

# STRATEGIC THINKING HELPS LONG BEACH GOODWILL CHOOSE THE BEST STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT



The key to successful implementation of any strategy is a strong Strategic Thinking methodology within the Strategic Planning process. This allows executives to thoroughly evaluate all opportunities prior to implementation.

When designing a Strategic Implementation Plan, oftentimes a group has difficulty agreeing on what might be the best course of action. Different interests and values can contribute varying opinions on what will work best and it can be challenging to prioritize ideas and plans. Beginning the process with a method of Strategic Thinking and bringing in an objective party to help organize the ideas can make for a more efficient and effective means of ascertaining the most successful strategy.

On the surface, some opportunities may seem lucrative, but upon closer inspection, they in fact use too many resources, can be too complex, or ultimately yield small returns. On the other hand, there may be missed opportunities that initially seem off the mark, but after some further research, turn out to be the best options for the business.

Until the various strategies are vetted, it's hard to tell which ideas are truly beneficial for the business and which ideas could weaken

resources without providing the expected return. Strategic Thinking allows companies to organize each of the brainstormed opportunities and confidently choose the right ones.



Over the past 15 years, Haig Barrett has guided many companies through this process. However, some of the most rewarding occasions are when we are able to donate our time and Strategic Thinking know-how to local non-profits.

In 2014, we were able to donate our time to the Long Beach Goodwill to help them expand their business.

## DETERMINING THE MOST EFFECTIVE ACTION

Long Beach Goodwill is part of Goodwill Industries International, the second largest non-profit organization in the United States, and is ranked as one of the top five most valuable non-profit brands in the country. Goodwill Industries International has continuously helped millions of people find employment and receive job training by utilizing profits from the sale of donated clothes, books, and goods through their retail stores and online auction.

Although Long Beach Goodwill is a successful non-profit operation, they were looking to expand their results and further improve their success in three areas: Donation of Goods, Workforce Development, and Retail Operations/Sales. However, when we met with them, they were unsure as to how to proceed and needed help to assess their options and determine the most effective course of action.

## SEARCHING FOR EASY, HIGH IMPACT STRATEGIES

To help Long Beach Goodwill determine which strategy to pursue to best grow their business, we designed a half-day workshop to collect, organize and evaluate their ideas.

During the workshop, key Goodwill Associates and Haig Barrett Consultants were broken into 3 groups representing the 3 areas of interest: Donations, Workforce and Retail. Each group was asked to brainstorm ideas they thought could increase results in their assigned area.

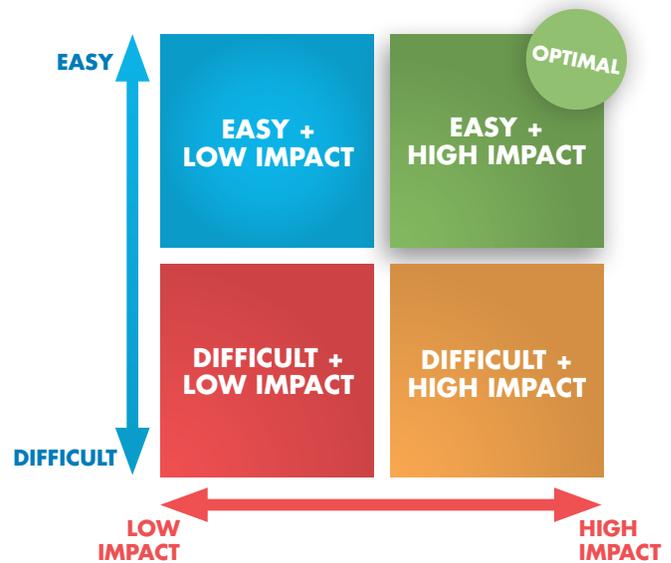


After a period of time, we asked each group to share their ideas. Many interesting and innovative opportunities came to light, however, the real question became, "How do we know which ideas to move forward with and investigate further?"

To begin answering this question, we had everyone first look at all the ideas the groups generated and collectively prioritize them. It quickly became clear which ideas were seen as most valuable and important. However this subjective assessment had another round of analysis to go through.

Each group then had to re-evaluate their list of ideas twice more. First, they had to determine which ones would be difficult or cumbersome to implement and which ideas would be easy to implement. Secondly, they had to rate the ideas based upon which would have a high impact on their business and which would have a low impact.

Once completed, we drew a chart on an overhead projector. Two lines intersected, creating four quadrants. The y axis represented the ease and difficulty of implementing the idea and the x axis denoted the impact the idea would have on the business.



We charted each idea along with the priority number originally assigned to it. This drew attention to the fact that some ideas originally considered higher priority might actually prove to be low impact, or even low impact and difficult to implement. This of course caused some people to reconsider some ideas and their prioritization. However, we then had the group brainstorm ways they could possibly move Low Impact ideas to the High Impact category and how to make the Difficult to implement concepts easier to execute, thus creating further refinement and efficiency of their strategic planning.

## STRATEGIC THINKING HELPED GOODWILL REACH THEIR GOALS QUICKER

By the end of the day, the Long Beach Goodwill had a well thought out list of highly impactful and relatively easy to implement strategic ideas that they could explore further.

The Strategic Thinking and Planning process saved the Long Beach Goodwill from spending additional time in the research phase and from implementing possibly low impact and resource heavy ideas. It gave them focus and direction to begin analysis and exploration of the opportunities best aligned with their goals.