

Strategic Directions → Goals → Strategy → Tactics

At a recent meeting, there was a lot of discussion/confusion about terminology that we are using in our 2010-2013 Strategic Planning process.... specifically the differences in definition of goals, strategies, and tactics.

Some of these terms are interchangeable. Some definitely are not. Some reflect the difference between WHAT and HOW. And some are similar, but are different because of scale/size.

Goal vs. Strategy vs. Tactic

<u>GOAL</u>	<u>STRATEGY</u>	<u>TACTIC</u>
Increase	Implement	Hire
Improve	Replace	Train
Gain	Revise	Purchase
Realize	Establish	Acquire
	Create	Install
	Offer	
	Develop	



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS and GOALS

Strategic directions and goals are somewhat interchangeable. They are the ends toward which effort and action are directed or coordinated. However, although achieving our goals and strategic directions are our collective aim, they are not necessarily the final achievement. That's the mission.

Strategic Directions and goals are also *whats*, not *hows*, but they are *smaller* than a mission. There can be a number of Directions and goals to be achieved in order to achieve a mission, but there is usually only *one* mission.

STRATEGIES

A strategy is *how* to achieve a goal (or even a mission). It is a thoughtfully constructed plan or method or action that will be employed to achieve the result.

We often talk about people who are good strategists. These are people who excel at devising schemes and plans and courses of action to achieve the desired result.

As you advance in the ranks of management you move from being more of a "doer" (execution, tactics) to being more of a "thinker" (developing strategies to achieve objectives and solve problems).

TACTICS (EXECUTION)

Tactics are what is done to deliver on or coordinate a strategy. Tactics are the foundation for budgeting and resource allocation.

Your tactic is your device used for implementing your strategy and achieving your goal. Strategy and tactics should always be relative to one another because the tactics are the set of actions needed to fulfill your strategy.

Although tactical execution is more about doing than thinking, it is still critical, as poor execution will prevent us from delivering on the strategies that will achieve our goals.

1. Strategies are the projects/initiatives to achieve goals.
2. Tactics are the specific steps taken to implement your strategy.
3. Resources are allocated to implement tactics.