

Technology Planning:
*A guide to preparing for future
technology*

Rose Bonjour
Tel: 405-743-5118
E-mail: rbonj@okcareertech.org
Educational Technology Resources Division
Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education
1500 West 7th Avenue
Stillwater, OK 74074-4364

Introduction

Technology planning is an essential part of an overall strategic plan. The objective of this Technology Planning Guide is to help you to prepare for the future of technology in education. Successful planning for technology in education depends on a sound plan. This tool can be used to organize your thoughts about how you want to pursue technology at your school.

Team Planning

- Planning for the future begins with the realistic understanding of existing conditions.
- Planning is the rational determination of where you are, where you want to go and how you are going to get there.
- Planning is making a set of decisions about the future which guide and help you determine current actions.
- The plan is to project the realization of your purpose.
- The team planning process is a participating, strategic planning program. The planning process should include **all** members of the team.
- The outcome is to develop a formal, written technology plan for the school that everyone can fully support.
- The questions serve as a working document, where you can jot down your ideas and thoughts for discussion.
- This is a team planning effort. The quality of the resulting plan is directly dependent on the efforts of each individual on the team.

Understanding Technology

We are witnessing major changes in the way we use technology to deliver courses (IETV, Internet, CBT, etc.) Advanced technology allows us to communicate faster and over further distances. The world of technology-based training is changing so fast it is difficult to grasp. It's like taking a drink of water from a fire hydrant. Yet we must make decisions about which technologies to invest in and how we are going to use those technologies. Planning teams need to be organized to provide an overall assessment of the current status of technology in your school and a subsequent strategic plan to deploy technical resources.

How do you define technology?

How does your school define educational technology?

Vision, Mission and Goal Review

To achieve your objectives, you must have a sound vision and mission and goals. Hopefully, these have already been developed during a previous overall strategic planning session for your school. If not, they need to be considered in order to proceed with a sound technology plan.

Critical Success factors

Critical success factors form the basis, the foundation, for creating a preferred future for technology in your district. By determining which factors are most important to the future success of the organization, team planners can develop realistic goals and measurable objectives that address these factors. They must go right if you are to have the best possible technology for your school.

What are the critical successes for technology at your school?

Examples:

- Excellent customer service
- Trust
- Well-trained staff
- Innovation
- Image

How do you think the public views your school? How does this affect the technology you provide at your school?

How do critical success factors influence how you approach the application of technology at your school?

Vision

The vision is a vivid description of what you want technology in your school to be like. It's what technology should look like if we were doing the critical success factors.

What is your school's vision?

How can technology support this vision?

What does your school want to achieve by providing technology?

What are the key areas of concern about technology at your school?

How will technology affect policy at your school in the next decade?

What policies will need to be changed or reviewed?

Mission

A mission is a broad statement that explains your product or services, your customers/clients and where your school provides these products or services.

What is your school's mission?

How can technology support this mission?

Situation Analysis

Situation analysis provides us with a picture of the gap between your *vision* and your *current reality*. Consider your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, problems and threats.

How do you currently approve the purchase of technology?

What evaluation process do you use?

Do faculty have input into purchases?

What is the role of the board in approving technology?

Do you have a quality distance education program in place? How do you assure academic integrity of the courses?

What support services do you have for distance education in your school?

How do you train your teachers to use the distance learning lab effectively?

Goals

Goals are broad general statements of intent that begin to define your direction.

What are the gaps between your current reality and your vision based upon your situational analysis?

Write a goal for each gap.

Objectives

Objectives allow you to look at what you need to be doing and when you will have them completed.

List three measurable objectives for each goal and include timelines.

List how resources will be deployed to accomplish each objective.

Strategies

Strategies describe how you will deploy your resources to accomplish your objectives.

Write down at least two strategies that you would recommend for each objective.

Action Steps

Action steps are individual steps that will be used to implement your strategies.

Write down the action steps for each strategy. They should be tied to a completion date.

Implementation

At this point you look at your implementation timeline to see when your vision will be realized.

Self-assessment

SWOT/P

Strengths; Helps you live your values and accomplish your mission.

Weaknesses; Are barriers to achieving your preferred future.

Opportunities;

Threats/problems

Conducting a SWOT analysis is an effective way to look at your organization, and your marketplace. It also allows you to decide where you are in comparison to your competition.

Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses of your organization/product/service as it relates each potential audience.

Then identify a list of the opportunities and threats that you see developing within the marketplace.

Internal

Strengths	Weaknesses
-----------	------------

External

Opportunities	Threats
---------------	---------

Make sure you maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses. Look for ways to turn weaknesses into strengths. Also look for ways to turn threats into opportunities. Capitalize on all market opportunities that you can. To do this you need to determine your *competitive advantage*. Match your SWOT analysis with your target market's needs and wants.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals that should be involved in the implementation of technology at your school. They should be selected from administration, finance, full-time secondary and full-time and short-term adult programs, business and industry training, client-based programs and other areas.

Marketing

A formal technology plan that leads to quality education should have a marketing plan designed to meet a clearly defined customer need.

What type of student will be involved in learning through the technology you implement at your school?

Age?

Education?

Previous training?

Geographic location?

Who evaluates the quality of instruction at your school? Internally? Externally?

Which courses offer certification, CEU's, licensure. How long do the students have to complete?

Is your faculty trained for distance education delivery?

How will you advertise your distance education courses?

Newspaper

Brochure

Radio

TV

Distance Education Marketing Plan

Developing a marketing plan for distance education delivery systems can only be successful when written, measurable goals are established and are accountable, accomplishable and ambitious.

For a marketing plan to be successful it must represent the needs and desires of the customers, school and community. Proper research should be done to determine:

- Who is your competition
- Describe the specific audience(s) or target markets to be served by the distance learning program.
- What are the economic and social trends
- What are the ages of the audience you are trying to reach
- What previous training may they have had
- What geographical location, region, national or international are you trying to reach

Next you need to narrow your focus in selecting target audiences. Which group or groups can you identify as being most advantageous. These are the groups that can help you reach your goals. Focus on three primary groups.

- Internal customers: To your own group
- Existing: To your current customers
- Potential: Your prospects

The more you know about the attitudes and behaviors of your target audiences, the better you will be able to design marketing messages and methods to reach them. This also allows you to better manage your resources with the least waste of time, money and energy.

Competitive Advantage:

- Product?
- Price?
- Distribution?
- Promotion?

Next, you need to determine your advertising budget. Consider these four factors:

1. Percent of sales
2. How much is left in your budget
3. How much does your competition spend
4. Spend as much as needed to get the business

Promotion/Effective Messages

Developing messages that are targeted to each particular audience and the media that will be used to communicate them is essential to your efforts. A consistent approach should be used so that all of the marketing components can build upon each other. Remember not all individuals and organizations are concerned with the same things. What is important to one individual may not be to another.

Use these effective tips:

- Effective messages are designed to communicate to a specific audience.
- Perception is reality.
- People select only what relates to them personally.
- A common message needs to be integrated into all materials.

Create:

- Awareness – Let people know about the products and services you provide.
- Attitude – know the current attitude of your audience to help you create messages that make use of those attitudes.
- Action – Be specific in telling them exactly what you want them to do, for example: Register Now!; Save travel time-do your next meeting via distance. Remember, messages have to include information that the audience is interested in hearing – not just what you are interested in saying.

Distance Education Planning

External connections

Do you plan on being primarily a receive site?

Do you plan on originating classes at your site?

Do you plan on doing both?

Bandwidth

Bandwidth dictates how many users may receive at one time. It is critical to measure how many “chunks” of data, audio and video, measured in megabits per second, you want to transmit and/or receive.

Options:

56K Typical of most computer modems

ISDN 128 Mbps (BRI or PRI)

DSL Digital Subscriber Line 8 Mbps one way. Fancy name for ISDN BRI line (Two 64 kbps circuit switched channels, one 16 kbps packet switched channel)

T1 1.5 Mbps

T3 or DS 3 45 Mbps Equivalent of 28 T1 lines

Internal connections:

H.320

H.323

Full motion

OneNet

Based in Oklahoma City, OneNet is a partnership between the State of Oklahoma and private telecommunications companies.

OneNet builds on the state's current telecommunications infrastructure, leasing facilities and equipment from telecommunications companies and utilizing their support and expertise in operating and maintaining the network.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, in partnership with the Office of State Finance and Oklahoma telecommunications companies, operate the network.

OneNet user fees pay for operating costs, technology upgrades and equipment replacement.

How can my organization get connected?

Call the OneNet toll-free hotline at 1.888.5.0NENET (1.888.566.3638) to learn how you can connect to the state network.

A OneNet hotline advisor can give you an accurate estimate of equipment costs and network user fees. A OneNet information packet to help you plan your connection to OneNet is available.

Also, OneNet can help you take advantage of volume pricing when ordering equipment from approved vendors. The help desk is available to assist you with common network applications and to troubleshoot any technical problems.

What equipment will my organization need to buy?

OneNet has adopted certain equipment standards to ensure OneNet users can effectively communicate with other users on the network.

OneNet has equipment standards for servers, routers, modems, desktop computer work stations, telephone circuits, and compressed and full-motion video coder/decoder (CODEC).

By purchasing equipment through approved OneNet contract vendors, users receive not only volume discount pricing, but also ensure equipment compatibility.

Purchase of equipment other than that specified by OneNet standards may require costly modifications to make the equipment compatible, or users may find the equipment will not work at all. For suggested equipment purchases, call the OneNet hotline at 1.888.5.ONENET (1.888.566.3638).

How will OneNet benefit my organization?

OneNet provides the following services:

Video Services:

- Full motion video
- Compressed video
- Video teleconferencing
- Desktop video (ISDN, CUSeeMe, MBONE, etc.)

Data Services:

- Access to the Internet
- World Wide Web host services
- High-speed secure, dedicated connections
- LISTSERV
- Electronic mail
- USENET News Feeds
- Dial-up access
- Domain Name Services (DNS)
- Network Security
- Firewall
- Encryption

Definitions

Vision--Ideal Future

Mission--A broad, current statement that defines your product or service, your customers and where you deliver these products or services to these customers.

Belief--A state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing.

A **tenet**--principle, belief or doctrine generally held to be true. Held in common by members of an organization, group, movement or profession.

Value--Something intrinsically valuable or desirable

Core Values--Fundamental beliefs

Strategies--Describe *how* you will deploy your resources to accomplish your goals.

Objectives--State *what* must be done to accomplish your goals and *when* it will be completed-Result of actions. Together, objectives and strategies explain *what* you will do, *when* you will do it and *how* it will be done.

Actions--The manner or method of performing.

Goal--The end toward which effort is directed. Goals are the beginning point of closing the gap between where you are today; your current reality and your future; your vision