Action Plans – specific statements about how to implement tactics containing the person responsible, the expected completion date, the desired outcome, and the measurable or quantifiable targets.

Champion – person who has primary responsibility for developing the response to strategic issues or measurement dimensions.

Core (Distinctive) Competencies – our strongest abilities and most effective actions and strategies, or the resources on which we can draw routinely to perform.

Core Values – principles by which we wish to be guided.

Goals – specific desired (future) states requiring effective strategy implementation; broad aspirations; long-term target or direction of development.

Mandates – requirements (expectations) imposed on us by formal or informal governing bodies, stakeholders, culture or other forces.

Milestone – a significant event or date during the execution of a project.

Mission Statement – a declaration, many times using inspiring language, of our purpose. The mission, combined with our mandates, provides the social justification for our existence. Many times the language is inspiring to those committed to the organization.

Objectives – specific accomplishments to be reached in achieving our goals.

Opportunity – future oriented possible activity or action that would benefit us.

Performance Measure – means of objectively assessing the results of programs, products, projects, or services.

Stakeholder – any person, group, or organization (internal or external) that can place a claim on our attention, resources, or output.

Strategic Commitments – affirmative statements derived from Strategic Issues that represent fundamental policy commitments; similar to goals.

Strategic Initiatives – related groups of strategies designed to address identified strategic issues or strategic commitments.

Strategic Issues – fundamental policy questions or critical challenges that affect our mandates, mission, and values as we try to fulfill our vision of success.

Strategic Planning – disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what we are, what we do, and why we do it.

Strategy – a set of proposed actions that respond to one aspect of a strategic issue.

Strength – an internal positive attribute.

SWOT – an acronym representing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; an integral part of the process of identifying strategic issues is a SWOT analysis.

Tactics – short-term, adaptive actions and reactions used to implement strategies.
**Targets** – specific desired outcomes, measurable and/or quantifiable

**Threat** – external, future oriented possible activities or actions that could harm us

**Values** – the way things should be; desirable ways of interacting with others

**Vivid description** – a statement of our expected future state at some future date; expressed in complete sentences.

**Vision of success** – a future state that occurs after the organization or entity has successfully implemented its strategies and achieved its full potential.

**Weakness** – an internal negative attribute (can be called a challenge)

A nesting of these concepts can be visually instructive – think of an outline in which there are subparts, each more specific than the ones preceding:

- **Strategic Issues** – limited number (e.g. 3-5) of questions that must be addressed during the relevant planning time horizon that critical to our success – **GOALS**
  - **Strategy** – several strategies may address a single issue; should have quantifiable outcome and assigned responsibility for achievement – **OBJECTIVES**
    - **Tactic** – specific breakdown of strategies into manageable areas of activity; multiple tactics for each strategy; should be quantifiable and assign personal responsibility for achievement – **MILESTONES**
      - Action plans – specific listing of steps and activities to accomplish a tactic, people responsible and time frames for completion; multiple action steps for each tactic – **COMPLETED TASKS**

It is important to remember that strategic issues, strategies, tactics, and action plans come in sets of multiple options that must be winnowed and focused. Only those that directly lead to achieving the next level up the outline should be considered. Once the alternatives have been focused, they should be further analyzed for the timing that needs to be used in addressing them.

- Critical – we must address this area to avoid serious negative effects or to capitalize on significant opportunities
- Important – we should address this area to avoid negative effects or to capitalize on opportunities
- Nice – we can address this area to avoid negative effects or to capitalize on opportunities once we have addressed critical and important areas