p. 2).

Additionally, in the implementation of a change plan, essentially a strategic plan, Edgelow (n.d.) notes that

...leadership should work from an integrated perspective: leading people through the transition involves helping your personnel separate from the old way of doing things and guiding them through the confusion of being between worlds, and then moving them into the desired new world (p. 7).

Leadership and Learning in the Implementation Process

The relationship of change implementation and organizational learning is an important concept to recognize. According to Gillen (as cited in Flood, Dromgole, Carroll & Gorman, 2000), change leadership involves inspiring and directing the learning process that must take place to implement the strategic plan. Without the linkage between learning and leading, establishment of a workable implementation process may lack a coherent direction. In this view, a changing organization is perceived as a learning organization.

In an earlier work, Friedlander (1983) described the direct relationship between leadership and learning. In essence, it becomes the executive's role to serve as the leader of the organization in guiding personnel in the learning process. Doing so entails identifying and confronting differing points of view while fostering structures within the organization that encourage contact between differing parts of the organization. The role of the executive then is to create a structure and climate for planned transition in which the resource of personnel knowledge is utilized fully.

The executive/leader is someone who guides and inspires this corporate learning process throughout the organization. The leader facilitates and motivates the thoughts and actions required to implement the key strategies of the organization based on the overall strategic mission and corporate vision. This leadership process of guiding, changing, and

developing an organization, according to Dixon (1994), includes four steps. These are termed an "organizational learning cycle:"

1. Making certain that needed information is generated widely to those who are involved in any critical undertaking on behalf of the organization.

2. Continuously integrating new information into the organization.

3. Collectively assessing and interpreting this information within the implementation context.

4. Allowing the necessary authority for the implementers to take responsible actions based on the interpreted meaning of the information (p. 1).

The implications for organizational leadership and overseeing successful implementation processes are reflected in Senge's (1990) thesis that the learning organization requires a multi-faceted view of leadership. The leader must become a designer and teacher, taking responsibility for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to learn through understanding complexity and clarify their visions. According to Pietersen (2002), organizational learning is an ongoing process founded on a cycle of renewal, which gives the organization a sustainable competitive advantage in the modern marketplace. For successful implementation, the organizational leadership must generate insights, create focus on achieving alignment of mission, purpose and resources, and motivate learning drawn from analysis of organizational actions.

In leading change in the learning organization, Beeby and Booth (2000) highlight the idea that the organization's personnel networks, alliances, and relationships have a

bearing on the learning organization and that management must be alert to the impact of these connections on the individual, interdepartmental, team, organizational, and inter organizational learning of the organization. During implementation changes, Owenby (2002) suggests that the functioning of personnel in a learning organization may be affected by power issues. These are issues such as managerial control of learning agendas and the objectives to be accomplished. The organization leadership, if truly committed to transformational learning, must allow development of critical reflection and inquiry on the part of the organization's personnel.

Specifically, Peneul (1997) reported on organizational learning demonstrated by a nonprofit organization, in this case the Cumberland Valley Girl Scout Council of Tennessee. When the organization's funding body, the United Way, adopted an "outcomes" model for member organizations, whereby funding would be based on their ability to specify and monitor program outcomes, the Council had to adapt to the new process and produce a strategic response. When leadership activated the learning process, the Council developed and implemented a strategic response based on monitoring and evaluation that identified outcomes for youth development.

Implementation and Establishing Outcome Assessment Measurements

The question arises as to how the organization knows if it has accomplished what its strategic plan has articulated as desired outcomes following implementation. Without measurable benchmarks and outcomes, it may be impossible for the organization to determine the progress of the implementation progress and/or any results that may be attributable to the implementation. According to Dusenbury (2000), performance measures are what keep a plan on target. The periodic reporting of performance

indicators provides the information necessary to guide adjustments during the implementation process. Therefore, a method for assessment of implementation progress and outcomes must be included in the strategic plan.

Ginsberg (2001), states that there are essentially two categories of such evaluations. These are known as formative and summative. In the formative approach, the focus is to provide data on a program's progress or lack of progress in conducting an action. Accomplishing this assessment requires that a set of implementation "achievement benchmarks" initially be set by the organization's leadership. Data reflect proximity to achievement benchmarks and provide quantitative measures of the progress of the implementation. The data then can then be used to make changes in the implementation process if necessary. In contrast, the summative approach gathers data about the effectiveness of the plan, once implemented, in accomplishing the organization's goals.

In reference to assessment in the implementation process, Lingle and Schiemann (1996) and Sharman (1995) describe the desirability of having active participation of employees from all units of the organization. This is important since the implementation process is a time of change and tension for an organization's personnel.

Additionally, Kravechuk and Schack (1996) assert that there are certain basic principles involved in developing effective performance measures. They are:

Formulate clear, coherent mission, strategies, objectives; develop an explicit measurement strategy; involve key users; rationalize the programmatic structure; develop multiple sets of measures for multiple users; consider the customer; provide sufficient performance details; periodically review and revise system; take account of complexities; and avoid excessive aggregation of information (pp. 348 – 358).

Fidelity (Adherence) to Strategic Planning

Fidelity to the strategic plan in nonprofit organizations is a scantily researched topic. Harrison (1995) commented that the environmental challenges that inspired initial strategic planning might act to render the plan obsolete, specifically, "changes in executive management, financial disasters, scandals or any number of unfortunate circumstances can render a strategic plan impotent" (p. 16). Lack of adherence to the plan might also be rooted in faulty planning. Picken and Dess (1996) cite the following pitfalls in strategic planning in the for profit sector:

Failure to recognize and understand events and changing conditions in the competitive environments, basing strategies on a flawed set of assumptions, failing to structure and implement mechanisms to ensure the coordination and integration of core processes and key functions across organizational boundaries and failing to provide the leadership essential to the successful implementation of strategic change (p. 2).

Changes to the plan may be inevitable even with careful planning. Todd, Felce, Beyre, Shearn, Perry and Kilsby (2000) reviewed perceptions of stakeholders of the All Wales Strategy, a strategic plan for the development of services for people with intellectual disabilities two years after implementation. The overriding perception was that more could have been made of certain opportunities and that there had been a failure to integrate planning to meet community needs. Wheeland (2003) reports positive outcomes for a community-wide strategic plan in Rock Hill, South Carolina, but notes that participants met often to review the plan with a formal amendment of the plan to reflect neighborhood empowerment midway through the plan. Dusenbury, Brannigan,

Falco and Hansen (2003) studied fidelity of implementation in a school-based drug abuse prevention program and reported that pinpointing the critical elements of the program is necessary to determine adherence. The researchers define adherence as, "...the extent to which implementation of particular activities and methods is consistent with the way the program is written" (p. 241). The authors confirm that, "in the social sciences, the literature on fidelity of implementation has been limited," reporting that only 24% of 162 studies over the past 25 years that evaluated the effectiveness of prevention programs assessed fidelity of implementation and "only a third of those considered the impart of fidelity on outcome" (p. 245).

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed research in the area of nonprofit organizations and strategic planning. It presented a discussion of the issues involved with managing organizational social and psychological changes and the complex transitions experienced during implementation of a strategic plan. The link between the organization as a learning entity and the leadership of plan implementation was explored. Finally, the use of performance and outcome measures to assess implementation was presented.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the research questions, an overview of case study and multi

case study methodology, the relationship of the researcher to the study, the selection

process for the participating organizations, type of sampling used, and descriptions of the

nonprofit organizations that participated in this study. Additionally, the chapter addresses

access to the study sites, instrumentation, data collection methodology, data analysis

approach, triangulation methodology, logistics of data collection and issues of validity

and reliability.

Introduction

Creswell (1998) describes qualitative studies as a process of inquiry leading to

understanding that is based on distinct methodological traditions or inquires that explore

a social or human problem. As such, the researcher conducts such studies in a natural

setting, builds a complex, holistic picture that provides an analysis, and reports detailed

perceptions.

This study explored the implementation processes of strategic planning in

nonprofit organizations and the efficacy of strategic planning in achieving organizational

goals. To achieve this end, a qualitative, multi case study methodology was utilized.

The advantage of the qualitative approach, according to Krathwolh (1998), is that

it is a useful tool in analyzing certain situational phenomena and eventually bringing

these phenomena to the point of plausible conjecture and eventual theory. Lincoln and

Guba (1985) posit that the qualitative approach possesses certain integral characteristics that make it preferable in certain non-laboratory situations. For instance, this study examines the question of implementation of strategic planning to achieve goals within multiple organizations. This occurs within the context of a natural setting, rather than a controlled or laboratory setting.

<center>*Research Questions*</center>

This study, drawing on the existing literature and research, considered the following questions:

Research Question 1

What environmental factors did the nonprofit organizations report as the impetus for adopting a strategic plan?

Research Question 2

What broad achievement goals did the nonprofit organizations identify within the organization's chosen strategic plan?

Research Question 3

What type of implementation issues, if any, did the nonprofit organizations report as having influenced the implementation of their strategic plan?

Research Question 4

a) Did the organization adhere to the initial strategic plan after implementation? b) What, if any, changes were made to the initial plan by the nonprofit organization following implementation? c) What was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation? d) If changes occurred, how did the changes following implementation affect the structure and operations of the organization?

Research Question 5

a) Did the organization use the previous year's strategic plan without alteration in the subsequent year? b) What, if any, alterations were made to the initial plan by the nonprofit organization in preparation for implementation in the subsequent year? c) What was the rationale for altering the initial plan prior to implementation in the subsequent year? d) If alterations were made, how did the alterations affect the structure and operations of the organization once implementation had occurred?

Case Study Methodology

Generally, case studies, Yin (2003) says, are a sound strategy when "how" or "why" questions are posed and when the researcher has little, or no, control over the situation under investigation. Additionally, the case study method is appropriate when the researcher is focusing on contemporary phenomenon within the context of real life. The case study becomes explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive simultaneously. Thus, the essence of the case study is to provide a reasonable avenue for the researcher to use in illuminating and describing a decision, or set of decisions, and why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result.

This research utilized a multi case study method to capture the unique views of the participants in terms of how each organization's participating personnel perceived the strategic plan implementation process and the efficacy of the strategic plan. The study examined whether the process facilitated, enhanced and\or created opportunities for organizational growth and development as evidenced by the organizations' movement toward achievement of their corporate goals.

According to Yin (2003) and Creswell (1998) the use of multi case designs is useful from the perspective of providing more evidence as the sources are derived from multiple population units. The evidence from multiple cases may be considered as a more compelling depiction of a process and its impact on a population or an organization. Yin (2003) says that the logic underlying the use of multi cases is that each case must be carefully selected so that it either predicts similar results or predicts contrasting results for predictable reasons.

The study of the process of strategic planning and implementation is a challenging subject that was best captured using multiple case study methodology. This was due to the interplay of complex human reactions relationships and organizational goals that exist within nonprofit organizations. Accordingly, this current study, through the careful selection of two cases, increased the potential for replicable findings that may suggest a general phenomenon related to implementation of an organization's strategic plan.

Relationship of Researcher to the Study

Since the 1960's, this researcher has been professionally interested, from an administrator's perspective, as to why some human service organizations experience success in designing processes to implement their strategic plans, while concomitantly others experience varying degrees of failure. For the immediate past eleven years, this researcher has been a teacher of community organization, nonprofit human services administration, and strategic planning at an urban-based institution of higher education. While in this capacity, the researcher developed the concept of creating a Development Center for Nonprofit Organizations, a university-based technical assistance, consultation, and training center. The concept was favorably received by the local philanthropic

foundation community and has enjoyed on-going financial support from this sector since 1994. The immediate relevancy of this to this particular study is that one of the most frequently recurring requests directed to the Center is in relation to both developing strategic plans for nonprofit organizations as well designing the implementation processes to enable the organization to realize those plans.

Purposeful Sampling Used in this Study

According to Krathwohl (1998) qualitative inquiry frequently focuses on relatively small samples purposefully selected. Creswell (1998) indicates that in undertakings such as a case study, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select cases to show different perspectives on the topic under investigation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) add the perspective that in the qualitative approach, one really cannot draw samples in advance of the study on a random basis.

In this study, the two cases presented were selected based on their ability to provide cogent descriptions of the strategic plan implementation process and fidelity to the plan.

Participating Nonprofit Organizations

For the purpose of this study, this researcher established characteristics used for describing two types of health education organizations. They were identified as either a nonprofit Type I or Type II health education organization. This study focused exclusively on the Type I nonprofit health education/ health advocacy organization. Type I organizations were described as "free standing" nonprofit, tax-exempt corporations. These organizations were not owned or operated as direct corporate subsidiaries of a larger umbrella organization. They generated their own revenues and were not affiliated with another organization in a local community.

Two, Type I, urban-based, nonprofit, health education/advocacy organizations were purposefully selected to form the study's population. The use of purposeful selection is consistent with the multi case study approach utilized in this study. The organizations were from the same health education field and operated generally with budgets of just under $300,000 dollars per annum. Accordingly, each organization had a common mission of health education and health advocacy, they were members of the same national professional association, operated similar programs and had reasonably similar organizational structures.

The researcher has a long-standing professional relationship with the Virginia affiliate of this group of organizations. It was through the Virginia affiliate that the researcher recruited and gained access to the second organization participating in this study. Additionally, the Virginia affiliate organization was one of the two purposefully selected organizations participating in the study.

Access to the Study Sites

One of the participant organizations was identified in advance. That organization was located in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The chief executive officer of the Virginia affiliate was agreeable to contacting a second affiliate organization in a separate state and requesting cooperation and participation with the study. Following this personal contact, the researcher forwarded a formal letter of explanation to the chief executive officers of the two organizations. The letter officially and formally detailed the purpose of the study and identified the researcher and the educational institutional base of the project.

Additionally, the organization was informed that the information elicited would remain confidential. For instance, pseudonyms were used to identify the participating

organizations. The letter also outlined the benefits to be derived from the study, the ultimate use of the information developed as part of the study and its value in the education to those who might go on to manage nonprofit organizations. Appendix A provides a sample of this letter.

Confidentiality

The study sites were represented through the use of pseudonyms to protect participant confidentiality. The identification coding is as follows:

1. Agency # 1 = State #1

   Respondent A.1 = Volunteer president

   Respondent A.2 = Paid chief executive officer

   Respondents A.3 = the collective responses of the volunteer members of Agency # 1's board of directors.

2. Agency # 2 = State # 2

   Respondents B.1 = Volunteer president

   Respondent B.2 = Paid chief executive officer

   Respondents B.3 = the collective responses of the volunteer members of Agency # 2's board of directors.

Number of Respondents

The anticipated number of individual respondents within the participating organizations ranged from thirteen respondents in one organization and up to 16 persons

in the other organization. The final total number of respondents incorporated in this study was 14 total between the two organizations.

<div align="center">*Instrumentation*</div>

The researcher has constructed a survey drawn from current research in the field and aligned with the research questions of this study. The questions were phrased to elicit detailed perceptions from the respondents to contribute to the volume and richness of the data. *Instrument A: President/CEO Survey* was be administered by a trained interviewer. Appendix B contains a sample of the *President/CEO Survey*. Due to time and funding limitations, *Instrument B: Board of Directors Survey* was mailed to the boards of participating nonprofit organizations. Questions were the same for both instruments. Appendix C provides a sample of this instrument.

<div align="center">*Data Collection*</div>

Essentially, data collection is a series of interrelated activities geared to capturing useable information to answer the researcher's questions. Creswell (1998) describes data collection as following a series of logical steps such as: locating a site and individuals to talk with, gaining access to the site and establishing a sense of rapport with potential and later actual study participants, conducting purposeful sampling, collecting the data, recording information, resolving field issues and storing the data obtained by the studying the multiple case study approach as reflected by this study, data collection is generally through organizational records or documentation, personal interviews. The researcher makes methical observations and records these observations through the use of field notes, interview and observational protocols. Storage of this information is typically in the form of notes, transcriptions or computer files.

Data for this current study were gathered through semi-structured written response instruments. The information covered personal perceptions, history of the organizations, the context of each organization in its respective community of operation, factors that enhanced and/or hindered positive outcomes and examples pertaining to each organization participating in the study.

Coding of interviews followed topics listed in the interview instruments; unanticipated concepts and insights were also noted. Core themes (expected and not) in each interview were identified. Themes were compared across interviews to determine areas of common focus and points of disagreement among the population participating in the study.

Dual Tier Data Collection Methodology

Tier One Data Collection

This tier involved the use of a trained interviewer conducting one-hour, face-to-face interviews with the presidents and chief executive officers of the two participating organizations. The interviews took place in the offices of each of the organizations. The interviewer used a semi-structured questionnaire instrument (Instrument A) and the interviews were recorded with the permission of the respondents.

The use of an interviewer, who is not the researcher, is to reduce the potential threat of researcher bias. The training of the telephone interviewer stressed:

1. Interviewing techniques (psychological\intrapersonal dynamics).

2. Avoidance of non-leading questions.

3. Voice modulation to achieve monotone emphasis control when asking questions.

4. Accuracy in note taking.

5. Operation of sound recording electronics

The field interviewer used hand written notes and a recording device to document the interviews with the presidents and chief executive officers. The recording instrument was a Sony TCM-200DV/150 recorder with seven hours of recording capability per session. The recording of interviews was important to this study as it was an added safeguard to promote thoroughness of data transcriptions and to increase the level of analytical accuracy by providing confirmation, amplification and even correction of the interviewer's hand written notations. Additionally, this was also necessary to reduce the threat of the interviewer inserting leading questions into the interview context.

In advance of the interviews, the researcher established firm dates and times for the interviews to be conducted, as well as having secured agreements for the use of the recording device and permission for the researcher to review certain documents. The documents were in the categories of annual reports, any appropriate meeting minutes that pertained to strategic plan implementation, any reports or studies conducted relative to the organization's strategic plan.

To facilitate the interview process with the presidents and chief executive officers, the researcher first forwarded copies of the data collection instrument to each respondent prior to the interviews. The respondents were encouraged to reflect on the questions in advance to prepare for the interview.

During the conduct of the interviews, the interviewer took notes using margin notations as appropriate. The interviewer used a semi-structured, open-ended interview format. This permitted the interviewer to focus directly on the topic and ask key

questions noting causal inferences as the interviewees express them. Interview questions and their order in the interview session was predetermined.

Tier Two Data Collection

Two tier data collection involved the collection of data relative to the implementation process as perceived by the members of the boards of directors of the organizations involved with the study. To accomplish this, the researcher initially secured the cooperation of the organization's chief executive officers to carry out the following functions:

1. Submission of basic documents such as, but not necessarily limited to: annual reports, meeting minutes, memos, past studies related to formulating the corporate strategic plan, guides and instructions for implementation processes to activate the plan.

2. The researcher forwarded to each of the two chief executive officers a set of succinct instructions pertaining to the collection of data from the members of the organization's board of directors. Primarily, the chief executive officers were requested to read a brief letter about the research project to the board at a regular meeting and distribute the data collection package to each member.

To avoid the potential research threat of group interaction, the board members were asked to complete the data collection instrument individually. The researcher provided the appropriate return pre-addressed, pre-stamped mailing package for each board member. The researcher followed up with each chief executive officer by telephone to insure timely return of the data to the researcher.

Table 1

Data Collection Methodology

Tier	Agency Response
One	Data collected through face-to-face interviews
	Respondent 1: Volunteer president (One Individual)
	Respondent 2: Paid chief executive officer (One individual)
Two	Additional data collection. The collective responses of the individual members of the board of directors

Triangulation

This study utilized data triangulation as a method for enhancing the reliability of the results. In the most basic sense, triangulation refers to the procedure of using multiple information sources to confirm and verify what has been told to the research by others, or what has been read or discovered by the researcher. Creswell (1998) confirms the use of triangulation as being integral to the case study method. Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that triangulation is a particularly important aspect in the naturalistic study as, "no single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated" (p. 283).

Guion (2002) says there are different types of triangulation that the researcher must contend with in qualitative research:

1). Data Triangulation (the utilization of different sources of data).

2). Investigator triangulation (basically utilizes several different investigators).

3). Theory Triangulation (the use of several different theories).

4). Professional Triangulation (this involves the use of multiple professional perspectives to interpret the data).

5). Methodological Triangulation (this involves the use of multiple qualitative an or quantitative approaches of study) (p.1).

This particular study utilized data triangulation, which incorporated having the presidents and chief executive officers review typed draft versions of their interviews prior to the study's completion. Each of the presidents and the chief executive officers were requested to review his/her particular typed transcript for accuracy.

Additionally, triangulation was effectuated further through review of boards of director's minutes, Internal Revenue Service 990 Reports, organizational memos, correspondence and written documents the participating organizations were willing to make available for review. Additionally, 14 respondents were involved in the data gathering processes. These triangulation protocols provided significant levels of corroboration to ensure multiple perspectives were acknowledged.

Data Storage

This study made use of three methods of data storage:

1. Field notes were transcribed twice weekly into Microsoft Word. The files were maintained both on the researcher's computer hard drive as well as back up file copies maintained and routinely updated by use of floppy disks. The disks were stored in a locked cabinet owned by the researcher.

2. Copies of documents provided by the participants were stored in a locked cabinet owned by the researcher. As appropriate, photo copies of the documents were made and stored in a separate locket cabinet.

3. Reference notes, publication information and reference information were maintained by the researcher on 5 x 8 index cards filed in a receptacle designed for this size reference card.

Data Analysis

Yin (2003) writes that data analysis is a series of connections between and among the examined phenomena, categorizing, making tabulations, and testing to answer the research questions. Creswell (1998) concludes that data analysis is a combination of managing, memoing, reading, describing, classifying, interpreting and representing through the written exposition of a phenomenon. Generally, in the case study approach, analysis consists of, according to Creswell (1998), making a detailed description of the case and setting. Essentially, case studies involve a successively selective process of narrowing down an overwhelming abundance of information, raw data, documentary reports and informant's inputs. Krathwohl (1998) observed that the researcher is looking for repetitions and relationships and figuring out what is important in these similarities. After reviewing various data analysis approaches, it was determined that this study made use of the data analysis strategies based on the work of Miles and Huberman (1994).

The basic data analysis approach for this current study was as follows:

1. Strategy of sketching ideas –The researcher made margin notes in the field notes.

2. Strategy of taking notes – The researcher wrote reflective passages in the notes.

3. Strategy of summarizing field notes – The researcher drafted a summary sheet on the field notes. Transcripts from the audio recording device were utilized.

4. Strategy of identifying codes – The researcher wrote memos.

5. Strategy of reducing information - The researcher noted patterns and themes.

Data Management

Data analysis was managed by the researcher through the organization of files of all written material for data, both in hard copy form and in computer file format. The categorization of the data began with the researcher reviewing descriptions of each of the participant organizations' experience with strategic planning and the process of implementing their respective strategic plans. Classification was addressed through the construction of patterns of categories, based on direct interpretation leading to generalizations of themes and patterns noted in the two cases. The data was represented by the use of narrative, augmented by tables and figures as appropriate, and complementary to the study's purpose.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the conventional criteria for trustworthiness are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. However, in the qualitative study this criterion becomes difficult to sustain. For example, conventional inquirers assert claims that internal validity exists if the study is carried out using probability sampling. However, in the qualitative milieu, the possibility of generalization, as that term is usually interpreted denies the possibility that this occurs in non-quantitative studies. In the emergent design of the qualitative inquiry, where the chief instrument is the researcher, the question of objectivity becomes based more on what

Guba terms prolonged engagement with the subject population, consistent observation and triangulation through examination of a variety of information sources.

As part of the data collection phase of the study, the researcher employed triangulation through the use of multiple sources of evidence from key informants and the review of pertinent documents. The contact with the organizations had a degree of prolonged engagement, consistent observation and triangulation. This was done to reduce the threat of single source data. Also, at the composing stage of this study, these same informants were asked to review draft versions of the case study reports of their organizations. Additionally, a second reader was utilized to increase inter-rater reliability.

In conjunction with the foregoing efforts to reduce threats to the construct validity of this study, the use of a trained interviewer to administer the survey, the recording of the actual interviews, and participant review of the interview transcript ensured that a reasonable degree of threat reduction was planned for in the study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the methodologies and procedures used to examine the nature and scope of strategic plan implementation fidelity in two, nonprofit, health education organizations. Interviews of the volunteer presidents and the paid chief executive officers of each organization were conducted. This was accompanied by data collection of the perceptions of the members of the two boards of directors. The responses were coded, analyzed and used to identify themes and patterns. Trustworthiness has been addressed. Finally, checks with the participants were implemented to insure accuracy.

CHAPTER IV

Findings and Results

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the data gathered in this study along with an analysis of the data based on current research and findings. Each participating organization is profiled and organizational responses are presented and analyzed on a question-by-question basis.

Introduction

This qualitative study explored key factors impacting the fidelity (adherence) of nonprofit organizations to their strategic plans following implementation. This study analyzed data from two similar, nonprofit, 501 (c) (3) health education/health advocacy organizations located in different urban sites in two states in the Eastern section of the United States.

Several types of data were collected and analyzed for this study to identify patterns and themes that promoted or hindered the successful achievement of strategic plan goals as the organizations proceeded through the implementation and post-implementation experiences. Implementation issues explored included the clarity of objectives for the implementation, sufficiency of authority granted to those responsible for conducting the implementations, the level of skill and experience possessed by those responsible for conducting the implementation and outcome/performance measures. Concomitantly, other issues such as whether the priority of conducting the implementation became altered over time by the emergence of other factors or environmental conditions and whether there was conflict within the organizations,

specifically among board members or with the CEO were also explored. Subject responses regarding the implementation experience were analyzed to determine both perceptions of the participants to the implementation processes as well as their perceptions of whether organizational goals were met. Additionally, perceptions of organization fidelity to the strategic plan were also gathered in an attempt to define the relationship between plan implementation and fidelity.

Profile of Participating Organizations

Both organizations met the criteria established for this study. Specifically, strategic plans had been developed and implemented and the respondent personnel associated with the organizations had experienced the processes. To preserve confidentiality, identifying information concerning the two organizations described in the case studies has been disguised. Accordingly, the study refers to the corporate participants as Organization A and Organization B. Likewise, the identification of particular individual respondents associated with each organization was not revealed in the study.

The annual operating budgets of each organization were less than $300,000 per annum. Both organizations were recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt, nonprofit corporations engaged strictly in charitable enterprises as approved by the Internal Revenue Service. Additionally, each of the participating organizations was identified as a health education/advocacy organization established on behalf of charitable purposes for comparable target populations in their separate communities. The organizations both focused on providing educational materials, advocacy and support groups for a target population challenged with similar personal functioning limitations stemming from their medical conditions. The organizations have

small paid staff compliments ranging from one-and-a-half staff persons to two-and-a-half persons. The number of staff members may fluctuate upward or downward depending on financial resources available to fund positions at any given time.

The average combined size of the two organizations' boards of directors number thirteen persons per board. Also, both organizations were affiliate members of the same national health organization dedicated to promoting research, public education regarding a specific health condition, promotion of advocacy to enhance and protect the rights of a specific target population and the development of programs and services.

The characteristics of the respondents participating in this study were as follows. Organization A: The chief executive officer was one of the founding persons of the organization and has been with the organization since its inception in the 1970's. The chief executive officer possessed experience in general organizational management, but was not trained or experienced in establishing and directing a nonprofit, community-based organization with a volunteer board of directors that the chief executive officer initially had to identify, recruit and meld into a cohesive collective of individuals with common goals and a vision for the organization. This chief executive officer learned through personal experience, coupled with professional development training provided by the national association and from local input from knowledgeable persons how to create a viable nonprofit organization, keep it funded to whatever degree possible each year. This chief executive officer gradually evolved a corporate strategic plan for service expansion and eventually statewide service delivery. The chief executive officer was described by several board members as, "…the guiding force through the years…it was the CEO who

has provided the consistency of purpose for the organization as members of the volunteer board changed periodically."

The volunteer board of directors members of Organization A were a mix of medical doctors, psychologists, and managers in the medical community, as well as business community representatives and news media professionals. Also, several of these persons have a direct personal relationship with a member or members of the organization's target population.

Membership on the board was generally through invitation from either the volunteer president, the paid chief executive officers or from various volunteer members of the board of directors. The organizations were free to create a nominating committee to propose new members for the board. Additionally, recommendations may also come from the business community, medical community or from members of the various community support groups that form the organization's constituent base through the communities.

Organization B: The chief executive officer was an individual with an international background who has held various executive level positions in development programs in several countries. This individual was a person of extraordinary high energy, with broad, yet realistic, sense of corporate vision. The CEO travels the length and breath of the particular state in which the organization was located and personally was involved in every aspect of the organization's service development and delivery to the target population.

The CEO was delegated a high degree of professional latitude to conduct the implementation of the move to become a statewide organization. This, according to

several members of the board, was recognition of the professional ability and knowledge level of the CEO and the degree of confidence placed in this individual by the board.

The volunteer members of the board of directors who participated in this study reflect representation from the medical community in which the organization was based, the pharmaceutical industry, the business community, the public educational system and individuals who may have a direct personal relationship with a member or members of the organization's target population. Membership on the boards of both organizations generally tends to reflect that organization's view of what particular professional talents and consumer representation was potentially most helpful to further the mission of the organization.

The basic programs/services provided by the two organizations were quite similar and follow the same pattern in purpose, structure and intent. Both organizations illustrate basic similarities in program/services such as provision of education and in-house training seminars regarding the challenges faced by the target population, training of personnel in educational institutions, medical facilities and community businesses, advocacy on behalf of the members of the target population who may face discrimination in employment or other areas, information regarding the specifics of the medical condition experienced by the target population and referral of members of the target population and their families to various appropriate community resources appropriate for their particular needs. Additionally, both organizations sponsor and coordinate target population support groups that promote mutual support and education and, as funds were available, some financial assistance may be provided to selected, needy individuals and

families. Table 2 provides an overview of the program/services provided by both

organizations on a consistent basis each year.

Table 2 *Overview of Basic Programs and Services*

Education	The organizations provide two basic forms of educational programs/services: 1. In-service training: This was provided for school personnel, medical professionals, and the business community concerning better understanding the health challenges of the target population. 2. Public Education: Accomplished through providing literature, speakers and information booths at community events.
Advocacy	The organizations provide an advocacy service for individuals in their service target population. This may take the form of serving as an advocate for persons experiencing forms of discrimination due to their health challenges. It further incorporates advocating for state/federal funding of programs/services and research on behalf of the organization's constituent target population.
Information and Referral	The organizations provide a wealth of information in written form, audio/visual and speaker's bureaus. Additionally, members of the target population or the general public may

	contact the organizations be referred to appropriate resources. Newsletters were frequently employed along with electronic data transmission and e-mail responses.
Support Groups	Support groups of members of the target population form the very foundation of both organizations support base and service receiving populations. Regular meetings were scheduled, usually on monthly bases, to provide specific information and to provide a nurturing environment for the target population and to encourage mutual self-help projects among the members of the support group.
Financial Resources	The organizations provide a limited amount of financial assistance to individuals and families.

Triangulation in Data Collection

In keeping with the requirements of triangulation in data collection, this study made use of a variety of data collection information sources to increase the validity of the data assessed and presented. The number of respondents and responses varied by method of data collection. The personal interviews were the most thorough due to the presence and skill of the interviewer (see following table).

Table 3 *Data Collection Matrix: Type of Information by Source*

Information Sources	Interviews	Documents	Audio Recorded	Percentage of Participation
Volunteer Board Presidents – Personal Interviews	Yes		Yes	100%
Chief executive officers – Personal Interviews	Yes		Yes	100%
Members of Boards of Directors – Surveyed	Yes			48% average
Meeting Minutes		Yes		reviewed by researcher
Annual Reports		Yes		reviewed by researcher

Written Strategic Plans	Yes	reviewed by researcher
News articles	Yes	reviewed by researcher
Internal Revenue Service Form 990: Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax	Yes	reviewed by researcher

As an additional aspect of triangulation, the researcher reviewed the written minutes shared by the two organizations. The minutes are considered as confidential and privileged information. One organization provided several years of minutes pertaining to why it developed a strategic plan (all due to the need for money and to create a state wide organization). Names were included along with confidential fiscal information on the business of the organization and establishing a regional office. The other organization provided only one set of minutes (June, 04) pertaining to establishing a regional office as the centerpiece of its strategic plan. They contained names of participants, confidential descriptions of internal financial matters, and fund raising items.

Analysis of Data and Discussion

The previous section established the similarity of the two participating

organizations and reported on the number and type of responses to the survey instrument.

The following section will present data and analyses of the information gathered from the

organizations to address the research questions of this study. Each research question was

addressed through both in-depth personal interviews with the volunteer presidents and the

paid chief executive officers of Organizations A and B. Additionally, information

obtained from volunteer members of the two boards of directors follows and associations

drawn between the impressions of the groups of participants.

Research Question 1 (Pre-Implementation Period): What Environmental Factors Did

The Organization Report As The Impetus For Adopting A Strategic Plan?

The presidents, chief executive officers and boards of directors unilaterally cited

the procurement of funds and funding sources as the main environmental factor behind

the impetus for strategic planning. The president of Organization A stated, "considering

the nature of fundraising in the community, the organization wanted to define where its

niche would be and how the organization could plan to find the resources or funds that

would be on a repeatable basis, as well as on a one time basis." The president of

Organization B noted decreasing financial revenues from traditional sources and a need

for increasing services to the organization's target population. Chief executive officers of

both organizations indicated "organizational survival" and lack of financial resources.

The boards of directors noted the organizations' on-going need to conduct fund

raising activities, and pragmatically, the need to move the present organizations from

their corporate single headquarter structure to that of operating one or more regional or district offices.

Perception of pre-implementation environmental strengths and weaknesses.

To increase validity in the instrument, all respondents were asked to identify their perceived external and internal strengths and weaknesses prior to the implementation of the strategic plan, and to note the opportunities available to each organization.

In discussing external strengths, all respondents cited valuable ties to other organizations and support systems that, in turn, strengthened the organization's standing in the community, specifically, being "situated in the heart of a thriving economic base... surrounded by successful major corporations and internationally recognized medical facilities" and "working relationships" with a highly visible medical/university complex. More globally, the general enthusiasm and positivism from the general public also was cited as an external strength.

Respondents overwhelmingly cited organizational personnel as the most powerful internal strength. The strengths of a dynamic staff, well-connected and steadfast CEOs, boards of directors with "keen interests," and the "passion of the young people" that comprise the organization were all mentioned. Another respondent cited the organization's infrastructure and on-going support of the board of directors.

The external weakness (threats to survival) for the respondent organizations can be summed up as "lack of funding or funding sources." This perception validates the reports of dwindling or changing funding sources as the main impetus for the adoption of a strategic plan. In one organization, some respondents further cited the mandated sharing of revenues with the national organization as another drain on the finances of his/her

organization and lack of community visibility as exacerbating influences on dwindling funding sources.

As with internal strengths of the respondent organizations, internal weaknesses center on problems with personnel. Developing the sophistication and maturity of the generally all-volunteer boards of directors, limited numbers of personnel, "one time program" mentality of some volunteer personnel, and in the case of one organization, tenuous relationships with the parent organization were all perceived as burgeoning internal weaknesses.

Several respondents cited the gains to be achieved by learning to partner effectively with local, very influential fund raising and fund granting federated organizations as perceived opportunities. Others noted an expansion of the geographical scope of the organization and the youthfulness of the volunteer leadership.

Analysis of Research Question 1

This question was structured into two segments of inquiry: determining the original impetus for formulating a strategic plan and identifying the external and internal environmental strengths and weaknesses of the organizations at the time of implementation (also known as an "environmental scan"). Analyses follow.

Original impetus for plan formulation.

The driving force behind strategic plan formulation was the financial issue that characterizes such nonprofit organizations, specifically the ongoing lack of adequate funds. Continual acquisition of funding sources is necessary to operate the organizations, provide services to the target population, and simultaneously move the organization to a more visible statewide prominence and provide enhanced and even expanded services.

The lack of financial resources for many nonprofit organizations has been well documented. For instance, Manzo (2003) reports that as a result of pervasive environmental challenges, the nonprofit sector is left attempting to accomplish expanded goals with increasingly limited financial resources. Additionally, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Studies in 2003 reported that as the twenty-first century begins, America's nonprofit organizations are facing a host of challenges. As a result, traditional sources of revenue for most nonprofit organizations are unstable or at best highly unpredictable or declining at worst. Also, the Carnegie Corporation (2004) noted that, in recent years, the nonprofit sector has undergone significant changes and now faces global challenges that threaten to weaken its influence and compromise its mission in society. Changes in government policies and severe cuts in federal funding, not only have made it difficult for nonprofit organizations to fulfill their mandates, but also forced many of these organizations to begin changing their services. The responses in this study underscore the paucity of funding sources and the concomitant use of strategic planning by nonprofit organizations to address this need.

Environmental scan of organizational strengths and weaknesses.

Bryson (2004) noted that the nonprofit organization today exists in a rapidly changing environment. The nonprofit organization is attempting to provide a greater diversity of services in an environment that is increasingly less supportive. This is an environment that is not only increasingly uncertain, but also more tightly interconnected with changes in society. This results in demand for increased program initiatives in the nonprofit human service sector, while concomitantly financial donor bases are experiencing attrition from economic changes. The Bearing Point Corporation (2004)

observed that the nonprofit sector is being driven by rising service delivery expectations and increased pressure from fund granting organizations to provide more and more improved services effectively and efficiently. According to Pietersen (2002), these heightened expectations create a different corporate "playing field" that the leadership of all organizations must now strategically address if they are to survive.

Bryson (2004) specifically addresses the aspect of the organization conducting a scan of its external and internal environments as a prelude to formulation of a strategic plan. Essentially, to respond effectively to changes in their environments, organizations must understand the external and internal contexts within which they find themselves so they can develop effective strategies. The purpose of assessing the organization's strengths and weaknesses was to provide information in relation to the opportunities and challenges it faces, and in doing so, information vital to the organization's survival.

The following is an analysis of the reported environmental scans for each organization. There was agreement among the respondents of both organizations that the following external strengths were identified:

1. The organizations had developed strong working relationships with very influential medical and business sectors of their communities.

2. The organizations enjoyed positive images in their respective communities and had successfully established a sound history free of acrimonious incidents or public relations problems.

3. Both organizations had developed numerous target population support groups in various geographic localities of their states. These groups provided a form of visibility for the organizations and also serve as the nucleus for localized fund raising efforts.

The reported consensus of internal strengths of personnel is important to a nonprofit because it is a reflection of public perception and this positive perception is a prerequisite to enhance fund raising activities on behalf of the organization. The noting of personnel as an internal strength also speaks well of internal organizational satisfaction.

Lack of funding sources as the most reported external weakness is not surprising as it is critical to the future viability and actual survival of the organizations. The specter of dwindling financial resources was an overarching theme unanimously identified by the respondents of both organizations. Interestingly, one of the organizations expressed some concern that there had been the possibility of having to compete in fundraising activities with the national organization of which it was a member.

Personnel issues were the most reported internal weakness. The limited number of personnel available to manage the organization and simultaneously carry out the delivery of program/services to the target population was a common problem for both organizations. The personnel limitation situation stems from the external weakness of a dwindling financial source and the lack of being able to identify steady and adequate sources to compensate for these shrinking resources.

Associated with the dwindling financial resource aspect, a common problem of what was termed a "one-time program" mentality. This was particularly troublesome to both of the chief executive officers as well as some of the volunteer board of directors. Specifically, it emanates from fund raising activities that are one-time special events that require a substantial outlay of people power and even funds to conduct the activity. Often, the activity is never repeated and a following is not developed that may provide support for such an activity if it is conducted again.

Research Question 2: What Broad Achievement Goals Did The Organization Identify In

The Initial Formulation Of The Strategic Plan?

As expected from the consensus reached as to the impetus for strategic planning and the attendant perceived external weaknesses, the broad goals to be achieved from the implementation of the strategic plan center on the issue of expanded funding. Additional funding was to be achieved through the following specific goals: planning of fundraising activities, procurement of more strategic office space, creation of regional offices, acquisition of a noted spokesperson, replacement/expansion of personnel, development of new programs, and provision of more/varied services to target populations.

Analysis of Research Question 2

In assessing question two, the overriding theme centers on each organization increasing the amount of funds flowing to the organizations through conducting more focused and dollar targeted fund raising. This theme was tied often to advancing the organizations to a statewide position with a substantial increase in the number of local community support groups to be established. The move to a statewide structure was viewed as a strategy to enhance each organization's visibility and local presence and enable the organizations to raise funds from a broader geographic base than currently possible. While the organizations participating in this study were located in two different states in the Eastern portion of the United States, the theme of strengthening fund raising and establishing a statewide organization presence was a common multi-jurisdictional strategy. Both organizations belong to the same national association and there may well be a nationwide strategic initiative to consider being implemented by various similar organizations in other localities.

The two participating organizations expressed one other common theme of the hiring of additional organizational personnel as quickly as financial resources permitted. Organization B actually had implemented this strategy using currently available financial resources to establish one office in a geographically strategic part of the state. This organization did retain the services of a part time, paid regional director. This particular director resigned from the position approximately one year into the process. The organization, however, learned a strategic fact from the experience, as reported by some board members. It was reported that the next regional person retained would come from a fund development background in corporate, nonprofit, financial development. Other than the foregoing common themes, the respondents cited a variety of local needs that were to be addressed such as increased office space, recruitment of volunteer board members possessing specific talents (finances, management, program development, media contacts).

Research Question 3: What Type Of Implementation Issues, If Any, Did The Organization Report As Having An Influenced The Implementation Of Their Strategic Plan?

Clarity of objectives provided regarding implementation of the strategic plan.

A review of the data reveals that both the paid chief executive officers and the volunteer presidents of Organizations A and B perceived the implementation objectives as possessing clarity and appropriateness to the implementation tasks. A majority (9 of 10) of the responding board members confirmed these perceptions.

The president of Organization A stressed the "well thought out" nature of the implementation objectives achieved by teamwork on the part of the board volunteers and the organization's CEO. The president of Organization B noted that a board of directors

subcommittee was appointed from the outset to work directly with the CEO, provide assistance where appropriate, monitor the process of implementation and work out any potential difficult issues before they became genuine problems for the organization.

Sufficiency of authority granted to those responsible for implementation.

One chief executive officer described the board as a "hands on" volunteer leadership group and was able to work within the board's monitoring role, and another commented that "authority was not a problem" in implementing the strategic plan. A president noted that this was a "non issue" in his/her organization as "the chief executive officer" clearly knows the lines of authority," and "the board of directors is quite good at specifying objectives to avoid ambiguity and confusion." Another added the information that, in his/her organization, the board retained final authority for the commitment of any extraordinary funds as certain plan objectives required financial support to activate. The boards were divided between reporting adequate authority for the person in charge and not knowing or not being sure about this issue.

The level of skill and experience of those responsible for implementation.

In one of the organizations, some respondents expressed trepidation over the experience and skill of the person to whom the responsibility for implementation was delegated, while some expressed confidence in the person in charge of implementation. The trepidation was not presented as a negative implication; rather it reflected an assessment that in one of the organizations there was an inexperience factor that existed. The chief executive officer, and many of the board volunteers, in this particular organization simply did not have strategic planning experience nor did they possess extensive technical skills in conducting an implementation of such an undertaking.

Additionally, the level of skill and experience of one of the boards during the period of implementation also was noted. One respondent concluded that the organization, with its severely limited financial capability, simply did the best it could with its personnel, noting that the board was comprised one hundred percent of volunteers who have other responsibilities, and that this must be factored into the skill and experience concern. The boards of directors reported acceptable levels of skill and experience overall, with one member reporting "limited" skill and another commenting that it was a "learning experience" for all.

The use of outcome/performance measures.

Neither of the participant organizations employed formal measures (e.g. statistical data collection and analysis) to assess the outcomes and/or performance related to the strategic plans. Rather, they applied informal, or qualitative measures such as reviewing board minutes and reports prepared by the CEO, reviewing numbers served of the organization's target population, and comparing the current status to the objectives contained in the strategic plan.

Outcomes of implementation activation were reported on in this manner throughout the year. Essentially, such reports were in the form of "process" evaluation format and provide and overview of happenings pertinent to the implementation. Otherwise, the organizations do not operate with a formal evaluation component. One president concluded that, "the organization is weak in this area," and noted that the organization has not established a more formalized evaluation component due to limited staff, limited dollars in the budget and time constraints to accomplish the implementation under constrained person power and fiscal capabilities of such a small entity. A majority

of responding board members confirmed lack of outcome/performance measures as a weakness of the organization.

While both organizations' CEO's were quite cognizant that outcome performance measures are very important to the organization, they cited a severe lack of resources such as trained personnel, funds and time constraints as preventing the development of such measures.

Did the priority of conducting the implementation become altered over time by the emergence of other factors or environmental conditions?

Both the volunteer president and the paid chief executive officer of Organization A responded that the priority did become altered. They attribute this to two specific factors. The first is that as the organization continued to gain practical operating experience, the leadership modified the plan to address newly identified, high priority needs of the target population membership. The alterations were integrated into the plan as an update and did not change the focus of the plan. The focus remained constant: raise money, increase community visibility of the organization and eventually segue to a state wide organizational structure. The changes were of a practical nature obtained from actual experiences and the fact that new program/service needs of the target population were identified and accommodated. No focus change really occurred. Second, the constant lack of adequate financial resources diverted the organization away from implementation so that it could devote time and energy to financial survival activities almost exclusively. In Organization B, the perception of the majority of respondents was that the priority did not become altered.

Conflict within the organization, specifically among board members, CEO's .

Conflict among organization leaders and boards was not noted as an implementation issue. The volunteer presidents and paid chief executive officers of both organizations reported an absence of conflicts among volunteer board members. A majority of board members reported no conflict over the implementation of the strategic plan, while three noted conflict in another area unrelated to the implementation of the strategic plan.

Other issues?

The organization's presidents and chief executive officers as well as board members reported none. See Appendix E for data files for Research Question 3.

Analysis of Research Question 3

In the literature review of Chapter II, there were certain common implementation issues discussed that may exert an impact on the implementation process. These issues, if unaddressed and allowed to take an unstructured course can stymie the process, for example, a lack of clarity in the objectives set forth for the implementer(s) to achieve. Additionally, the level and experience of those responsible for conducting the implementation has a direct bearing on the conduct of the process. Along with the foregoing the issues of the integration of outcome/performance measures integrated into the implementation process is an important component to build into the process. Without such measures, it is difficult for the organization to ascertain where the process is at "benchmark" time posts and ultimately determines success or lack of success emanating from the process.

Research Question 4: Did the organization adhere to the initial strategic plan after implementation? b) What, if any, changes were made to the initial plan by the nonprofit organization following implementation? c) What was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation? d) If changes occurred, how did the changes following implementation affect the structure and operations of the organization?

Did the organization adhere to the initial strategic plan after implementation?

There was full and unanimous agreement between the organizations' chief executive officers and the presidents that there had indeed been fidelity to the initial plan. While there had been some practical modification made dictated by experience realities, the initial plan and its objectives were implemented as written by the strategic planners. The boards concurred for the most part, with two respondents noting, "more or less" as a qualifier.

What, if any, changes were made to the initial plan by the nonprofit organization following implementation?

Changes made to the initial plan according to the chief executive officer and the president of Organization A was that the organization became more focused on becoming a statewide organization. In the case of Organization B, both the chief executive officer and the president stated that since the 2003-2004 plan was still in the implementation stage, changes were being held in abeyance pending more experience being obtained as implementation continues. A majority (10 of 12) of respondent board members did not answer this question or were "not sure."

What was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation?

The chief executive officer of Organization A indicated that the rationale for plan changes came from recognizing the need to move beyond a one or two program/service mix for the target population. To formalize this, new objectives were incorporated into the plan directed toward expanding the types of program/services provided by the organizations. The president of Organization A indicated that as the organization gained experience it "learned better ways to do things".

The chief executive officer of Organization B, as well as the president, voiced the perceptions that as the 2003-2004 plan was still being implemented at the time of the study, this particular question did not apply to that organization. Again, a majority (10 of 12) of respondent board members did not answer or were "not sure."

If changes occurred, how did the changes following implementation affect the structure and operations of the organization?

The chief executive officer of organization A stated that more attention was directed toward the professional development of the staff and the volunteers serving on the board of directors. The president of Organization A noted that currently there was not that much of an observable impact on the organization. The chief executive officer of Organization A, as well as the volunteer president did not offer responses to the question. Additionally, 12 respondent board members did not respond and one reported "no changes." Table 4 provides an overview of the responses of the volunteer presidents and the paid chief executive officers of Organizations A and B's perceptions relative to fidelity to the initial strategic plan after implementation.

Analysis of Research Question 4

This research question was oriented to elicit data related adherence to the strategic plan. An analysis of each part of the question follows. The poor response from the board of the directors was so pervasive that it is addressed in a separate section.

Did the organization adhere to the initial strategic plan as written after implementation, and to what extent?

Both the chief executive officer and volunteer resident of Organization A agreed that the organization did adhere generally (have fidelity to) the initial strategic plan as it was written, after implementation. The only time a modification to the plan occurred was rooted in a change in organizational priority. Both individuals concurred that priorities change as the organization proceeds with implementation over a period of years. In Organization A, implementation only proceeded as quickly as the organization could sustain financially any changes that required significant dollar outlays to achieve. As a result, the plan was not implemented all at one time. It was phased in over a period of years.

The chief executive officer and the volunteer president of Organization B indicated that the organization did adhere to the plan. However, since the plan is not implemented fully and is still in the process of implementation over a period of time, it is not possible to conclusively respond fully to the question. Essentially, the plan, as written, is being implemented and fidelity exists primarily because the organization has decided to delay making changes until full implementation had been achieved.

What, if any, changes were made to the initial strategic plan following implementation?

Both the chief executive officer and the volunteer president of Organization A concurred that the major change to the plan was the focus on becoming a statewide program/service provider. Since, in the view of the chief executive officer and the volunteer president of the Organization B, the plan was not fully implemented, changes were not formally recognized at this point. The use of a staggered implementation plan and its bearing on this study will be discussed in Chapter V.

What was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation?

The chief executive officer of Organization A presented the opinion that the organization must move beyond being only a one or two service program provider. The volunteer president of the board added the concept that as the personnel of the organization learned enhanced methodologies of carrying out the mission of the organization, these methodologies became adapted and integrated into the organization's conduct.

In the view of the chief executive officer and the volunteer president of Organization B, the plan is still in the process of implementation. As such, no opinions or perceptions were offered in response to the inquiry.

If changes occurred, how did the changes following implementation affect the structure and operations of the organizations?

The chief executive officer of Organization A stated that more attention was directed toward the professional development of the staff and the volunteers associated with the organization. It was recognized by the organization's leadership that to

implement the strategic plan fully, additional professional skills would be required. The volunteer president of the board of directors indicated that the significant and observable changes would occur as the organization moves to a statewide structure with a statewide board of directors.

The chief executive officer and the volunteer president of Organization B did not respond to the question due to the implementation process not yet being completed.

Limited response from the Boards of Directors.

One unanticipated finding of this research effort was the apparent lack of familiarity with the status of the organization's strategic plan on the part of some members of the boards of directors of both organizations. For instance, in one of the organizations, the responses to the inquiry of whether the organization adhered to the strategic plan as initially written elicited a 33.3% response of "not sure", and a 33.3% response of "yes it was revised, and 41.6% responded that the organization did adhere to the initial plan as written. In the case of the other organization the responses to the same question indicated that 33.3% of the respondents reported that the organization did adhere to the plan, 33.3% responded that the organization "more or less" adhered to the plan and 33.3% did not respond to the question.

In relation to the question of what, if any, changes were made to the initial strategic plan following implementation the responses were as follows: 16.6% of the volunteer board members reported that a change was made to hire an additional staff person, 41.6% reported not being sure any changes were made and 41.6% chose not to respond to this particular question.

The response to the question of what was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation reveals that 25.0% of the respondents could specify why changes were made due either to practical experience being gained or the loss of additional funds prompted changes and 75.0% of the respondents chose not to respond to the question. When asked if changes occurred, how did the changes affect the structure and operations of the organizations, the respondents replied as follows: 8.3 % were able to report a response to the question, while 91.7 % chose not to respond to the question.

Considering the time spent and importance of the formulation of a plan, few board members seemed able or chose not to respond to questions about the progress and status of the implementation. A number of researchers have addressed the involvement of personnel in the process of strategic planning. Fogg (1999) cites the main focus of the implementation process must be on establishing clear accountability for those responsible for the process. Specifically, the leadership of the organization must align actions throughout the organization to address priority issues and translate these issues into assigned, measurable action plans with specific accountability systems.

For Bryson (2004), the implementation process is comprised of interrelated steps. The focus is on creating an "action plan" that details all roles, responsibilities, and authority of the implementers and oversight committees, or boards of directors. It is the responsibility of the organization's leadership to provide the needed resources and to establish an "up and down" communication protocol. Tosti (2000) observed that there are identifiable factors contributing to an organizations experiencing success with implementation. Such organizations employ a system wide model used to guide the changes within the organization. Tosti concludes that communication of the

organization's goals and the value of the implementation processes to achieve them must be articulated clearly throughout the organization to obtain the support needed for success in completing the implementation and operating the organization in the future. According to Quintanilla, Schatz, and Benibo (2000), changes must be conducted with on-going, clear communication directed toward the personnel involved. If the communication is insufficient, members who were new to the organization do no receive the information necessary for assimilation and comprehension of the significance of the changes brought about by the implementation. Essentially, people develop different meanings and different values and beliefs. This could even impact the stability of the organization as changes occur.

According to Gillen (2000), implementation is too important to be just managed; it must be led. This requires inspiring and directing the learning that is required to implement strategies in a world of change. Accomplishing this requires executive leadership. Friedlander (1983) stated that the executive function is to lead the organization to its reconstructive learning. This means to encourage exploration and confrontation of differing viewpoints, to foster structures within the organization that encourage contact between differing subsystems in which power balance as well as trust and valuing occur. According to Friedlander (1983) the executive role is to foster a structure and a climate for planned transition in which the organization's knowledge resources were utilized fully utilized.

There is a link between leading implementation and learning within the organization. Gillen (2000) cites that leadership at all levels in the organization must use vision and the values of the organization to focus learning about implementation strategic

changes. Without the linkage between learning and leading, establishment of a workable implementation process may be allowed to drift without coherent direction.

In Friedlander's perspective (1983), this learning aspect is the key to the implementation strategy. It is the essential component in the success of implementing strategic initiatives. The chief executive officer, as leader, is the one guiding and inspiring the learning process and creating and motivating the thoughts and actions required to implement the plan.

According to the Harvard Business School (2003), there are identifiable elements of what constitutes a "good implementation process". Essentially a good implementation process is simple and not overly complex, and the people associated with the organization who will be affected directly by any changes create it. The implementation must have measurable milestones to chart progress. Finally, and perhaps of greatest relevance to the organizations in the study is the requirement for constant communication that constantly tells the why, how and where things stand.

Research Question 5: a) Did the organization use the previous year's strategic plan without alteration in the subsequent year? b) What, if any, alterations were made to the initial plan by the nonprofit organization in preparation for implementation in the subsequent year? c) What was the rationale for altering the initial plan prior to implementation in the subsequent year? d) If alterations were made, how did the alterations affect the structure and operations of the organization once implementation had occurred?

Respondents universally neglected this question. The researcher theorizes that as both organizations were in the process of implementing a plan, this question proved irrelevant.

Chapter Summary

The data analysis detailed in this chapter trended to confirm current research findings regarding strategic planning in organizations, as well as indicating the need to conduct more extensive studies on the use of strategic planning in nonprofit organizations. Chapter V will present a more detailed summary, implications of the study, and recommendations for future research in this area.

The contention of researchers that funding sources for nonprofit organizations are dwindling was confirmed and validated by respondents in the responses to research questions 1 and 2. Specifically, renewal or expansion of funding sources was noted as the impetus for adopting a strategic plan, as an external environmental weakness of the organization at the time of adoption, and a broad achievement goal of the strategic plans.

Research question 3 was phrased to collect data regarding implementation issues, as there is a large body of research regarding the impact of how the strategic plan is implemented on the eventual outcomes. While all respondents noted that the objectives of the implementation were clear, that there was sufficient authority delegated to those in charge, and that there were no conflicts during the implementation, the question regarding the experience and skill of the person in charge elicited some concerns from one of the organizations, which may be relative to the limited board responses to research question 4. Additionally, the lack of the use of outcome/performance measures was a

subject of concern for the respondents of both organizations. These issues will be discussed in Chapter V.

Research question 4 concerned fidelity to the strategic plan and was affirmed by the presidents and chief executive officers of both organizations. However, the board responses to this question revealed a possible disconnect between the board and the chief executives and presidents as to the status of the strategic plan. This will be discussed further in Chapter V. Research question 5 appeared to be unnecessary as both organizations were in the process of implementing their first strategic plans, using a multiphase process.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations

Chapter Overview

This chapter summarizes and interprets the research findings gathered in this study. The limitations of the study are discussed. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further investigation.

Summary of the Study

This year-long, qualitative, multi case study focused on two financially limited (less than $300,00 per annum in operating budget resources), urban-based, nonprofit, health education/advocacy organizations to study the degree of fidelity each demonstrated in adhering to their initial corporate strategic plans. The usefulness of this study was its development of a greater understanding of the implementation process faced and the factors affecting implementation of a strategic plan in such organizations. Concomitantly, the issues of why and when changes should occur provided insight into aspects of plan fidelity. Finally, the use of a multiphase implementation process is discussed as a factor in the small nonprofit organization milieu of strategic planning.

In general, there was a sense of optimism from respondents about the future and both organizations' capabilities of surviving in today's rapidly changing environment. This corporate optimism has been tempered by the development of a sharpened awareness of the difficulties of fund raising in the first decade of the new century. The actual ability of the organizations to survive is predicated on the commitment and energies of the small paid corps of personnel that provide the year-in and year-out

consistency and infrastructure of the organizations. It is this paid personnel coupled with a dedicated group of volunteers who freely give their time and talent, that generate this spirit of optimism and propel the organization forward into implementing their strategic plans

Impetus for Strategic Plan Implementation

This study found that the organizations were quite clear in the consistent theme that the "driving" impetus for formulation of the strategic plan was financial need to facilitate organization survival. Such survival was necessary to enable the organizations to provide for the continuance of program/services to an identified high need target population. To address this, the organizations, both members of the same national umbrella association, were exposed to similar organizational growth and enhancement training, developed relatively similar strategies to provide a degree of financial stability. The strategies primarily centered on increasing community visibility through moving the organizations to a statewide program/service structure. This expanded structure will be founded on expanding additional support groups comprised of members of the organization's target population in the new geographic territories.

Interestingly, both organizations developed strategic plans on their own, primarily because they lacked the financial resources to retain strategic planning consultants. In spite of the lack of experience in the area of strategic planning, the organizations produced and implemented working plans. This is an indication of the ingenuity and unique capabilities of the leadership of these nonprofit organizations.

The common theme readily identified on the part of both participating organizations was the issue of expanded funding for operations and program/service

delivery to the target population. A corollary theme emerged centering on each organization recognizing the need to develop a more focused approach to fund generation. Particularly, the chief executive officers were cognizant of the necessity of educating their respective boards of directors to move away from a "one-time" fund raising event way of thinking and move to a multi-tiered fund development approach.

General Strengths and Weaknesses

The key themes pertaining to external strengths were in relation to the working relationships that had been forged with prestigious medical and business entities in each of the communities. Overwhelmingly, relative to internal strengths identified in the strategic plan environmental scans of both organizations were the dynamism, commitment and efforts of the paid personnel associated with the organizations. Essentially, it was the basic continuity and daily infrastructure that the paid chief executive officers and their very small staffs provided that was perceived as the most important internal strength identified in these scans.

In relation to opportunities achieved from the eventual implementation of a strategic plan, both organizations displayed a similar theme of "organizational gain" flowing from effectively partnering with other influential fund raising and fund granting organizations to achieve geographic expansion. The overarching theme is identified as one that follows the line or reasoning that links increased funds for each organization flowing from increasing each organization's visibility through affiliation with larger, highly influential institutions and territorial expansion. The external critical threats to survival for both organizations were depicted as a consistent "lack of funding" for both

organizational operation and delivery of the organizations program/services to the target population.

Personnel Issues

Assessing the environmental scan's perceptions of what constituted the most critical internal weakness of both organizations centered on concern with the limited number of personnel in both organizations. With such staffs, there was some concern that they could actually manage the organizations, continue to provide program/services, and simultaneously move the organizations to higher visibility and establish statewide structures. While evaluation of the personnel of the organization was not the principle focus of this current study, one may conjecture that the skill and experience levels of the paid chief executive officers of the financially small nonprofit organization may be an area warranting future study. In the experience of this researcher, there frequently is a connection between successful implementation and the experience and skill of the person tasked to bear the implementation responsibilities.

Strategic plan formulation is still in an immature stage of development in the financially small, nonprofit organization milieu. In the small nonprofit organization, it is not generally feasible to choose among several strategic planning staff candidates to manage the implementation responsibility. As a result, the implementation process may have to be managed by individuals who, though talented, may not possess a great depth of experience as nonprofit, corporate strategic planners and plan implementers. Therefore, a suggestion that this researcher offers is that, in the nonprofit setting, training in strategic planning and the implementation of such plans is a developmental area worth pursuing.

Lack of Performance and Outcome Measures

A majority of respondents noted that the lack of performance measures was an organizational weakness that needed correcting in the future. The absence of formal outcome and performance measurement efforts may be related to the small staff size of the organizations, lack of funds and familiarity with statistical performance measurement efforts, and the general lack of time to conduct such efforts given the constant pressure to procure organizational survival funds. From the perspective of this researcher, this is an area worthy of additional study with a view toward developing a financially affordable measurement approach that is appropriate for the small nonprofit organization. For example, affiliation with local institutions of higher education could prove to be of mutual benefit to both the nonprofit organization as well as the educational institution. The nonprofit organization gains the expertise, ideally "pro bono" of the higher education institution, which would construct program outcome measures for the organization. The higher education institution gains from providing community services to a worthwhile organization. This could potentially lead to contractual situations supported by grant funds.

Fidelity to the Plan

The overarching theme was that essentially the organizations did adhere to their initial strategic plans as written. Fidelity was ascertained from examining the respondents' answers to both interview and written surveys. Additionally, those boards of director's minutes that were made available were reviewed pertaining to the organization's environmental scans, strategic plan formulation and plan implementation. Concurrently, the written strategic plans themselves were reviewed as well as relevant

news articles, Internal Revenue Service annual reports, and organizational reports prepared for the boards of directors and others pertaining to the organizations.

Two very different findings were uncovered with respect to changing the strategic plan after implementation. One organization described the rationale as stemming from recognizing the need to get beyond a one or two program/service providing type of organization. Concomitantly, the organization gained experience on "how to do things differently." In the case of the other participating organization, the leadership was of the opinion that the most current plan was still in the implementation process stage and such a question was unanswerable at this point in the implementation.

The organizations participating in this current study followed a multiphase implementation process that unfolded over a period of years. According to Bryson (2004) in the implementation of strategic plans, there are two approaches to consider, direct and staged (or multiphase). In the case of a direct implementation approach, all proposed changes are accomplished essentially at the same time, whereas staged or multiphase implementation incorporates changes sequentially.

As Bryson (2004) indicates, staged or multiphase implementation presumes that implementation will occur in waves. The exact nature of the staged process depends on the difficulties and complexities faced by the organization. In this study, the organizations essentially employed the staged approach. While this was not an original component of either's strategic plan, reality dictated that it be adopted as the implementation approach. The realities of constrained finances, the reliance on extremely small staff complements, the use of wholly volunteer boards of directors and the daily

necessity of continuing to provide program/services to the organization's target populations literally pushed the organizations into a staged implementation process.

Communication Disconnect between Presidents/CEOS and Board Members

While the volunteer presidents and the paid chief executive officers of both organizations were clear in their responses to the questions, overall, 83% of the volunteer board of directors responded that they "were not sure" to some questions. A communication problem may exist relative to keeping the volunteer board leadership informed of changes and outcomes of such changes. Bryson (2004) states that attention must be devoted to the design and use of communication networks and the messages and messengers within them.

It falls to the chief executive officers to establish such organizational networks and use these to reduce resistance based on divergent attitudes and lack of participation. Bryson (2004) suggests that those charged with implementation responsibilities provide orientation sessions and one-on-one interactions to reduce the communication break down and potential lack of support for the implementation. Kettner (2002) discusses the "lines of communication" in the organizational environment. It is not unusual to find that much information gets filtered out of the organization before it gets from top to bottom or bottom to top. In many cases little of the original message reaches its intended destination.

According to Weinbach (1994), communication in the organization is a major factor in shaping its climate. As the leader, the chief executive officer's task is to promote the flow of good, useful, supportive communication while limiting the flow of

information destructive of morale and that sidetracks individual and group energies. Communication can break down and cause problems.

The aspect of an apparent communication disconnect between the chief executive officers and some members of the boards of directors was not a targeted area in this study. However, in the perception of the researcher, the communication disconnect relative to the organizations' strategic plan's status may be attributable to differing perceptions of what constitutes communication.

In newer, small, nonprofit organizations, the paid staff and the volunteer leadership generally tend to work closely together on all aspects of organization survival and delivery of program/services to the target population. This phase of the organization's development can extend over a period of several years. While in this mode, communication is passed between and among the staff and the volunteer leadership on a daily basis through conversation, telephone, or electronically.

As the organization ages, there is a tendency for the volunteer board members to turn more control over to the paid chief executive officer. Concurrently, the communication begins to shift to information sharing at board of directors meetings or within sub committees of the board via the chief executive officer.

However, as time goes on, the communication often shifts to written reports and meeting minutes read by the volunteer board members. Essentially, one may speculate that a board member only knows the status of a strategic plan as it is relayed by the chief executive officer in reports or at board meetings. Compounding the communication situation for one of the subject organizations is that the board does not meet on a monthly basis.

In this situation, information flow is limited by the chief executive officer not having to provide detailed information monthly, face–to–face with a board of directors group. In the cases of board members who responded as "not sure" of the status of the strategic plan or if alterations had been made to the plan, one must bear in mind that these are volunteers who have delegated control of the organization and communication about the organization to the chief executive officer.

The researcher conjectures that these types of responses may be fairly typical of the small, nonprofit organization that must devote most of its attention to fiscal survival while simultaneously attempting to provide a package of program/services to its targeted populations. Watching details, other than money matters, expenses, and revenue may be a stretch beyond the reach of small nonprofit organizations. There is a tendency for the organization's volunteer leadership to develop what has been termed "managing by exception". In this model, only those organizational issues, either external or internal, that develop an egregious posture are dealt with. Other issues not in such dire straits are left to the discretion of the chief executive officer to address.

Therefore, in the small, nonprofit organization, the volunteer board members have a host of other current issues to address. Accordingly, one may speculate that board investigation of a plan that they have been informed is working, is not a likely scenario. If the situation, or its concomitant changes, do not cost money and are not causing a problem, the tendency may be not to probe further. However, it has been this researcher's professional experience, that it is necessary to devote considerable amount of time to foster strong communicating between a chief executive officer and the governing board

of directors under regular conditions and extremely important in the implementation of a major plan that will effectuate changes in the organization for the future.

In retrospect, the researcher would have spent additional time exploring this area. The chief executive officers, as the primary purveyors of information and facilitators of communications, have an unusual degree of responsibility thrust upon them. Not only do they serve as the paid executive leaders, but concurrently as fiscal officers, assisted by volunteer treasurers, marketers, fund raisers, grant writers, program/service deliverers, official spokespeople and advocates for the target population served by the organization. Nevertheless, if the flow of communication is not made a priority by the chief executive officer, the volunteer leadership is left to draw its own conclusions and develop its own set of perceptions of where things stand.

A suggestion here for the small, nonprofit organization may be that training in both time management and organizational communication and implementation of major programs could be an avenue that the organization may wish to pursue to facilitate future implementation activities. Additionally, this is also an area for educational institutions to examine with a view toward offering either curriculum integrated courses relevant to this area or conversely to offer certificate programs to the local nonprofit community.

In this study, the field interviewer was unable, due to time constraints, to return to the Presidents and chief executive officers to elicit more information about the communication aspect or other questions raised by respondents. Also, to reduce the potential for bias, the researcher did not conduct such follow up as this would necessitate the researcher having direct contact with these respondents concerning specific questions

in the survey instrument. This could be interpreted as exerting an undue influence.

Accordingly, this was avoided to preserve internal integrity of the data collection process.

Conclusions Drawn from the Study

This study explored and analyzed key factors impacting the fidelity of two

nonprofit, 501 (c) (3) health education/advocacy organizations to their strategic plans

following implementation. The findings can contribute to identifying areas of further

study because of its relatively unique focus on strategic plan fidelity, an important, yet

largely neglected critical aspect in operationalizing plans to enable the small nonprofit

organization to survive financially survive. The purposefully selected participants in this

study, had conducted pre-implementation environmental scans, both externally and

internally relative to their organizations, formulated a strategic plan based on the findings

from the environmental scans and had actually implemented strategic plans to address

corporate survival activities as specified in their strategic plans.

The two organizations in this current study reflect a profile of strategic plan

implementation utilizing a multiphase process format. This process involves

implementation of elements of the plan over an extended period of time. This time

extension, in the case of the two participating organizations, was not an original part of

either's plan. The approach nevertheless recognized that there were fiscal realities,

personnel realities and other legitimate demands on the time of the small organization

that impacted implementation processes and timetables. The organizations did not

possess sophisticated planning personnel nor were they experienced in strategic plan

development and implementation. They essentially, learned as they moved through the

process and as reported by one of the volunteer board of director's respondents, "they did

the best they could with what they had." This required devoting extended time to try approaches, explore various strategies and, as required, temporarily deferring the implementation of the entire plan to conduct fund raising activities so that the organization could financially survive and continue delivering their program/services.

Generally, there was fidelity (adherence) with the initial strategic plans as written by both organizations. The questions of why and at what point such plans are modified during an implementation process is identified as being related to pressing financial survival needs which must be addressed, newly identified need realities that bring about a change in plan emphasis as the implementation process extends over a multi year time frame.

The results of the study provide information that may be used to further explore the numerous factors that impact the financially small, nonprofit organization as it moves to implement strategic plans. Considering the challenges facing the urban-based, financially small, nonprofit organization, the study provides insight into the implementation process and the need to educate and train new nonprofit organization chief executive officers about this process.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations to this study involving the methodology, purposeful selection of participants, interview protocol and data analysis are noted here. These limitations obviously must be considered when comparing findings of this study to other populations.

The themes and processes identified in the current study are most likely only some of the themes and processes that are germane to financially small nonprofit

organizations engaged in implementation of a strategic plan. The identified themes and processes in this study are those that are relevant currently of those who participated in this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings, analysis, and limitations of this study, the following recommendations for future research are indicated. These recommendations will assist in supplementing the relatively scarce literature addressing the degree of fidelity to a strategic plan experienced by financially small, nonprofit organizations specializing in the provision of health education and advocacy for a specific target population.

The first recommendation relates to replicating this study in a wider context. The present study involved only two organizations. Follow up studies could replicate this study on a larger scale to determine if the findings can be generalized to a wider population. A related recommendation is that research should be conducted to determine if the factors impacting fidelity to a strategic plan remain the same in all settings in which financially small nonprofit organizations initiate the process of strategic plan implementation.

A recommendation concerning the interview protocol would be to re-work the interview instruments, based on the outcomes of this study. More precise follow up questions could clarify the meanings of the participants, and using what was gained and refining the questions should yield additional valuable information.

Another recommendation would be to focus increased attention on how the organizations measured outcomes of the implementation process. More precise questions could clarify this situation and provide suggestions pertaining to strengthening such

measurement efforts. Additional information needs to be provided to nonprofit organizations on how to integrate performance measures into strategic planning on the small budget common to nonprofit organizations.

A final recommendation deals with the benefits that would be derived from exploring the degree of involvement the volunteer members of the two boards of directors had relative to strategic plan formulation and during the implementation process and following the conclusion of the implementation process. This topic has great potential for future researchers attempting to contribute information to the field.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest a general way of viewing the degree of strategic plan fidelity demonstrated by the small nonprofit organization. The implications of this study highlight the importance of understanding that multiple factors are involved in the implementation process and that these factors can exert influence on the process in a positive manner or in a negative manner. Although strategic planning has been widely adopted from the for-profit sector, until there is further exploration in this area, nonprofit organizations should take care to become cognizant of the scope of the existing research on strategic planning.

Appendix A

Exploratory Analysis:
Post Strategic Plan Implementation
Fidelity

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Dear Chief Executive Officer 2005

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a study of strategic planning implementation in health related nonprofit organizations. I believe the study has considerable potential benefit for these vital entities.

This study will examine strategic planning implementation and subsequent fidelity to the plan in two nonprofit health related organizations. This will involve the researcher's reading documents such as strategic planning meeting minutes, pertinent memos, and other studies relative to the organization's planning efforts. Additionally, face-to-face interviews will be conducted with the Presidents and the Chief Executive Officers of the participating organizations and field notes compiled. The Boards of Directors will be requested to respond to an identical list of questions. All respondents will be assigned a research number to preserve confidentiality.

I will be happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. Your name and the name of your organization will not be associated with the research findings in any way. There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. The researcher is available by telephone or e-mail to answer any concerns or questions you may have.

The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information about the experiences with strategic planning and its implementation that may be incorporated in the future education and training of persons desiring to be involved with the managerial and planning aspects of the nonprofit organization.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this consent will be given to you to keep.

_____

Signature of Participant

Appendix B

Instrument A: President/CEO Survey

Section I: Identification Information

Time of Interview:	Research #:
Date:	
Place:	
Interviewee:	
Interviewer:	
Position and/or title of Interviewee:	

Section II: Background Data- Pre Implementation Phase

1. Describe what environmental factors prompted the organization to adopt a strategic plan in the initial year that a plan was adopted.

2. Describe how the organization perceived its external and internal environments before the implementation of the strategic plan.

    a). Strengths
        1. external

        2. internal

    b). Weaknesses (Threats to the organization's survival)
        1. external

        2. internal

c). Opportunities

3. What broad achievement goals did the organization identify in the initial formulation of the strategic plan?

Section III: Background Data: The Implementation Process

Please describe the implementation of the strategic plan in relation to the following:

1. What were the specific expected results (outcomes) from the initial implementation of the strategic plan?

2. What financial resources (i.e., funds, personnel, office space, printing, mailing) were provided by the organization to those responsible for the implementation process?

3. What was the organization's experience with the following implementation issues and what was their effect on strategic plan implementation?

A). Clarity of objectives provided regarding implementation of the strategic plan.

B). Sufficiency of authority granted to those responsible for conducting the implementation.

C). The level of skill and experience possessed by those responsible for conducting the implementation.

D). Use of outcome/performance measures.

E). Did the priority of conducting the implementation become altered over time by the emergence of other factors or environmental conditions?

F). Conflict within the organization, specifically among board member, CEO's .

G). Other issues?

Section IV: Post-Implementation Perceptions

Fidelity to Initial Plan

1. Did the organization adhere to (continue to use as written) the initial strategic plan after implementation? To what extent?

   If no, continue to #2 just below.
   If yes, go to **Alterations to Plan**

2. What, if any, changes were made to the initial plan by the non-profit organization following implementation?

3. What was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation?

4. If changes occurred, how did the changes following implementation affect the structure

and operations of the organization?

Alterations to Plan
1. Did the organization use the initial strategic plan without alteration in the next year? If yes, thank you for your time. We appreciate your participation. If no, continue to #2 just below.
2. What, if any, alterations were made to the initial plan by the non-profit organization in preparation for implementation in the next year?
3. What was the rationale for altering the initial plan prior to implementation in the next year?
4. If alterations were made, how did the alterations affect the structure and operations of the organization once implementation had occurred?

Appendix C: Instrument B: Board of Directors Survey

Dear Board Member:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this valuable undertaking. This is a study by a Ph.D. candidate at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. The study explores how nonprofit organizations implemented and continued to use (fidelity) strategic planning in two nonprofit organizations in the Mid Atlantic region of the United States.

Your name will not be associated with any responses, nor will the name of this organization be reported in the study. Your response will be assigned a research number to identify it. A final copy of the full study will be made available to the Chief Executive Officer of this organization upon request.

For your convenience, a pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelope is provided for your personal use. Your cooperation is truly appreciated. Your input forms a crucial part of this study. Without your help, the study will not be possible. As recognition of your valuable time spent on this response, a gift certificate for redemption at a local purveyor of books will be mailed to you upon completion of this survey. Please feel free to use additional pages if you wish. Thank you for your participation!

Section I: Identification Information

Research Number:
Date:
Your name:
Position and/or title:
Section II: Background Data- Pre Implementation Phase
1. Describe what environmental factors prompted the organization to adopt a strategic plan in the initial year that a plan was adopted.

2. Describe how the organization perceived its external and internal environments before the implementation of the strategic plan.

    a). Strengths
        2. external

        2. internal

    b). Weaknesses (Threats to the organization's survival)
        2. external

        2. internal

    c). Opportunities

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3. What broad achievement goals did the organization identify in the initial formulation of the strategic plan?

Section III: Background Data: The Implementation Process

Please describe the implementation of the strategic plan in relation to the following:

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    2. What were the specific expected results (outcomes) from the initial implementation of the strategic plan?

2. What financial resources (i.e., funds, personnel, office space, printing, mailing) were provided by the organization to those responsible for the implementation process?

3. What was the organization's experience with the following implementation issues and what was their effect on strategic plan implementation?

    A). Clarity of objectives provided regarding implementation of the strategic plan.

    B). Sufficiency of authority granted to those responsible for conducting the implementation.

    C). The level of skill and experience possessed by those responsible for conducting the implementation.

    D). Use of outcome/performance measures.

    E). Did the priority of conducting the implementation become altered over time by the emergence of other factors or environmental conditions?

    F). Conflict within the organization, specifically among board member, CEO's .

    G). Other issues?

Section IV: Post-Implementation Perceptions
Fidelity to Initial Plan
1. Did the organization adhere to (continue to use as written) the initial strategic plan after implementation? To what extent? If no, continue to #2 just below. If yes, go to **Alterations to Plan**
2. What, if any, changes were made to the initial plan by the non-profit organization following implementation?
3. What was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation?
4. If changes occurred, how did the changes following implementation affect the structure and operations of the organization?
Alterations to Plan
1. Did the organization use the initial strategic plan without alteration in the next year? If yes, thank you for your time. We appreciate your participation. If no, continue to #2 just below.
2. What, if any, alterations were made to the initial plan by the non-profit organization in preparation for implementation in the next year?

3. What was the rationale for altering the initial plan prior to implementation in the next year?

5. If alterations were made, how did the alterations affect the structure and operations of the organization once implementation had occurred?

Appendix D: Research Question 3: Presidents and CEO's Perceptions

Issues	Agency A	Agency A	Agency B	Agency B
	CEO Perceptions	President Perceptions	CEO Perceptions	President Perceptions
A). Clarity of objectives provided by the Board of Directors regarding implementation of the strategic plan	The objectives were very clear.	The objectives had been well thought out.	The objectives were clear and did not pose a problem of clarity.	The objectives were very clear. They were simple and succinct.
B). Sufficiency of authority granted to those responsible for conducting the implementation.	The Board is a "hands on" group. The CEO was able to work within the monitoring and management orientation of the Board.	This was a non-issue.	Authority was not a problem.	The Board delegated complete authority to the.
c). The level of skill and experience possessed by those responsible for conducting the implementation.	The CEO candidly cited a lack of experience in nonprofit organization management and in strategic planning.	. The skills were adequate to accomplish the implementation.	Implementation was assigned to the CEO.	The Board perceived that the CEO possessed the skills and experience to manage the implementation.
d). Use of outcome/performance measures.	Usually accomplished by reading meeting minutes and reports provided by the CEO.	The organization is weak in this area. The Board does review outcomes and compares them to the objectives in the strategic plan.	The CEO provides basic, descriptive statistical reports to the Board on a regular basis.	Outcomes are measured based on the strategic plans objectives, such as: Opening the first regional office, the number of fundraising events.
e). Did the priority of conducting the implementation become altered over time by the emergence of other factors or environmental conditions?	Yes – due to so many target population's needs for a variety of program/services. As experience gained, the organization adjusted its program/service approach to meet the more clarified needs being identified.	Yes – primarily due to financial resources needs and need for additional staff. The lack of steady cash flow altered the plan and staff could not be hired as planned.	The implementation was delayed – priority did not change - field office was opened.	No – "I guess it remained the same". The opening of a field office was accomplished – but discovered it is hard to raise money – thought it would be easy.
e) Conflict within the organization, specifically among Board members, the CEO?	None in relation to the strategic plan or implementation	None in relation to the strategic plan or implementation.	None in relation to the strategic plan or implementation	None in relation to the strategic plan or implementation.
f). Other Issues?	None reported	None reported	None reported	None reported

Research Question 3: Boards of Director's Perceptions

Issues	Organization A Volunteers	Organization B Volunteers
1. The clarity of implementation Objectives	5 volunteers reported the objectives as clear 2 volunteers reported not being sure	4 volunteers reported the objectives as clear 1 volunteer reported the objectives as "poorly written" 1 volunteer did not respond
2. The sufficiency of authority granted to those responsible for the implementation	3 volunteers reported authority sufficient for CEO 3 volunteers reported not being sure 1 volunteer did not respond	3 volunteers reported authority sufficient for CEO 3 volunteers reported they did not know
3. The level of skill and experience possessed by those responsible for the implementation	4 volunteers reported Board and CEO skilled 2 volunteers reported, "it was an on-going learning experience for all" 1 volunteer did not respond	2 volunteers reported the CEO was skilled 2 volunteers reported the Board was skilled volunteers reported the Regional Director was skilled 1 volunteer reported overall limited skill and experience in the organization
4. Were outcome/performance measurements used?	3 volunteer reported that the organization is weak in this area 3 volunteers reported that they use reports from the CEO and compare status of implementation to the plan's objectives 1 volunteer reported "the effect is positive"	4 volunteers reported the organization is weak in this area 1 volunteer reported that the Regional Director's performance was good 1 volunteer did not respond
5. Did the priority of conducting the implementation become altered over time by emergence of other factors or environmental conditions?	2 volunteers reported Yes (Need for fund raising set new priorities- defer action on implementation 5 volunteers reported not being sure	4 volunteers reported that the concept of establishing a state-wide system (Regional Offices) became the major priority 1 volunteer reported no alteration in conducting implementation 1 voluntee reported not being sure
6. Was there conflict within the organization, specifically among Board members and/or the CEO?	6 volunteers reported none concerning implementation 1 volunteer reported some conflict regarding allocation of funds for implementation goal targets	3 volunteers reported none concerning implementation 3 volunteers reported conflict over other issues
7. Other Issues?	None noted	None noted

Organizational minutes, completed surveys, and other data gathered in this study are confidential and available on request from the researcher by contacting him at his office at Norfolk State University.

Appendix E: Research Question 4: Presidents' and CEO's Responses

	Agency A CEO Perceptions	Agency A President Perceptions	Agency B CEO Perceptions	Agency B President Perceptions
1. Organization adherence to the initial strategic plan, as written, after implementation and to what extent?	Yes There were modifications based on experience. Priorities shifted	Yes There were modifications based on experience. Priorities shifted.	Yes Plan still in process of implementation.	Yes Plan is being implemented and fidelity exists to what has been implemented to date.
2. Changes made to the initial plan by the organization following implementation?	More statewide focused. Increased state level advocacy.	Statewide focused. Increased state level advocacy.	Strategic plan not fully implemented.	Plan still in process of implementation.
3. Rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation?	Must move beyond a one or two service orientation.	Learned better ways to do things. Example: fundraisers	Plan still in process of implementation. No response.	Plan still in process of implementation. No response.
4. How did changes following implementation affect the structure and operations of the organizations?	More attention directed toward development of staff and volunteers.	There has not been that much of an observable impact on the organization. Big changes will come -move to a statewide structure.	Plan still in process of implementation. No response.	Plan still in process of implementation. No response.

Research Question 4: Boards of Directors' Responses

Fidelity Questions	Organization A Volunteers	Organization B Volunteers
1. Did the organization adhere to the initial strategic plan as written after implementation, and to what extent?	3 volunteers reported that the organization did adhere to the plan 2 volunteers reported that it was revised based on experiences gained 2 volunteers reported not being sure	2 volunteers reported that the organization did adhere to the plan 2 volunteers reported that "more or less" and "yes and no" regarding adherence 2 volunteers did not respond
2. What, if any, changes were made to the initial strategic plan following implementation?	1 volunteer reported that the organization added the hiring of a legislative liaison person volunteer reported that the national association exerts changes 5 volunteers did not respond	1 volunteer reported that the organization added the hiring of a fund development professional staff person 5 volunteers reported not being sure
3. What was the rationale for changing the initial plan after implementation?	2 volunteers reported that experience dictated practical changes in the plan 5 volunteers did not respond	1 volunteer reported that the loss of funds provided the rationale 5 volunteers did not respond
4. If changes occurred, how did the changes following implementation affect the structure and operations of the organizations?	1 volunteer reported "no change s of this date". Changes will occur when the organization segues to a state wide structure 6 volunteers did not respond	6 volunteers did not respond

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