

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES & PLANNING

Coordinating information technology (IT) strategies, plans, and projects with business goals helps leverage information as a tool for business decisions, properly sequence projects, and justify investments. Westin helps you develop effective IT strategies and plans to support business goals while improving efficiency and effectiveness.

IT-CENTRIC PLANNING

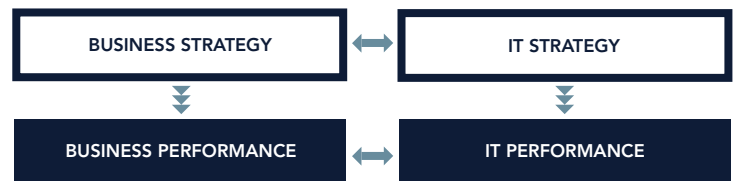
IT Strategic Planning guides utilities in their decisions to use technology to support business goals. A good plan will guide you from where you are today to where you want to be in the future. It should:

- ✓ Improve asset and resource performance
- ✓ Clarify organization and governance
- ✓ Identify opportunities to streamline and integrate business processes
- ✓ Establish means to improve efficiency and quality of customer service
- ✓ Improve capabilities associated with regulatory compliance
- ✓ Support management decisions

BUSINESS-CENTRIC PLANNING

Business-centric IT planning is based on the premise that technology must serve business needs. It requires a thorough understanding of your business drivers, vision, goals, organization, and systems. It should:

- ✓ Assess relevant technical innovations and trends
- ✓ Develop attainable plans in context of operational, technical, and resource constraints



- ✓ Prioritize IT investments to maximize business benefits
- ✓ Develop integrated IT programs
- ✓ Evaluate the impact of technology on business practices, processes, and staff
- ✓ Mobilize resources and identify constraints

WHEN SHOULD YOU PLAN?

There are several appropriate times to create, or refresh, an IT Strategic Plan. These include when:

- ✓ Existing information systems can't enable informed decisions
- ✓ Systems are too complex to support and/or lack full implementation
- ✓ Fundamental changes in business strategy or technology make a previous plan obsolete
- ✓ The current IT plan is near total implementation

PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGIC IT PLANNING

IT plans affect change when they are implemented. We apply several key principles to ensure such success:

- ✓ **Alignment** – The IT plan must complement the utility's business plan(s).
- ✓ **Relevance** – To be effective, strategies must address the utility's specific needs and circumstances.
- ✓ **Relevant Timeframe** – The planning horizon should provide long-term direction (5 years) as well as immediate tactics (1-2 years).
- ✓ **Benefits Realization** – Implementation costs should be identified and justified based on potential business benefits.
- ✓ **Achievability** – Planning should recognize the reality of resources, funding, and the organization's capability and capacity to implement solutions.

- ✓ **Measurable Performance** – The plan should provide a basis for measuring and monitoring performance.
- ✓ **Reassessment** – Defining when the plan should be refreshed ensures continuity and progress.
- ✓ **Awareness** – The planning process should facilitate communication throughout the utility.
- ✓ **Accountability** – Responsibility for implementing the plan should be explicit.
- ✓ **Commitment** – Management commitment to implement the plan should be firmly established.
- ✓ **Collaboration** – Comprehensive plans require participation across, up, and down the organization. This breaks down silos, addresses enterprise-wide problems, and develops buy-in – a prerequisite for success.
- ✓ **Actionable** – Planning alone won't guarantee benefits from technology; effective plans identify how to mobilize, including resources and organizational commitment to act.

IT PLANNING ANSWERS FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

WHERE ARE YOU TODAY?

Strengths
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats/Obstacles

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE TOMORROW?

Vision
Goals
Objectives
Issues
Initial Strategies

IT VISION, STRATEGIES, & PROJECTS

HOW WILL YOU GET THERE?

Success Factors
Refined Strategies
Defined Projects
Budget Estimates
Master Schedule

HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHEN YOU ARRIVE?

Performance Measures
Metrics
Reporting
Accountability