

# Tom Little's **BIG IDEAS**

for Non-Profits

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November 9 - 13, 2020

### **SWOT Not Working? Try the Logic Model**

*Our lead article is about planning methodologies. We discuss several you can choose from.*

### **The Two Sides of WE Charity**

*WE Charity continues to be in the news. Find sources of insights from both critics and supporters in this week's email commentary.*

### **HP Offers a Lesson in Customer Service**

*TomBits returns to Tom's printer story of last week and extracts an important lesson for BIG Ideas readers.*

### **A New Spin on the Contents of an Annual Management Plan**

*Blast From The Past reveals another approach to management planning.*

*At CMCS, COVID means we Zoom more and travel less. Our work, including strategic planning, Board training and executive recruitment goes on. All continues to be possible.*

# SWOT Not Working for You? Consider Planning with the Logic Model

## The Story

Planning is better when it is based on a methodology.

Some non-profit organizations across Ontario have embraced the SWOT approach. Under SWOT, the task is to identify strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T). Then you use this knowledge as a base for creating your actions. These actions are intended to build on your strengths, reduce or eliminate your weaknesses, take advantage of your opportunities and reduce or eliminate your threats.

For some users, there are challenges with the SWOT approach. Only the “O”, opportunities, is directly transferable into action. Weaknesses and threats tend to be muddy and merge into one. Strengths don’t clearly translate into action either. Your staffing might be a strength, but what does that tell you about what you should be doing going forward?

## The Skinny

For those who like SWOT, we suggest doing a slight shift and use the SCO approach instead, where S is still for strengths and O is still for opportunities, but where C is for challenges (internal or external). Challenges may be weaknesses, they may be threats or they may simply be issues that need attention. Using SCO, you would identify actions that build on strengths, that reduce or eliminate challenges and that exploit your opportunities.

If you are into planning methodologies, and SWOT doesn’t work for you, consider the Logic Model. It is made up of a number of categories or elements that are addressed sequentially, starting with Inputs (your resources – e.g. staffing, facilities, funding), then Activities (actions you will be taking using those resources – e.g. providing residential supports), then Audience (the people who will be the target of your activities – e.g. seniors), then Outputs (e.g. the number of seniors who will receive residential supports) and finally Outcomes (how the people will benefit from the outputs – e.g. seniors live better lives because they have quality accommodation).

Some non-profits find the Logic Model appealing because it is laid out in chart form and therefore is very visual. That chart can also be beneficial when used as a means to monitor and evaluate the plan as it unfolds. If the Logic Model interests you, you can do an Internet search and get lots of information on how to go about planning with the Logic Model. Like SWOT, the Logic Model is in the public domain, so there is no cost involved.

At CMCS, our approach to planning begins with determining each organization’s current situation, then identifying changes or additions that will make it better. In so doing, we look closely at each of the following categories:

- Vision, mission and values

- Clientele
- Services (or products)
- Staffing
- Facilities
- Administration (HR, Finance, IT)
- Management
- Community partnerships

We ask stakeholders to rate the organization related to each of the above, then invite them to provide ideas for change. Environmental issues such as COVID and changing government legislation and policies are taken into account when changes and additions are being proposed. Our analysis relies heavily on stakeholder input.

## The BIG Idea

Our BIG Idea for this week is to use any planning tool that works for you, as long as it gets you to action. Oh, and did I mention that this is only the first step? Following through on those actions can be the bigger challenge.

Editor's Note: See this week's Blast from the Past for another take on planning.

## The BIG Survey

Do you use SWOT for planning? Yes    No

If yes, to you find it effective?    Yes    No

# Emails... We Get Emails

## The Two Sides of WE Charity

WE Charity continues to attract media attention.

Canada's Foundation magazine devoted the bulk of its September/October issue to the topic. For the most part the content was critical of WE and addressed ways of learning from its travails.



On the other hand, in a full page ad in the Toronto Star newspaper, Andy Stillman of the Stillman Family Foundation, stated: "I believe in smart, impactful philanthropy. That's why for nearly a decade, my family foundation supported WE Charity." To "cut through the politics and get to the truth", Stillman hired an investigator along with forensic accountants to conduct his own review of the various parts of WE.

He advises that the review: "...included over 5,000 pages released by the federal government, and nearly 400 documents released by WE Charity, as well as a full evaluation of WE Charity's finances and that of the social enterprise ME to WE that funds the charity."

In the end, Stillman's conclusion was that: "Simply put, there was no funny business. The real #WEscandal is politics causing the loss of an incredible Canadian charity which has helped millions of young people over 25 years."

He says that he remains a believer in WE and hopes the review he commissioned will renew the public's confidence in WE.

Confused? Want to learn more?

The Foundation magazine edition can be found at:

[https://issuu.com/dmn.ca/docs/fm\\_septoct2020\\_w?fr=sNDVjMTEwMzkzMjA](https://issuu.com/dmn.ca/docs/fm_septoct2020_w?fr=sNDVjMTEwMzkzMjA)

The Stillman report is available at <https://www.friendsofwe.org>

## This Week's TomBit

### HP Offers Lessons in Customer Service

Last week I told you about not being able to connect to my printer because the manufacturer, HP, revoked what are called security certificates on some HP printer software, knowing full well the difficulties so doing would cause. I spent many hours trying to find a remedy and I was just one of thousands of HP owners in the same boat.



HP says it did so unintentionally, but if third-party Internet commentators are to be believed, HP has too many internal levels of approval for it to have happened that way.

The most obvious reason for HP's action would be to force those affected to buy new printers. However, another that was thrown out on the Internet is that HP might have done it because it was experiencing problems with hackers using the certificates for evil, not good. The connection between hackers and security certificates was explained but was a little obscure for me.

While I criticized HP for doing what it did and for not owning up to it once all these printer owners started complaining, I should have noted for you that there is a BIG Idea to be extracted from this mess: no matter what product or service you provide, treat your customers right. It will come back to haunt you if you don't.

# Blast from the Past

*Blast from the Past is a selection of previous BIG Ideas articles that you may not have read, or if you did, may have forgotten how helpful and insightful (i.e. brilliantly written) they were. This article is from 2016.*



## A new spin on the contents of an annual management plan

### The Story

I am a huge fan of planning. Planning produces superior results and reduces the problems organizations face along the way. And of course, I have my own ideas on the content and structure of a plan.

Those ideas are challenged by the planning approach taken by Community Living Kingston and District. Under Executive Director Peter Sproul, CLKD produces a Quality Improvement Report each year. The most current report describes actions the organization planned to take in 2015-16, the results of those actions and its plans for the coming year.

Looking at the report's index, it becomes clear that CLKD works not from one plan, but from seven of them. But that is only the beginning. CLKD develops plans for annual reviews of policies, for dealing with complaints, for conducting satisfaction surveys and for meeting targets related to effectiveness, efficiency and what it calls business function. CLKD also reports in detail on the demographics of the people it supports.

Looking more closely at the Quality Improvement Report, the first thing you notice is how many plans CLKD has developed and works from:

- Strategic Plan
- Risk Management Plan
- Accessibility Plan
- Technology Plan
- Cultural Competence and Diversity Plan
- Plan to Secure Input from Stakeholders
- Plan to Distribute Performance Improvement Information

Most of these plans are more expansive than just listing actions to be taken over the coming year. The risk management plan, for example, provides an overview of CLKD's approach to risk and breaks out the various kinds of risk it faces, along with its current strategies for mitigating them. It then moves into results achieved in the past year and new actions to be taken in the coming year.

As part of the plan, the organization reviews its operating policies annually and reports on the results, as it does with complaints. It also reports on the satisfaction surveys it conducts with persons served, families of children and CLKD's community partners. Changes to its approach to surveying are noted.

One of the most interesting aspects of CLKD's approach to planning is its use of targets related to effectiveness, efficiency and business functions. Some of these targets focus on the services it offers. For example, a goal of the organization is to increase the use of its respite house, and it set a target of being occupied 80% of the time. Despite its best efforts, in 2015-16 it managed 71% usage, therefore falling short of the target. So the report includes actions it will take in the next twelve months to move towards the 80% goal, which remains in effect for 2016-17.

Other targets relate to staffing. Sick time has been an issue for CLKD, as for many organizations, and it has set upper limits for its various service areas related to the percentage of payroll that would be spent on sick pay. These ranged from 3% to 5% depending on the service area. For the most part those targets were met in 2015-16, and continue as goals for 2016-17.

A very important target for CLKD related to meds errors, and here things did not turn out as well in 2015-16. At 165 errors in its residential services, the organization was well over its target for the year which was less than sixty. In response, the organization identified actions it would take in the coming year:

- *Medication Administration practices will be a standing agenda item at all staff team meetings. Identified topics of discussion for the 2016/2017 staff meeting cycle include: Common mistakes when completing Medication Error reports, reviewing standard administration practices for each person served, blister and MTAR checks, review of the medication policy, reviewing program specific errors and brainstorming improvements, and review of medications for each person served.*
- *Residential Coordinators will complete a medication practices review with all Residential staff as part of the performance evaluation process.*
- *Follow up will occur with (name of pharmacy) around pharmacy-related errors.*
- *The two programs with the highest rates of errors will also be piloting a colour coding system that will make confirmation of right person, right medication, right time and right dose simpler. If this leads to improvements, it will expand this to the rest of the division.*

For 2016-17 CLKD also raised the bar related to its target for meds errors, increasing its benchmark from 60 to 90.

Other targets CLKD seeks to meet and reports on include:

- WSIB reportable injuries (target - 6)
- Employee access to electronically-stored information (target - access is available uninterrupted on 97% of work days)
- Staff training (target - at least 90% of staff are current on their CPR/First Aid and CPI certification)
- Unfunded vacation and lieu time financial liability (target - more than 80% of full-time employees have less than 240 accumulated vacation and lieu hours), and
- On-call management response times (target - at least 80% of calls are responded to in six minutes or less).

## **The Skinny**

I am impressed with the number of plans CLKD has developed and works from each year. I also like the effectiveness, efficiency and business function targets it sets, the reporting on results and the development of actions for the coming year related to the targets.

The willingness of the organization to be public and transparent about some of its targets, such as sick time, meds errors, WSIB reportable injuries, server access, unfunded liabilities and on-call management response is laudable.

My only suggestion for improvement relates to format and not to content. It would be nice if the actions and targets were broken out by the various parts of the organization, so that it was clear where the many actions would be taken and especially who would be accountable for completing them and meeting the targets.

This would mean a report which had sections on services, staffing, facilities, administration (office, finance, HR, IT and property), management and community relations. The services section would be broken down further by each specific type of service CLKD offers. The actions contained in the various plans such as the strategic plan, risk plan, technology plan and so on, would be inserted into each section as appropriate. The efficiency, effectiveness and business function targets would be handled in the same way. The report would be then be used as an accountability tool for the members of the management team as well as for providing clarity on the actions to be taken over the next twelve month period in each part of the organization.

## **The BIG Idea**

My BIG Idea for this week is to take advantage of the planning concepts created by CL Kingston and District. Develop plans in areas like Risk Management, Accessibility, Technology and Cultural Competence and Diversity. Do the same for securing input from stakeholders and publicizing the results of your efforts at quality improvement. Set benchmarks in key operational areas such as service usage, service outcomes, staff training, complaints, injuries and meds errors. Track your results and address shortfalls as needed. And don't be afraid to make them public.

## **2020 Update**

You can find CL Kingston's 2020 Outcomes Report on its website: <https://myclkd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-Report-Card.pdf>

## **Current CMCS Clients**

We are pleased to be working with York Region Centre for Community Safety, Community Living Thunder Bay, Canopy Support Services (formerly Tri-County Community Support Services), Literacy Network Northeast, Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet, Community Visions and Networking (Quinte), Chatham-Kent Family Health Team and Community Living St. Catharines. Recent clientele includes Durham Youth Services, Community Living Trent Highlands and Mill Creek Care Centre.

## Testimonials

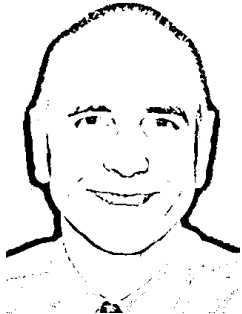
*Thank you again to you and Nancy for all the work, dedication and effort put into this Operations Review. We made the right choice in hiring you to do this project and on behalf of the board of directors, I express our deep gratitude.*

**Roz Werner-Arce, Board Chair, Durham Youth Services**

*Our Strategic Plan is moving along better than I could have imagined. I chair the group of around 20 Board and staff who have been meeting monthly for the past 6 months and plan to continue through the fall. Great enthusiasm from all involved and much is being accomplished already, particularly on renewed focus on our Mission and Vision. Thanks again for getting us off on the right foot!*

**Frank Moore, Board Chair, Community Living Central Huron**

## About Tom Little and Nancy Collins



Tom Little and Nancy Collins are the principals of CMCS.

In addition to consulting for many years, Tom has been Executive Director of a large human service organization, experience he brings to the table when working with his non-profit clients. In his younger days he was lucky enough to be part of three Canadian champion hockey teams while attending the University of Toronto.

Nancy's background includes a degree from Wilfrid Laurier and working at a downtown Toronto law firm. In her spare time, at least when there is no pandemic, she plays goal in women's hockey and catcher in summer slo-pitch. A life-long Leafs fan, she no longer apologizes for her unwavering commitment, given their resurrection in recent years. Now if they could just win a playoff round!





## Free Resources From CMCS

We offer a range of free resources to help non-profits be better. For your copy, contact us at [info@cmcsconsulting.ca](mailto:info@cmcsconsulting.ca)

Board Duties  
Policy Board Model  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Board Decision-Making Checklist  
Board Evaluation Form  
Dealing with Risk  
List of Possible Board Policies  
Board Recruitment (Stop the BIG LIE)  
Management Principles  
Member and Director Qualifications  
The Importance of Planning  
Canada's Great Non-Profit Websites  
Transitioning to the New Not-for-Profit Corporations Act

## Tom's Book For Boards of Directors



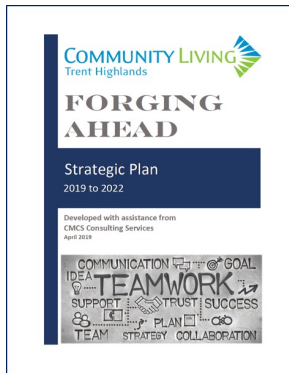
One hundred and ninety-pages. Thirty-six *BIG Ideas*. Thirteen of them are *The BIGGEST of the BIG*, ideas Tom's experience says are critical to any non-profit. Then come twenty-three *BIG Ideas*, more ways to enhance the governance of your organization.

You don't just get ideas either. The book contains all kinds of resources for implementing them. For example, *BIG Ideas* includes samples of strategic and Board yearly action plans, and of evaluation formats Boards can use to rate their own work.

*Tom Little's BIG Ideas* is formatted as a work book, so it can be used on a continuous basis by the Directors. It is easy to read and has a fun quality your Board members will appreciate.

Just \$40 plus HST and shipping. For your copy, contact us at [info@cmcsconsulting.ca](mailto:info@cmcsconsulting.ca).

## More About CMCS



At CMCS, our specialty is strategic planning. Since the start of 2018, the following 14 organizations have completed their strategic plans with help from CMCS:

Kenora Association for Community Living  
Community Living Dryden-Sioux Lookout  
Community Living Trent Highlands  
Elmira District Community Living  
Literacy Northwest  
Durham Region Child Care Forum  
Tollendale Village  
Centennial College School of Transportation

York Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee  
Autism Home Base Durham  
Canoe FM Community Radio  
Toronto Island Residential Community Trust  
York Region Centre for Community Safety  
Literacy Network Northeast

We provide Board training that comes with a bonus: A Board action plan developed by participants based on the discussion.

Tom wrote his book for non-profit Boards, which you can buy and use as an ongoing resource. We are great facilitators and can help develop agendas for Board and management retreats.

Much of our past work has been in the human service sector, especially disability. But we have assisted in other sectors such as community colleges, local workforce authorities, family health teams, Big Brothers Big Sisters, United Ways and violence against women. We have even assisted a community radio station.

We have built our reputation on producing quality products that have great content and are appealing to look at.