

The ten
secrets
of a
successful
planning
meeting

How to implement
Total Quality
Planning™

John W. Myrna

*The breakthrough step-by-step program that enables you to create a strategic long range plan in only two days with **immediate bottom-line impact**.*

*Your executives reach **consensus** on where your company is today and should be in the future with a **commitment** to specific actions to create and control that future.*

The ten secrets of a successful planning meeting

1. **Play your role as CEO and walk the talk**
 - 1.1. ***Pre-retreat***
 - 1.1.1. **Communicate the importance of the retreat**
 - 1.1.2. **Build team consensus on the need and value of the retreat**
 - 1.1.3. **Make the final decision to plan, participatory with the executive team**
 - 1.2. ***Retreat***
 - 1.2.1. **Suspend your usual “problem-solving” role**
 - 1.2.2. **Suspend your usual intuitive, “save time” role**
 - 1.3. ***Post-retreat***
 - 1.3.1. **Follow-up with the team and communicate importance through actions**
 - 1.3.2. **Hold people and company to commitments**
2. **Select a quality executive team**
 - 2.1. ***Pick people who can look at the business through the eyes of the CEO***
 - 2.2. ***Pick 5-12 people***
 - 2.3. ***Include direct reports, department heads, key consultants and key movers/shakers***
 - 2.4. ***Make sure all members participate. There are no observers***
 - 2.5. ***It’s expected and OK that team member’s business skills are uneven***
 - 2.6. ***Never include lame ducks***
3. **Pre-plan the retreat**
 - 3.1. ***Set a retreat date in advance and communicate the date and its importance***
 - 3.2. ***Use an input form to gather basic WOTS-up input and organize anonymously***
 - 3.3. ***Prepare a calendar of company events***
 - 3.4. ***If required, address team member uncertainty during pre-retreat meeting***
 - 3.5. ***Set expectations for intensity, dedication, and possible evening hours***
4. **Use a facilitator**
 - 4.1. ***Select someone experienced in the process***
 - 4.2. ***Select someone with real-world business knowledge and experience***
 - 4.3. ***Select someone who can establish credibility with the team***
 - 4.4. ***Select someone who has good chemistry with the CEO and the team***
 - 4.5. ***Select someone who can educate the team as well as facilitate the process***
 - 4.6. ***Select someone who can earn the CEO’s respect***
 - 4.7. ***Select someone with presence***
 - 4.8. ***Don’t ask a team member to facilitate, especially the CEO***
5. **Use meeting tools**
 - 5.1. ***Meet off-site. Dress in business casual***
 - 5.2. ***Dedicate 2 intensive days to establishing an organizational state of flow time***
 - 5.3. ***Have and follow a posted and distributed agenda***
 - 5.4. ***Define, explain and acknowledge the different roles of the facilitator, participant and CEO***
 - 5.5. ***Define, explain and acknowledge a set of meeting rules everyone agrees to follow***
 - 5.6. ***Use flip charts, taping sheets to the wall as the meeting progresses***
 - 5.7. ***Maintain sizzle with foul flags for rule breakers, motivational posters, etc.***
 - 5.8. ***Make sure to use a quiet meeting room with enough space and open walls***
 - 5.9. ***Serve food that keeps the team alert and awake***

Executive summary

6. **Surface the company's strategic issues**
 - 6.1. *Surface issues by prioritizing pre-retreat input of expectations, WOTS & trends*
 - 6.2. *Never attempt to assign blame*
 - 6.3. *Say what needs to be said, there are no sacred cows*
 - 6.4. *Take the time to discuss every issue to a common level of team understanding*
 - 6.5. *Synthesize individual issues into restatements of company-wide strategic issues*
 - 6.6. *Don't vote without discussion, and don't railroad discussions to "save time"*
 - 6.7. *Prioritize the issues and focus future attention only on the most important*

7. **Establish a vision for the future**
 - 7.1. *Update and/or establish and commit to a company mission statement*
 - 7.1.1. *The mission statement talks about who we want to be 3-5 years from now, not merely who we were or who we happen to be today*
 - 7.1.2. *The mission statement answers the questions of who we are, what we do, who we do it for, and why we do it*
 - 7.1.3. *The mission statement fits like a lobster shell, not too big or too small*
 - 7.2. *Update and/or establish and commit to a set of company values*
 - 7.2.1. *Values are based on the CEO's and/or founder's existing values*
 - 7.2.2. *Values reflect the team's consensus*
 - 7.3. *Update and/or establish a company product/market strategy*
 - 7.3.1. *Identify the major product focus for near, mid and long-term*
 - 7.3.2. *Identify the major market focus for near, mid and long-term*

8. **Establish team consensus on the strategic goals for the next 12 months**
 - 8.1. *Start with each executive defining their concept of the best 5 company goals*
 - 8.2. *Hold the team to a few goals, ones that can be kept in front of the team daily*
 - 8.3. *Set the number of goals, 5-10 typically, to fewer than the number of executives*
 - 8.4. *Make each goal a synthesis of individual goals. (Goals have no single author.)*
 - 8.5. *Pass the red-faced test. Agree that the process led to reasonable conclusions*
 - 8.6. *Identify goal champions who represent the best mix of passion and competence*
 - 8.7. *Remember that champions can champion only 1 goal*
 - 8.8. *Try to have the CEO champion the "Maintain the momentum of the strategic plan." goal. (This is the "Plan of plans")*
 - 8.9. *Identify multiple co-champions with energy and genuine concern for success*

9. **Develop an initial draft of an action plan for each goal during the planning meeting**
 - 9.1. *Action plans have a 12 month focus*
 - 9.2. *Action plans have 6-12 strategic milestones*
 - 9.3. *Each milestone has a date. Align dates if possible with key external events*
 - 9.4. *Each milestone has 1 responsible individual*
 - 9.5. *Milestones are not cast in concrete. Action plans can be revised during the year*

10. **Implementation**
 - 10.1. *Deliver the paperwork documenting the meeting within 3 business days. Give the delivered product an important look and feel*
 - 10.2. *Complete company communication within 10 days via a stand-up meeting*
 - 10.3. *Revise and re-distribute the action plans within 2 weeks*
 - 10.4. *Review/discuss action plans during regular weekly or monthly meetings*
 - 10.5. *Commit to and hold formal, facilitated quarterly review, mini-retreats*
 - 10.6. *Make sure the CEO and executive team maintain their attention to the plan, keeping the goals and milestones in front of their faces daily*
 - 10.7. *Hold a full, zero-based, strategic planning retreat annually*
 - 10.8. *Remember to celebrate your successes*

1 Play your role as CEO and walk the talk

The CEO has only three jobs that can't be delegated:

- Making the “you bet the company” decisions.
- Developing the management team.
- Leading the strategic planning process.

The strategic planning retreat is the best path to fulfilling these responsibilities. Strategic planning only works when the CEO is committed to it and leads the process. It is key that the CEO **communicate the importance of the planning retreat** to the executive team. Informally talk to each team member one-on-one about your goals for the retreat. **Solicit agreement and buy-in** on the value and need for the meeting. Discussing the issues with your executives before a final commitment is made, creates an effective team planning climate.

During the retreat the CEO plays a particularly difficult role. The **CEO acts as a participant** in the planning retreat rather than the a problem solver and action oriented, time saver. CEOs are the ultimate problem solvers. When an executive appears with a problem the CEO looks to resolve and solve the issue or problem then and there. In the planning meeting it is important that major issues get surfaced, discussed to a common level of understanding and prioritized. Trying to “solve” an issue dampens discussion and understanding. This process of discussing issues until the entire team “gets it” can drive a CEO up the wall. CEOs are bright and intuitive. This combination leads to their reaching an understating after hearing only a little bit of information and using that understanding to formulate a solution. In a desire to save everyone time they share their insight with a simple “Here’s what we should do” statement. Executives who don’t see where the answer came from, try to ask but usually get squelched. Ultimately they salute and say “yes sir!” but don’t have the deep commitment that flows from a personal understanding. Bite your lip or take a walk but allow the rest of the team to catch up with you. (They might even come up with an approach that’s even better than your intuition.)

People listen to what you do rather than what you write or say. In the 2 weeks following the retreat focus your actions on asking your executives how they are doing on their close-in milestones. Be the first to meet your milestones. Make sure that the team understands that you take their commitment to results seriously and expect them to achieve the goals. Further, keep your commitment to provide the resources required by the plan. Do not change direction because of an interesting article in Friday’s Journal and do not create an operating budget that isn’t anchored by the strategic plan.

Your team will take the plan as seriously as you do.

Select a quality executive team

2

Pick people who can look at the business through the eyes of the CEO. An executive is someone who cares about the entire business not just their function, their department, their people or themselves. This attitude is key. Your executive may not yet have the education, experience and knowledge to excel but without the attitude they will never be effective members of senior management. **It's expected and OK that team member's business skills are uneven.** The planning retreat is an excellent opportunity for the team to learn and develop general business skills.

Pick 5-12 people. The information necessary to set direction and establish goals is in the heads of your executives. Strategic issues are too complex and nuanced to be completely understood by any 1 member of the team. It takes a group of people, each with their personal view of reality, to create a common vision of the elephant*. With fewer than 5 participants there isn't enough diversity to get the job done. Above twelve participants there isn't enough time for everyone to reach the common understanding required to achieve a state of flow where everyone can see and balance the complex interrelationships between issues. With more than twelve participants the meeting can turn into a series of presentations rather than an interactive session.

Select your planning team to **include your direct reports, department heads** (no matter where they report in the organization), **key outside consultants** and the **1 or 2 movers and shakers** that will affect your success over the next 3-5 years. A mover and shaker might be an insightful, top sales rep or product developer. Make sure **all members participate**. There are no observers. Everyone weighs all the issues and as a team they "place their bets and takes their chances." You can't allow someone to stand aside and not be part of the commitment. To this end, **never include lame ducks**. You are asking for commitments and a lame duck is not in a position to make one.

* Elephant? There once were six, blind, wise men. Word reached them of a monstrous and wondrous animal. The six blind men traveled to the site of this animal and 1 by 1 walked up and felt some part of it. They then spent the rest of their days arguing over the nature of the beast. It's like a wall said one. No, no, no it's a giant snake. You're wrong it's a spear, a wall, a tree-trunk, a rope, a giant fan. On and on they went. The truth is that it required a synthesis of all their views in order to gain a true impression of the elephant. Strategic issues in a company are like the elephant. It requires a synthesis of many views to gain an accurate sense of an issue's reality.

3

Pre-plan the retreat

Set a retreat date far enough in advance that the entire team can commit to it without conflicts from weddings or major company events such as a new product launch. **Communicate clearly that this is important** stuff and the executive's calendar is to be kept clear of any other appointments. Explain that this is all we will be doing for those 2 days so don't assume you can overlap the planning with a sales call or other activity.

Use an input form to gather basic information from the team. Ask for the 5 major weaknesses, opportunities, threats, strengths and industry trends. (The classic WOTS-up topics.) Ask for team members' expectations, 5 top products and 5 top markets. Have a non-team member, such as the meeting facilitator, create a single page, numbered list of items from each topic (weakness, opportunity, etc.) Combine duplicate items and sort the list to obscure the author of any particular item. Ask for the top 5 in each topic to start the process of prioritizing and focusing.

Prepare a calendar of company events to aid in the action planning. These should be the major internal and external events that drive the business. Typical events include annual shareholder meetings, user conferences, contract re-compete and trade shows.

If required, **address concerns** team members may have **during a 30 minute pre-retreat meeting**. This can be an excellent time for the team to meet the facilitator and fill out the pre-retreat input form.

Set an expectation for intensity, dedication, and possible evening hours. The meeting will start at the company's normal starting time and end anytime between 6 PM and 11 PM depending on how long it takes to address the issues. Ask people to keep both evenings open. This is a key moment in the history of the company and you don't want to stop short of finishing because someone has tickets to the opera or a plane to catch.

Use a facilitator

4

Select someone **experienced** in the strategic planning process. It stands to reason that someone who facilitates strategic planning retreats week in and week out is going to be more experienced and effective than someone who does it once in a while or even once a year. The power and value of experience becomes crucial when the planning retreat doesn't go exactly as planned.

Select someone with **real-world business knowledge** and experience. This experience allows the facilitator to do a better job of relating to basic company issues. On the other hand it is not necessary nor even desirable that the facilitator come from your industry. The industry knowledge and plan should flow from the team's head, they are the ones who will be implementing it. Sometimes it is hard for facilitators to keep their distance from a market they grew up in.

Select someone who can establish **credibility** with the team. People implement better when they believe. If the team doesn't believe in the facilitator then they may not believe in the plan. Be sure to select someone who has **good chemistry with the CEO** and the team.

Select **someone who can educate** the team as well as facilitate the process. All management teams have uneven experience. This retreat is an excellent opportunity to learn.

Select **someone who can earn the CEO's respect**.

Select **someone with presence**. Executives and CEOs are a rowdy bunch. You need someone who can get the group back on course when they start of wander off.

Don't ask a team member to facilitate, especially the CEO. Team member contributions are too intense and too valuable to be diluted worrying about when to break for lunch, where the rest rooms are and other meeting details. Further, a facilitator that is seen as a neutral party can steer the group through discussions of the really tough issues.

It is a false economy to facilitate the process yourself. Time and time again companies find that they either don't finish the agenda or worse yet, finish the entire agenda in a few hours because the meeting becomes a presentation by the CEO.

5

Use meeting tools

Meet off-site. Meeting rooms carry their own negative connotations. The room doesn't have to be expensive. It could be a conference room at a colleagues' company or even a rented church hall. Dress in **business casual**. The casual dress breaks the mold and 8-12 hour meetings are more comfortable in casual clothes.

Dedicate 2 intensive days to establish an organizational state of flow time. The 2 planning days need to be back to back. The most popular combination is a Friday and Saturday, 1 day of company time and 1 day of personal time.

Have and follow a **posted and distributed agenda**. Post the agenda on the wall and check off the items as you go along. No hidden agenda.

Define, explain and acknowledge the **different roles of the facilitator, participant and CEO**. The facilitator is responsible for the meeting having met the team's goals. The CEO suppresses the normal modes of operation and acts as a participant. The team members acknowledge that they are here to look at the business through the eyes of the CEO. They are not here representing their people, their departments, their functions or themselves. They are here to look at the entire business through the eyes of the CEO.

Define, explain and acknowledge a **set of meeting rules** everyone agrees to follow. (1)Listen, (2)stay focused, (3)say what needs to be said, (4)there are no sacred cows, (5)avoid cheap shots, (6)respect differences of opinion, (7)focus on solving problems rather than placing blame, (8)contribute only new information to the discussion and (9)conduct only 1 discussion at a time.

Use flip charts, taping sheets to the wall as the meeting progresses.

Maintain **sizzle** with **foul flags** to throw in front of rule breakers, and motivational **posters**, etc. Using a bright yellow foul flag, or bean bag, shows that you are serious about the rules without putting someone down. The tossing of flags is a good way to break the tension.

Make sure to use a **quiet meeting room with enough space and open walls**. The open walls are used to post flip charts and while setting goals.

Serve **food that keeps the team alert and awake**. Skip the croissants, onion rings and pastrami, instead serve bagels, salads and chicken.

Surface the company's strategic issues

6

Surface issues by **discussing, synthesizing and prioritizing** weaknesses, opportunities, threats, strengths and trends. This is the classic WOTS-up analysis.

Start the discussion of each topic (weakness, opportunity, etc.) by handing out a numbered list of items taken from the pre-retreat input form. The list should have combined duplicate items. The process works best if items are sorted alphabetically to obscure the author of any specific item.

The process starts with the entire team discussing each item on the list. **Discuss** an item **until the entire team understands** it. Everyone doesn't have to agree but everyone should understand the item's point and everyone's view of that point.

Say what needs to be said, there are **no sacred cows**. In the discussion of each item, (weakness, strength, etc.) **never attempt to assign blame**. Assigning blame tears down teamwork, makes people defensive & closed mouthed and inappropriately focuses attention on the past rather than the future you want to create.

Don't vote without discussion, and **don't railroad discussions** to "save time." After all the items on a given list have been discussed, have each team member vote for the three most important items (three major weaknesses, three major opportunities, etc.) Encourage members to "cheat" by grouping related items and voting for the new group. This "cheating," synthesizes individual issues into a set of company-wide strategic issues.

As you prioritize the issues, **focus future attention only on those prioritized, most-important issues**.

In addition to the classic WOTS-up analysis, **discuss and record the expectations of the various stakeholders**. (Stakeholders include customers, employees, owners, vendors, community and lenders.) A plan can't met the expectations of the various stakeholders if the team doesn't know what those expectations are.

7

Establish a vision for the future

Update and/or establish and commit to a company mission statement. The mission statement talks about **who we want to be 3-5 years from now** not merely who we were or who we happen to be today.

The mission statement answers the questions of **who we are, what we do, who we do it for, and why we do it**. A productive way to develop the mission is to break the team into 4 groups and take 15 minutes to have each group brainstorm phrases that address 1 of the 4 points. When the team reconvenes they prioritize the phrases. Assign the task of assembling the phrases into a mission statement to 2 volunteers or the facilitator. Review the result of their work before setting goals. The **mission statement should fit like a lobster shell**. Large enough to protect and support your growth over the next 3-5 years while not being so big as to drag you down today.

Update and/or establish and commit to a set of company values. **Values are based on the CEO's and/or founder's existing values**. The CEO/founder values should be distributed and serve as the starting point for **building a team consensus**.

Update and/or establish a company product/market strategy. Identify the **major product focus (5 products or so) for the next 12 months**. How will that focus change in **18 months** and how will it change again in **5 years**? (Products are what the customer pays for. Every company has products including service companies.) Knowing what you want to be focused on in 18 months lets you know what product and market development you need to be doing in the next 12 months. Include a question on product focus on the input form and create a starting list of products to make this process more efficient.

Identify the major **market focus for near, mid and long-term**. (This is done using the same process you used to define the product focus.) After the team identifies the basic elements of the product market strategy have a volunteer or the facilitator write up the strategy to present and distribute before setting company goals.

Establish team consensus on the strategic goals for the next 12 months 8

Start with **each executive defining** their concept of the best **5 company goals**. Individuals should work alone, take about 30 minutes and look at the business through the eyes of the CEO. Each executive defines 5 goals that they believe will do the best job of meeting stakeholder expectations, overcoming weaknesses, exploiting opportunities, protecting from threats, leveraging company strengths and exploiting industry trends. These goals should be consistent with the company mission and follow the company's product/market strategy.

Develop a **small set of goals** that can be **kept in front of the team daily**. Set the number of goals, **5-10** typically, to **fewer than the number of executives**. Goals are accomplished because 1 person champions them. There can be no more champions than there are planning team members.

Make **each goal a synthesis of several individual goals**, (no single author of a goal.) This can be accomplished with the following process. Have the team members write their goals on 5 x 8 inch index cards, 1 goal per card. 1 by 1, each goal is read by the author and discussed long enough by the team to gain understanding. (Don't argue or criticize the goal, only ask clarification questions.) The goal card is then taped to the wall either under an existing column of cards or forming a new column. When you finish discussing all the cards, there will be a set of columns on the wall representing the team's consensus. Move cards around until you have as many columns as the desired number of goals and then write goal statements that capture the spirit of the set of cards in each column.

Perform a red-face test on the goals. A year from now when you have accomplished the full set of goals will the team agree that they were the best way to get where you want to be in three years? Keep at it until the team agrees that the process has led to a reasonable set of goals.

Identify goal **champions** who represent **the best mix of passion and competence**. Select champions through volunteering and CEO prompting. Remember that champions can champion only 1 goal.

Try to have the **CEO champion** the "Maintain the momentum of the strategic plan" goal. (This is the "**Plan of plans.**")

Identify **multiple co-champions** for each goal. They should have energy and genuine concern for success.

9 Develop an initial draft of an action plan for each goal during the planning meeting

Most strategic planning meetings stop when you have goals. This is a mistake. It is seldom realistic to assume that people will create the action plans immediately when they get back to the office. Instead, have the champions and co-champions take 1-2 hours and draft an initial version of an action plan for their goal during the planning meeting.

Strategic goal statements are usually broad. Only with the addition of specific, quantifiable measures and explicit milestones can the goal take shape.

Each strategic goal represents a consensus of the planning team and was derived by grouping individual goal statements. However, once the goal is defined and a champion selected, the goal takes on a life of its own. The goal's action plan is not a committee effort. The champions with the enthusiastic assistance of their co-champions create action plans that reflect how **they** will accomplish the goal. (This is how you avoid creating a camel, an animal designed by a committee.)

Goals have a 3-5 year focus while **action plans have a 12 month focus**. Each action plan has a set of quantifiable measures that define success when the goal is met. A measure is some statement of quality, quantity, timeliness or cost.

Action plans have **6-12 strategic milestones**. Less than 6 is too coarse to manage from while more than 12 gets everyone lost in the trees. **Each milestone has a date. Align dates** if possible **with key external events**. Use the dates as communications and commitment but never as a club.

Each **milestone has a single responsible individual**. The individual may not do the work but is the single point of contact responsible to see that the milestone gets accomplished. Milestones are not cast in concrete. **Action plans can and usually are revised during the year**.

Think of the plan as having a hierarchy of stability. The values and mission are the most stable followed by the product/market strategy and goals. You need to keep your goals stable during the year in order to produce results. (You never produce results unless you finish what you start!) The action plans that implement the goals, however, are like drafts of a new book. You learn as you execute the plan. It is appropriate to apply that learning by revising your action plans.

Implementation

10

Deliver the paperwork documenting the meeting within three business days. The single biggest thing you can do to communicate urgency is to get the paperwork done quickly. Give the delivered product an **important look and feel**. Don't distribute the plan as a stack of poorly photocopied, stapled sheets of paper.

Complete **company communication within 10 days** via a stand-up meeting. Employees can help you reach your goals only if they know what they are. Don't wait until you can "do it right" that usually means it doesn't get done at all.

Have the goal champions commit to **revise and re-distribute** their **action plans within 2 weeks**.

Review/**discuss action plans during regular** weekly or monthly **meetings**, don't create special weekly strategic planning meetings that just add overhead. Planning is a lifelong process, not a special event.

Commit to and **hold formal, facilitated quarterly review, mini-retreats**. Set those dates at the end of the planning meeting. The team will want to delay each quarterly meeting to have more time to finish milestones, but resist. Lots of progress will get done the week before the meeting! Delay a week and you delay the progress by a week.

Make sure the **CEO and executive team maintain** their **attention** to the plan, keeping the goals and milestones visible and in front of them daily. Print a simple calendar with the milestones. Post a copy of the goals and milestones where the team can see them when they meet.

Hold a full, zero-based, strategic planning retreat annually. Don't just take the existing goals and add new ones. While you invest the same amount of time in planning each year, each time you do planning the team deals with more nuances of the business, greater detail and applies more sophisticated trade-offs in the decision making.

Celebrate success. Don't allow your intensity and constant push for excellence to blind you to the successful achievement of your goals. It is all too easy to focus attention on the small details that didn't happen the way you expected, (the "trees") while ignoring the fact you achieved the goals (the "forest.") Take a few minutes to celebrate before pressing on to the next challenge.



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John started his business career working two paper routes to feed his avid electronics hobby. As a high-school sophomore he moved into the big-time with a leveraged buy-out of his accordion teacher's music business. He received an early education in managing a declining market when the Beatles invaded and the accordion business took a nose dive. Effective market positioning and two acquisitions generated the cash flow to fund his BS in Electrical Engineering from New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Following the road less traveled, John went from the big city streets of central Newark to the big sky country of Bozeman, Montana. two years later he left for the Army with a Masters degree in communications science and life-long love of skiing and the West.

John joined STSC in its first year to share in the lucrative computer time sharing business. During his 15 years, STSC grew to over 250 employees, had a successful IPO and secondary offering, was acquired by a telephone company, and ended with an employee buy-out. John became the General Manager of the core business after the triple blows of a back-to-back recession, the IBM 4100 and the PC revolution knocked the time sharing business out of the sky. He turned his business unit around by shutting 18 offices, downsizing, and focusing on existing customers to generate enough cash flow to jump-start a very successful micro-computer software business.

Two months from bankruptcy and valued at "a quarter and two dead flies," VM Systems Group's board asked John to leave STSC and do his best to turn their company around. Within two years he consolidated the company's position as number two in its market, attracting venture capital and enhancing growth through product and competitor acquisition. John was now a recognized turn-around artist.

On July 4, 1991, John and his life-long partner - and wife - Mary, formed Myrna Associates, dedicated to improving the competitiveness of America's small businesses. John's experiences have given him a passionate belief in the power of strategic planning to generate immediate bottom line results, especially during a growth-spurt, turn-around or other transition. He's distilled what he learned from leading organizations over the past 20 years into a formal program tailored for the small to medium sized organization. It accomplishes more in a two-day team-planning meeting than in the two weeks required by traditional "big company" methods. Even organizations in crisis can find two days to invest.

Success flows from the executive team's consensus and commitment to achieving a small number of goals through specific action plans. John's Total Quality Planning™ (TQP) process facilitates this happening. He can take total responsibility for pre-planning, meeting facilitation and the transcribing and printing of a company's plan. All the company team has to do is show up for the intensive two-day retreat and they are guaranteed to have the final plan in their hands three working days later! Myrna Associates backs its work with a no questions asked, 100% money-back guarantee.

John lives the CEO Club's motto "It's one thing to be independent, but there's no reason to be alone." He is a member of the CEO Club's annual management course faculty, provides monthly workshops on strategic planning and serves on the board of several companies.

John and Mary's son Adam followed in the family footsteps by founding his own software business when he was 13. He is a currently a networking consultant. Daughter Kathern is veterinarian, working toward a residency in optomology.

Make your planning meeting a home-run success. Take advantage of the breakthrough Total Quality Planning™ products & services

The ten secrets of a successful planning meeting

The twelve page report revealing the secrets of a successful strategic planning meeting. Find out the role of the CEO, how to pick the planning team, what a true executive is, how to make your meeting effective using meeting tools, how to synthesize issues, how to create consensus goals and how to jump-start implementation. **\$10, Single copies free to qualified callers**

Where the hell are we?

The 45 minute audio tape of John Myrna's Total Quality Planning™ luncheon talk. Find the answers to the following questions. What secret did Andrew Carnegie pay \$1,000,000 (in 1992 dollars) to learn? How can your company be more competitive, more profitable and more fun? How many milestones were there in the action plan to reach the moon? How many strategic goals can your organization manage? Is planning an event or a process? What are the only three jobs of the CEO? What are the 2 challenges that keep your company from reaching the next plateau? What can we learn from the six blind men? What is the breakthrough that enables your executive team to accomplish more in a 2 day planning meeting than during the 2 weeks required by conventional "big company" approaches? What is the secret of building team consensus and commitment? How can you guarantee successful implementation of your strategic plan? Why can't you finish important work in the office during the normal work day? **\$15**

New, improved, 3rd edition of How to implement Total Quality Planning™

The 100 page, detailed nuts and bolts how-to book, documenting the Total Quality Planning™ process. This pragmatic book contains detailed instructions on executing a successful planning retreat. Delve into the secrets of a successful planning meeting in detail. Use the appendixes with a retreat agenda, pre-retreat input form & instructions, and meeting rules. Learn the nuances of a successful meeting from detailed strategies for building team consensus and commitment to the kind of food to serve at the meeting. The book even includes a complete sample plan. **\$100 3rd edition introductory price \$40**

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