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## **STRATEGIC PLANNING WON'T SUCCEED UNLESS THE PLAN IS IMPLEMENTED**

Developing a Strategic Plan requires considerable time and effort. Yet some plans are not successful because they never achieve their well-conceived goals. Why? Because the strategies and action steps were never implemented.

We have guided many firms in the development and implementation of their strategic plans. This is what is done in firms that are successful in their strategic planning.

1. There are a limited number of goals – five or six at the most; often less. The goals are achievable although sometimes incremental.
2. The Planning Group “sells” the goals and strategies to the rest of the partners as the plan is being developed. If it is clear that something may not be accepted – and therefore not implemented – it may be changed or even discarded, at least for a while.
3. The action steps to achieve the goals and strategies are clearly spelled out.
4. Responsibility for completing each action step is assigned throughout the firm – to one partner or, at times, to a committee or task force, as well as to senior non-lawyer managers. Everyone is then held accountable for the completion of their assignment.
5. Specific dates are assigned for initiation or completion of each action step.
6. The Planning Group continually monitors implementation with the support of firm management.
7. The Planning Group and firm management monitor if the goals are being achieved. If they are not, the timetable may be moved back or the goal changed.

Two important points to recognize:

1. The surest way to bog down implementation – and destroy support for the plan – is to assign responsibility to only a few people.
2. Implementation involves change. Change doesn't always result in improvement – but improvement rarely comes without change.

*Robert Denney Associates Inc. provides strategic management and marketing counsel to law firms, companies and non-profit organizations throughout the United States. Previous Communiques as well as information about our services may be viewed on our web site.*