Session 2:
Implementation Planning

Implementation Plan

Acknowledgements

Some of the content in this training was provided by NPower and adapted from their signature course, *Technology Strategies for Nonprofit Leaders*. Learn more about NPower at www.NPower.org, or visit their online technology planning tool, TechAtlas, available on www.ymcaexchange.org.

Additional content and other elements were adapted from *Wired for Good* by Joni Podolsky (March 2003, $35, Paper) by permission of Jossey-Bass /A Wiley Imprint. More information on *Wired for Good* is available at the following web site:
http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787962791.html

Thanks to reference sources

Throughout this training you will find many links and references to TechSoup (www.techsoup.org). TechSoup has been an outstanding source of information and a good partner.

Thanks to the YMCA of the USA Network Consultants' input and advice on the change management and planning portions of Y-USA Network Services Guide to Strategic Planning. Special thanks to Chuck Ainsworth, Norm DeRobertis, Steve Hambright and Jeff Ottaviano.

Summit Collaborative, www.summittcollaborative.com, for the information on Logic Model Processing.

Implementation Plan

In order to make this work, we will all have to pitch in!
I know we want to get the work started but we need a plan first.
Are you sure everyone knows what is happening?

Kicking Off the Project

Implementation includes many activities and events. It is not as simple as signing the deal with your software provider, buying hardware, installing software, converting data, and using the systems. Therefore, the first, critical step of the implementation process is to create a project plan, recognizing that the plan will change and evolve as you work through these many activities.

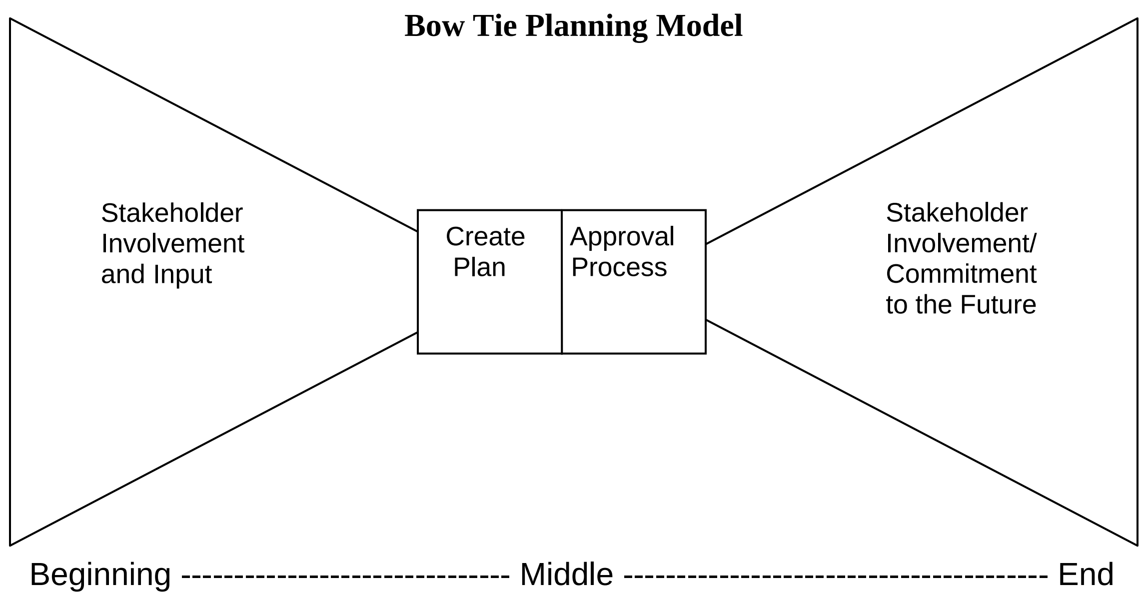
☞Important NOTE: Leadership Checklist

As you begin to go through this second session please remember to follow along and complete your Leadership Checklist. For each of the areas covered below, there is a corresponding section that you need to fill out on your checklist. This checklist will be used as a guide and reference when you are ready to create and customize your implementation plan.

Implementation Plan

This approach to the planning process was created by Y-USA Network Consultants for YMCAs to use during strategic planning.

Bow Tie Planning Model



Developed by Jeff Ottaviano, Network Consultant ©YMCA of the USA

COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL:

Left Side - Stakeholder Involvement and Input

- The process begins with the involvement of people from all levels, including volunteers, board members, consultants, vendors, and even members. You may solicit involvement using some type of survey instrument or by facilitating focus groups that ask people what they think the organization should consider during the technology implementation. You may also solicit input through a member satisfaction survey, which can provide important data for decision-making.
- Remaining on the left side of the model, but moving to the right and forward in time, the next steps would be the involvement of key decision makers that will be more involved at “go live” time, but who may not be part of the group involved in creating the plan. Stakeholders at this level might include the program directors, front line staff, board members, or others who the leaders would like to have involved in the implementation. The forum for their involvement might be a large-scale planning event where people are engaged for several hours in a facilitated process where they can contribute ideas to the future vision and goals of the organization.

Implementation Plan

Center - Create Plan/Approval of Plan

- After all stakeholders have provided feedback on the plan, the core technology team creates a written plan that addresses all pieces of implementation at a high level. Later, individual areas or tasks will be further broken down. Breaking down the steps can be completed by the technology team, but in larger associations may be assigned to smaller or specialty teams.
- After the basic directional aspects of the plan are established, they can be given to leadership for approval.

Right Side - Stakeholder Involvement/Engagement in the Future

- After the plan is approved by leadership, steps are taken to present it to those stakeholders involved in implementation. Mirroring the left side of the bow tie, the first people engaged in this discussion are the key decision makers.
- After the key decision makers have been engaged in discussions regarding the high level plan, the rest of the teams can be involved in discussions/presentations about the plan.
- It is also in this period, after the plan's approval, that the staff and board committee engage in developing specific objectives for achieving the goals, commonly referred to as tactical planning.

Engage Implementation Team

The implementation team may be the same as your existing technology team (discussed in OSS), but may change or include different members as the process progresses. As shown in the Bow Tie diagram earlier, there may be many people involved in the initial planning and building of the business case. Then a core team will take over to make final decisions, track progress, and complete tasks. Finally, at "go live," the team will include virtually everyone. But since a majority of the people involved at the point of "go live" were also involved elsewhere in the process, gaining their support and enthusiasm will be easier.

Core implementation team – These are your Decision Makers

Possible Members

- IT Director
- HR Director (for training)
- Operations Director
- Senior Program Directors
- Membership Director
- CFO/Business Manager
- Board Members

Responsibilities

- Inform executive staff of plans and progress
- Inform whole association of necessary pieces
- Make final plans and decisions based on others' input
- Responsible for plan milestones and deadlines

Implementation Plan

Functional sub-teams- Depending on the size of your organization, these may be teams or simply roles that you assign:

- Communications – keeping teams, executives, whole organization, staff, consultants, service providers informed of the implementation's progress
- Training – Systems and end user training
- Implementation – Technical and physical pieces of installation, configuration, deployment and integration
- Change Management – Defining model practices, addressing technology culture, shaping acceptance of new technologies
- Conversion – Managing of steps from cleaning current data, to preconversion, to testing and validation

Assign Project Leader(s) - For each of the teams and tasks, assign a project leader. This person will not necessarily be doing the work but will manage and monitor progress.

☞Create a Project Plan

Steps for developing a project plan

1. Start with the areas that will take the longest time to complete; for example, installing the hardware and network
2. Break each initiative down into smaller milestones
3. Estimate time to complete milestones
4. Identify tasks that need to be completed to achieve milestones
5. Identify who will be responsible for completing each task
6. List the resources needed to complete each task
7. Start working with the plan and meet regularly to refine as needed

One approach to developing the project plan is to use a logic model, which may bring new learnings and can help you document expected outcomes that you can use later to measure success.

Implementation Plan

☞ Logic Model Process

(Logic Model Process courtesy of Summit Consulting Collaborative, **www.summitcollaborative.com**)

You can assign each of the functional teams the task of completing the logic model for the pieces they are responsible for. Then consolidate to look for missing areas.

Define clear objectives for the implementation

This should be a one-sentence statement that captures what basic goals you have for implementation. Describe what you are doing and why. These statements should come straight from your work in OSS where you defined your needs. For example:

- The new computer network will enable all staff to access the same information and make use of powerful software to improve their productivity
- The new client tracking software package will enable us to target our services more effectively and produce timely reports to stakeholders about our activities

Note that these statements make general assumptions about the direction an initiative will take and why, but do not specify detailed outcomes and the measures you will use to evaluate your progress in reaching those outcomes.

List all the activities you will need to complete to bring this initiative to life

Listing tasks in detail will help you understand the resources you need to succeed.

- After you brainstorm the list, put the activities onto the Logic Model form in a sequence that makes sense.
- Detail the timeframe and the people responsible for the tasks. In some cases the activity listed will be self-explanatory and in other cases the people responsible will have to develop a deeper list of things to do to complete the task. This is something that the team should not do at this point. Either delegate this out to a subgroup or reconvene once you have completed all the columns in your logic model.

Describe all the resources you will need to implement this initiative. These may include:

- Time (staff, volunteer)
- Attitude
- Policies
- Knowledge
- Supplies
- Human Resources
- Money
- Physical Space/Facilities
- Equipment
- Information

Implementation Plan

Describe the desired outcomes from the particular initiative

Outcomes are benefits or changes that occur during or after a technology initiative is put into motion.

Questions you can use to help you frame your thinking are:

- What will change as a result of your efforts?
- What knowledge/opportunities will people have?
- What will be the ultimate impacts of the initiative? For example, an outcome from development of a computer network might be:
  - Staff collaborates more closely on projects. An output that is evidence of this new collaboration may be:
    - Staff edits each other’s press releases more carefully

Be careful as you work on these. Remember that outcomes are actual *changes* to the way things are done, *not* simply the quantifiable or anecdotal measures that are outputs of the activities done. When looking at the outcome you listed be sure to ask: Is this an actual change or just an indicator or evidence of a change that has occurred?

What are the concrete outputs (indicators) of the initiative?

Outputs are the direct products of activities and usually are measured in terms of the volume of work accomplished, such as numbers of clicks on a Web page, new members signed on, or documents collaborated on by staff.

For example, an output or an indicator of a new Web site you develop may be:

- $13,000 more than last year in donations from fall fund drive from existing donor base
- 455 new members signed up online
- Noticeable decrease in incoming calls requesting basic program materials

Implementation Plan

OBJECTIVES What basic goal(s) have you set for this technology strategy?	ACTIVITIES What do you do to implement this strategy?	RESOURCES What will you need to implement the strategy?	OUTCOMES What will success look like. What will change as a result of your efforts?	OUTPUTS (Indicators) What are some concrete (measurable) results of the initiative?
			Immediate: Intermediate: Longer-term:	

Implementation Plan

OBJECTIVES What basic goal(s) have you set for this technology strategy?	ACTIVITIES What do you do to implement this strategy?	RESOURCES What will you need to implement the strategy?	OUTCOMES What will success look like. What will change as a result of your efforts?	OUTPUTS (Indicators) What are some concrete (measurable) results of the initiative?

Intranet
• **To develop an intranet that allows staff to electronically share files and access a library of services, grant proposals and internal policies and forms.**
	• **Develop an electronic system of file sharing and move electronic forms, policies, procedures to our internal network.**
	• **Work with consultant to develop a searchable database where we can file our internal services and grant proposals.**
	• **Train staff on how to use the intranet site:**
	• **Intranet basics:**
	  ◦ Searching the database
	  ◦ Sharing of documents, data, etc.
		• **Hardware is in place and operating properly**
		• **A well-organized intranet is in place with primary bugs worked out of the system**
		• **Access to good training so staff feel competent to use the intranet site.**
		• **The intranet has sufficient content to engage users' interest**
		• **A plan is in place for continual content updates and general maintenance of the intranet**
			Immediate:
			• Staff work more efficiently on tasks
			• Greater collaboration among staff
			Intermediate:
			• Organization secures more grants
			• In aggregate, staff spends less time grant writing.
			• All staff know and can explain all of our services to an outside person
			Longer-term:
			• Internal work culture shifts to one that is more collaborative-based, leading to knowledge sharing and increased learning.
				• **# of grants collaboratively worked on**
				• **# of press releases collaboratively worked on**
				• **# of clicks on FAQs**
				• **# of new FAQs that staff enter into the database**
				• **# of time standardized forms are used**

Implementation Plan

Creating a Timeline

When creating a timeline, the tool you select should match the scope of the project. Software like Microsoft Project can help you enter tasks and create Gantt charts. But you don't want to spend more time entering and managing the plan than completing it. A simple spreadsheet may be enough. There are two basic approaches to mapping out a timeline: 1.) begin with a start date and work forward or 2.) select a hopeful go-live date and work backwards.

In project management there are three constraints that control a project: scope, resources and time. The scope of a project is all of the work or tasks to be completed. Resources are the people, money, hardware, and software that are needed to complete the project. Time is how long the project takes to complete.

If you must go live by a certain date, then your main constraint is time. In order to meet that date, you may need to use more resources or change the scope of the project to meet the date. In this case, it may make sense to start with the go live date and work backwards to determine a start date. If your start date ends up in the past, then you know you will need to make changes and that this may cost resources or a change in scope.

If you have a very tight budget and/or limited staff time, then resources are your main constraint. In order to finish implementation, you may need to shift your timeline or the scope. In this case, it may make sense to pick a start date and work forward.

If you are like most YMCAs where time and resources are limited, you may be tempted to cut scope and cope with a lesser tool. Consider looking into alternatives before sacrificing the quality of your selection and/or implementation. These alternatives may include financing, leasing, shared services, donations, volunteers, grant proposals, or breaking down purchases or steps into smaller pieces spread over time.

When creating a timeline here are some things to consider:

- Down-time during final conversion
- Holidays, staff vacations, or busy times or seasons at your Y
- Your YMCA's calendar of events
- Major purchases (may have shipping or order time involved)
- When funding is available
- Time for installation and testing
- Status meetings
- If board approval is needed for specific steps, when do they meet?

Implementation Plan

Create a Roles and Responsibilities Matrix

Now that you have a project plan and a timeline, you will need to start assigning each task and assigning roles and responsibilities. All of these elements should be combined into a simple matrix or spreadsheet that can be shared with all involved.

There is a sample of a Roles & Responsibility Matrix on the TRG website at:

http://www.ymcaexchange.org/back/technology_management/using_technology/Implementation_Matrix_2004-11-17.aspx

Create a Communication Plan

In order for any implementation to succeed, it will need support across the organization. A communication plan will allow you to share information regarding expectations, progress, and roles. If the Bow Tie Model for planning was used in the first phase of the process, leaders will have already considered the importance of involving stakeholders.

The communication plan should be created to permit certain stakeholders to receive complete copies of the plan, including appendices, while others might only receive the body of the plan without appendices.

- Board members and members of the management team should receive copies of the plan when complete.
- Consider publishing portions of the plan regularly in newsletters, memos or announcements. This would allow exposure to staff across the organization.
- Provide necessary pieces to involved providers and consultants.
- Include any volunteers that are assisting with the process.

Create an Issues Log

As the implementation process starts, creating an issues log will help minimize overlooked pieces, loose ends, or unanswered questions. The log does not have to be anything more elaborate than a Word document with a table. The table should number each issue, indicate what the question or possible issue is, to whom it is assigned, status, a date addressed and a short explanation of the resolution. Then, whenever there is an unanswered question at a meeting or a problem arises, it is recorded in the log. Then the log is reviewed at status meetings as a reminder of unresolved issues.

A sample of an issues log is incorporated into a status report that can be used by the implementation team at meetings. For the sample status report visit the TRG website at: http://www.ymcaexchange.org/back/technology_management/using_technology/Status_report_issue_log_2004-11-17.aspx

Implementation Plan

☞Your Turn: Leadership Checklist Part 1 (Homework for Sharepoint)

While going through this session you were completing your Leadership Checklist, looking for issues to address and next steps. Now it is time to share that work with the group. Please post your checklist responses on the sharepoint site. For directions to post your checklist please refer to the orientation email and attached PDF. If you need assistance please email YUSATech@ymca.net.