

Community Planning One with the community

When it comes to Community Planning, it has always been advised to engage the community at as much as possible. This enables to get an outlook of what the unique needs of community are that need attention and what all needs should be catered to. As they say, if you want to know how the shoe fits, ask the person wearing it and not the one who made it. ARK Productions continuously evolves its Community Planning Process with the fundamental concepts in operation and the contemporary



technicalities in recommendation for immediate practice. Community Planning with ARK has become more effective and efficient now over the span of last couple of years. Thanks to the evolutionary model that is incorporated by our professionals which enables us to make informed decisions and develop our processes & practices with reference to the past experiences that are quite unique to every community.

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The most crucial part being developing the Vision of the Community is fundamentally based on the people's opinions

ARK's latest Community Planning model is based upon the grass root realities and understanding of the fundamental aspects of the First Nation community. The following illustration depicts the model developed at ARK production. In each of the following phases, the participation of community people becomes an integral part of the entire process. The projects, as the final outcome of the entire model, are the well thought and result of thorough analysis of every

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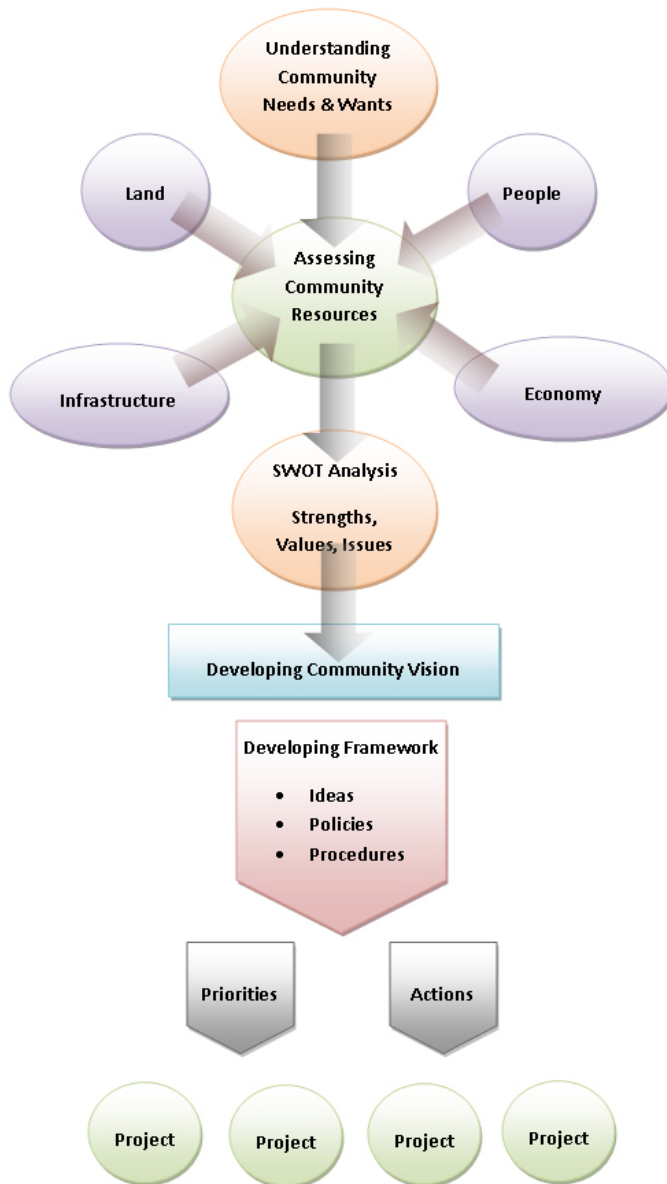
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about their community and their needs and wants which essentially is the very first phase of the process. Community Planning ideally has been the process developed for people to have control over their present and future in the community. ARK has been helping the First Nation Communities across Manitoba and Canada since last eight years.



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Lately, ARK has been developing Strategic Plans and Comprehensive Community Plan for a number of the leading First Nations and for some time. What ARK facilitates is bridging the GAP between groups and departments. This could also become possible by developing the communication between community authorities and federal authorities. ARK simultaneously plays a significant role in creating awareness about the importance of community planning in each First Nation community they are involved with enabling the community authorities to operate with ease. Persuading the community people about the value of such an activity and making them participate is critical steps since it's the community people who are the makers or breakers of community economies and it's the community's plan. We help them be the makers. It's an effort of ARK to maintain as much transparency as possible during the community consultation process between the community people and local authorities.

Community planning has never been a piece of cake, may it be for the community itself, the authorities or the project managers. We never say it is an easy process. However we always strive to eliminate the painstaking part of it and divert the focus of the aspiring communities towards the great values that can be realized by the people having undertaking the effort. We are good at making things easier and removing the technical difficulties.

Strategic Planning A Corporate Buzz

An excessive preoccupation of business managers and entrepreneurs with the immediate issues are often more operational than strategic. They tend to lose focus on the spine of their business. It then becomes a virtual requisite to radically rethink the business processes and reengineer them with a strategic bend. Not often this bend hits the goal, yet a business can't afford to be operated eliminating such incorporation.

A strategic plan's purpose is quite known to serve the organization as a framework for decisions and provide basis for more detailed planning. A strategic plan provides a framework and foundation for a business plan which is more a comprehensive document depicting

the business blueprint based on the strategies of the organization. Strategies are rules and guidelines based on which the organization performs its day to day business activities to achieve its mission and objectives set by the strategic teams or board of directors. Strategic Planning puts a dynamic force that

helps drive the organization forward by coordinating and channeling resources towards achievement of pre-determined goals. Its significance in a business context invariably entails effective results in most cases ensuring imminent profitability and better chances of successful survival of an organization. While Strategic Planning does not guarantee success, where implementation of the plan governs that, it does improve the chances of success and minimizes the risk of failure, as without planning, events will be left to chance.

It is a fact that Strategies need to be discussed and established ahead of time in order for the overall process and support system to be proactive. A primary purpose of strategic planning and consequently its preeminence is to avoid a crisis. Quite naturally: When a crisis forces choosing among alternatives, most people choose the worst possible one (Rubin's Law). Yet another aspect is the ownership of and participation with strategies by the people who have to execute them. This proves to be a key to success as Strategic decisions are affected by the values and expectations of people in power within the organization. To achieve this, as many

managers as possible are expected to participate and contribute in the process.

Why the Strategic Planning has been more popular amongst the progressive businesses than most lateral concepts would be a self answerable question. The Progressive businesses are bound to have a strategic plan ready even before they start up. It's more than a buzz word not just in the corporate world but also many other areas like entertainment, education and even politics. Whenever businesses need realizing value of some tangible sort the savior would be strategic planning. It's always interesting to understand why strategic planning is essential for any business across the world. The output of strategic planning is a report which depicts the plan that acts as a roadmap to the business activities performed. The genesis of a strategic plan undergoes several logical steps that form a process involving activities like developing and freezing the crucial aspects like organization's Mission, Vision, Objectives, Values, Strategies, Tactics, Goals and Programs. The Vision defines the desired or intended future state of the organization in terms of its fundamental objective and/or strategic direction. A Mission defines the fundamental purpose of an organization or an enterprise, basically describing why it exists. Precisely A Mission statement tells you the fundamental purpose of the organization. It concentrates on the present. It defines the customer and the critical processes. It informs you of the desired level of performance. Where as a Vision statement outlines what the organization wants to be. It concentrates on the future. It is a source of inspiration. It provides clear decision-making criteria.

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Similarly the Values are the beliefs that are shared among the stakeholders of an organization based on which the culture and priorities of the organization are decided. Objectives are the mostly medium to long term that cover a span of not more than five (5) years. Strategies are

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set of rules and guidelines to achieve these objectives in line with the Mission and Vision of the organization. Goals are specific interim or ultimate time-based measurements to be achieved by implementing strategies in pursuit of the company's objectives. With such a comprehensive and acute approach towards the foundation of the administration of the organization, an ease is induced in the process where something is made available for future reference every time management is stuck up in making a critical decision. The strategic plan helps our most of the times in most awkward situations which is why the companies become more and more progressive day by day. Besides, strategic planning has also been helpful in cause and effect analysis where in more difficult questions can be answered like:

- What keeps our Business from performing like competition?
- What caused the current situation and what effect is likely to be faced?
- Why the set goals are not achieved?

Another attribute which is amongst the most integral part of strategic planning is SWOT analysis. Having built up a picture of the company's past aims and achievements, the all-important SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis can commence. Strengths and weaknesses are quite essentially the attributes internal to the organization. These relate to the organizational matters pertaining to the resources and programs in key areas which include:

- Sales - marketing - distribution - promotion - support;
- Management - systems - expertise - resources;



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- Operations - efficiency - capacity - processes;
- Products - services - quality - pricing - features - range - competitiveness;
- Finances - resources - performance;
- Research and Development- effort - direction - resources;
- Costs - productivity - purchasing;
- Systems - organization - structures.

Likewise when a startup is planned, the strengths and weaknesses are related mainly to the promoter(s) - their experience, expertise and management abilities - rather than to the project. In a nutshell, the objective is to build up a picture of the good and bad points, achievements and failures and other critical features within the company.

On the other hand, Threats & Opportunities are external attributes which a company anticipates or identifies to be confronting in an imminent span of time. Threats and Opportunities can exist or develop in the areas like the company's own industry where structural changes may be occurring in terms of Size and segmentation; growth patterns and maturity; established patterns and relationships, emergence/contraction of niches; international dimensions; relative attractiveness of segments. Other probable areas could be the marketplace which may be altering due to economic or social factors; Customers, distribution channels, economic factors, social/demographic issues, political & environmental factors. Moreover, Competition which may be creating new threats or opportunities could be direct threat or opportunity; Identities, performances, market shares, likely plans, aggressiveness, strengths & weaknesses. Nevertheless, new technologies which may be causing fundamental changes in products, processes, etc. have enough potential to be considered under this category which include Substitute products, alternative solutions, shifting channels, cost savings etc.

It's critical for any organization to identify all possibilities in individual areas as discussed so that all the possible and probable risks can be mitigated or even if they could not be, the ones not anticipated would cause as less a loss to the organization as possible.

For more information, visit www.arkpro.net or call toll free 1.866.692.6178 or contact now for an ARK consultant to receive special appointment and information on how to apply for the funding and receive the capacity building package by sending your queries at ark@mts.net.