

12 Best Practices for Strategic Marketing in Schools

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Strategic Marketing in Action

- Strategic Marketing Practices
 1. How each practice benefits financial sustainability
 2. A key generative or essential leadership question to launch your planning
 3. Practical application

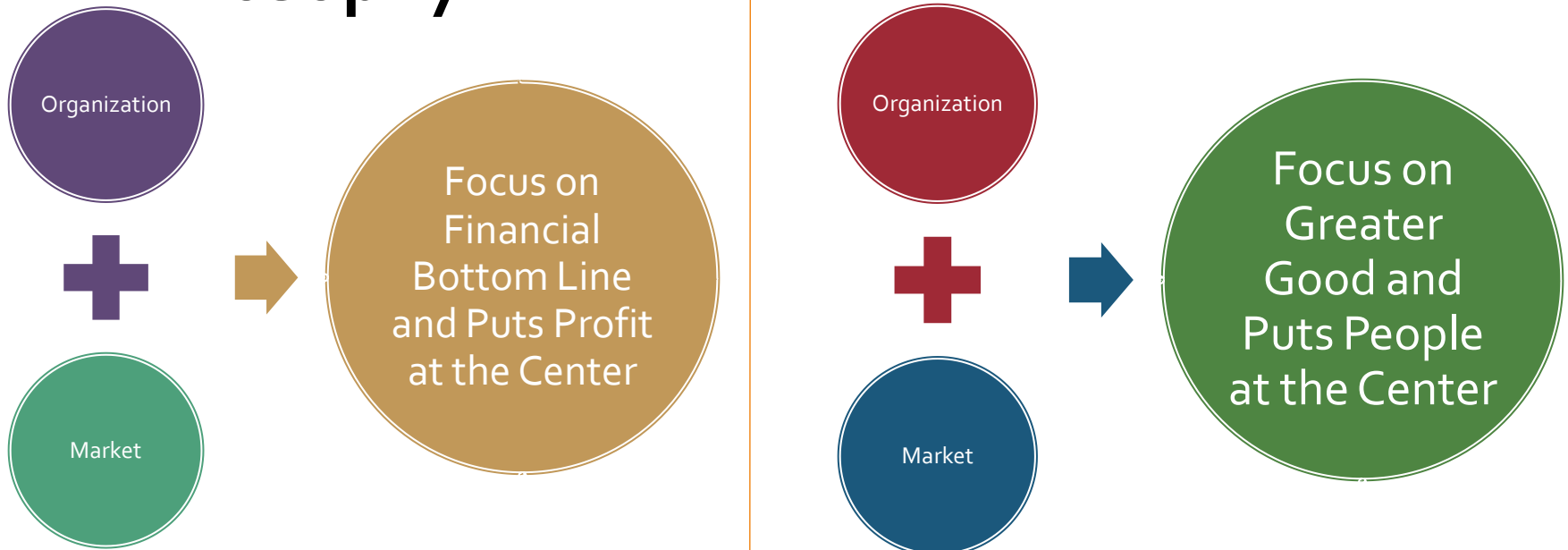
12 Best Practices for Strategic Marketing in Schools

1. ***Clear the air:*** adopt a proper marketing philosophy
2. ***Set up the system:*** integrated marketing planning
3. ***Plan strategically:*** set organizational direction and goals
4. ***Get to the heart of the matter:*** apply the principle of exchange
5. ***Answer the who? question:*** segment and target
6. ***Answer how? and what?*** to complete your strategy suite
7. ***Stand out:*** differentiate yourself
8. ***Decide your promise*** and build the brand
9. ***Shape what they think of you:*** competitive positioning
10. ***Identify and optimize growth opportunities***
11. ***Adjust your bundle of benefits:*** your marketing mix
12. ***Put it in writing:*** your strategic marketing plan

Practice 1

Changing lives is the focus of the classroom teacher and social marketing. So what's the problem?

Clear the air: Adopt a Proper Marketing Philosophy



Industrial Marketing vs. Social Marketing

Adopt a proper marketing philosophy

- **Value added**

Gets the entire campus onboard and working strategically toward sustainability

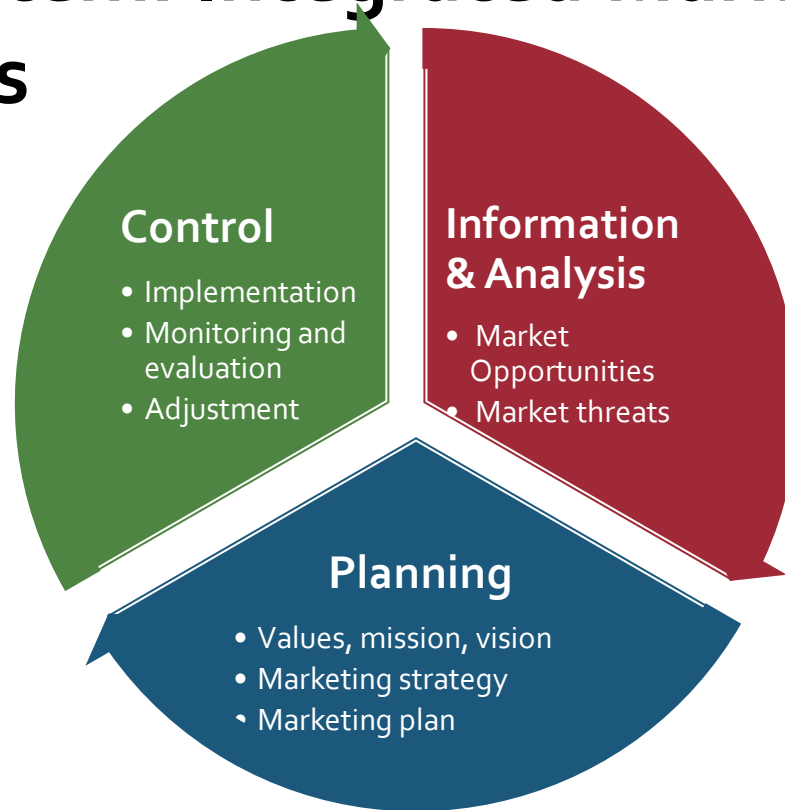
- **Essential governance question**

What are we missing if we don't adopt a proper marketing philosophy and our competitors do?

Practice 2

Marketing is not advertising, promotion, or sales. And it includes all three.

Set up the system: Integrated Marketing Components



Integrate your marketing system

- **Value added**

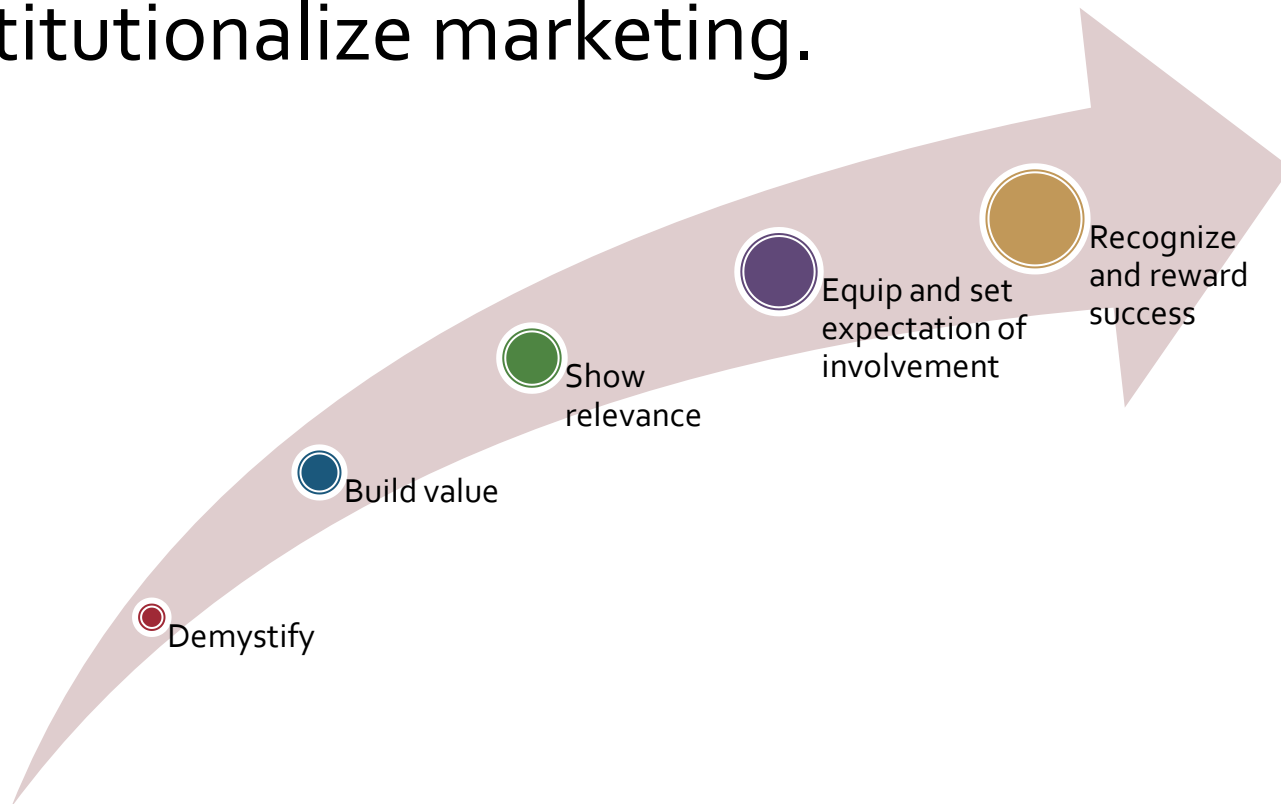
Institutionalizes structure and process so the marketing effort can get off the ground and into action, transcendent of administrations and market conditions

- **Essential question**

What changes in our administrative structure must be made to accommodate strategic marketing planning? Who will manage the marketing system, how, and at what cost?

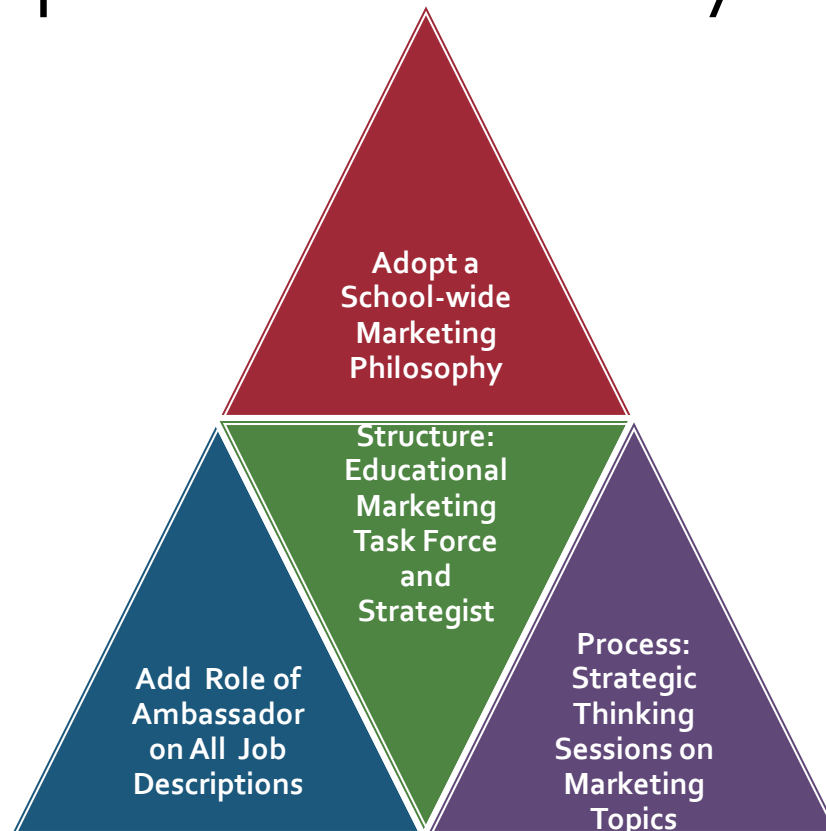
Practical application

- Create structures and processes to institutionalize marketing.



Practical application

Centralize core responsibility and distribute leadership and accountability for marketing.



Practical application

Project Team Charter

- Purpose
- Scope
- Term
- Leadership
- Team Composition
- Reporting Responsibilities
- Meeting Frequency
- Decision-making
- Final Output/Outcomes

Design strategy

- **Value added**

The purpose of all strategy is to optimize the potential for sustainability

- **Essential governance question**

Whom do we want to serve, how can we stand out among competitors, and how will we manage the benefits we offer so we can attract and retain our target markets?

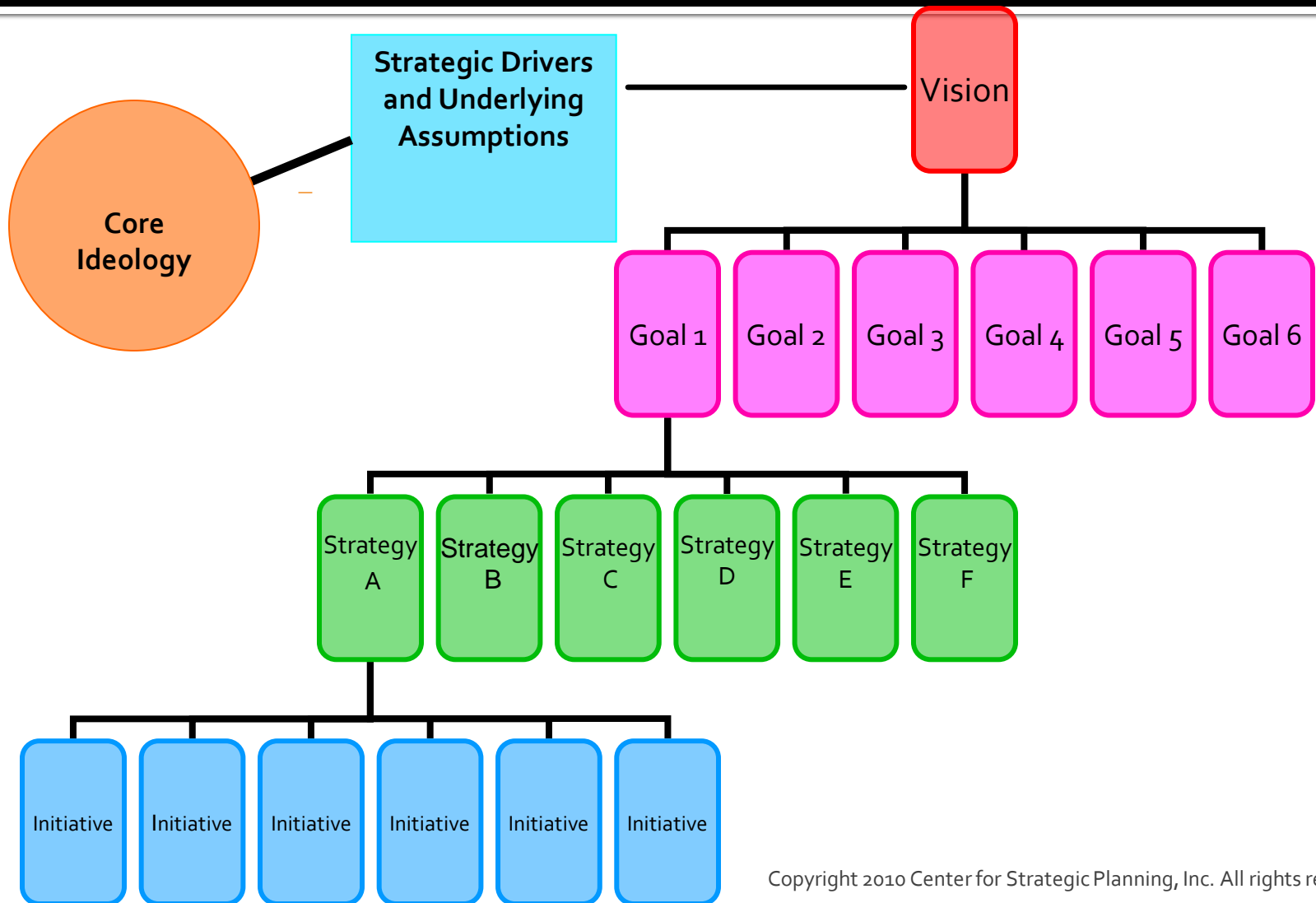
Practice 3

Preserve the core and stimulate progress through your institutional strategic plan.

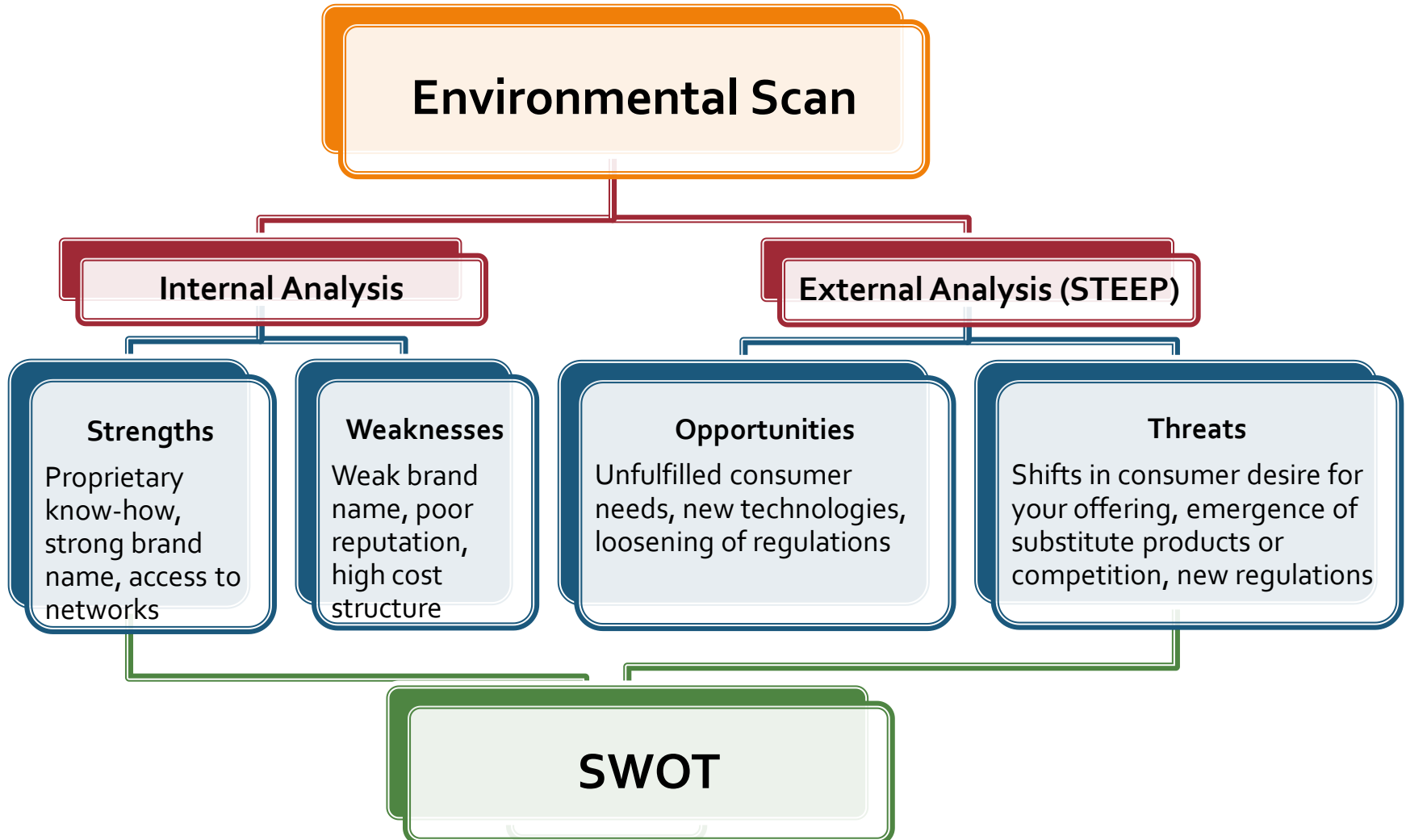
Plan strategically - set organizational direction and goals

- Preserve the core and stimulate progress
- Determine once and for all what you stand for and what is your purpose. These are the immutables. Everything else should be up for change....This is strategy-making for sustainability.

Strategic plan framework



Analyze your environment



Practical application

Learn more about the STEEP factors and comparable offerings



Practical application: select your SWOT/OTSW strategies

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	<p>O-S Strategies pursue opportunities that match your strengths</p> <p><i>Brain research and single sex schools addressed through the creation of a signature program...</i></p>	<p>O-W Strategies overcome your weaknesses to pursue opportunities</p> <p><i>Ramping up targeted communications with an emerging market to increase awareness...</i></p>
Threats	<p>T-S Strategies use strengths to reduce vulnerabilities</p> <p><i>Faculty turnover addressed through faculty mentoring ...</i></p>	<p>T-W Strategies establish a defensive plan to mitigate the impact of external threats due to internal weaknesses</p> <p><i>Trimming high cost structures while increase alternative revenue streams in light of economic downturn</i></p>

Plan strategically

- **Value added**

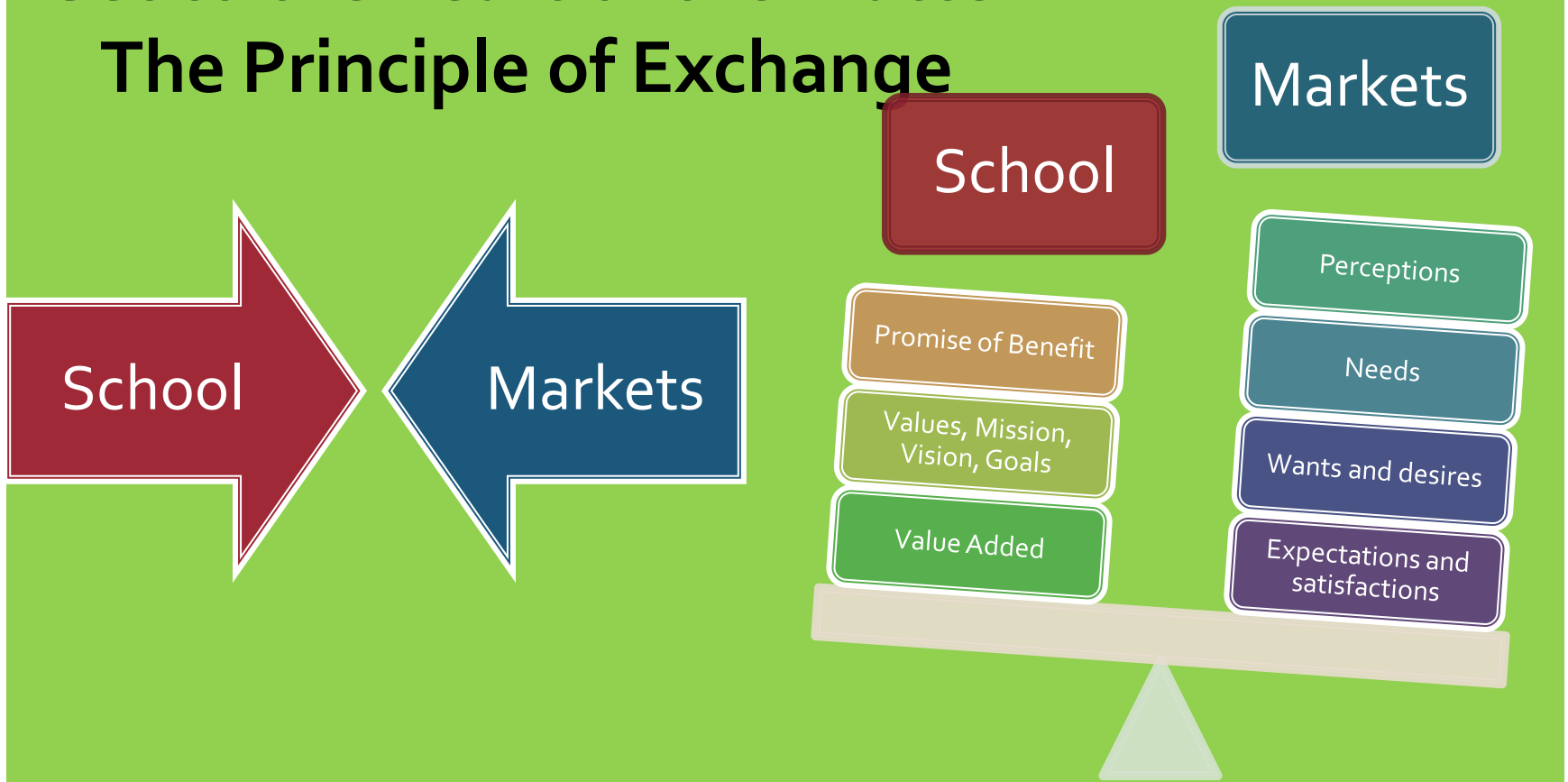
Guards the essence while building capacity to adapt to changing conditions

- **Essential governance question**

What won't change, what should change or must change to respond to opportunities or threats to our sustainability, and how will we know?

Practice 4 This is why marketing is not public relations.

Get to the heart of the matter: The Principle of Exchange



Practical application

- Learn everything there is to know about your internal markets : perceptions, needs, wants, expectations and satisfaction levels



The principle of exchange

- **Value added**

Puts the needs, wants, expectations, and satisfactions of the markets you serve at the heart of how to reach institutional goals

- **Essential governance question**

How can we best meet our institutional goals by satisfying the current and anticipated needs, wants and expectations of our key stakeholders?

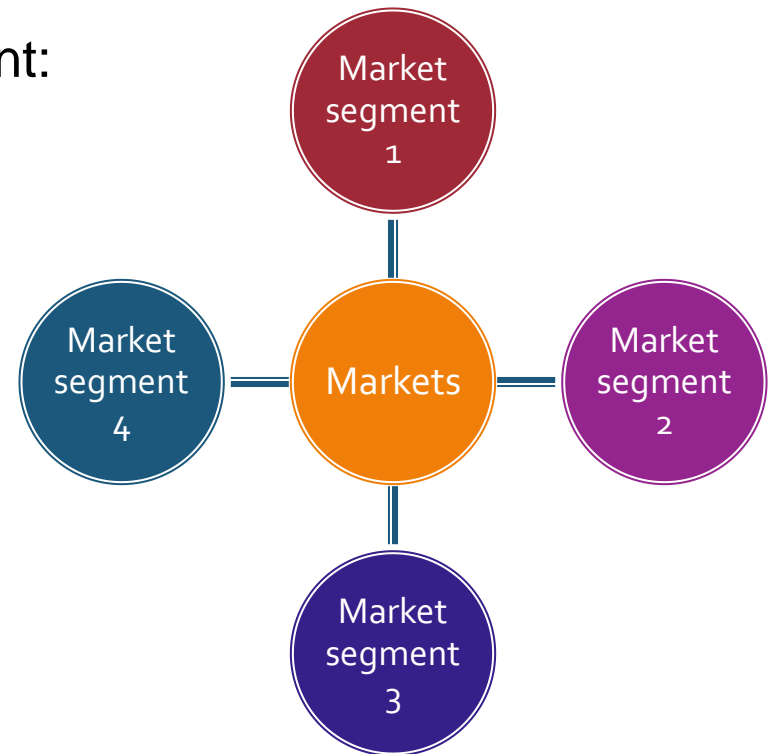
Practice 5

Because you truly cannot be all things to all people.

Answer the *Who?* question: Segment and Target

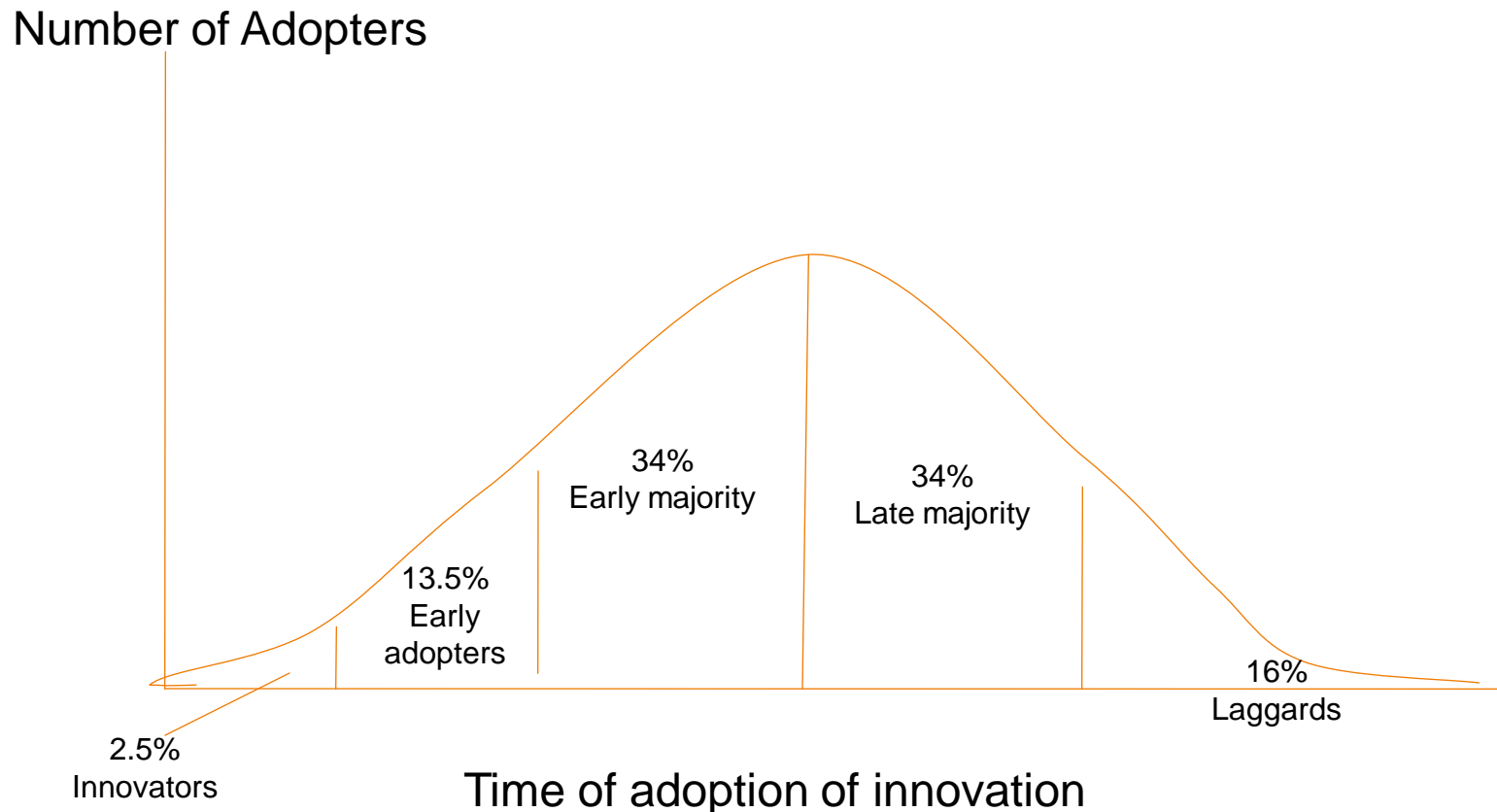
Characteristics of a true market segment:

- Homogeneous
- Different from other segments in response to a customized marketing mix
- Measurable
- Reachable
- Substantial
- Stable



They all won't come onboard at the same time.

Diffusion of Innovations and the Role of Personal Influence*



Everett Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, 1962.

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Segment and target

- **Value added**

Increases your knowledge of your stakeholders and target markets and your ability to identify and reach them with offerings that will attract and retain them based on your solutions to the problems and needs they have

- **Essential governance question**

Who are my targets, what are they like, where can I find them, how can I reach them? Are today's targets the right targets for the future?

Practice 6 Marketing strategy required

Answer the *how?* and *what?* questions to complete your strategy suite

Key strategy decision: how to uniquely position your school based on how your brand promise fulfills the needs of your target markets as compared to the brand promises of competitive offerings



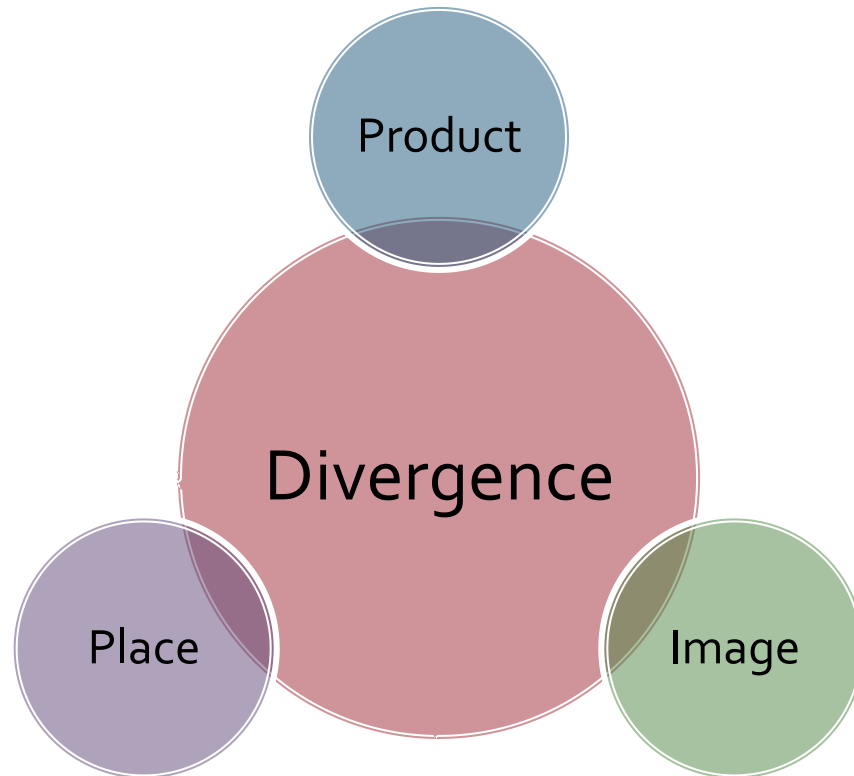
Key strategy decision: how to segment, target and prioritize the most promising market segments according to those where you are most likely to enjoy superior competitive advantage and achieve the goals of your strategic plan

Decide how to manage and adjust your bundle of benefits so you can attract and maintain target markets

Practice 7

How are you different? Really.

•Stand out: Differentiate



Practical application

- Determine if differentiation will be your competitive strategy (Porter 1980)

Differentiation

- **Product** (real differences in your offerings)
- **Place** (where and how your offering is made accessible to your target markets)
- **Image** (how your offerings are perceived)

Cost Leadership

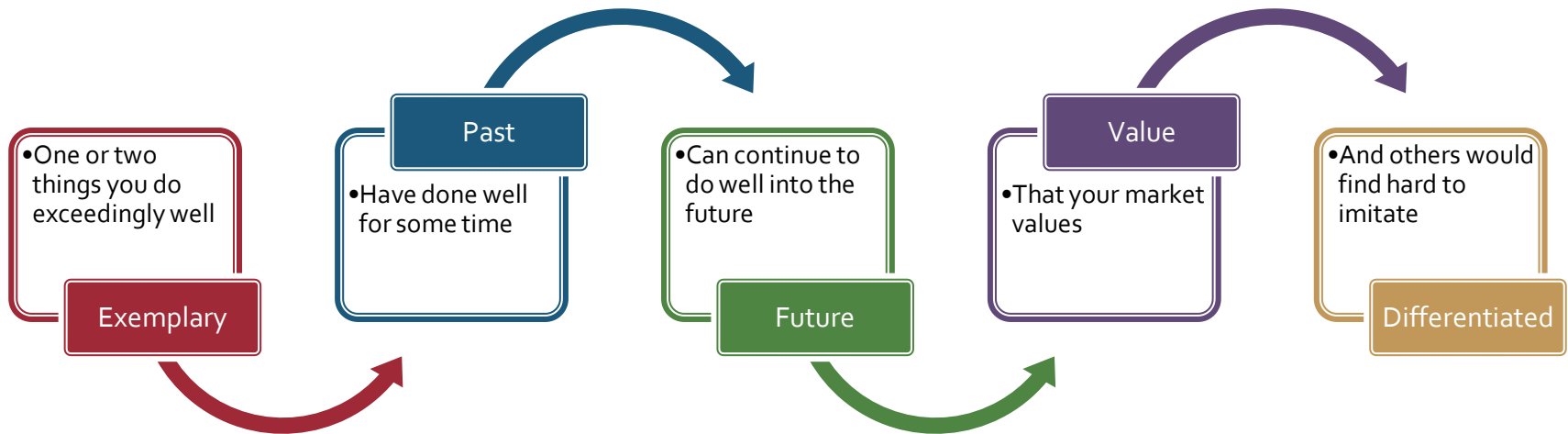
- Lower priced offering among identified competitors

Focus (Niche)

- Specialists in serving a narrow and clearly defined target market

Practical application

- Determine your distinctive capabilities



Differentiate

- **Value added**

Adds to the capacity of your brand to add value to the markets you want to attract and retain; added value translates into enrollment, giving, and otherwise supporting mission and vision.

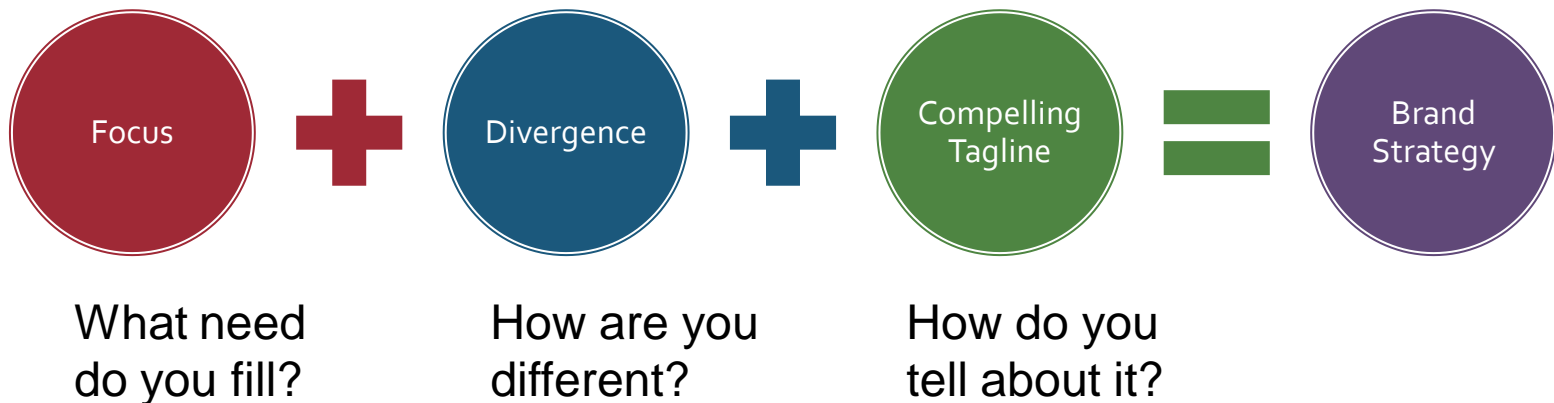
- **Essential governance question**

Are our distinctive capabilities right for the future?

Practice 8

"In the factory we make cosmetics. In the drugstore we sell hope." Charles Revson

- **Decide your promise and build the brand**



Steps to building a brand strategy

1. List the features and benefits of your offering. A feature is an attribute – a color, a configuration; a benefit is what that feature does for the target group.
2. Determine which benefits are most important to each of your target market segments.
3. Identify which benefits are emotional – the most powerful brand strategies tap into emotions.
4. Look at the emotional benefits and boil them down to the main thing that your target market segments should think of when they think of you. That's what your brand should represent.

Best advice for building a brand strategy

Develop your brand
strategy around
emotional benefits

Practical application: Key steps in building your school's brand

1. *Make brand a strategic priority.*
2. *Make brand connections in the classroom and beyond.*
3. *Ensure that all staff exemplify the brand.*
4. *Walk the walk and talk the talk...ground your brand in truth.*
5. *Show how you deliver on your promise.*
6. *Give students a chance to contribute to branding efforts.*
7. *Leverage your strengths.*
8. *Co-brand.*
9. *Know what works and stick with what works.*
10. *Develop a brand adoption plan to help board, faculty, staff and administration embrace and embody the school brand. Educate, communicate with and train faculty, staff and administration to become brand stewards.*

Build the brand

- **Value added**

Brand equity is a key element of a sustainable resource engine and is built through brand awareness, preference and loyalty; its results are stakeholders who enroll, give, support or otherwise advance the goals of your school.

- **Essential governance question**

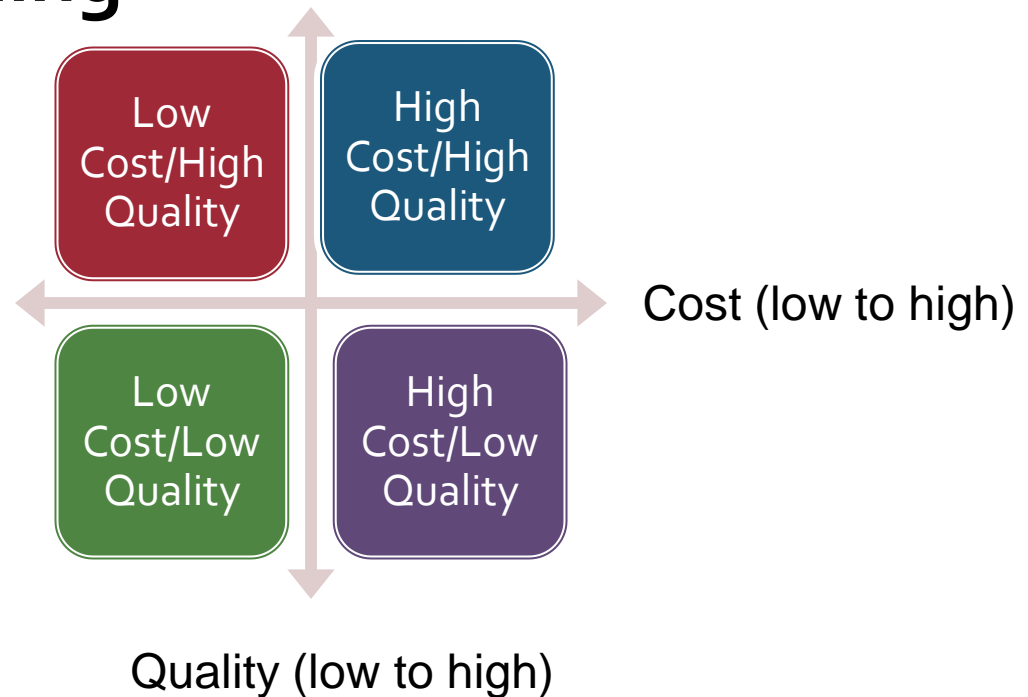
What are our long-term prospects for creating value?

Practice 9

What's your share of mind? What position do you own relative to your competitors?

Shape what they think of you: Competitive Positioning

Position: using a differentiation strategy to uniquely position the school based on how its brand promise fulfills the needs of the school's target markets as compared to the brand promises of competitive offerings



Competitive positioning

- **What sets your school apart from your competitors?** What value do you provide and how is it different than the alternatives?
- **Competitive positioning is about defining how you'll "differentiate" your offering and create value for your market.** It's about carving out a spot in the competitive landscape and focusing your school to deliver on that strategy. A good strategy includes:
 - **Market profile:** size, competitors, stage of growth
 - **Customer segments:** groups of prospects with similar wants & needs
 - **Competitive analysis:** strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the landscape
 - **Positioning strategy:** how you'll position your offering to focus on opportunities in the market
 - **Value proposition:** the type of value you'll deliver to the market

Positioning strategies

- Head-on
- Leadership
- Differentiation
- Innovation
- Lifestyle

Competitive positioning

- One of the key elements of your positioning strategy is your value proposition.
- There are three essential types of value:
 - Operational excellence
 - Product leadership
 - Customer intimacy

Define your value proposition

Operational excellence/cost leadership	<p>You can deliver your offering at a cost lower than your competitors</p> <p>Your focus is low cost, operational efficiency</p> <p>Your offering is typical for the category – not the best and not the worst</p>
Product leadership/Innovation	<p>Your focus is innovation: new technologies, better quality offerings</p>
Customer intimacy/solutions	<p>Your goal is to solve your constituencies' problems with a broad portfolio or customized set of products/services</p> <p>You are promising a relationship that is superior to the relationship offered by your competitors.</p>

Value proposition rating

- To choose your value proposition, rate each of your competitors and yourself.

5	The institution offers extremely high value
3	The institution offers average value
1	The institution offers little or no value

Rate your competitors on delivering their value propositions

- Operational excellence/cost leadership
- Product leadership/innovation
- Customer intimacy/solutions

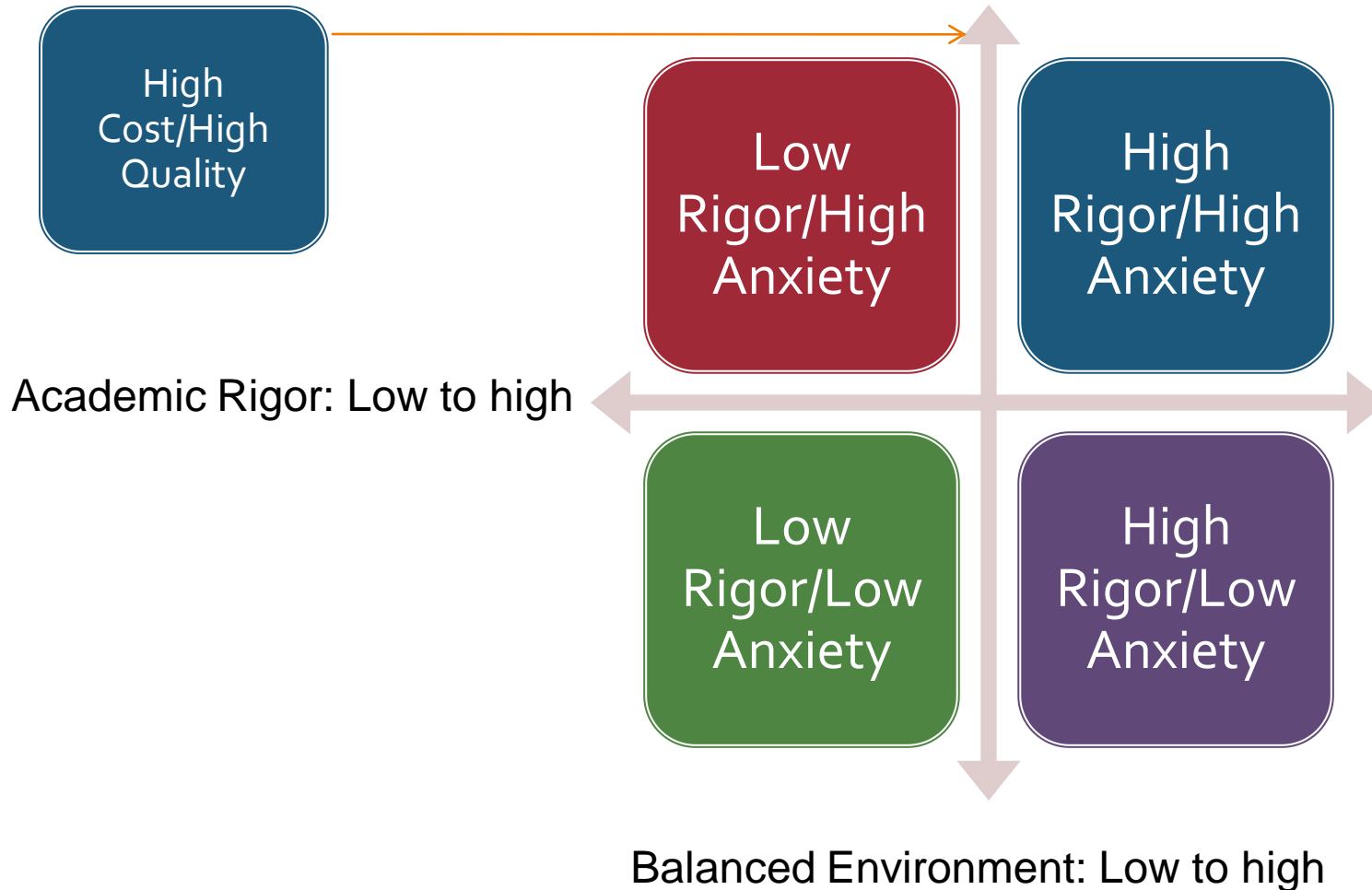
In order to differentiate, what value should you focus on to prevail over your competition? If all your competitors offer the same value proposition, it will be difficult to differentiate.

Solving your market's problems

1	The competitor's solution for this problem is poor.
3	The competitor's solution for this problem is average.
5	The competitor solves this problem very well.

- Which consumer problems are your competitors solving effectively?
- Which consumer problems aren't being solved effectively?

Solving your market's problems



Practical application: key strategies for positioning your school

1. Be clear about the position you want, can deliver on and sustain, and will give you a competitive edge.
2. Develop an 'outcome identity' that goes beyond classroom success.
3. Focus on the experience as well as the product.
4. Position using core values.
5. Build an integrated visual brand identity.
6. Assess staff attitudes about any new direction in branding.

Competitive positioning

- **Value added**

Identifies the position the school wants to own, and can own and defend relative to the positions owned by competing schools in its peer group

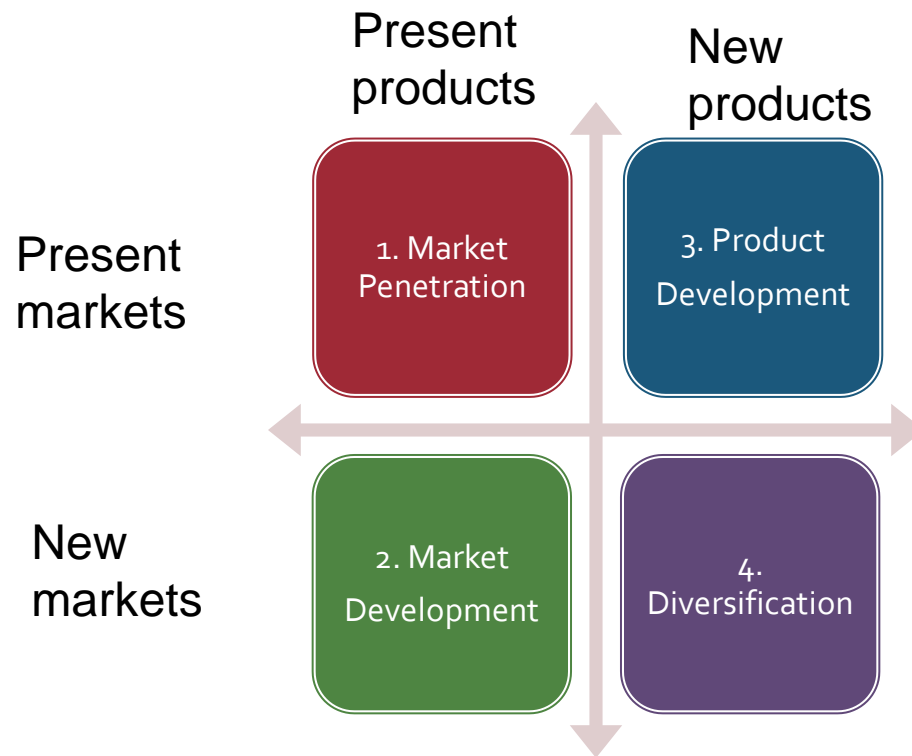
- **Essential governance question**

On what bases do we compete today and are they sustainable? What, if anything, must change?

Practice 10

Focus first on your intensive growth opportunities.

Identify and pursue growth opportunities: Ansoff's Growth Strategy Matrix



Optimize growth opportunities

- **Value added**

Working with the Marketing Growth Matrix you can stabilize your market share, increase your market share, open new markets, adapt or create new product versions, or all of the above

- **Essential governance question**

Given our resources and the goals of our strategic plan, what should be our growth strategy for near term and long term sustainability?

Practice 11

What's your bundle of benefits?

■ Adjust your bundle of benefits: Marketing Mix The Four "P's"

Vary your marketing mix for different market segments.



Various purposes of a marketing campaign ...

- **Generate new leads**
- **Qualify leads**
- **Nurture existing leads**
- **Direct sales**
- **Branding**
- **Cross-sell**
- **Up-sell**
- **Nurture existing customers**
- **Generate referrals**
- **Training**

Practical application

■ Choose your marketing mix strategy

Product *Product* decisions focus on programs, services, features, options, and quality.

Will you build, maintain, or retrench?

Price *Price* decisions center on tuition, discounts, scholarships, financial aid, payment periods, and credit terms.

Will you maintain, increase, decrease, or extend?

Place *Place* decisions are about channels, locations, schedules, and atmosphere.

Will you maintain, add new, change, improve, merge, partner with, or go virtual?

Promotion *Promotion* decisions involve internal and external communications including advertising, publicity, public relations, interactive/direct marketing, event marketing, alliance marketing, merchandising, and personal contact.

Will you ramp up, scale down, change, challenge, or chance? Will you invest, divest, or hold? Go global, Tweet, blog, email or snail mail?

Marketing Mix Must Do #1

**Focus on core elements
of the service mix:**

**people, product and physical
presence**

Marketing Mix Must Do #2

**Ask the right questions about the
traditional marketing mix:
product, price, place and
promotion**

Marketing Mix Must Do #3

**Adjust your mix and message for
specific target market segments**

Marketing Mix Must Do #4

**Sharpen your
campus visit experience**

Marketing Mix Must Do #5

**Recognize the power of
your website**

Recognize the power of your website

- **Be user-focused, not us-focused.**
 - Who you (your audiences) are
 - What you know
 - What you want us to know
 - What you like
 - What you believe
 - What you want us to do
- **Meet the needs of your key internal departments and staff.**
- **Be designed with the user in mind.**
- **Be easy to navigate.**
- **Be intuitive.**
- **Be well-written.**
- **Focus on content.**
- **Provide an engaging experience. (microsites for prospective students, alumni, donors)**
- **Be action-oriented.**
- **Be seamlessly branded through content, tone, visuals, and features.**
- **Drive qualified traffic.**
- **Track results and evaluate ROI.**

Source: STAMATS BEST WEB SITE PRACTICES

Marketing Mix Must Do #6

Set attainable written marketing goals for specific marketing mix elements

Sample goals for social networks using innovative 2.0 tools:

- Expand admissions inquiry pools
- Track prospective students as they move through the recruiting funnel
- Improve yield and conversion rates
- Bring alumni back home and integrating them into recruiting and fundraising
- Expand potential donor pools, particularly for annual funds
- Broadcast your brand through viral 'word of mouse'
- Expand the reach and constancy of your institutional identity

Marketing Mix Must Do #7

- Develop a strategic marketing dashboard to measure and adjust.



NAIS Data Markers of Success

Key organizational factors that signal success and some suggested measures:

- Market Demand (*Reflects the market's perception of the school's success and includes the number of applications per enrolled student and the yield, or percentage of admits who enroll*)
- Low student and faculty attrition
- Generous giving

NAIS Data Markers of Success

- Competitive faculty salaries
- Relatively low tuition and moderate annual tuition increases
- Financial aid
- Ratios of students to faculty and students to total staff
- Significant budgets for professional development and technology
- Growing endowment
- Student outcomes

Adjust the marketing mix

- **Value added**

Adjusting the levers of product, price, place, and promotion gives a school the flexibility necessary to meet the changing perceptions, needs, wants, expectations, and satisfactions of target market segments

- **Essential governance question**

If we are locked into one or more of our marketing mix elements, what can we change to adapt to market needs while meeting school goals?

Practice #12

Put it in writing

Key components of
your strategic marketing plan¹

¹ [The Market Planning Guide: Creating a Plan to Successfully Market Your Business, Products, or Service](#) by David H. Bangs Jr (Paperback - Jan. 1998) (Adapted)

Put it in writing

1. Executive Summary
2. The Challenge (*decline, inadequate growth in market share, maintenance, unusual action or inaction by the competition, static, sudden change, new product introduction*)
3. Situation Analysis
 - **School Analysis** (focus, vision, goals, culture, strengths, weaknesses)
 - **Current Constituent Analysis** (number, type, what they value most about your offering, the decision process, concentration by particular type of offering, e.g. divisions, summer camp, pre-school, after care)
 - **Competitor Analysis** (position, strengths, weaknesses)
 - **Collaborators**
 - **Climate** (STEEP and SWOT)

Your strategic marketing plan

4. Market Segmentation

Segment 1

- Description
- What they want
- How they use and benefit from your educational offerings and services
- How to reach them
- Pricing sensitivities

Segment 2 , etc.

5. Selected Marketing Strategy

- Marketing mix decisions by segment (product, price, place, promotion)

6. Short and Long-term Projections

7. Budgets and Timelines

8. Summary

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Simple advice

- Keep the main thing the main thing
- Do first things first
- Lead with your strengths
- It's not over until it's over...and it's never over

Act strategically

Resource or Function and Related Strategic Activities

Products/Services

Offer new	Enhance quality	Develop	Diversify	Produce more
Retrench	Joint venture	Coordinate	Innovate	
Partner	Acquire	Invent		

Income

Increase	Decrease	Invest	Divest	Diversify
Find alternative				

Market

Expand	Penetrate	Position	Develop	Diversify
Research	Divest	Specialize	Analyze	Segment
Differentiate	Compete	Target	Maintain	

Personnel

Hire new	Terminate	Enrich jobs	Train	Reassign
Mentor	Develop	Build capacity	Share	

Organization (no change)

Maintain

Act strategically

Resource or Function and Related Strategic Activities

Communications

Make aware	Promote	Sell	Advertise	Publicize	Educate
Persuade	Integrate	Target	Synchronize	Maximize	Optimize
Diversify	Integrate online				

Information

Research	Share	Develop	Disseminate	Manage	Analyze
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Leadership

Expand	Develop	Distribute	Build capacity	Assess	
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Technology

Develop	Invest	Divest	Centralize		
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Facilities

Expand	Relocate	Divest	Build	Improve	Reconfigure
Centralize	Decentralize				

Organization (radical change)

Reorient	Turn around	Revitalize	Transform	Restructure	
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