

Module II: Accountability

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Bielefeld & Tschirhart, 2012

Non-profit management derives much of its strategic thinking from the for-profit sector and scientific management theory. Planning is distinct from strategy; one without the other will not succeed at realising the goals of an organisation or enterprise. There are two opposing camps within the debate: one that emphasises rational planning in advance, and another that emphasises social and organisational factors in emergent strategy.

The ends and needs of NFP work requires translating the priorities and methods of strategic thinking into useful terms. Some organisations are more similar to a traditional business and require little reworking; others are substantially different animals from businesses, with distinct advantages and disadvantages. The authors provide examples of NFPs exemplifying Porter's three strategic positions (cost-leadership, differentiation, and focus), then they describe Miles and Snow's four generic strategic positions (defensive, prospective, analytic, and reactive).

Ian MacMillan's framework, rather than translate for-profit archetypes to NFP work, begins with assumptions about NFPs reasons for existing and operating (as distinct from for-profit entities). Along three axes – program-attractiveness, competitive-position, and alternative-coverage – organisations weigh their strategic options, leading to eight different strategies, listed on pp. 92-3. Depending on which position an NFP finds itself in, Macmillan counsels either expanding operations, divesting, or collaborating with others – strategies which would not be evident within a for-profit model.

After arriving at a vision for the organisation and assessing one's strategic position, making plans to accomplish the strategic goals comes next. Consultation with external advisors, internal staff, and the community served can be useful at this point, although staff may have a personal stake in alternatives or the status quo. Existing commitments or shortage of resources can limit the scope of any change, so assessing the landscape for change needs to happen first.

Jones 2011

Good Measurement practices lead to better performance, better access to funds, and

what obstacles exist to good self evaluation? - no time - no funds - no expertise
- no staff - no training - most NFPs report that they are unable to effectively self-evaluate

Jones argues that self-evaluation is, on the contrary, easy, fulfilling, and not as expensive as it can seem

Cultural hostility to self-evaluation within an org is the first problem to be resolved; Jones wants NFPs to embrace data positively rather than employing it as a whip. Secondly, *clarifying* the organisation's mission and what needs to get evaluated. By creating a causal chain for a program or partnership (the five-whys-deep), an organisation can identify what can be and needs to be measured as an index of success (or failure). Once the measure of success or failure is clear, then data *capture* can be either outsourced to consultants (although in the interests of cost and long-term sustainability, Jones says it's worth it to build internal survey methods).

Clarify Capture Communicate Change/Celebrate