



Introducing . . .

ACCORD LIMITED



**STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES
FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES**

STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES

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STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES

INTRODUCTION

At **ACCORD LIMITED** we believe that the development of a strategic business plan is one of the most important aspects of operating a business. The development of an effective plan minimizes risk, enhances the orderly progression of growth and management, and enables the business to address major unforeseen external events that may occur. This is especially true when governance, ownership (when appropriate), and management of the company play an active and ongoing role in the strategic plan development process.

❖ WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING?

Strategic business planning is analyzing the business and its environment as it is today in order to create a formal program for guiding its development and success tomorrow.

For entrepreneurial businesses, the strategic plan normally addresses a 3 to 5 year period into the future.

Although the content of strategic plans varies considerably, the basic ingredients include:

- **Mission:** Our purpose; the reason we exist. It is a concise, timeless and ideally, aspirational statement that distinguishes us from others in our business.
- **Vision:** Specific, ideally measurable, description of what we want to look like in 5-6 key components of the organization over the next 3-5 years.
- **Goals:** 4-5 major areas of focus and priority for the next year; categories under which the objectives will be written; include measurable indicators of success.
- **Objectives:** 3-5 organization-wide initiatives under each strategic goal for the next 3-12 months; include lead responsibility, time frame, and resources required.

❖ WHY DO STRATEGIC PLANNING?

An overriding purpose for strategic planning is to create and place the business at a **competitive advantage** in the future. Specific reasons for doing strategic planning include:

- To define, in measurable and objective terms, what is most important and needs to be achieved by the business;
- To anticipate problems and to take positive steps to eliminate them;
- To build commitment and orientation to a common purpose among the business' key stakeholders including board members, owners (in closely held businesses) and managers;

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INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

❖ WHY DO STRATEGIC PLANNING? (continued)

- To chart a clear direction and furnish "marching orders" for the business and its employees to follow;
- To ensure consistency in decision-making and to allocate resources most effectively and efficiently in areas such as: people, facilities, equipment, research, and product/service changes;
- To establish a firm basis for evaluating performance, both corporate and individual; and
- To provide a management framework which can be used to facilitate quick responses to changed conditions, unplanned events, market opportunities and deviations from the plan.

❖ WHO SHOULD DO STRATEGIC PLANNING?

For planning to be effective, it must be done by the key managers and stakeholders in the business. These individuals understand the business best, recognize its potential and limitations, can commit the resources required to implement plans, and can initiate and monitor plans to ensure their successful implementation.

This does not mean that internal planners or external consultants cannot or should not play a role in helping to facilitate the development of an effective plan. It is this facilitation role that **ACCORD LIMITED** has provided to help over 200 entrepreneurial clients across the country to develop strategic plans.

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ACCORD'S APPROACH TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

Inherent to **ACCORD**'s approach to planning is the facilitation of a process involving both the key stakeholders and top management team of a company. **ACCORD** consultants enable successful planning experiences for clients because we:

- Are experienced with the issues and concerns of entrepreneurial businesses;
- Take a participative approach that builds consensus in spirit and in action;
- Are flexible and willing to modify the project approach to meet client needs;
- Are sensitive to the unique characteristics of entrepreneurial companies;
- Focus on the implementability of plans;
- Position planning as a basis for performance appraisal and compensation;
- Are objective, straightforward and open in providing evaluative feedback and observations on strategies;
- Bring both a strong business and a strong process perspective to planning; and
- Offer creative, innovative but practical solutions that have been used successfully by other entrepreneurial businesses.

Our overall approach to strategic planning is to work with the client to:

- Structure a planning process that is meaningful and useful for the business;
- Facilitate all planning meetings to ensure the client develops plans that address all critical issues;
- "Challenge" the client on strategic and business issues and decisions; and
- Ensure that the client asks all of the necessary strategic questions and considers a variety of options.

The steps on the following pages are typical to most **ACCORD** strategic planning engagements.

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ACCORD'S APPROACH TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

❖ DEVELOP OWNERSHIP STRATEGY

Prior to involving the management team in strategic planning, we meet with the owners / principals of the business to clarify their plans for the future of the company. During this meeting we will:

- Clarify strategic goals in regard to the long-term direction of the business (In a closely held business, we would meet with the owner(s) of the business and/or its Board. In public companies, we would meet with the Directors.);
- Establish expectations regarding the financial performance of the business (e.g., profitability, ROI, debt capacity, etc.).

The ownership strategy provides a critical context and parameters for making growth and investment decisions during strategic planning.

❖ INITIATE PLANNING AND GATHER DATA

To initiate strategic planning, we meet with the client to determine the following:

- Who will participate on the planning team;
- Client information needs regarding: competitors, market trends, customer satisfaction, supplier strategies, etc.;
- Project schedule.

We individually interview each member of the planning team to identify the primary issues to be addressed during the planning process. If desirable, we also conduct group input sessions of employees such as sales staff, foremen, customer service reps, etc. The purpose of these input sessions is to build broad based employee participation in and commitment to the planning process and resulting plan.

During planning, it is critical for companies to have enough data to make key decisions. We help clients gather information that will be helpful in making strategic choices. Assistance in this area may include:

- Interviewing key customers and/or suppliers;
- Structuring customer satisfaction surveys;
- Gathering competitor information;
- Conducting market research and assessing market trends;
- Analyzing historical financial and performance data.

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ACCORD'S APPROACH TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

To minimize fees, it is **ACCORD's** approach to assist the client in gathering data for planning rather than generating data ourselves. We focus on data that is essential to planning and avoid overloading the process with unnecessary information. If the client already has information available, we are glad to work with it.

❖ FACILITATE STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

The strategic planning retreat is the cornerstone to **ACCORD's** planning approach. It is during the retreat that we facilitate consensus building and decision making around the future direction and focus of the organization. Prior to the retreat we develop retreat objectives, agenda and a participant preparation package. The client reviews this information in advance to ensure that the design of the retreat addresses the needs of the company. Planning participants are asked to complete a pre-retreat questionnaire and reading as preparation for the planning meeting.

We then facilitate a two-day planning retreat. We recommend that the meeting be held off-site in a retreat setting. The flow of the strategic planning retreat is very structured so that all objectives are met. While the process is structured, it is also highly participative. Our role in the retreat is to run the meeting and to ensure that by the end of the meeting, our client has an effective plan that addresses all key business factors and includes the input of the entire group.

During the retreat, the group identifies and analyzes a wide range of planning alternatives. At the conclusion of the retreat, alternatives will have been assessed, decisions reached, and a uniform commitment developed by the group. Typically, the agenda items for a strategic planning retreat include the following:

- Analyzing the external environment and drawing strategic implications;
- Reviewing owner expectations for future company performance;
- Analyzing the company in terms of its internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities;
- Identifying major concerns, issues and decisions that are confronting the company and will confront it within the next one to three years;
- Developing a mission statement;
- Developing a strategic vision and major strategic goals for the company around areas such as growth, profitability, management, quality, diversification, business mix, human resources, etc.;

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ACCORD'S APPROACH TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

❖ FACILITATE STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT (continued)

- Identifying specific tactics/actions for achieving each goal (actions define who will do what, by when);
- Determining the process for using the plan as a basis for accountability, performance appraisal and compensation; and
- Identifying immediate next steps for communicating, implementing and monitoring the plan.

❖ PREPARE STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

The data generated in the preceding steps provide the basis to prepare a draft strategic plan report. The primary data comes directly out of the retreat and reflects the plans and decisions reached by the group. The report is developed within two weeks of the retreat.

❖ CONDUCT FOLLOW-UP SESSION

Within a month of the original retreat, we conduct a one-day follow-up session with the planning group to review and finalize the plan. This meeting and the month preceding it provide everyone with an opportunity to reflect upon the plan, test financial assumptions and goals, and make adjustments to strategies and time frames for implementation. As a result of this meeting, we prepare a final version of the plan.

❖ CONDUCT QUARTERLY OR SEMI-ANNUAL FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

We will meet with the planning team on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to help review plan progress, make recommendations on plan implementation and to assess overall performance against the plan.

❖ COMMUNICATE THE PLAN

Effectively communicating the vision, goals and key strategies to important stakeholders including employees, suppliers, customers and, for public companies, analysts and investors, is crucial to making the plan an organizational reality. **ACCORD** can assist companies in developing processes and communication messages for conveying the plan throughout the organization and to interested external groups.

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ACCORD'S OTHER SERVICES

❖ GOVERNANCE SERVICES

One of **ACCORD**'s other major areas of expertise is governance. We provide any level of assistance that our clients need, from a one-time board retreat to a comprehensive assessment of governance structure and functioning.

❖ MERGER / AFFILIATION / PARTNERING FACILITATION

ACCORD provides facilitation assistance in the creation of mergers and other less formal collaborative arrangements. These services include structuring and facilitating the entire process, designing the governance and management structures, and creating implementation plans. **ACCORD** typically teams up with the client's legal, financial and other advisors on engagements of this type.

❖ ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGNOSIS AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

ACCORD provides in-depth analysis of organizational and management culture, structures, reporting relationships, decision-making processes, and communications channels. As a result of these assessments, roles, responsibilities and authority are clear; management passion and effectiveness are increased; and the organization is revitalized.

❖ RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING ASSISTANCE

ACCORD utilizes a facilitated, collaborative approach to the development of relationships of any type: among the board, board and management, Board Chair and Owner/CEO and among the management team. Stronger, more effective relationships often result in higher quality products and services, improved employee and customer satisfaction, and greater assurance of meeting the organization's mission.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES ACCORD'S SERVICES?

Many consulting firms offer strategic planning consulting. We believe that **ACCORD's** planning services are superior to those of our competitors because:

- We are committed to our clients' success. We form personal, long-lasting relationships with clients. These relationships are characterized by frequent informal follow-up, sharing of information and resources that are relevant to our clients' businesses and ongoing interactions with clients regarding their businesses.
- Our planning process is a reflection of what our entrepreneurial clients have told us they value: the approach is efficient, economical, non-academic and practical.
- **ACCORD's** consultants are entrepreneurs. We all have owned and operated our own businesses and understand the dynamics of running a business from an owner's perspective. We know the issues and challenges of an entrepreneurial culture.
- We focus on the implementability of plans. A handsome document is meaningless if the plan isn't implemented as a core management tool. We help clients ensure that the document is translated into action.
- We view facilitation as an important part of our role. However, we also view ourselves as business advisors to our clients and will actively challenge strategies and collaborate in decision making.

We are dedicated to our mission: **To exceed client expectations.**

A PROMISE TO OUR CLIENTS

At **ACCORD**, our philosophy and mission are to exceed our clients' expectations. We back this promise with our commitment to quality.

- At the outset of each engagement, we solicit expectations and desired outcomes regarding the project.
- During the project, we ask for feedback as to how well we are meeting client expectations.
- At the conclusion of a project, we revisit the expectations and ask the client to evaluate the degree to which the desired outcomes were achieved. If clients are dissatisfied in any way, we work with them to correct or enhance the situation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES

ACCORD'S PARTIAL CLIENT LIST

The following is a partial list of **ACCORD's** clients. **ACCORD** has assisted these organizations and hundreds of others with strategic planning, governance effectiveness, or other issues.

BANKING / FINANCIAL SERVICES / INSURANCE

API Corporation (extended automobile warranty company)
Boulevard Bancorp (multi-bank holding company)
Charter Bank and Trust, N.A. (community bank)
Cole Taylor Financial Group (multi-bank holding company)
Dann Brothers Inc. (insurance agency and risk management company)
Devon Bank (community bank)
First Enterprise Financial Group (secondary auto financier)
ForwardLine Financial, LLC (small business lender)
Hyde Park Bank (community bank)
Kentucky Medical Insurance Company (physician malpractice insurance carrier)
MEPCO (finance company)
Michigan Physicians Liability Company (medical malpractice insurance carrier)
Parkway Bancorp (multi-bank holding company)
Pioneer Bank (community bank)
Preferred Professional Insurance Company (health care insurance products and services)
ProAssurance Corporation (professional liability insurance products and services)
Stratton-Cheeseman Management Company (insurance)
Strong Capital Management Inc. (mutual fund and investment management)
The Vistria Group (private equity firm)

CONSULTING / PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Altschuler, Melvoin & Glasser (accounting firm)
Amper, Politziner & Mattia (accounting firm)
Carlyle Group (executive search firm)
Eckenhoff Saunders Architects (architectural firm)
The Hibbert Group (marketing support consultants)
Jack Levy Associates (advertising agency)
JMP-Newcor (in-store promotions)
Kupferberg, Goldberg & Neimark, LLC (accounting firm)
Ricondo & Associates, Inc. (aviation consulting firm)
Ten Eyck Associates (litigation support consultants)
U.S. Water Works (water conservation consultants)
Witt-Kieffer (executive search firm)

STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES

ACCORD'S PARTIAL CLIENT LIST (CONTINUED)

ENTERTAINMENT

- Disney Corporate Brand Management** (brand development)
- Disney Licensing** (specialty licensing company)
- Disney Strategic Communications** (public and media relations management)
- Disneyland** (theme park)
- Walt Disney Attractions** (international operator of theme parks)

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

- Follett Corporation** (educational resources)
- Follett Elementary & High School Group** (classroom materials and text distributor)
- Follett Library Resources** (educational products)
- Knowledge Learning Corporation** (early childhood education provider)
- Nightingale Conant** (motivational tape producer and mail order marketer)
- The Governance Institute** (healthcare governance education organization)

FOOD SERVICE / PROCESSING / RESTAURANTS

- Back Bay Restaurant Group** (restaurant group)
- Durling Farms** (dairy)
- Edwards Baking Company** (pie manufacturer)
- Heinemann's Bakeries, Inc.** (retail and commercial bakery)
- Land O' Frost** (food processor)
- Levy Restaurants** (restaurant and food service group)
- McCain Citrus Inc.** (beverage producer)
- McCain Foods USA** (frozen potato and appetizer manufacturer)
- Ogan Company** (food processor)
- On-Cor Frozen Foods** (frozen food entree manufacturer)
- The Cheesecake Factory Restaurants, Inc.** (national restaurant chain)
- The Martin-Brower Company** (international food service distributor)
- The Republic of Tea** (tea packaging/distributor)

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ACCORD'S PARTIAL CLIENT LIST (CONTINUED)

MANUFACTURING / DISTRIBUTION / WHOLESALE (continued)

Andis Company (trimmer and clipper manufacturer)
Berman Brothers (glass and plastic bottles manufacturer and distributor)
Bicron (manufacturer of high-powered lenses/environmental monitoring equipment)
The Boyds Collection Ltd. (distributor of collectibles and giftware)
Central Wholesale Liquor Co. (wholesale liquor distributor)
CIBCOA (home electronics distributor)
Color Graphics Inc. (commercial printer)
Conney Safety Products (safety equipment distributor)
Continental Leavitt Communications (cellular telephone retailer and wholesaler)
Dixon Ticonderoga (office products manufacturer)
Dow Canvas Products (industrial fabric manufacturer)
General Business Forms (forms manufacturer and promotional printer)
Gosiger Inc. (machine tool distributors)
Hickory Springs Manufacturing Company (furniture component manufacturer)
iGPS (plastic pallet manufacturer)
Life Fitness, Inc. (exercise equipment manufacturer)
Louis Glunz Wine Company (wine wholesaler)
Lustro Plastics Company (plastics extruder)
Magid Glove & Safety Manufacturing Co. (manufacturer and distributor of work gloves, safety equipment and protective clothing)
Martin Engineering (industrial equipment manufacturer)
Maurice Sporting Goods (sporting goods distributor)
Milsco Manufacturing (seating manufacturer)
Mueller Distributing Company (wine & spirits wholesale distributor)
Nemschoff Chairs (health care furniture manufacturer)
Océ USA (office & engineering systems manufacturer)
Plymouth Tube (tubing manufacturer)
Pride Container Corporation (corrugated box manufacturer)
Quill Corporation (wholesale office products distributor)
Romano Brothers Wholesale Beverage Company (wholesale liquor distributor)
Semco Windows and Doors (window and door manufacturer)
Service Web Offset Corporation (commercial printer)
Siegal Steel Company (steel processor)
Spacesaver Corporation (mobile storage and shelving manufacturer)
Spartan Aluminum Products (magnesium and aluminum processor)
Tenex (office products manufacturer)
US Foodservice (wholesale food distributor)

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ACCORD'S PARTIAL CLIENT LIST (CONTINUED)

REAL ESTATE / DEVELOPMENT

- Classic Residences by Hyatt (senior housing)
- Higgins Development Partners (commercial real estate developer)
- Pritzker Residential (developer and manager)
- The Parking Spot (operator of off-airport parking)
- The Taubman Company (shopping center developer and manager)

RETAIL

- Barnes & Noble Booksellers (retail booksellers)
- Busch Jewelers (retail jewelers)
- Collegiate Stores Cooperative (university stores co-op)
- Convenient Food Mart (food stores)
- Disney Sourcing Organization (international trading company)
- The Disney Store (Disney Corporation retail division)
- Dominick's Finer Foods, Inc. (food stores)
- Follett Higher Education Group (higher education bookstore products and services)
- Gap, Inc. (national retail clothing chain)
- Mark Shale (retail clothing)
- Moyer & Sons (retail garden supplies and fuel distributor)
- Mr. G. Finer Foods (retail grocery stores)
- Phillip's Flowers (flower & gift wholesaler and retailer)

OTHER INDUSTRIES

- AmeriMark Holdings, LLC (catalogue publisher)
- broadcastspots.com (internet based media buying service)
- Care Initiatives (nursing homes)
- Center for Family Business of the University of New Haven (center for family business)
- Gallagher Asphalt Company (asphalt and paving contractor)
- K&S Imaging (commercial photo lab/processor)
- Luck Stone Corporation (mining)
- McCarthy-Bush (highway paving contractor)
- Millard Service Maintenance Company (building maintenance services)
- Nobart (mail order catalogue photographer)
- The Peoples Gas, Coke and Light Company (public utility and energy)
- Power Maintenance & Constructors (power plant construction and maintenance)
- Regis Technologies, Inc. (contract and production chemists)
- RTC Industries (merchandising/display production and management)
- San Jose International Airport (transportation)
- The Care of Trees (nation-wide tree care)
- The Charlton Group (telemarketing)
- USF Corporation (transportation)
- Wavetek Wandel Goltermann (communications technology)



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ACCORD'S CONSULTING TEAM

Our highly qualified consultants come from diverse backgrounds. They are known for their ability to solve problems creatively and bring about positive change. As is clear from the foregoing client list, they have worked with a wide variety of organizations nationwide. This section includes biographies for each of our consultants.

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ACCORD'S CONSULTING TEAM

PAMELA R. KNECHT

Ms. Knecht, President and CEO of **ACCORD LIMITED**, has over 36 years of consulting experience in multiple industries. Her clients include for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in industries such as manufacturing, financial services, distribution, retail, professional services, health care, associations, social services, arts, and education. She has special expertise on assisting privately-held and family owned businesses.

Pam assists clients with owner planning, strategic planning, governance effectiveness, organizational diagnosis and design, change management, executive team effectiveness, and merger and acquisition facilitation. She designs and facilitates programs and processes that enable owners, boards, and senior executives to clarify their mission, vision, and goals, and to develop their organization to support implementation of their strategic plans.

Ms. Knecht is a frequent speaker at local, regional, and national conferences and association meetings, such as the Planning Forum and the Center for Family Business. She makes presentations on strategic planning, family-owned businesses, governance effectiveness, and other topics. She is also a faculty member for the American Hospital Association, The Governance Institute, iProtean, and numerous state hospital associations.

She has authored a number of articles that address successful strategic planning and effective board enhancement. She also authored a white paper for The Governance Institute entitled, *Engaging the Board in Strategic Planning: Rationale, Tools and Techniques*.

Prior to joining **ACCORD LIMITED**, Pam was a consultant for an executive education and organization development firm that served the Fortune 200. Pam and her colleagues helped CEOs and their direct reports to understand the strategic challenges that would be facing their industry and organization over the next five to ten years. During the previous ten years, Pam consulted within the computer and telecommunications industries where her clients and employers included privately-held and publicly traded organizations.

Ms. Knecht is a graduate of Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

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ACCORD'S CONSULTING TEAM

EDWARD A. KAZEMEK

As the principal founder of **ACCORD LIMITED**, Mr. Kazemek works closely with other **ACCORD** consultants to identify creative solutions to the issues and problems facing our clients.

Mr. Kazemek has approximately 40 years of experience in the management consulting field serving a variety of industries and types of organizations, including health care, manufacturing, distribution, financial services, not-for-profit, closely-held and Fortune 1000 companies. For the past 30 years, Mr. Kazemek has concentrated his consulting practice on serving the health care industry, primarily on governance enhancement and strategy matters. Before co-founding **ACCORD LIMITED**, Mr. Kazemek was a national partner in one of the largest professional services organizations in the United States. Prior to that, Mr. Kazemek was the Chairman of a highly successful national consulting firm, which he co-founded in 1974.

Mr. Kazemek's areas of specialization include: strategic planning, governance assessment, restructuring and development, organizational analysis and development, change management, merger / collaborative arrangements, and facilitating integration and effective management in complex organizations.

More than 85 articles / monographs written by Mr. Kazemek have been published in professional and trade journals and newspapers and magazines including the best-selling white pages published by The Governance Institute on the board's role in strategic direction-setting; the evolution of health systems; and addressing challenges to an institution's integrity and physician collaboration. Mr. Kazemek is a frequent speaker on a number of business and health care subjects, such as strategic planning approaches, governance effectiveness, change management, merger / collaborative ventures, and organization development issues. He was also on the faculty and one of the Governance Advisors of The Governance Institute in San Diego, California for over 15 years.

Mr. Kazemek completed his undergraduate and graduate work in the Behavioral Sciences Program at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He also completed a number of post-graduate programs in organization development and change management, including Cape Cod Institute workshops taught by Dr. Edgar Schein and Dr. Warren Bennis.

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