

# Strategic Planning with SOAR

The Thin Book of SOAR: Building Strengths-Based Strategy Jacqueline M. Stavros and Gina Hinrichs Thin Book Publishing, 2009. <http://www.thinkbook.com>

SOAR uses stakeholders to talk about the strengths an organization has, and to use their judgment and thoughts to help the organization grow and improve.

Strengths – what the organization does best

Opportunities – understanding current circumstances

Aspirations – considering S and O, what direction? Values? Vision?

Results – measuring success, tangible realities from S/O/A

A Sample Agenda, using the community group and an outside facilitator

Strengths intro and breakout Intro (5 minutes), discussion (25 minutes)

Strengths report outs Each small group reports back, 5 minutes per group

Facilitator debriefs What did we learn? What does it mean? What do we do about it?

Opportunity intro and breakout Senior leader provides insight on trends, issues, forces.

Group breakouts; opportunities and insights. Reframe challenges

Opportunity report outs Report out and opportunity mapping (40 minutes)

Facilitator debriefs What does it mean? What do we do about it?

Aspirations intro and breakout Facilitator intro (5 minutes), group discussions (25 minutes)

LUNCH

Aspirations report outs 5 minutes/team; 35 minutes

Facilitator debriefs What did we learn? What does it mean? What do we do about it?

Results intro and breakout Introduce results breakout (5), group discussions (25 minutes)

Results report outs 5 minutes/team; 35 minutes

Results debrief What did we learn? What does it mean? What do we do about it?

Sample questions from the Thin Book of SOAR

STRENGTHS

What is the Library most proud of? How does that reflect our greatest strengths?

What makes us unique? What can we be best at in our world?

What is our proudest achievement in the last two years?

How do we use our strengths to get results?

What do we provide that is world class for our customers and for libraries?

## OPPORTUNITIES

How can we best meet the needs of our stakeholders, including customers, employees, partners and community?

Who are possible new customers?

What are possible new markets, products, services or trends?

How can we reframe challenges to be exciting opportunities?

What new skills do we need to move forward?

## ASPIRATIONS

What do we care deeply about?

Reflecting on Strengths and Opportunities, who are we, who should we become and where should we go?

What is our most compelling aspiration?

What strategic initiatives like programs or projects would support our aspirations?

## RESULTS

Considering our Strengths, Opportunities, and Aspirations, what meaningful measures tell us we are achieving our goals?

What three to five indicators would show us we are helping people and the planet as we reach our goals?

What resources are needed to complete our most important projects?

What are the best rewards for the people who achieve our goals?

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