

MEMBER SNAPSHOT



PREPAREDNESS SCALE



TO-DO COMPLETION

_____ # completed / _____ # To-Dos due = _____ % completed

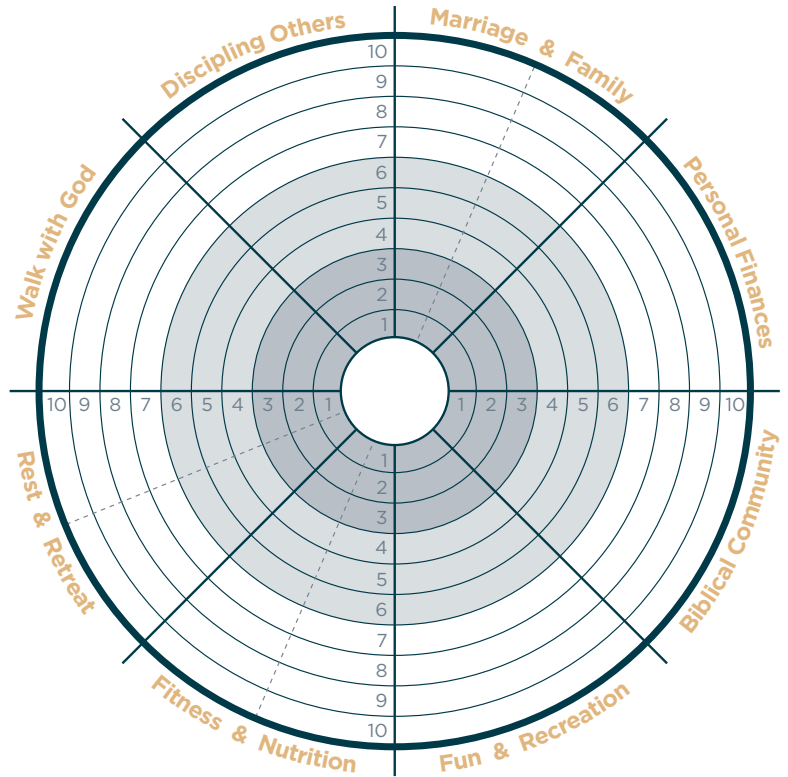
LIFE & LEADERSHIP BALANCE WHEEL

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” **-Colossians 3:17**

Share with the group:

- Your highest areas
- Areas in which you can celebrate improvement
- Your lowest areas
- Areas in which you would like counsel

Big wins and notable events:



5-POINT ALIGNMENT ASSESSMENT

	Behind Target	On Target	Ahead of Target
Revenue Generation Sales, marketing, product line management, and customer relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Operations Management Product/service supply chain, fulfillment, technology, and administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizational Development Recruitment, job selection, talent development, talent management, and succession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial Management Goals, projections, metrics, controls, reporting, and cash management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ministry Kingdom impact/eternal fruit through the business (e.g., salvations, ministry giving, discipleship)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” **-Proverbs 16:3**

Devotion: Establishing the Work of Our Hands

Seeking God's Glory in Our Work

“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. [...] Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!”

Psalm 90:12, 16-17

In these verses, the psalmist calls out to God, asking Him to reveal Himself and bestow His favor upon His people. Most biblical scholars attribute the authorship of this psalm to Moses,¹ and, thus, it is likely the oldest of all the Psalms.² These words are a desperate recognition of Israel's dependence on God. Despite Israel's history of rebellion, Moses's prayer emanates from humility, recognizing that human accomplishments are ultimately reliant on God's sovereignty.



Good men are anxious not to work in vain. They know that without the Lord they can do nothing, and therefore they cry to Him for help in the work, for acceptance of their efforts, and for the establishment of their designs.

—Charles Spurgeon³

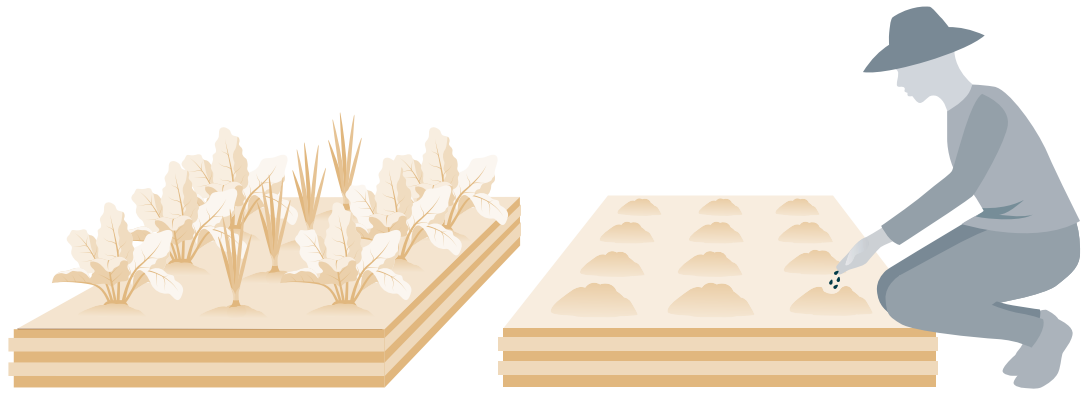
As we develop our plans, crucial questions arise: Whose glory is the aim of our intentions? Are our plans primarily driven by the desire for self-promotion and personal glory? Or have we undergone a transformative process, moving from self-centeredness to a place of dependence on God? Do we seek our own glory, or His?

Often, our desire to bring glory to God can be more fluid than we would like to admit. We alternate between pursuing our own ambitions and submitting to God's plan for our lives. Seeking wise counsel and spending intentional time with God can help us separate the selfish from the sacrificial.

¹ David Guzik, “Psalm 90 – The Prayer of Moses in the Wilderness,” *Enduring Word*, 2020, <https://bit.ly/31Vkkku>; Got Questions, “What can we learn from the prayer of Moses (Psalm 90)?” [GotQuestions.org](https://bit.ly/3NBpPW0), <https://bit.ly/3NBpPW0>.

² Steve Pettit, “Psalm 90: Living With an Eternal Perspective,” Bob Jones University, March 12, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3Jh8VcO>.

³ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, online at The Spurgeon Archive, <https://bit.ly/43KHBfh>.



The success of our plans is ultimately dependent on His favor. It is our responsibility to work diligently, but it is God who will bring the results. Thus, we would be wise to approach our annual planning processes with humility, asking Him to speak into our aspirations. With hearts committed to His glory, we humbly acknowledge God’s sovereignty over all things. We approach planning with an attitude of submission. Then, and only then, can we confidently ask Him to establish the work of our hands.



As you plan for 2024, list five things you could do to intentionally make God integral to the process:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



If you truly believe that you have heard from God in your planning process, does a prayer like “establish the work of our hands” feel too audacious to you? Why or why not?

What would praying “establish the work of our hands” look like in your life and leadership?

Business and Ministry: A Step-by-Step Process for Strategic Planning

The biblical story of Nehemiah is one of vision, strategy, and execution. It is a narrative of hope unfolding amidst a backdrop of ruin and despair. The walls of Jerusalem were broken down and destroyed.¹ Moved by a divine calling, Nehemiah sought permission from the pagan king to embark on a grand undertaking: the restoration of Jerusalem’s protective barrier.

“Then I said to them, ‘You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.’ And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’ So they strengthened their hands for the good work.”

Nehemiah 2:17-18

Nehemiah led the disaster recovery with a clear focus, supporting objectives, measurable goals, and action plans.² He rallied God’s people around a shared mission. His leadership became a beacon of inspiration. Rooted in strategy and meticulous execution, Nehemiah’s experience stands as an example of how, through purposeful planning, we all can accomplish great things.

The unforeseen can outwit any planner, but as a rule, our long-term business outcomes hinge on the quality of our planning.³ Effective stewardship, aligned with Business as a Ministry (BaaM) principles, requires that we engage in strategic planning. C12’s BaaM Strategic Planning Framework describes the process for developing a comprehensive strategic plan for any business:



¹Neh. 1:3.
²Rick Boxx, “Planning Like Nehemiah,” Unconventional Business Network, YouVersion series, <https://bit.ly/3b788NK>.
³See the C12 business segment “Building an Eternally Balanced Scorecard” (September 2020).

When we follow the BaaM Strategic Planning Framework, we empower our teams with critical direction and organizational alignment. We set up our companies to progress and achieve our mission.






Planning to Plan

This segment organizes strategic planning into a five-step method useful for both novice and veteran planners. As we embark on our own strategic planning activities for 2024, this process can be used to conduct a one-day or multiday planning retreat with our leadership teams.

Strategic Planning: An Ongoing Process

The discipline of strategic planning is not a project to complete but an ongoing process to sustain year after year. It is like a muscle that will grow over time if exercised. Each year, we can strengthen our efforts and become more proficient in different aspects of the planning process.

The table below provides an overview of the initial and annual steps of the strategic planning process. The parties involved and the length of each step will vary by company. C12's Strategic Planning Guide walks leadership teams through this process in greater detail.⁴

Establish Once/Confirm Regularly	Perform Annually			
 Look Inward	 Look Back	 Look Up	 Look Around	 Look Ahead
Define: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Statement • Vision Statement • Core Values 	Assess previous year's planning Assess previous year's process execution	Pray for wisdom and direction Align with board, founder, franchisor	Assess company's strengths and weaknesses (SWOT) Assess business environment (PESTEL) Assess competitive landscape (Porter's Five Forces)	Determine a three-to-five-year strategic vision Identify annual strategic objectives Establish annual primary objective Formulate goals, KPIs, and action plans



Break into groups of two or three and share:

- Which steps in the strategic planning process are strengths or weaknesses for your company?
- What do you see as your critical next step to improve your company's planning for 2024?

⁴ Access the 2024 Strategic Planning Guide in the C12 App (Member Resources > General > Tools).



Strategic Planning: From Vision to Victory



C12 member: Jonathan Bailey, Vice President and COO

When Jonathan Bailey learned about strategic planning in his Key Player Forum, he took it upon himself to walk the Wilson & Associates leadership team through the process. Over the course of several years, he helped the team develop core principles, a three-to-five-year strategic vision, and annual strategic objectives. This resulted in an aligned team executing at a high level and doing more business than ever to the glory of God.

Company: Wilson & Associates, P.C.

Employees: 74

Industry: Surveying and Engineering

Year Established: 1972

Headquartered: Franklin, TN

Years in C12: 5



Step 1: Look Inward

Nehemiah's journey started with a clear sense of the mission and vision he was about to undertake.⁵ A visit from his Jewish countrymen revealed that Jerusalem's walls had broken down and that its gates had been destroyed by fire.⁶ Nehemiah immediately understood the implications of this news. He started by **looking inward**. His mission was to protect the holy city. His vision was to rebuild its walls. In business terminology, these were his core principles.

Establish Core Principles

We start our strategic planning process by identifying our company's core principles.⁷ Many C12 companies have completed this initial step and can simply affirm their principles. However, for those who lack these foundational pillars, it is time to develop them.

Our **mission statement**⁸ is a succinct statement that expresses why the business exists. It provides internal clarity to the organization.

Our **vision statement**⁹ is a forward-looking statement that describes what the success of the mission would look like or mean for the world. It should be inspirational and aspirational and lend itself to milestones of achievement.

Our **core values**¹⁰ list the essential behaviors that guide the organization and its culture. They are the cultural attributes to which the company aspires, which employees commit to embodying, and that shape the way we operate in the business.

⁵ See the C12 devotional "Courage Under Fire" (February 2020) and the C12 video "Let Us Rise Up and Build" <https://bit.ly/3NSJBvd>.

⁶ Neh. 1:1-3.

⁷ "How to Write Mission, Vision, and Values Statements - 100 Examples to Guide You Through the Process," Bâton | Global, accessed July 6, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3pMAfsU>.

⁸ For instructions on how to develop a company mission statement, refer to pages 5-6 in the 2024 Strategic Planning Guide in the C12 App (Member Resources > General > Tools). Also, see *A Strategic Plan for Ministry* by Buck Jacobs. Speak with your Chair about attending "A Greater Purpose Workshop."

⁹ For instructions on how to develop a company vision statement, refer to pages 5 and 7 in the 2024 Strategic Planning Guide in the C12 App (Member Resources > General > Tools). Also, watch Craig Wilburn's CURRENT'23 talk, "#BeTheGiveback: Developing a Ministry Vision for Your Business," with CURRENT'23 On-Demand, available at <https://bit.ly/3OmQWcN>.

¹⁰ For instructions on how to develop company core values, refer to pages 5 and 8 in the 2024 Strategic Planning Guide in the C12 App (Member Resources > General > Tools). Also, see the C12 business segment "Compelling Core Values" (August 2019).

Sample Mission Statements

“We build the best center console sportfishing boats with people, processes, and resources to honor God.” —*Regulator Marine*

“Sharing the love of Christ while building homes and relationships with excellence.” —*Pruett Builders*

“Bringing buildings to life through the quality of our people and the service we provide to the Glory of God.” —*Unic Pro Inc.*

Sample Vision Statements

“Pointing humanity to God by creating a worldwide culture of giving back.” —*Team Dynamo (Keller Williams)*

“Every Christian investing for the glory of God.” —*Inspire Investing*

“Christian-led workplaces set the standard as the best, most effective places to work in the world.” —*Best Christian Workplaces*

Sample Core Values

<u><i>Wilson & Associates</i></u>	<u><i>Topaz Sales Consulting</i></u>	<u><i>Reliable Electric</i></u>
Willing Attitude	Love without Limits	Integrity
Gratitude	Unwavering Principles	Servant Leadership
Go the Extra Mile	Honest about Everything	Trust
Teamwork	Stewardship of Time	Passion for Winning
Humility	Passion for Our Purpose	Balance
No Excuses		

These core principles serve as the anchor for the rest of our planning processes. While it can be tempting to skip this step, doing so would be like driving a car without determining a destination or understanding the distinctive capabilities of the vehicle.



See **Step 1** on pages 5–10 in C12’s **2024 Strategic Planning Guide** for additional guidance on how to “look inward.” Also, consider discussing ways to identify core principles with your Chair in your next Focus60.

Confirm Core Principles

For those with previously identified core principles, it is a best practice to confirm them annually at the start of the strategic planning process. Reviewing our core principles brings us back to the heart of what we are trying to achieve.

The mission, vision, and values of an organization are relatively static, but they can change over time, especially if a business has faced major disruption. A review of our core principles may reveal mission drift. Thus, an annual review allows us to confirm the accuracy and effectiveness of our core principles and make necessary adjustments.

Mission/Vision/Values Confirmation Checklist

- Are our mission/vision/values clearly articulated, effectively used, and resilient to changes in technology or the environment?
- As we have grown in our commitment to our BaaM efforts, do our mission/vision/values statements reflect our faith commitment and overall BaaM strategy?
- Have we intentionally pursued new opportunities that necessitate an update to the way we articulate our mission/vision/values?
- Have we unintentionally fallen prey to mission drift?



Step 2: Look Back

Nehemiah took stock of the situation, **looking back** at the root cause: the nation had sinned against God by forsaking His commandments.¹¹ In our planning processes, *looking back* may reveal the past year's challenges or highlight its successes. Whatever the case, before we can effectively build a strategic plan for the year(s) to come, we must evaluate the past year's planning and performance.

Look Back Disciplines

The following two assessments will help us evaluate our strategic planning process and outcomes for last year's planning season. We might consider using these assessments with our leadership teams to gain their perspective. The first assessment evaluates the quality and execution of our plans. The second rates how well our company implemented each aspect of the planning process.

¹¹Neh. 1:6-8.



Strategic Planning Results Assessment

To what extent did your teams create and execute a strategic plan in last year’s planning season, and what results have you seen to date? On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the quality, execution, and results for last year’s strategic plan for each aspect of the 5-Point Alignment Matrix (5PAM).¹² Then, prioritize each area of the business based on which aspects of the 5PAM require the most attention in the coming year.

	QUALITY (1-5) 1 = no credible plan 3 = defined objectives 5 = KPIs with accountability	EXECUTION (1-5) 1 = not referenced 3 = referenced, but not executed 5 = executed	RESULTS (1-5) 1 = poor 3 = satisfactory 5 = excellent	PRIORITY (1-5) 1 = most urgent 3 = somewhat urgent 5 = least urgent
 Revenue Generation				
 Operations Management				
 Organizational Development				
 Financial Management				
 Ministry				

¹² Balanced scorecards are one tool our businesses can use to both assess past success and plan for the future. First popularized by Kaplan and Norton, balanced scorecards drive alignment, execution, and measurement of strategic objectives across business functions. C12 adapted this methodology to equip leaders to build great businesses with a greater purpose.



Strategic Planning Process Assessment

When undertaken with intentionality, a strategic planning process unfolds in a predictable pattern. Each part of the process identifies challenges and opportunities. As we assess results from the past year, it is helpful to highlight which aspect(s) went well and which ones may have caused our action plans to stall. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate how well your company implemented each aspect of the strategic planning process this year:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1.  Establish and confirm the core principles (look inward)</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>2.  Evaluate prior year's performance (look back)</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>3.  Seek God's direction (look up)</p> <p>-----</p> |
| <p>4.  Assess competitive environment (look around)</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>5.  Define three-to-five-year strategic vision (look ahead)</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>6.  Identify the annual strategic objectives</p> <p>-----</p> |
| <p>7.  Ensure leadership buy-in</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>8.  Craft annual primary objective (APO, or "rallying cry")</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>9.  Establish ownership for each annual strategic objective</p> <p>-----</p> |
| <p>10.  Formulate goals, KPIs, and action plans (for each annual strategic objective)</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>11.  Communicate APO, goals, KPIs, and action plans to employees</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>12.  Monitor progress with data</p> <p>-----</p> |
| <p>13.  Update/revise action plans as needed</p> <p>-----</p> | | |



What positive results did your plan produce, and to what do you attribute the success?

If you had unfavorable results, did they grow from weaknesses in the *quality* or from the *execution* of the plan?

Which area of the business did you rank as your top priority in the next year? Why?



During your CEO/key player sync meeting, discuss your assessments of last year's planning season:

- **If you achieved results that cannot be attributed to your planning process, what caused them?**
- **Could you have planned more effectively, or did you miss something in your process?**



See **Step 2** on pages 11–13 in C12's **2024 Strategic Planning Guide** for additional guidance on how to “look back.”



Step 3: Look Up

For the Kingdom-minded leader, prayer precedes planning. Before formulating his plan, Nehemiah **looked up**, repenting and seeking God's direction and blessing.¹³ Nehemiah sought God's favor in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls long before he “pulled permits” from the Persian king, locked down his timber supply, and journeyed to the defenseless city.¹⁴

Look Up Disciplines

If we want the Holy Spirit's guidance in our planning process, we must take time to seek it. When leaders habitually submit in prayer to the Holy Spirit's conviction and direction, they can be more confident that their ideas, suggestions, and decisions reflect God's heart.



We are not trying to manipulate God and tell Him what to do. Rather, we are asking Him to tell us what to do.

—Richard J. Foster

Alignment with God

Consider starting your strategic planning process with a time of prayer.¹⁵ This could involve dedicating the first hour for each member of the team to individually spend time with God, asking Him for wisdom. In addition, consider spending an extended time as a team in communal prayer, asking for God's direction.

Alignment with a Founder, Board, and/or Franchisor

For some company leaders, *looking up* may also involve ensuring alignment with those above us. Non-founding CEOs may wish to seek counsel from predecessors or company founders. Leaders of subordinate organizations, such as franchisees or regional VPs, may need to consult strategic documents from headquarters as part of the preplanning process. Those who answer to corporate boards may want to seek their input as they prepare to plan.

¹³ Neh. 1:4–11.

¹⁴ Neh. 2:1–12.

¹⁵ Some C12 leaders suggest scheduling a time of personal retreat to seek God's heart for the business in the month prior to the strategic planning process. See the C12 ministry segment “Retreating to Advance” (August 2023).



If a third party were to audit your business, where in your strategic planning practices would they see submission to God’s direction?



During your CEO/key player sync meeting, discuss how you can invite God to guide you in the strategic planning process.



See **Step 3** on page 14 in C12’s **2024 Strategic Planning Guide** for additional guidance on how to “look up.”



Step 4: Look Around

After *looking back* and *looking up*, Nehemiah **looked around** at the hard facts relating to the program he was preparing to launch. He assembled a handful of trusted key players to survey the ruins and become aware of the scope of work ahead of them.¹⁶ In effect, Nehemiah did a situational analysis of the factors and obstacles the people faced.

Whether we are poised for success or building on last year’s ruins (or both, like Nehemiah¹⁷), awareness is essential in a good strategic planning process. We can conduct the following analyses to gain awareness of the business environment, the market, and the organization itself.

Look Around Disciplines

The following four tools are designed to help us determine the internal and external environments that form the backdrop for our strategic planning. We assess the relative strength of our companies using a SWOT analysis, the general business environment using a PESTEL analysis, the competitive landscape in our market sector using Porter’s Five Forces analysis, and our competitive advantage using the dominant selling idea (DSI).



Utilizing SWOT, PESTEL, and Five Forces Analyses in Your Strategic Planning



Mike Sharrow, CEO of C12

Over the years, thought leaders in strategic planning have developed various analytic instruments to help leaders take a critical look at the environment in which our companies operate. The SWOT, PESTEL, and Five Forces analyses are widely used to identify opportunities and threats we may not see in the fog of daily business activities. In this video, C12 CEO Mike Sharrow breaks down how and when to use these tools in our strategic planning processes.

¹⁶ Neh. 2:12–16.

¹⁷ Neh. 2:20.

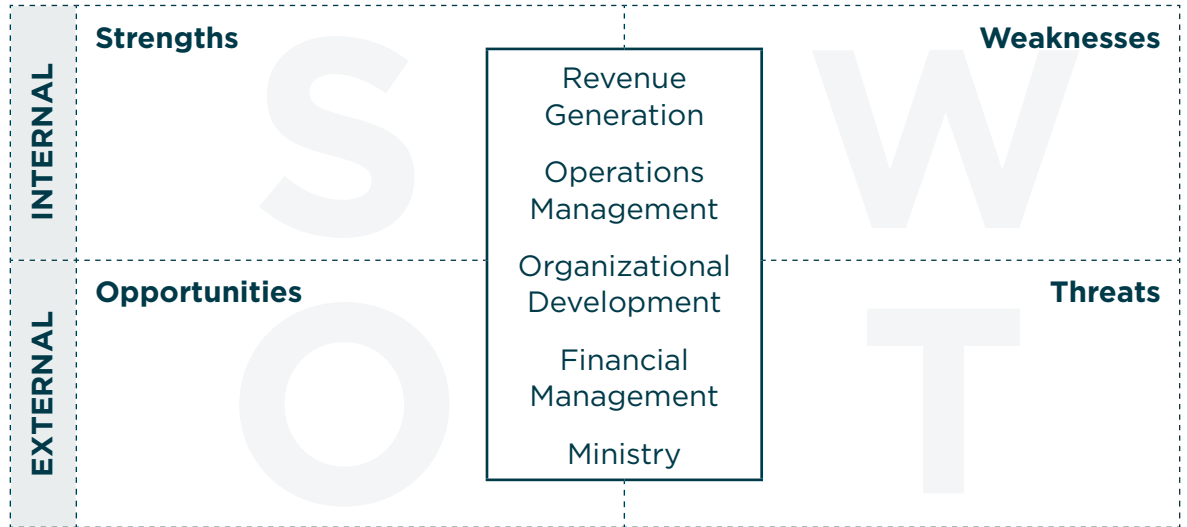


See **Appendix A** for more detailed instructions on how to conduct the SWOT, PESTEL, and Five Forces analyses with your team.

Assess the Company’s Strengths and Weaknesses

A SWOT analysis classifies the internal aspects of a company as *strengths* or *weaknesses* and the external factors as *opportunities* or *threats*. The internal strengths of our companies may reveal a competitive advantage, while our weaknesses may hinder our ability to compete. Refer to the PESTEL and Porter’s Five Forces analyses to identify the external opportunities and threats.

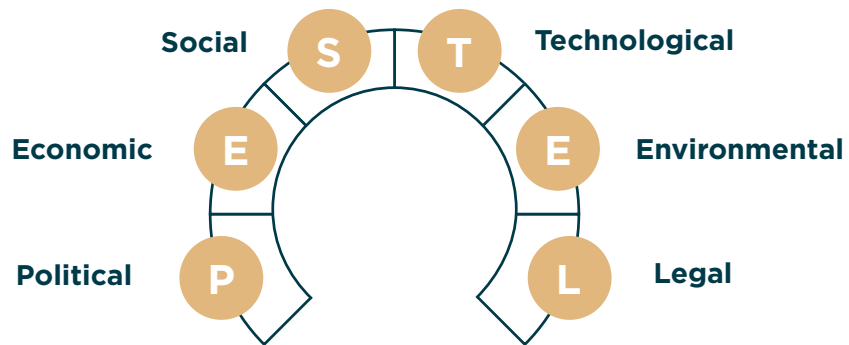
SWOT Analysis



Assess the Business Environment

A PESTEL analysis will help us identify external factors in the business environment that may impact our strategic plans. These six external influences could have a profound impact on the opportunities and risks for our businesses.

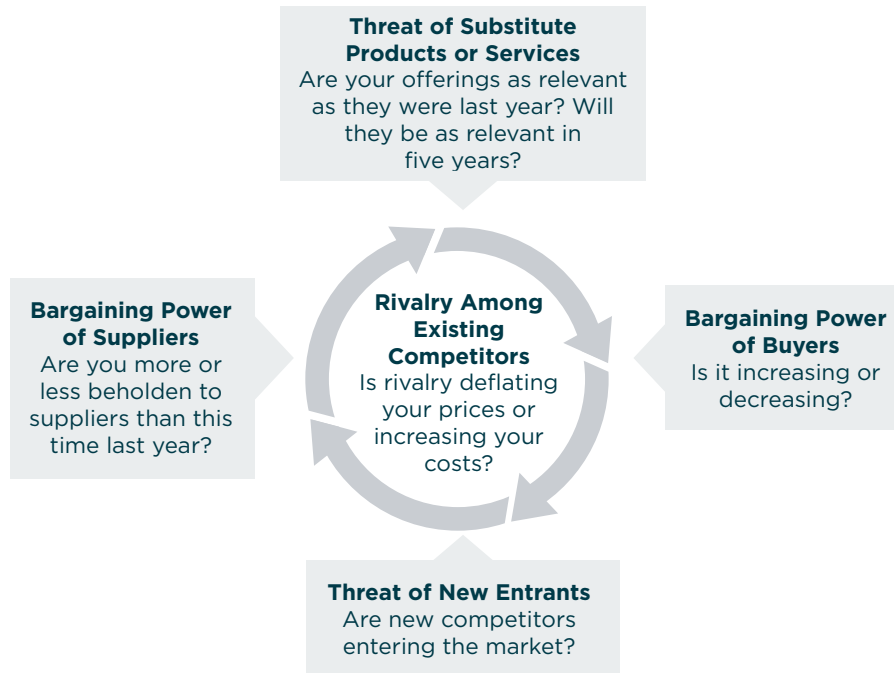
PESTEL Analysis



Assess the Competitive Landscape in Our Market Sector

A Five Forces analysis, formulated by business strategist Michael Porter, will help us identify the competitive factors and trends affecting our market sector. These forces (rivalry among existing competitors, threat of substitute products or services, bargaining power of buyers, threat of new entrants, and bargaining power of suppliers) will test the strength of our company's position in the marketplace and impact our ability to compete for business.

Porter's Five Forces Analysis



Assess the Company's Unique Competitive Advantage

Our company's competitive advantage is expressed in our dominant selling idea (DSI), also known as a value proposition or a unique selling proposition. When we have a clear understanding of our DSI, our marketing efforts will be more effective in reaching our target customers.



REWARDS & BENEFITS

- Clarifies the most valuable and unique aspects of our product line to our customers
- Recognizes the unique resources God has given us to do the work He has called us to do



RISKS OF GAPS

- Getting lost in the noise of competition
- Overpromising and overextending
- Lack of sales and increased customer turnover as cost drives decisions



Break into groups of two or three and share:

- **One business factor (external or internal) that has been a major issue for you in 2023**
- **One business factor (external or internal) that you anticipate will be a major issue for you in 2024**



How do you determine which environmental or market factors will be headwinds for your business next year? How do you determine which factors will be tailwinds?



During your CEO/key player sync meeting, discuss whether conducting a SWOT, PESTEL, and/or Five Forces analysis would be helpful to better understand the issues facing your company in 2024.



See **Step 4** on pages 15–21 in C12’s **2024 Strategic Planning Guide** for additional guidance on how to “look around.”



Step 5: Look Ahead

Just as Nehemiah’s reconnaissance led to the formulation of his plan,¹⁸ our preparatory work will lay the groundwork to build our strategic plans with confidence. We are now ready to **look ahead**.

Look Ahead Disciplines

The following activities are designed to help our leadership teams develop plans for 2024 and beyond. These steps include defining a three-to-five-year strategic vision, identifying annual strategic objectives, crafting an annual primary objective, and formulating goals, KPIs, and an action plan.

Define a Three-to-Five-Year Strategic Vision

Our **three-to-five-year strategic vision** describes how we will achieve the company’s vision over a medium-range timeframe, consistent with our mission, vision, and core values.

Our first *look ahead* step is to define a three-to-five-year strategic vision, encompassing ideal yet realistic targets for the future state of the company over a medium-range timeframe. The strategic vision should include one or more desired outcomes for each area of the 5PAM. Once a three-to-five-year strategic vision is in place, the team will review it in subsequent years, reflecting on progress and updating it. In the final year, the team will develop a new three-to-five-year strategic vision for the next medium-range timeframe.

Our three-to-five-year strategic vision will develop in three steps:

1. Brainstorm specific strategic initiatives and desired outcomes for organizational performance for each area of the 5PAM.
2. Narrow the list of initiatives and outcomes to the ones that are most important. This conversation may lead to disagreements among different members of the team. Take time to pray through the decisions. Encourage the team to frame the discussion within the context of the company’s mission, vision, and core values, rather than focusing solely on pet projects or narrow departmental needs.
3. Arrive at a consensus on the most important initiatives and outcomes for this medium-range timeframe. This is the strategic vision, bringing clarity to what you must achieve in the next three-to-five years to stay on track.

¹⁸ Neh. 2:17–18 implies the formulation of Nehemiah’s plan, the details of which are revealed in the following chapters. For another example, after reflecting on the people’s rebellion, turning to the Lord for guidance, and establishing their defenses, Nehemiah and Ezra led the people of Israel in covenanting with the Lord to no longer reject God’s rule (Neh. 9–10).



Three-to-Five-Year Strategic Vision Continuum

Using an arrow, mark along the continuum to indicate where your company is today. Using a star, mark where you would like the company to be a year from now.

Where we are	Without a three-to-five-year strategic vision	In the middle of a three-to-five-year strategic vision	At the end of a three-to-five-year strategic vision
	○-----○-----○		
What to do	Host a strategic planning retreat and develop a three-to-five-year strategic vision	Reflect on progress and update the strategic vision	Build a new three-to-five-year strategic vision

Identify Annual Strategic Objectives

In *The Advantage*, Patrick Lencioni teaches that organizational health depends on leaders communicating and reinforcing clarity around our companies' core principles (see Step 1) and our annual strategic objectives.¹⁹ This is where we ask, "What objectives do we need to achieve this year to make demonstrable progress toward our three-to-five-year strategic vision?"

Once our teams have established our desired outcomes and intermediate goals for the three-to-five-year timeframe, we then break down each goal into specific year-by-year milestones that the company will need to achieve to accomplish the vision.

Annual Strategic Objectives Example:

If our three-to-five-year strategic vision includes a goal to grow the commercial line of business from \$6M revenue to \$10M revenue by 2028, our annual strategic objectives might be:

- 2024: \$6.5M revenue
- 2025: \$7M revenue
- 2026: \$7.75M revenue
- 2027: \$8.75M revenue
- 2028: \$10M revenue

The size, capacity, and capabilities of our team members will determine the number of annual strategic objectives our companies can accomplish in a single year. Larger companies may have 10 or more annual strategic objectives scattered throughout different departments. Smaller companies may be limited in the number of annual strategic objectives they can accomplish.

Each year, during our strategic planning process, the CEO and the executive team will review the year-by-year milestones and annual strategic objectives. This is the time to confirm whether our annual strategic objectives for the coming year are still valid, or whether, given current conditions, we might consider adjusting the objectives or adding new ones as necessary.

¹⁹Patrick Lencioni, "Discipline 2: Create Clarity," in *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 73-138.

Craft an Annual Primary Objective

Once we have completed our *look inward, look back, look up, and look around* analyses—and agreed upon the annual strategic objectives for the coming year—we will often take a reflective pause. During this pause, we take a broader perspective to consider the underlying factor that unifies our annual strategic objectives, challenges, and opportunities for the coming year. Or, said another way, of all the objectives we want to accomplish in the coming year, we determine which one is the most important.

Let’s imagine ourselves in December 2024, reflecting on the previous 12 months. Assuming we have proven to be “good and faithful servants,” what would we like the headline of our annual report to be?

This is our annual primary objective.²⁰ Patrick Lencioni calls it a “thematic goal” or “rallying cry.”²¹

Annual Primary Objective Examples:

- Rebuild credibility with customers.
- Make the new partnership work.
- Attract repeat business.
- Build the team.
- Love and care for each other.

To promote accountability among members, many C12 Forums encourage members to share their annual primary objectives during their December meeting.

From Strategic Planning to Execution

As senior leaders pause to determine the annual primary objective, key players (or those tasked with project management responsibilities) can begin developing goals and KPIs.

Formulate Goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

For each annual strategic objective, we must develop specific measures to determine the timing and metrics for achieving our goals. Goals should be SMART and FAST:²²



²⁰ An annual primary objective is the one unifying dominant idea that guides planning, decision-making, and progress toward our organization’s vision. See the C12 business segment “Presenting Next Year’s Plan” (December 2021).

²¹ Patrick Lencioni, “Question #5: ‘What Is Most Important Right Now?’” in *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 119–131.

²² Donald Sull and Charles Sull, “With Goals, FAST Beats SMART,” MIT Sloan Management Review, June 5, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3QO62ho>.

The SMART and FAST frameworks are meant to work in tandem. We start by developing SMART goals for each annual primary objective.

SMART Goal Examples:

- Pay off \$120,000 in business debt in the next 12 months.
- Transition IT support from contract to in-house in Q2.
- Increase website traffic by 10% by May 1, 2024.

Once SMART goals are established, we evaluate each goal through the lens of FAST. The FAST framework helps us leverage our SMART goals, and goals need to be SMART to be leveraged.

- The **S** (Specific) exists in both the SMART and FAST frameworks. This commonality suggests the importance of specificity in our goal-setting process. Vague or ill-conceived goals may deflate our ability to execute our strategic plan.
- The **A**'s in these frameworks appear contradictory, but they are not. The "A" in SMART stands for "Attainable." The A in FAST stands for "Ambitious." The best goals—often called "stretch goals"—are both. A stretch goal must be within reach, but it should require a team to go beyond its current capabilities to achieve it.
- The **F** (Frequently Discussed) and **T** (Transparent) refer to the way companies leverage goals. Leaders must develop a frequent and transparent way to discuss and progress toward goals.

Example of SMART Leveraged by FAST:

- **SMART:**
 - Pay off \$120,000 in business debt in the next 12 months.
- Leveraged by **FAST:**
 - **F**requently Discussed: The executive team will discuss monthly; the employees, quarterly.
 - **A**mbitious: The entire team will understand that this sacrifice will set us up to invest in new opportunities next year.
 - **S**pecific: \$120,000 per year; \$10,000 per month
 - **T**ransparent: The executive team will honestly communicate progress among themselves and with employees.

Develop the Action Plan

An action plan consolidates the annual strategic objectives, the annual primary objective, the goals, and the KPIs into a unified planning program.²³ Our action plan is designed to help us achieve our vision, engage our stakeholders, and prioritize our resources. To enable effective execution, we must identify accountabilities.

²³Ron Price, "Why strategic plans don't work ... and what to do about it," ReliablePlant, accessed June 21, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3OIMahQ>.



To ensure that our strategic plans don't sit and collect dust on a shelf, each task within the strategic plan has a supporting document—known as the action plan—produced for that particular task. All action plans are then supported by project managers through our strategic alignment division.



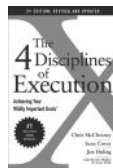
Jake Bland, President/CEO of Youth For Christ USA

For each annual goal across the 5-Point Alignment Matrix, identify the following:

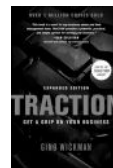


- Priority level
- Alignment with other objectives
- SWOT category
- Key measures or performance indicators²⁴
- Reporting method
- Frequency of review
- Potential disruptions
- Red flags
- Needed resources
- The owner or responsible individual(s)
- Target completion

Across C12, companies utilize different systems to execute their strategic plans.²⁵ Some favorites among C12 companies include:



The 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) developed by Chris McChesney and the team at FranklinCovey



The Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) developed by Gino Wickman, author of the book *Traction*



Scaling Up (SU) developed by Verne Harnish, author of the book *Scaling Up* and *The Rockefeller Habits*

It is best to commit to one system and faithfully operate within it over time. While each system has unique features, all contain similar core practices. Regardless of which system we select, successful execution requires that we set goals/KPIs, empower leaders, establish a regular cadence of accountability, measure progress using a scoreboard, and celebrate progress.

²⁴ For examples of KPIs for each area of the 5-Point Alignment Matrix, see page 31 in C12's 2024 Strategic Planning Guide.

²⁵ See C12's "Recommended Resources for Strategic Plan Execution" in the C12 App (Member Resources > General > Documents) and the C12 business segment "Breakthrough Discipline: Balancing Strategy & Execution" (February 2018). See also the October 2022 business segment, "Executing Our Strategic Plans."



What have you learned about planning since last year? How are you stronger now?

Which of these concepts are you excited to take into your planning process this year?



During your CEO/key player sync meeting, discuss how you will move from strategic planning to execution. Who will be responsible for developing goals, KPIs, and action plans?



See **Step 5** on pages 22–37 in C12’s **2024 Strategic Planning Guide** for additional guidance on how to “look ahead.”



My Intention for Strategic Planning

I commit to working with our executive team to hold a strategic planning offsite meeting on _____, 2023.

Our strategic planning meeting participants should include

We will engage in the following planning disciplines:

- Look inward* to confirm the clarity and effectiveness of our core principles
- Look back* at last year’s planning and performance
- Look up* for God’s will and direction
- Look around* at the organization, the environment, and the market
- Look ahead* at our medium-range vision and annual goals

I think _____ would be the best person to lead the meeting.

Our organization’s biggest barrier to strategic planning is

I think we can overcome this barrier by _____

By _____, our organization will have our 2024 Strategic Plan Overview (One-Pager) filled out.



How can we hold our peers in this Forum accountable to engage in strategic planning for 2024?



To capture an overview of your strategic plan on one page, see **Appendix B** for the 2024 Strategic Plan Overview (One-Pager) worksheet.

Strategic Planning as Responsible Stewardship

Nehemiah was tasked with leading a difficult project during dangerous and uncertain times. His accomplishment demonstrates the transformational power of a leader embarking on a strategic plan and submitting to the will of God. Whatever business environments we face,²⁶ the process of strategic planning will allow us to step confidently into the future. Instead of responding to circumstances in a reactionary way, the strategic planning process ensures we will be prepared.

We are stewards of our businesses. God is the Owner. Whether we are veteran planners or novices, we can follow Nehemiah's example to craft strategic plans and execute them, all with the goal of building great businesses for a greater purpose.



Priorities are what we do. Everything else is just *talk*.

Record your To-Dos at the bottom of page 2 and in the C12 app.

²⁶ See the C12 business segment "Thriving in the Age of Disruption" (June 2020).

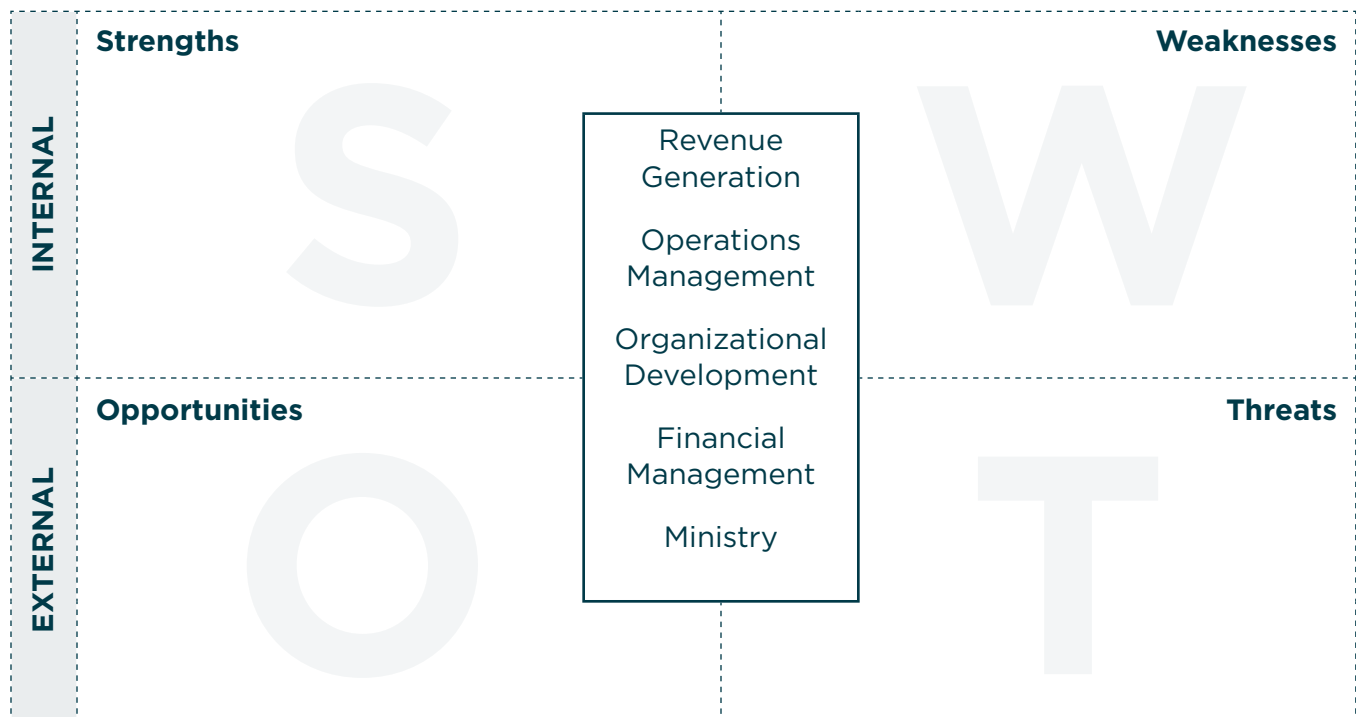
Look Around Exercises

The following three analyses are designed to help us determine the internal and external environment(s) that form the backdrop for our strategic planning.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis classifies the internal aspects of a company as *strengths* or *weaknesses* and the external factors as *opportunities* or *threats*.¹ The internal strengths of our companies may reveal a competitive advantage, while our weaknesses may hinder our ability to compete. Refer to the PESTEL and Porter’s Five Forces analyses to identify the external opportunities and threats.²

SWOT Analysis



Questions to ask our teams during a SWOT analysis:

- What **internal strengths** in the business will be a competitive advantage for our company this year?
- What **internal weaknesses** in the business will be a headwind for us this year?
- What **external opportunities** can we see on the horizon for our business this year?
- What **external threats** might affect our business this year?
- How can we implement more **Business as a Ministry (BaaM)** initiatives in our organization?

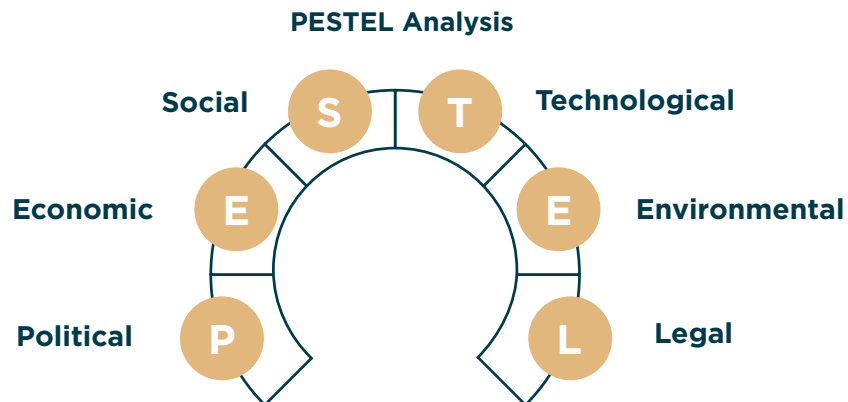
A SWOT analysis can be done on a **macro level** (overall company) or on a **micro level** (by department). We can choose to involve a variety of stakeholders, such as employees, the board of directors, and customers. Once these groups have completed their analysis, we ask them to force rank their findings by order of importance.

¹ A TOWS analysis is an extension of SWOT, combining the two internal factors with the two external factors in order to come up with four separate strategies for future growth and development (<https://bit.ly/3oyeybT>).

² Use the “Threats” quadrant to summarize the most relevant external factors identified in your PESTEL and Five Forces analyses.

PESTEL Analysis

A PESTEL analysis³ will help us identify external factors in the business environment that may impact our strategic plans. These six external influences could have a profound impact on the opportunities and risks for our businesses.



Questions to ask our teams during a PESTEL analysis:

- Are there key **political** issues (taxes, fiscal policies, trade) our company should follow?
- What is the **economic** forecast (interest rates, employment, inflation) for our sector of the economy?
- Will **social** trends (demographics, lifestyle, consumer sentiment) affect our business in any way?
- How will **technology** (automation, cybersecurity, online preferences) affect our company's future?
- Will our company be mandated or choose to address its **environmental** footprint?
- Will pending or past **legislation** impact our company or our Business as a Ministry (BaaM) strategy?

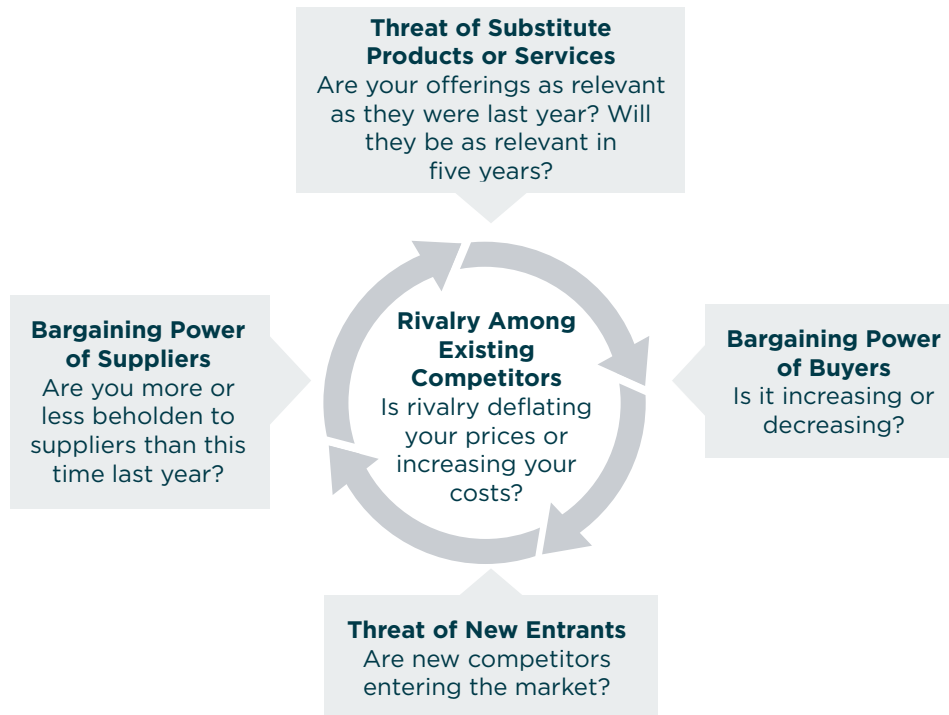
After conducting this analysis, create a “heat map” to identify significant areas of risk and opportunity. Assess the **severity of impact** these factors might have on your company (positive, negative, or neutral) and the **probability of occurrence** that these factors will affect your company (high, medium, or low).

³ “PESTEL Analysis,” Corporate Finance Institute, June 7, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3zALYwF>; see the C12 business segment “Assessing Market Position” (September 2019).

Porter's Five Forces Analysis

A Five Forces analysis, formulated by business strategist Michael Porter, will help us identify the competitive factors and trends affecting our market sector. These forces (rivalry among existing competitors, threat of substitute products or services, bargaining power of buyers, threat of new entrants, and bargaining power of suppliers⁴) will test the strength of our company's position in the marketplace and impact our ability to compete for business.

Porter's Five Forces Analysis⁵



Questions to ask our teams during a Five Forces analysis:

- Is rivalry among **existing competitors** deflating our prices or increasing our costs?
- Do we face a threat from **substitute products or services**? Are our offerings as relevant as they were last year? Will they be as relevant in five years?
- Is our **buyers' bargaining power** increasing or decreasing?
- Are **new competitors** entering the market?
- Is our **suppliers' bargaining power** increasing or decreasing? Are we more or less beholden to suppliers than this time last year?

⁴ See the C12 business segment "Strengthening and Diversifying Supply Chains" (May 2022).

⁵ Diagram adapted from Institute for Strategy & Competitiveness, "The Five Forces," Harvard Business School, accessed June 7, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3cFftEJ>. Recently, business thought leaders have reconstituted this framework by adding two more forces: complementors and owned digital assets. See Paul Myers, "Is It Time to Reconstruct Porter's Five Forces?," Medium.com, accessed June 6, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3pEESFy>.

Strategic Plan Overview (One-Pager)

Use this worksheet to capture an overview of your strategic plan on one page.

Our Core Principles (see pages 7-8)

Our Mission Statement:






Our Vision Statement:

Our Core Values:

Our Three-to-Five-Year Strategic Vision (to be accomplished by _____; see page 16-17):

Our 2024 Annual Primary Objective (see page 18):

Our 2024 Action Plan (see page 19-20):

	2024 Annual Strategic Objective(s)	2024 Goals/KPIs	Person Responsible for Action Plan	Target Completion Date
 Revenue Generation				
 Operations Management				
 Organizational Development				
 Financial Management				
 Ministry				

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Devotion: Establishing the Work of Our Hands

Scriptures:

Ps. 90:12, 16–17; Prov. 29:18

Books:

The Treasury of David, by Charles H. Spurgeon

Business and Ministry: A Step-by-Step Process for Strategic Planning

Scriptures:

Neh. 1:1–11, 2:1–20

Books:

Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups, by Ruth Haley Barton

Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth, by Richard J. Foster

Rescuing Ambition, by Dave Harvey

The Vision Driven Leader: 10 Questions to Focus Your Efforts, Energize Your Team, and Scale Your Business, by Michael Hyatt

A Light Shines Bright in Babylon: A Business as a Ministry Handbook for Christian CEOs and Owners, by Buck Jacobs

The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business, by Patrick Lencioni

Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business, by Gino Wickman

Videos:

“Strategic Planning: From Vision to Victory” – Jonathan Bailey (C12 YouTube)

Previous C12 Segments:

Executing Our Strategic Plans – October 2022, Business

Strengthening and Diversifying Supply Chains – May 2022, Business

Presenting Next Year's Plan – December 2021, Business

Building an Eternally Balanced Scorecard – September 2020, Business

Thriving in the Age of Disruption – June 2020, Business

Assessing Market Position – September 2019, Business

Compelling Core Values – August 2019, Business

Breakthrough Discipline: Balancing Strategy & Execution – February 2018, Business

Monthly Thematic Resources

Readitfor.me Summaries (C12app.com/curriculums):

Relevant book summaries are curated monthly and available in the C12 App, including:

Competing in the New World of Work, by Keith Farrazzi

Good Strategy Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters, by Richard Rumelt

Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck—Why Some Thrive Despite Them All, by Jim Collins

RightNow Media @ Work (app.rightnowmedia.org):

Relevant videos and materials are curated monthly and available on RightNow Media @ Work, including:

“Dream Big” – video series by Bob Goff

“The Five Questions of Vision Casting” – video series by Jeff Henderson

“Wisdom for the Future” – video series by Jean Symons

