STRATEGIC PLANNING IS A **JOURNEY**…PREPARE FOR IT

1 ▶ ORGANIZATION *and* TEAM STRUCTURE
Who's Planning the Trip?

TO-DOS

Rightsize your team. Match size and composition with functions and scope of responsibilities, which can include:

- Enterprise strategy.
- Business unit strategy (region, market, service line).
- Certificate of Need, capital and master facility planning.
- Reporting (market share, competitor analysis, growth performance).
- M&A due diligence, strategic partnerships.
- Business development, physician liaison teams.
- Marketing and communications.
- Innovation, transformation.

FAST FACTS AND TRENDS

54% of strategy teams are led by a CSO, with the majority reporting to the CEO.

- Post-pandemic planning functions have become more centralized (68% compared to 37% prior), though the hybrid approach remains popular (30%).
- Team size varies widely (2–20), even among organizations of similar size and footprint.

2 ▼ PLANNING PROCESS *and* TIMELINE
What's the Destination? When Do We Need to Be There?

TO-DOS

Time frame matters more than ever. Balance planning efforts to address now, near and next time horizons.

Expand data sources and revisit who you ask for input. Add consumer and claims data insights to market assessments to prevent blind spots. Extend your list of stakeholders beyond the usual suspects (finance, hospital leadership, marketing, service line leadership). Gain perspective from the medical group/faculty practice, population health teams and local community organizations.

FAST FACTS AND TRENDS

In 2022, over 60% updated plans as the pandemic turned endemic.

- Time horizons are beginning to return to pre-pandemic standards: 3–5 years for enterprise plans and 1–2 years for service line plans. Just 10% have enterprise plans targeting more than 5 years out.
- Only 12% saw contracting as a key stakeholder. Given the ambulatory shift, partnering with contracting is critical.

3 ▶ PRIORITIZATION TOOLS *and* APPROACHES
Before We Go, What Needs to Happen?

TO-DOS

Structure + discipline enable prioritization.
- Meet regularly with primary decision makers to streamline process. Leverage "soft influence" of strategy to advance priorities.
- Ensure criteria for evaluation are clearly defined and agreed upon—alignment with pillars, costs, ROI, community impact and timeliness (impact × feasibility).
- Provide transparency into the capital allocation process.

Mindset shift—don't lose sight of the forest for the trees. Set stage gates to formally deselect opportunities (eg, timeline, budget threshold/availability) and establish a process for revisiting or creating off-ramps to sunset projects.

FAST FACTS AND TRENDS

- Strategic deselection remains elusive. Almost 40% identified 6–10 strategic initiatives as the ideal number to track, manage and focus on, while almost 30% said 10+.
- On a scale of 1 to 10 (highest), organizations rated their ability to prioritize a 6.4 on average. **The top three pain points include:**
  1. Priorities added to the list but never removed.
  2. Cultural resistance to saying no.
  3. Disagreements between stakeholders.

4 ▼ EXECUTION *and* IMPLEMENTATION
Once We've Arrived, How Do We Ensure Things Run Smoothly?

TO-DOS

Define what success looks like. Beyond metrics, identify who owns monitoring and cadence for progress updates. Regular checkpoints will prompt discussion and allow you to adjust or pivot.

Overcommunicate the plan to align expectations and understanding. Equip stakeholders doing the "strategy roadshow" with consistent messaging. Pair the CEO with another senior executive who can "translate" for different audiences. Leverage multiple communication channels (eg, in person, email, virtual, video).

FAST FACTS AND TRENDS

Communication and messaging—organizations use multiple methods to share strategic plans:

48% cascade the strategic plan throughout the organization.

19% use a one-page sheet or infographic.

13% leverage digital tools (eg, video, intranet, email).

6% include a scorecard to support communication.

Ownership and performance:
- A nearly even split exists between organizations that use a project management office (52%) and those that rely on strategy or others (48%) to monitor and measure implementation.
- The most common performance metrics organizations track are financial performance, volumes/share and quality/outcomes.

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