



Strategic Planning for Public Managers

James L. Mercer

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Designed for local government managers and administrators, this pioneering work offers a clear and comprehensive guide to the use of strategic planning techniques in the public sector. The author presents a concise overview of the strategic planning process, defines the terms involved, and provides a step-by-step methodology for organizations ready to move into the actual implementation of strategic planning. In addition to differentiating between community-based, corporate, functional, and defined-purpose strategic planning processes, Mercer explains the delineation between strategic and tactical planning and offers practical approaches to overcoming barriers to the use of strategic planning in the public sector arena. Throughout, the author makes extensive use of case studies of strategic planning programs implemented by a variety of local government and public sector organizations.

Mercer begins by describing how strategic planning can be both an effective tool for dealing with change and a technique of organizational development. He goes on to provide detailed instructions on how to prepare to conduct strategic planning, how to determine strategic issues, the importance of a values audit, and how to develop an environmental scan or assessment. Subsequent chapters address determining organizational threats and opportunities, composing the mission statement, defining critical success factors and indicators, planning strategies, and assessing strategic risks and benefits. Finally, the author shows how to perform an internal assessment of ability to actually adopt and carry out strategies, the importance of contingency planning, and how to tie strategic planning to the budget and evaluate the process. The public sector manager experienced with strategic planning techniques can use the guide as a handy reference to particular aspects of the process, while those new to strategic planning will find this an indispensable aid in developing and implementing their own internal strategic planning processes.

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