

**Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics in Strategic Planning**

**Goals:** Broad, general statements of the desired end-state or outcome. Programs and campaigns may have one big goal or several more modest goals. Goals are usually written as follows:

- “To promote positive media coverage of our event.”
- “To provide customer service of the ‘highest quality.’”
- “To create a safe workplace for our employees.”
- “To position ourselves as a leader in healthcare.”
- “To cut the accident rate among workers.”
- “To raise our score on the five-point ‘Customer Satisfaction’ rating scale.”

**Objectives:** Statements about how you will influence or change behaviors, knowledge, or attitudes of individuals and public. Objectives help achieve goals. Objectives should be specific to publics, measurable, and achievable by a specific date/timeframe. Measuring objectives requires pretest (benchmark) data and posttest data. Quantitative objectives are preferable to qualitative objectives.

**Types of objectives include:**

**Behavioral Objectives** try to modify how people act or behave. Behavioral objectives represent the *behaviors* that are necessary to make the goals happen. Often several behaviors are necessary to accomplish each goal.

**Attitudinal Objectives** try to modify how people feel or what people believe about something or someone. Changed beliefs lead to changed behaviors.

**Knowledge Objectives** try to modify what people know about something or someone. Increased knowledge about an issue will lead to changed beliefs and behaviors.

Behavioral objectives should be written as specific, quantifiable, behaviors with specific timeframes for achievement: “to (verb) X (public) to do Y (behavior) by Z (date).”  
E.g.:

- “To receive comments from 500 more customers by the end of the fiscal year.”
- “To provide information (via our Web site) to 5,000 registered voters by March.”
- “To convince 500 employees to attend a payroll workshop by November.”
- “To persuade three media representatives to take a plant tour by March.”
- “To review 250 applications from undergraduate students by November.”

**Objectives Example:** If our goal is “*To create a safe workplace for our employees,*” several behaviors will be needed to make this happen and it might include:

- **To encourage** all employees to regularly wear their safety equipment (goggles, earplugs, gloves, etc.) by December;
- **To convince** all employees to immediately report unsafe work conditions;
- **To require** all employees to attend a “safety seminar” each quarter.

**Strategies:** The informative/persuasive techniques used to encourage behaviors, achieve understanding, alter beliefs, and achieve objectives. Like objectives, strategies are targeted to specific publics. What works with one public will not necessarily work with another.

In practice, the strategies that we might use to get people to do what we want them to do are limitless and include: information, persuasion, entertainment, repetition, fear, identification, environmental changes, modeling, use of celebrities, face-to-face meetings, symbols/images, etc.

**Strategies Example:** Using our goal of “*To create a safe workplace for our employees,*” and one of our objectives, “*To convince all employees to immediately report unsafe work conditions,*” there are many strategies we could use to get employees to report unsafe conditions:

- **Information:** Post safety signs saying, “Be safe! Report all unsafe conditions!” etc.
- **Ego:** Employees who report unsafe conditions get merit badges, their pictures posted on a bulletin board, a shout-out in the employee newsletter, etc.
- **Economic:** Reporting an unsafe condition earns employees 50 bucks!
- **Images/Fear:** Post signs depicting accidents and encouraging employees to report unsafe conditions.
- **Diffusion/Repetition:** Relate stories about unsafe conditions in newsletters and employee correspondence.

**Tactics:** The activities we undertake to fulfill the strategies. For every strategy you will utilize one or more tactics. Tactics include face-to-face interactions, public gatherings, group meetings, and written documents: news releases, brochures, speeches, invitations, media kits, etc. Sometimes the line between strategies and tactics is blurred. Holding a meeting to *inform* organizational members is a strategy, as is inviting a celebrity to speak at the event. The speeches given at the meeting, the materials that are distributed are tactics. But is a Web site a strategy or tactic?

**Tactics Example:** Using our goal of “*To create a safe workplace for our employees,*” and one of our objectives, “*To convince all employees to immediately report unsafe work conditions,*” a strategy of “*offering an economic incentive (or reward) for reporting unsafe conditions,*” we need to make employees aware of the reward program so that they start looking for unsafe conditions. Tactics might include:

- **Print:** Posters/signs around the plant about the new program; a story in the employee newsletter about the upcoming “incentive program”; creating a brochure explaining how the program works to be used in a “point-of-purchase display,”; including a copy of the reporting form in the employee’s pay envelopes, etc.
- **Spoken:** Mentioning the program at the next plant meeting and providing instructions for how to properly report an unsafe condition and claim the reward; mentioning the program during a news conference, interview, or other appropriate public event. Note: these both might be “strategies” as well.
- **Electronic:** Writing a story about the new program for the employee Intranet.
- **Media:** Writing a news release about the new program and submitting it to local newspapers; creating a fact sheet about the program for media or informational kits, etc.

**Setting clear goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics** is the first step toward effective planning and integral to the RACE process. Effective campaigns begin with effective research and strategic planning, and end with evaluation.