



Strategic Growth for Thriving Schools

Integrating Planning, Fund Development, and Mission for Lasting Impact

Vince Burens, Chief Operating Officer & Senior Consultant
Jan Stump, CFRE, Senior Consultant

What we will cover today:

- Strategic planning guides missional alignment
- Missional alignment fosters transformation and student thriving
- Proven fundraising frameworks cultivate lasting relationships
- Cultivation should disciple donors into "stewards"
- Healthy missional relationships can be nurtured at every level
- Strategic planning fuels fundraising with a compelling case for support

Characteristics of a Thriving School

Definition:

A thriving Christian school does well and is successful, healthy, or strong.

- 1. Is deeply committed to pursuing education that reflects the mind of Christ**
- 2. Has clear vision for student outcomes, per its unique mission**
- 3. Increasingly accomplishes those outcomes through . . .**
 - Skilled and tenured faculty, who are experts in their disciplines and exemplars of faith and learning
 - A thoughtfully and strategically curated curriculum
 - A vibrant spiritual climate , balancing head knowledge, heart transformation and selfless service
 - Maturing business practices that include a balanced tuition philosophy, planning and budgeting cycle
 - A growing cadre of individuals who invest in the mission with resources they have in abundance

What is Most Needed?

By our nation, our communities and the Church . . .

- Christ-centered schools that increasingly fulfill their mission in the lives of their students—not perfectly, but with humble and prayerful integrity.
- Schools that continually discern what they are called to do, who they can best serve and what they must provide

Strategic Mission Discernment

guides...



- The students you enroll
- The teachers you hire
- The nature and scope of your curriculum
- The programs you offer
- The tuition philosophy and model you choose
- The case for your annual fund
- The facility you need

Missional Effectiveness is Intentionally Cultivated

It doesn't just happen

- School Leadership, through the planning process, gain a shared definition of and vision for excellence within a particular context
- The head of school and board are mutually accountable to achieve a singular, God-given purpose—encompassing every facet of student growth and development.
- A highly qualified and committed faculty is cultivated and nurtured for longevity
- Aligned families are retained year after year

Missional Flourishing invites Transformational Relationships

Your School's Relational Universe includes . . .

- Current students and their families
- Alumni
- Alumni parents
- Current and former teachers and staff
- Current and former board members
- Donors and lapsed donors
- Grandparents
- Pastors and churches
- Community members (partners, vendors, neighbors)

All who have been personally impacted by your mission.

Strategic thinking is key in planning!

“In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.”

-Eisenhower

“Most successful organizations undertake a ‘20 Mile March’ of methodical steps toward their goal, not a sprint to the finish line.”

-Jim Collins

No school can afford *not* to be thinking strategically all the time!

This is more of a culture than a document

What's Wrong with most Strategic Plans?

1

Static

Written as if no internal or external changes are going to impact the plan over its life – *The illusion of control*

2

Episodic

Thinking strategically every three years

3

No mechanism to adapt

Plans can't change; they are written annually

4

Die with changes in leadership and board

"That's not my plan."

5

Seeking the Holy Spirit once

Operating on our own strength and skills

Power of Small Steps to Fuel Planning

- Planning process itself changes mindset and culture
- Big goals and small goals working together
 - Achievable steps to motivate and create forward momentum
- Hold team accountable for the small steps and celebrate
 - Foster awareness of mutual responsibility in planning

Bullets, not cannonballs

- How do we engage everyone in a Holy Spirit led discernment process?
- How do we empower more people to participate?
- Do we have a current, relevant plan? If not, create one.
- How could we use scenario planning to catalyze it?

Five Keys to Creating a Strategic Thinking Culture

1. Have a Vision and Mission that Drive Everything

- Board
 - Prayer, discernment, and Godly wisdom
 - Expectations of the leader
 - Recruitment of board members
 - Iterative thinking at every board meeting- Be Agile!
- Head of School and Leadership Team
 - Discuss assumptions
 - Watch trends
 - Understand the changing needs of your target audiences

Five Keys to Creating a Strategic Thinking Culture

1. Have a Vision and Mission that Drive Everything (cont.)

- Staff
 - Planning becomes personal and inspiring when efforts are directed to further impact
 - Staff development on changes and new ideas
 - Communicating unchanging truth in an ever-changing environment

Five Keys to Creating a Strategic Thinking Culture

2. Have a plan that is relevant, agile, and driving daily decisions

- Three-year rolling plan
- Created with stakeholder input
- Bathed in prayer throughout the process
- Tools to execute it, adjust it, and refresh it
- Communicated across your community
- Celebrated when key milestones are met (God gets the glory)

Five Keys to Creating a Strategic Thinking Culture

3. Make it part of your discernment culture

- What habits and practices might enhance this practice?
- Does your commitment to prayer empower this culture?
- How might God speak to your school through the voices of your community?

Five Keys to Creating a Strategic Thinking Culture

4. Empower everyone

- Define the culture you want so people understand expectations
- Train and equip for it
 - Commit the time and resources
 - Hire accordingly
- Make it the '*lingua franca*' of the community
 - Changing culture means changing your language
- Embed it into your policies and processes

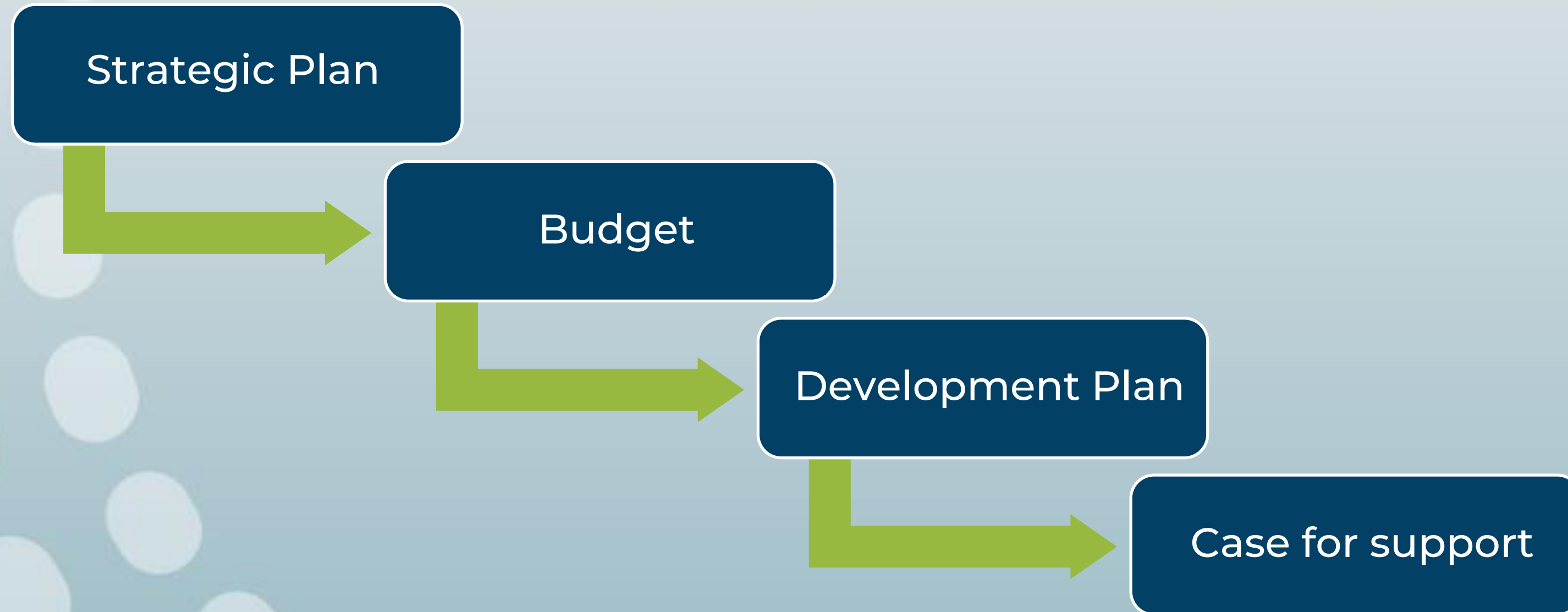
Five Keys to Creating a Strategic Thinking Culture

5. Use Scenario Planning as an ongoing tool

- Encourages creative, strategic thinking at every level
- Forces questions and ideas you may not otherwise consider
- Make it a part of ongoing board, leadership, and staff development

Strategic Planning Flow

A Magic Bullet? Just, maybe!



Growing Sustainable Relationships for Impact

It's in the details . . .

- **Tracking all relationships** touched by the mission
- **Communicating impact** to rekindle connection
- **Invite and involve** all who are willing into the life of your school
- **Acknowledge all involvement** in personal and missional ways.
- **Knowing and acknowledging** those God gives you
- **Understanding life-cycle** ebb and flow
- **Confidently sharing vision** for annual funding and capital projects

Disciplining Stewards for Eternal Impact

- Recognize God provides for his work
- God is generous and grows and gifts his people for generosity
- Donors have needs too, and relationships should always be reciprocal
- Fundraising must focus on honoring people and trusting God to orchestrate their investment
- While donor segmentation is essential for campaign momentum and success, every gift should be gratefully acknowledged
- Stewarding donors is holistic, never focused just on getting a gift

The Trifecta

Missional Thriving, Planning and Relationships

Factors that Delay or Diminish Fundraising Campaigns

- Lack of a strategic plan
- Lack of a compelling case for support (from strategic plan)
- Little or no relationships with those who love and support your mission
- Lack of leadership to effectively achieve the mission
- Inability to measure or communicate long term impact
- A revolving door of teachers, students and staff

Six Key Principles of Fundraising

1

People give to people they know and people they trust

2

People give because they are asked and shown how

3

People give when they are involved and have a sense of ownership

4

A “no” is never forever

5

Giving is a way of life

6

Proper planning maximizes results and minimizes costs

Where is Your School on the Thrive-ability Spectrum?

Are you doing well, missionally successful, healthy and strong?

What are your measures for success?

- Size and mature program are not the definitive factor
- Waiting lists do not tell the full story
- Dedication and sacrifice may not be enough



Open Discussion/Q & A



Thank you for attending
Strategic Growth For Thriving School

Vince Burens,

vburens@thefocusgroup.com

Jan Stump, CFRE

jstump@thefocusgroup.com