



CASE STUDY

100 YEARS YOUNG



A Case Study in Digging Deep and Taking the Long View

The Strategic Dilemma:

A significant cultural institution prepared for their centennial celebration with pride and desperation. As the start of year 98 began, the leadership surveyed the long-standing mission with pride and the current operational reality with deep concern. Yes, they had always served the mission well over its long history, and it had continued to fill the urgent needs of the community. But now it was struggling to serve today's needs on a campus built for yesterday. How could it prepare for a celebration when so much of the past needed retooling?

As the board and staff leadership looked ahead, they knew a new compelling vision of their future was needed BEFORE they could begin to plan a celebration of a storied past.

The Engagement and Our Approach:

Focused Momentum® was asked to lead a long-range strategic planning project that would lay the foundation for the next evolution of this important non-profit organization. Over a 5-month strategic planning process (a Strategic Summit™ engagement) we were asked to assist the leadership team in crafting a new vision. They also needed to lay out the core elements of a new campus for a capital campaign, guide how to engage and enroll the community in the centennial celebration AND resolve how to address program priorities from the international governing organization. Any one of these would be a satisfactory outcome for a strategic planning project but charged with address all four AND four-month less time to complete the project set us up for a significant challenge.

This planning project required all we could bring to it and more. The more came from the incredible commitment and tireless work of our clients – both staff and board. Their admiration for the institution, its mission and great standing in their community compelled nothing less than the highest excellence in their efforts. They were fearless in their examination of the status quo and resolve to make hard decisions about cutting legacy programs to make room for the future. Their ability to embrace the complexity of the unknown and stay true to their vision was inspiring. This project was truly one of our most powerful planning projects to date.

What made the difference in leading this strategy development effort was a strong grasp of the facts and the flexibility of our creative process. We deftly prepared a strategic assessment that made the facts clear about what was not working with their current operations. These facts strengthened the resolve for the tough decisions. We also fully utilized our group strategy development tools to ignite new thinking when the team was struggling. When momentum stalled drafting the new direction, we created a word association game that revealed deeper meaning and broke open new, shared emotions about the future. We used the graphic recording technique to create visual metaphors that depicted visually how the elements of the mission could be leveraged to build up to the ultimate vision. Building on everyone's personal vision statements we created, in real time, a comprehensive and compelling vision for their future.

Results:

Today, you walk through the campus and buildings drawn during that Strategy Creation Session. Their centennial celebration engaged greater numbers of their community in their new vision, and they met their capital campaign goals. Today they are not only viewed as a leader in their local community but throughout their state.

We have been fortunate to be asked back repeatedly over the years to continue the strategy development process. Still focused on the core of that long-range vision created with those amazing people in 2004.

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