76. 5T SMART Plan

How can I turn my big picture strategy into a detailed plan?

Key Definitions

Strategy is the course of action being followed and is usually shaped by three types of aims: a long-term aim called a *strategic vision* (also called a horizon 3 goal, typically 5-10 years into the future), some mid-term aims called *strategic objectives* (horizon 2 goals, typically 2-3 years out) and multiple short-term aims called *strategic targets* (horizon 1 goals, 6-12 months out).

Ideally, when setting an intended strategy, people should think *future-back*, first formulating their vision and objectives as a big picture and then filling in the targets that need to be reached in the shorter term, along with a detailed plan of action. To know what to do, such a plan should be *SMART* – Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Time-bound.

Conceptual Model

The *5T SMART Plan* template offers a one-page framework for detailing each strategic objective in an organization's big picture strategy. It asks the user to identify at most five strategic targets that need to be realized for each strategic objective, followed by the required key actions, people involved and timing of each action and some measure by which progress towards the target can be tracked. As such, the 5T SMART Plan is more detailed and tangible than the widely used OGSM (Objectives-Goals-Strategies-Measures) framework, while it also avoids the confusion of using the word "strategies" incorrectly.

Strategic Objective: xx *(Horizon 2 Goal)*				©Ron Meyer 2025
Targets *(WHAT: Horizon 1 Goals)*	**Tasks** *(HOW: Key Actions)*	**Team** *(WHO: People Involved)*	**Timing** *(WHEN: Start & Duration)*	**Tracking** *(WHICH: Performance Indicators)*
Target 1: xx	• xx	• xx	• xx	• xx
Target 2: xx	• xx	• xx	• xx	• xx
Target 3: xx	• xx	• xx	• xx	• xx
Target 4: xx	• xx	• xx	• xx	• xx
Target 5: xx	• xx	• xx	• xx	• xx

Key Elements

The six categories of the template are the following:

1. **Strategic Objective.** Based on the overarching strategic vision (see Meyer's Management Models #56), every strategy should identify a limited number of strategic objectives to be

pursued in the coming 2-3 years. These core pillars of an organization's strategy are also called *strategic guidelines* or *must-win battles*. For each, a template should be completed.

2. *Targets*. Just as the vision needs to be broken down into shorter-term objectives, each objective needs to be broken down into even shorter-term targets – typically goals to be reached in the coming 6-12 months. The template only provides room for a maximum of five targets, to force the setting of priorities, but in practice extra targets can be added.

3. *Tasks*. The targets in turn need to be broken down into tangible actions that need to be taken in the short run. Again, the limited room in the template is intended to force the user to prioritize the key actions and to avoid drawing up an overly detailed blueprint. Of course, in a follow-up template, an even more fine-grained planning can be created if necessary.

4. *Team*. For each of the tasks it needs to be determined which people will be involved and in what type of capacity – lead, contributor or supervisor. By completing this part of the template, it will become clear where *people bottlenecks* show up and teams need to be reshuffled, new people need to be recruited, or tasks need to be delayed to a later moment.

5. *Timing*. Based on the assessment of the required task and team, it can be determined when each activity should start and how long each should take. Again, while the logic of the template flows from left to right, sometimes timing-issues will force a few iterations, going back to adjust the team or the tasks to the demands of timing.

6. *Tracking*. Finally, to complete the plan-do-check-act cycle, it is important to have some measures of how well the "doing" is going. Therefore, for each task some indicator needs to be identified for tracking execution (*progress check*), while another indicator might be required to review whether the intended target is being realized (*result check*).

Key Insights

- *Strategy needs to be operationalized*. Most strategy formulation exercises result in a big picture strategy document, focusing on the broad sweep of the strategic direction, including a strategic vision and some strategic objectives. The lurking danger is that this high-level strategy is not made SMART enough for people in the organization to know what to do.

- *Strategy needs a tree of goals*. An internally consistent strategy should be designed from the future back like a tree diagram of goals. A strategy should start with one long-term goal, the strategic vision, as the tree trunk, that then branches out into a few mid-term goals, the strategic objectives. These in turn should each branch out into several short-term goals, the strategic targets, that then branch out into various tasks. The closer one gets to the current moment, the more numerous and detailed all the branches will be.

- *Strategic planning requires determining five Ts.* Detailing these branches is a large part of the strategic planning process. For each of the main branches (*strategic objectives*) a 5T template should be completed, specifying the sub-branches (*targets*) and sub-sub-branches (*tasks*), followed by determining who should be involved (*team*), when activities should be carried out (*timing*) and which way progress should be measured (*tracking*).

- *Strategic planning requires iterations.* While the logic of the 5T template is from left to right, in practice there will be many moments at which various branches of the tree will be at odds with each other, either by pushing in conflicting directions or more often by making use of the same scarce resources. Therefore, the planning process will often go through multiple iterations to achieve alignment between the parts.

- *It's time to retire OGSM*. For many years people have used the OGSM framework, defining Objectives, Goals, Strategies and Measures, leaving out the key factors of team and timing, and confusingly calling tasks "strategies". It's time for an update.

Meyer's Management Models
Insightful Tools to Kickstart Your Thinking

Publication Schedule

July 2019	*Mind the Gap Model*	*Change Management*
August 2019	*Digital Platform Map*	*Digital Strategy*
September 2019	*Interaction Pressure Gauge*	*Interpersonal Interaction*
October 2019	*Revenue Model Framework*	*Revenue Model Typology*
November 2019	*House of Engagement*	*Organizational Engagement*
December 2019	*Confidence Quotient*	*Trust Building*
January 2020	*Competition Tornado*	*Competitive Strategy*
February 2020	*11C Synergy Model*	*Corporate Synergy Management*
March 2020	*Leadership Fairness Model*	*Leader-Follower Interaction*
April 2020	*Strategic Agility Model*	*Strategy Process Approach*
May 2020	*Control Panel*	*Corporate Control Dimensions*
June 2020	*Rising Star Framework*	*Talent Management*
July 2020	*Strategy Development Cycle*	*Strategy Process Steps*
August 2020	*7I Corporate Center Model*	*Corporate Organization*
September 2020	*Storytelling Scripts*	*Leadership Communication*
October 2020	*Strategic Bets Framework*	*Strategic Decision-Making*
November 2020	*Rebound Model of Resilience*	*Organizational Resilience*
December 2020	*4C Leadership Capabilities*	*Leadership Competences*
January 2021	*Digital Product Model Dial*	*Digital Strategy*
February 2021	*Digital Distribution Model Dial*	*Digital Strategy*
March 2021	*Empowerment Cycle*	*Employee Empowerment*
April 2021	*Innovation Box*	*Innovation Approaches*
May 2021	*Knowledge Sharing Bridges*	*Best Practice Sharing*
June 2021	*Followership Cycle*	*Leader-Follower Interaction*
July 2021	*Everest Model of Change*	*Change Management*
August 2021	*Fruits & Nuts Matrix*	*Priority-Setting*
September 2021	*Powerhouse Framework*	*People & Organization Strategy*
October 2021	*Strategy Hourglass*	*Strategy-Making Steps*
November 2021	*Disciplined Dialogue Model*	*Interpersonal Communication*
December 2021	*Team Building Cycle*	*Team Building Process*
January 2022	*Market System Map*	*External Analysis Framework*
February 2022	*Strategic Alignment Model*	*Business Level Strategy*
March 2022	*Creativity X-Factor*	*Creativity Enhancement*
April 2022	*Organizational System Map*	*Organizational Analysis*
May 2022	*Corporate Value Creation Model*	*Corporate Level Strategy*
June 2022	*Change Manager's Toolbox*	*Change Methodologies*

July 2022	Sustainable You Model	Personal Sustainability
August 2022	Value Proposition Dial	Business Level Strategy
September 2022	The Tree of Power	Organizational Power
October 2022	Psychological Safety Compass	Team Dynamics
November 2022	Strategic Action Modes	Strategy Process
December 2022	Corporate Management Styles	HQ Management
January 2023	Thinking Directions Framework	Reasoning Skills
February 2023	5I Innovation Pipeline	Innovation Process
March 2023	Resistance to Change Typology	Change Management
April 2023	Ambition Radar Screen	Motivation Analysis
May 2023	Corporate Strategy Framework	Corporate Strategy
June 2023	Cultural Fabric Model	Organizational Culture
July 2023	New Pyramid Principle	Presentation Approaches
August 2023	Activity System Dial	Value Creation Analysis
September 2023	Customer-Centricity Circle	Organizational Design
October 2023	Status Snakes & Ladders	Leadership Branding
November 2023	Stakeholder Stance Map	Stakeholder Management
December 2023	Best Practice Sharing Modes	Sharing Methods
January 2024	Duty of Care Feedback Model	Feedback Method
February 2024	BOLD Vision Framework	Organizational Vision
March 2024	MOVING Mission Framework	Organizational Mission
April 2024	Leadership Circle Map	Leadership Skills
May 2024	Digitalization Staircase	Digital Strategy
June 2024	Time Management Funnel	Personal Time Management
July 2024	Wicked Problem Scorecard	Organizational Decision-Making
August 2024	Hunting & Farming Typology	Sales Management
September 2024	Guiding STAR Matrix	Objective Setting Approach
October 2024	Corporate Synergy Typology	Corporate Level Strategy
November 2024	Self-Centered Thinking Traps	Thinking Styles
December 2024	Sustainability Maturity Ladder	Sustainability Management
January 2025	Top Line Growth Pie	Growth Strategy
February 2025	Innovation Sins & Virtues	Innovation Management
March 2025	Interaction Drivers	Communication Determinants
April 2025	Frictionless Flow Framework	Customer Journey
May 2025	Five Phases of Change	Change Management
June 2025	Courageous Core Model	Leadership Behaviors
July 2025	Integration Zippers	Corporate Strategy
August 2025	Innovation Arena	Innovation Management
September 2025	Conversation Elevator	Communication Approaches
October 2025	5T SMART Plan	Strategic Planning

November 2025	Organizational Diamond	Organizational Design
December 2025	New Learning Curve	Personal Learning
January 2026	Strategic Assignment Matrix	Corporate Strategy
February 2026	Five Forces of Inward-Looking	Organizational Dynamics
March 2026	Embedded Identity Model	Personal Awareness
April 2026	Synergy Value Matrix	Corporate Level Strategy
May 2026	Low Performance Team Slide	Team Building
June 2026	Leadership Journey	Leadership Development
July 2026	Partnership Distance Model	Interorganizational Relations
August 2026	Triple Diamond Model	Organizational Decision-Making
September 2026	Personal Quick Guide	Personal Effectiveness
October 2026	Dynamic Organization Paradigm	Human-centered Organization