Creating a strategic plan is not for the faint of heart. A well-designed, well-defined, practical strategic plan takes a number of things into consideration: scanning the environment; collecting relevant data; analyzing the data; stating a mission, vision, and values; prioritizing needs; identifying risks; designing and validating tactics; prioritizing resources; and documenting and communicating the plan. Follow-up and monitoring also occur after the creation. If you have never been a part of creating a strategic plan, you need to complete some research of your own. Try using a search engine on the Internet to find examples of strategic plans.

There are twelve attributes of a good strategy. The next time you create a strategy, give it the Dirty Dozen Dusting. Does it meet all the attributes listed here?

- Is it understood and shared by the people who must implement it?
- Is it framed to answer the right questions aimed toward the purpose?
- Does it allow flexibility so that the strategy can be adapted to a changing world?
- Does it provide a picture of the desired long-term future?
- Is it based on input from a diverse group of thinkers, unafraid to state contrary opinions?
- Does it display competitors’ elements that must stay in focus?
- Does it demonstrate competitive advantages that will be seized with employees’ full commitment?
- Does it follow a thorough analysis of the external environment?
- Is it based on a realistic assessment of internal capabilities?
- Is it clearly articulated internally and selectively shared externally?
- Are the assumptions underlying the strategy clear and kept in the foreground?
- Is it stated so that strategic, operational, and tactical planning can align?