Developing Your Coaching Strategy
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Strategy Development: A Bird’s Eye View

This diagram gives you an overview of the steps needed to complete a well-structured coaching strategy. Each section is colour coded for ease of reference throughout this resource.
Developing Your Coaching Strategy

This resource outlines all the key components you will need to develop a successful and robust coaching strategy. It can be used by governing bodies of sport and county sports partnerships – indeed, any organisation that is looking to develop a strategy.

The resource has been laid out in colour-coded sections for ease of reference. The sections identify the route you need to take and the information you need to gather to inform your finished coaching strategy. Exercises are placed throughout the resource making it an interactive workbook. The exercises can also be found within the System, Strategy and Policy section of the Resource Bank on the sports coach UK website (www.sportscoachuk.org).

By the end of this resource, you will understand how to define the purpose of your strategy, gather the appropriate information, and generate background research and analysis to inform your direction. There are tips and exercises to start developing your strategy and all-important information on how to successfully deliver the contents to ensure your strategy is meaningful to your organisation and can be understood by people both internally and externally.

By introducing strategy in a simple and straightforward manner; you, the reader, can use this resource to develop and deliver a strategy, or to critically evaluate and improve an existing strategy.

There is no one correct way to design a strategy, but there are basic concepts proven to work, as well as certain methods that should be avoided. Please note this resource is not prescriptive. Through exercises and easy to digest sections, the resource will provide you with a practical approach to developing your own strategy.

Throughout this resource there will be various exercises that will help to not only contextualise the information into your own sport, but will also start to develop your own strategy by helping you think about the key content needed to get you started. The exercises can also be found on the sports coach UK website (www.sportscoachuk.org) within the System, Strategy and Policy section of the Resource Bank.
So, what is strategy?

Fundamentally, strategy is a plan: it is the way an organisation identifies what it aims to do, be and/or go, and how it will achieve its goal(s).

Your strategy is, or should be, about identifying where you wish to get to and planning your route to get there.

A strategy is also a communication document and, like all communications, the easier it is for the reader to understand, the more likely it is to succeed.

The language of strategy

Ask a room full of strategists to explain the difference between outcomes, outputs, goals, aims, objectives or targets, and you are unlikely to gain a consensus.

It is, therefore, wise not to get too hung up on the language, for language does not deliver successful strategy, people do. And people will be more likely to deliver success if the strategy defining it is written in language they understand.

Words that all people will understand are Rudyard Kipling’s ‘six honest serving men’; namely, what, when, why, where, who and how. These are the words you should employ to check your strategy is functional.
Section 2
Defining Your Purpose

Understanding your organisation is key to developing a robust strategy. This section will enable you to identify who your partners are and how meaningful your relationship is with them.

You will also understand the value of consultation, whether this means working with an external consultant or whether you choose to conduct your own, internal consultation process. Most importantly, this section will support you to develop your own mission statement, organisational vision and values. These important statements will underpin the development of your strategy as they serve to identify who you are as an organisation, where you want to get to and how you want to get there.

Consultation is key
Consultation can be carried out either internally, using people from your own organisation or, depending on your available budget, it may be possible to work with a consultant to develop your strategy. As in all walks of life, there are good, bad and indifferent consultants, so it is wise to know what you require of your consultant and ensure they understand and have the capability to deliver what you need.

That said, a good strategy consultant or Subject Matter Expert (SME) will be worth his or her weight in gold, in both the consultation process and in helping you ensure your strategy is as effective, efficient and economical as it can be.

Compliance versus commitment
Compliance means being expected to help deliver a strategy you have no stake in, so you have no excitement for or commitment to it. However, full and proper consultation creates a sense of shared vision and, with it, commitment.

When consulting, it is important to be aware not only of the value of the information you gather, but also of the inclusion (or otherwise) of the people and organisations with whom you consult.

This is especially important in sport as it is heavily reliant on volunteers for delivery.

Put another way, saying ‘let’s do this together’ builds resilience during times of change and uncertainty and creates a genuine commitment to partnership working. (Partnership working is defined on page 5 and in Appendix 3.)
Developing Your Coaching Strategy

A full and proper consultation helps to build a shared and committed view of the future. The final strategy will not be ‘yours’ or ‘mine’ but ‘ours’ and everyone will be committed to seeing it through together.

**Working in partnership**

It is rare to find successful strategy where some partnership working is not required. By ensuring you choose partners who can provide value to your project and understand you and each other’s outcomes fully, the future success of your strategy becomes far more realistic. Working in partnership and sharing good practice can be a highly cost-effective method of developing a strong and sustainable strategy.

Working in partnership can help not only the development of your strategy but help you understand what you need to include and how you can be supported to deliver the actions. Having a collaborative working approach between a governing body and county sports partnership, for example, would be mutually beneficial.

**Exercise: Working in partnership**

The following exercise will help you identify the benefits of your partnerships and what you can do to develop and strengthen the relationship to support not only the writing of your strategy, but also effective implementation of it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is the partner?</th>
<th>In what way do you benefit from the partnership?</th>
<th>In what way do they benefit from the partnership?</th>
<th>How can the partnership be developed/strengthened?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eg Central Sports Association</td>
<td>Provision of tutor workforce</td>
<td>Provision of tutor training</td>
<td>Join up our workshops to reduce training costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do we mean when we say ‘sustainable’?

Sustainable: capable of being continued.

The meaning of sustainable is an important consideration for all strategy development, but especially strategies in spheres such as sport, where there is so much reliance on funding and funding cycles.

If an element within, or even all of, your strategy is reliant on funding and yet the ambitions being pursued by that strategy will need to continue after the funding ends, it is important to consider what your options might be.

Hoping the funding will continue should not be a consideration: hoping has no place in strategy. Examples of solutions worth considering are pricing structures; commercial sponsorship; shared facilities; or support for unrelated partner programmes, which may fund your own.

If losing funding is likely to present a serious challenge to achieving success, remember that changing focus from vision-based strategy to issue-based strategy will likely be the wiser short-term solution, ie moving from proactive to reactive measure. See Appendix 2 for an explanation of vision-based and issue-based strategy.

There are other considerations to the sustainability of programmes. One of these is personnel. It is often said that the true sports development professional works to make him/herself redundant. This means they understand that any initiative in which they are engaged can only truly be sustainable if it works without them.

In the same way, ask yourself what impact would the following have on either part of, or the whole strategy:

• If key personnel were suddenly unavailable?
• If funding to your sport was reduced by 10, 30 or even 50% what impact would it have on your ability to deliver?
• If a volunteer head coach got promoted at work and had to move away from the area, could the void be filled and, if so, how quickly?
• Does your sport know and understand its commercial value and, if so, has it been fully exploited?
• What partnerships have you developed/could you develop with other sports, which would be of mutual benefit?
• What partnerships have you developed/could you develop with non-sporting bodies, which would be of mutual benefit?

For more information on sustainability, see Appendix 1.

Exercise: Sustainability

Write down potential sustainability issues facing your organisation. How could you deal with these issues? What possible options are available to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability issues</th>
<th>Potential options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eg Reduction of funding</td>
<td>Source further funding opportunities - explore commercial values of activities via sponsorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where to start

The process overview – intelligence gathering
Generating high-quality intelligence is key to a successful and effective strategy.

Many a strategy is ruined before it has begun by the rush to write it without first giving consideration to what should be (and is therefore assumed to be) in place first.

Starting at the beginning, irrespective of what kind of organisation you are, you should know and understand why you exist.

The following terms will be introduced in more detail within this section:

• Mission statement – created internally by a small group who are well informed as to the purpose of the organisation’s existence.

• The values of your organisation – with a specialist area like coaching it is wise to consult more widely to ensure the values you stand for are values shared by the coaching community.

• The vision will become the driver behind the strategy. It is important that the people who will share, own and deliver the strategy must feel it belongs to them, especially if they are volunteers. Consultation done properly will help do this.

Understanding consultation

The dictionary defines ‘to consult’ as to:

• seek advice or information from

• have regard for, to consider

• exchange views, to confer with.

Undertaking consultation is easy; doing it to the required depth, with the right audience and in the right way to solicit maximum benefit is what frequently catches the consultant out and alienates the consultee.

In the world of strategy, getting consultation wrong has been cited as one of the biggest reasons for strategies failing.

Not consulting properly can make the difference between your strategy being viewed as one of imposition or one of shared ownership. It can be the difference between compliance and commitment.

The mission statement

Establishing the mission statement will be your first step, and one done internally by a small, well-informed group who understand the purpose of the organisation’s existence. They will establish a statement that defines your reason for being – your mission.

Although many organisations like to publicise their mission statements, this is not necessary; the mission is usually, but not exclusively, for internal consumption.

The mission statement can be long or short; the key is to be descriptive and true to your reason for existing.

A good example of a mission statement that doesn’t waste words is Wal-Mart’s:

‘Our company’s purpose is saving people money so they can live better.’

Another good example is Nike’s:

‘Experience the emotion of competition, winning and crushing competitors.’

Both are simple, to the point and state conclusively why they are in business.

Top Tips

Top tips for creating your mission statement.

Ensure it:

• defines why the organisation exists

• leaves room for the organisation to grow and develop without the mission changing

• is not time phased (eg by the end of the decade we will be...).
**Exercise: Mission statement**

The following exercise will help you think about how to write an accurate mission statement. Think about:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you do:</th>
<th>eg Train coaches to support disabled people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why you do it:</td>
<td>eg To increase participation rates of disabled people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where you operate:</td>
<td>eg Surrey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What your purpose is:</td>
<td>eg Ensure all coaches have the confidence and knowledge to coach disabled people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write down your completed mission statement here:

eg Supporting the creation of positive experiences for disabled people in Surrey through developing highly skilled coaches
Your values statement

Having established your mission, the next thing to consider are the values of your organisation. While this is often done by a similar small group as that which established the mission, in a specialist area like coaching it is wise to consult more widely. This is because the values will need to be shared by the coaching community; a strategy must represent the values of coaches or they will not see it as representative.

With established organisations, the values may already be set and need only be the subject of regular review. With newer organisations, those values will need to be established. In both instances the logical thing to do is to consult (see pages 7 and 18).

Whereas the mission statement is a ‘need to have’, establishing your organisation’s values is more of a ‘nice to have’.

It is wise to establish what your organisational values are prior to embarking on the development of strategy, as these values can provide an important thread through the strategy document and can even flag up areas that will need addressing.

An organisation needs to identify what its individual values are, rather than using common or generic values. For example, a common value is ‘customer focus’, but, if this does not apply to you, getting the people within your organisation and those working with your organisation to back it will prove problematic. This relates to compliance versus commitment, as outlined on page 4.

It is worth bearing in mind that a short list of well-defined values that you will be able to guarantee, will always be preferable to a long list of vague values to which you are not committed.

To identify your values, consider the following areas:

- Equality
- Value
- Confidentiality
- Personnel (paid and unpaid)
- Community
- Welfare
- Quality.

This list is not exhaustive; the key is to identify which values are relevant to you and your organisation.

Exercise: Values statement

Write down here what values you feel coaches share. How would you express this as a values statement?

eg Knowledge; patience; pride; strong communication; listening; hearing; positive role models.

Our coaches are a solid workforce of knowledgeable, experienced individuals who can work as a team to become positive role models for our participants through strong communication and pride for their sport.
The vision

The vision is your goal for your organisation; not a wishy-washy goal but a goal based on sound research that will provide an inspirational signpost to great things to come. Vitally, and often overlooked, the vision should also provide the focus and the drive behind your strategy: it takes your goals and makes them tangible while, importantly, also giving them a deadline.

The value of your vision cannot be understated. A good one will define and drive your strategy. A poor one into which you, your staff and your partners do not ‘buy’ will quickly put pressure on even the best strategy, frequently having the effect of undermining delivery.

The vision should be specific and look into the future, whereas the mission is what you are about; your reason for being.

Example

Let’s transfer this vision to that of a talented athlete whose dream is to, one day, compete in a Paralympic Games. Without defining which Paralympic Games (the deadline) there will always be tomorrow, thus removing any urgency or need to create impetus. One day the athlete will wake up and time and age has caught up with her and the Paralympic Games becomes a dream unfulfilled.

Another athlete might have targeted a specific Olympic Games with the aim of becoming number one or number two in the world. It sounds great but when seeking a driver for high performance, it is too unspecific. Athletes improve every generation. Think four-minute mile and you get the picture; once it would make the athlete number one, now this would not be the case at all.

The athlete needs to work out a target performance that is likely to produce a gold medal performance and work to that. Saying ‘being number one or number two’ without a time frame is vague. Saying ‘I will run the mile in under 3.45 minutes by 2016’ is both specific and measurable, not to mention far more motivational and easy for the athlete and the team around the athlete to picture and plan (i.e., the strategy).

Running that time will not guarantee the gold, but the athlete cannot control what his competitors are doing and therefore should ensure the focus of his plans is firmly on what he can control. In the same way, we can’t control our competitors or outside influences on our organisation. All we can do is plan for the needs and wants to get us where we aspire to be.

This does make it far harder to get the vision right than simply having a good sounding vision that no one will question and which lacks the specificity to be achievable, but it is imperative that you get it right.

Consultation will also be a valuable tool in establishing your vision. The vision will become the driver behind the strategy. It will be the motivator; so the people who will share, own, and deliver the strategy must feel it belongs to them, especially if they are volunteers.

What does a great vision look like?

‘This nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth.’

President John F Kennedy addressing Congress on 25 May 1961. A nation was inspired and, come 1970, it had been achieved.

Exercise: Vision statement

The following exercise will help you think about how to write an accurate vision statement.

Does your organisation have a vision? If so, what is it?

Does it define what success looks like in a way it can be recognised when achieved? If it could be, how might it be improved?
This section will guide you around the all-important information-gathering process, including being aware of your internal and external challenges through the use of SWOT and PEST analyses, as well as recognising what further challenges and requirements you may face as a sports organisation through using appropriate consultation and intelligence-gathering methodology.

Scoping your strategy - intelligence gathering

To help you gather intelligence prior to developing your strategy, there are a number of tools available, which have passed the test of time. SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and PEST (political, economic, social, technological) analyses can be invaluable if applied correctly, but beware, they can also be a waste of time and resources if applied incorrectly.

Understanding who your partners are or might be is also important at this stage, although a good strategy will leave the door open for appropriate partnerships to be established at any time.

Among the methods you use to gather intelligence, it is worth considering tried and trusted methods that will assist you in analysing the ‘landscape’ in which you operate.

Analysing your organisation - the SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis of your organisation is the assessment of strengths and weaknesses internally and opportunities and threats externally.

Carried out properly, a SWOT analysis should provide you with a clear picture of your strengths and weaknesses together with opportunities for, and threats to, your organisation.

Further reading

There are some great, simple guides on how to develop your SWOT analysis on the Internet. Just type ‘SWOT analysis guide’ into your search engine.
It is important to remember when conducting a SWOT analysis that honesty is vital; the analysis will only be of use if it reflects reality and not what might be instead of what is. It must, therefore, be conducted in a recrimination free environment, regardless of how uncomfortable truths are.

A further issue with the conducting of a SWOT analysis is knowing how to apply it to the development of your strategy. When we start describing a process for putting your strategy together, we shall cover using your SWOT analysis as part of the intelligence which informs your strategy.

At this stage, it is more important to understand what a SWOT analysis looks like and how to conduct one.

If possible, the SWOT analysis process should be led by someone with a wholly neutral perspective who has nothing to gain or lose by what it discovers.

The SWOT analysis should also be open to as many of your staff (paid and unpaid) as possible, although not all together (to ensure a more open environment), so as to get a fully rounded perspective.

It can be beneficial to use questions to solicit responses, otherwise the categories may be too non-specific.

Some generic, corporate examples of questions are:

**Strengths:**
1) What are our assets?
2) Which asset is strongest?
3) What differentiates us from other sports and/or leisure activities?
4) Do we have the right people for the job in our staff (paid and unpaid)?
5) Do we maximise our commercial value?
6) Do we have a broad membership base?
7) What unique resources do we have?
8) Do we have a sustainable competitive advantage?
9) Do we have specific sales or marketing advantages over other sports and/or leisure activities?

**Weaknesses:**
1) What areas do we need to improve on?
2) What necessary expertise/workforce do we currently lack?
3) In what areas do other sports and/or leisure activities have an edge?
4) Are we relying on one customer too much (note: funding from one source should be viewed as one customer)?
5) Do we have adequate cash flow to sustain us?
6) Do we have adequate income levels?
7) Do we have a well of new ideas?
8) Are we over-leveraged (too much debt)?
9) Are our membership levels growing?
10) Do we have sufficient, appropriately located clubs/coaches/competitions for our members?
11) Are our links with educational establishments as strong as they could be?
Opportunities:

1) What external changes present interesting opportunities?
2) What trends might impact our sector?
3) Is there talent located elsewhere that we might be able to acquire?
4) Is a competitor failing to adequately service the market?
5) Is there an unmet need/want that we can fulfill?
6) Are there trends emerging that we can profitably service?
7) If we package our product differently, can we extract a higher premium for it?
8) Can we take advantage of our sport’s significant events to promote and increase interest in our sport?

Threats:

1) Is there a better equipped (funding, talent, mobility, etc) competitor in our market?
2) Is there an entity which may not be a competitor today, but could possibly become one tomorrow?
3) Are our key staff satisfied in their work? Could they be poached by a competitor (or, in the case of volunteers, walk away)?
4) Is our intellectual property properly secured (trademarks, copyrights, firewalls, data security plans, etc) against theft and loss (both from internal and external sources)?
5) Do we have to rely on third parties for critical steps in our development process that could possibly derail our delivery schedule?
6) What might be the impact on funding/interest/other revenue if we underperform at the Olympic and Paralympic Games (or World Championships/cup)?
7) What if there is a natural disaster?
8) What if our suppliers (eg sponsors) go bankrupt?
9) What if our website is hacked?
10) What if we are sued?
11) Do we have a business continuity plan in place in case of emergency?
Exercise: SWOT analysis

Using the preceding questions as your guide (some may be relevant to you, some might not), think about your own environment and the ongoing development of your sport. What strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats exist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities:</th>
<th>Threats:</th>
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Analysing your environment - 
the PEST analysis

The PEST analysis is not as widely known as the SWOT analysis. It is, however, an extremely valuable tool which, when applied in tandem with a SWOT analysis, can provide a more in-depth understanding of the environment your organisation is operating within and what it might face in the future.

PEST splits the environment into four sections to enable more focused analysis: political, economic, social, technological.

The PEST analysis enables you to consider the implications of changes to the environment in which you operate (whether current or future) so can assist in planning to address them in place of becoming a victim of them.

These are some examples of PEST factors that may affect your organisation, although you should ensure you conduct your own comprehensive analysis:

Political:
- A change in government
- A change in government policy towards sports
- Local authority priorities, such as funding or building on green spaces.

Economic:
- Different spending priorities of consumers (ie players)
- Less disposable income during a recession
- A change in stakeholder funding priorities and grant distribution (eg Sport England).

Social:
- Demographic shifts in the population, more women potentially playing sport
- Growing number of elderly and their impact on the current profile of players/officials
- Younger players changing their leisure habits such as increasing time on game consoles.

Technological:
- Growth of the Internet and gaming consoles as a competitor for leisure time
- Growth of the Internet and gaming consoles as an aid to promotion and development.

Further reading

There are some great, simple guides on how to develop your PEST analysis on the Internet. Just type 'PEST analysis guide' into your search engine.
Exercise: PEST analysis
What are some of the environmental issues that might affect your sport locally and nationally in the coming months and years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political:</th>
<th>Economic:</th>
<th>Social:</th>
<th>Technological:</th>
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Consultation revisited

It is worth revisiting consultation to understand at what stage to use it. When consulting on the future direction of a membership-based organisation, broad consultation is sensible. The information gathered will be used to decide the vision for that organisation and that vision, as discussed, needs to drive commitment rather than compliance. It needs to ‘belong’ to the membership, to those it represents.

The mission, on the other hand, can probably be decided by the Board or other dedicated group of informed individuals.

It is important to know your participants in order to develop your coaching system and move your strategy forward. This is covered in more detail later in the resource on page 21.

In between those extremes, the SWOT analysis will be best served by utilising well-informed representatives from different sections and levels within the organisation, rather than including everyone, which would potentially swamp the process. It may even be useful to consult with other sports or even other leisure providers to gather their views on your organisation.

In approaching the questioning it is best to start with the basics – ‘what, when, why, where, who and how’ – they can be employed to maximum benefit when consulting:

• What are we consulting on?
• What is the purpose of our consultation?
• When do we need responses by?
• When is the best time for our consultees?
• Why are we consulting?
• Where should we consult to keep it inclusive and accessible?
• Who should be consulted?
• Who can help with the consultation process?
• How should we consult to maximise its usefulness?

Remember, you will not get the best results at your convenience; rather, you will get the best results when it is convenient for your consultees.

A lot of organisations favour online consultations to the exclusion of other forms. While quick, easy and convenient, a significant minority of the population are not online. The broader the consultation, the wiser it is to mix different consultation forms and formats to ensure the best possible response.

The following exercise serves to identify with whom you are consulting to ensure the effective development of your strategy, and recognise how you go about your consultation process.
Exercise: Consultation
Consider who you might consult with and how to achieve the most useful, relevant and high-quality information to inform your strategy’s development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consulting to:</th>
<th>Who and how:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• establish our mission</td>
<td>eg Been put on the agenda for the next Board meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• establish our values</td>
<td>eg An internal group of five people: a member of senior management; head of coaching; regional coaching lead; coach; and participant. To be fed back to as many coaches as possible through the regional coaching leads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• establish our vision</td>
<td>eg Led by an external consultant, this group will also contain a Board member, senior management team member and the head of coaching. We should also feed this through the rest of the staff members, coaches and club members, where possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inform our SWOT analysis</td>
<td>eg Internal staff survey (email). Speak to four clubs in two separate regions. Face-to-face consultations. Involve club members who have outspoken/negative views of the club (use independent consultant for this?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inform our PEST analysis.</td>
<td>eg Board member(s), coaching lead(s), heads of departments. Use an external consultant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the coming pages we will discuss components of your strategy including outcomes, actions, measurement and tactics. While reading these sections, continue to ask yourself: ‘whose input will I need to ensure that my strategy is fully and properly informed, and will be functional?’
Developing Your Coaching Strategy

Identifying the challenges that may inhibit the chances of success

Your vision and mission have identified who you are and where you want to be, but what challenges lie in the way of these goals?

Just as clearly defining what success looks like will assist your ability to properly plan for its achievement, failing to identify any issues, risks or challenges you might face along the way could turn developing specific plans into a futile exercise.

There are many such challenges in the world of sport; here are a few examples:

- Knowledge and training
- Idealism versus realism
- Matching agendas (eg health, education)
- Managing your workforce (both paid and unpaid) appropriately and effectively
- Funding
- Political.

There will be others specific to your sport, coaching, local circumstance and more.

Many of these will have been identified via your SWOT and PEST analyses; however, it is always wise to check and recheck at each stage of the strategy’s development and make a note of any new challenges or risks once identified.

Exercise: Challenges

List some challenges you are aware of that might impact on your strategy’s successful delivery if ignored and not planned for. Explain why they present challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge:</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eg Increased interest in our sport following Olympic and Paralympic Games.</td>
<td>Not planned to increase the number of coaches to meet the needs of increased numbers of participants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifying the requirements of a successful sports strategy

These requirements are elements that, if overlooked, could create gaps in your plans:

- **Know where you are starting from**
  Your strategy is the journey you are planning to reach your destination (vision). It is as important to know where you are starting from as it is to know where you are going. Make sure you have carried out a stocktake of your current position. This will include elements such as equipment, finances, personnel, facilities, etc. Vitally, do not overlook the wants and needs of your participants.

- **Know your core business**
  Is your mission statement in place and accurate?

- **Know your participants**
  This is key to identifying and developing your entire workforce and fundamental to developing a robust strategy.

- **Know where you ultimately want to be**
  Your vision is your destination, where your organisation wants to be.

- **Know the key partners and deliverers**
  Inclusive consultation will have created shared ownership both internally and externally, but it should also identify the key partners who share your ambitions and can help you deliver them.

- **Getting from here to where you are going (on time)**
  Don’t forget to put deadlines in your document.

- **How do you/can you pay for it?**
  Ensure sound financial planning and management are in place.

- **Fit with sound coaching development models:**

  **Coach Development Model (CDM)**
  A coaching model provides the future direction and strategic framework for coaching policy and practice. It consists of a diagram (see below) and accompanying principles that outline the key components of your future coaching system, how these are developed sequentially, and their interrelationships.

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**Figure 3: The Coach Development Model**

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**Further reading**

For further information on the CDM, see the CDM User Guide, which can be found at www.sportscoachuk.org within the System, Strategy and Policy section of the Resource Bank.
Coaching System diagram

The Coaching System diagram (below) recognises the importance of understanding your participants, coaches and coaching workforce to be able to recruit, develop and retain quality coaches. This is all underpinned by effective management, monitoring and evaluation, and research. Your coaching strategy should take account of all these components to ensure a quality coaching system for your organisation.

Figure 4: The Coaching System
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There are simple models for sports development which will assist with ensuring your strategy takes your people and your sport along a defined developmental pathway, for example, The Sports Development Continuum. This model identifies the stages at which your participants can be found.

You also need to identify the various elements which will need to be integrated into the strategy to ensure that the whole is not undermined by overlooking a key component or by assuming its provision elsewhere.

If you think of these components as bricks which will help you to successfully build a wall which might look something like this (examples only):

![Figure 6: Brick wall of requirements](image-url)

![Figure 5: The Sports Development Continuum](image-url)
Exercise: Requirements

The following questions will identify the content of your strategy. Fill in the information below to help focus your thoughts into these specific areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you know and understand the needs of your participants?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the sports coach UK Participant Development Model*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know and understand the needs of your coaches?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the sports coach UK Coach Development Model (page 21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know and understand the needs of your coaching workforce?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the sports coach UK Coaching Workforce Auditing User Guide*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you recruiting your coaches?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you deploy and regulate your coaching workforce?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What training, qualifications and continuing professional development (CPD) do your coaches and coaching workforce need?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are your coaches being managed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What processes do you have in place to retain your coaching workforce?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is your management structured to ensure an effective coaching system?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you carrying out useful and effective monitoring and evaluation that is being acted upon?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What further research do you need to carry out to be able to develop your coaching system further?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This can be found within the System, Strategy and Policy section of the Resource Bank, located at www.sportscoachuk.org
Let’s get writing your strategy! Now you have identified who your organisation is, where you want to go, how you want to get there and completed your all-important research and scoping exercises, you are in a great position to develop a really robust strategy.

This section starts by looking at over what period you should base your strategy – an important factor to help you identify what goals you want to achieve and when. You will then go on to identify your milestones that will inform your overall objectives for your coaching system, and how to measure them to ensure you are achieving what you set out to achieve. To get down to detail, the objectives will inform the actions you need to identify to start turning your overall vision into reality.

Thinking short, medium and long term

Your vision is your long-term plan. A common-sense approach would suggest a 12-year vision. Why? Because that allows us to tie planning to common cycles, whether they be the Olympic and Paralympic Games common to many sports, or the world championships/cup cycle common to others.

Although this is not set in stone and you will establish your own ideal, it is convenient for medium-term planning to tie it to a single cycle of four years as it attaches strategy to a time frame everyone in sport is familiar with and will understand.

Continuing with this principle, the short term would then be one year to accommodate tactical planning, which we cover on page 33.

This is one model and, while a logical model for sport, you should remain aware that your strategy is personal to your organisation and if an alternative time frame fits better, that should be the one you adopt.

Having established your long-term vision, you will be able to break it into the steps required in order to turn vision into reality and to identify the order in which they will need to happen.

To have a 12-year strategy would be difficult, not least because planning so far in advance would not be possible given the uncertainty such a time period
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Exercise: Milestones
On page 11 you identified your vision. List below some of the milestones you will have to reach to make that vision a reality:

- **eg (Based on JFK’s vision from page 10)**
  - Employ best astronauts for the job.
  - Confirm suitable locations for take-off and landing.
## Setting objectives

So far you have identified your vision and the milestones important to achieving it. You have also conducted both SWOT and PEST analyses.

We are now in a position to establish the objectives for our four-year strategy. But where do the objectives come from?

Some objectives will be the obvious steps towards the vision, but we should not overlook intelligence we gained from our SWOT and PEST analyses. This will help us to establish objectives that address the environment in which we work and make us better equipped to face the future.

It is wise to ask ourselves what steps:

- must we make during the four-year cycle to remain on course to achieve our vision
- do we need to take to strengthen the internal efficiency, effectiveness and economy of our organisation
- do we need to take to ensure external factors do not undermine our pursuit of success and to maximise the benefits of identified opportunities?

The first question is the one most will, naturally, want to get straight to; however, the second and third questions are vital components. The data gathered via your SWOT and PEST analyses is the data which you will apply to answering the second two questions.

Overall, your objectives should:

- reinforce the strengths
- address the weaknesses
- grasp the appropriate opportunities (that is unlikely to be all of them; remember your mission)
- prepare to overcome the threats
- understand, predict and prepare for political change (or stability)
- ensure sound, informed financial planning
- be aware of the social context(s) within which you operate and the ways in which it is changing
- embrace and maximise the benefits of technological developments.

Don’t forget to add in the challenges to your success identified on page 20 and the requirements for a successful strategy (page 24).
## Exercise: Four-year objectives

Using the prompts in the table below, identify your objectives for the next four years.

### Vision:

>This nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth.

### Milestones relevant to this four-year planning cycle:

*eg Employ best astronauts for the job.*

*Confirm suitable locations for take-off and landing.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. What steps do we need to take to strengthen the internal efficiency, effectiveness and economy of our organisation?</strong></td>
<td><em>eg Having the right people for the job of astronaut. Seek sufficient funding to complete the mission.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. What external factors/challenges exist that may undermine the success of our identified objectives?</strong></td>
<td><em>eg Need to get to the moon safely before anyone else, locate appropriate materials/parts to build rocket and recruit willing astronauts to fly to the moon.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. What steps do we need to take to ensure these external factors/challenges do not undermine the success of these objectives?</strong></td>
<td><em>eg Need to build the rocket and plan the mission ASAP; source parts required; ensure the flight is safe yet exciting to draw in potential astronauts.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The importance of measuring your progress

It is not enough to solely plan for success; you must also have methods in place to measure whether you are on target to achieve that success. As well as ensuring your strategy is progressing, it will also allow you to catch things if/when they start to fall behind and to take steps to either adjust actions accordingly or to allow more time.

Types of measurements

There are two types of measurement: hard and soft. Hard measurements will give you factual data and tend to be quantitative (i.e., they measure quantity), whereas soft measurements will give you a more general feel for how things are going; they are qualitative (i.e., they measure the quality of something).

Hard measurements will be used for things that can be counted (e.g., the number of coaches attending Level 1 courses over a set period of time). Soft measurements will be used for tracking those things a little less tangible; for example, if you set out to increase enjoyment levels in the club, a satisfaction survey may provide an insight.

Note: It is not advisable to rely on just one of these measurements. A combination of the two can be far more informative.

The vast majority of people take part in sport because they enjoy it and, although all organizations want to see increases in participation and performance, it is important to recognize the quality of the coaching and the participant’s experience.

Exercise: Measuring your objectives

Having set some objectives in the previous section, how will you go about measuring the achievement of those objectives? Be sure to consider both hard and soft measurements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective:</th>
<th>Measurements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eg Confirm appropriate project</td>
<td>Project plan developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find the right people for the job</td>
<td>Five astronauts recruited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It will add up to nothing without action!

Now you have decided on your objectives and how you will measure progress towards achieving those objectives, it is time to consider what actions will be required to achieve them.

At this stage, these actions need only be defined in broad terms, although they will form a platform on which the important detail of your strategy – the ‘how’ – will be carried out.

For example, assume an objective is to increase the participation figures of under 16s by 5% per year.

This might suggest actions of:

- improving links with, and delivery in, schools
- improving your profile with young people in local communities
- developing an online, social media presence for your organisation
- training sufficient coaches to cover the increased demand from this demographic.

None of these actions go into any great detail; all they do is identify the steps (actions) which will be needed to achieve the objective.

In the same way that the objective is clearly measurable, so we should ensure our actions are measurable. For example, where we have said ‘train sufficient coaches to cover the increased demand from this demographic’, we might suggest running more ‘coaching children’ workshops per year in relevant locations to ensure accessibility.
**Exercise: Determining your actions**

Consider your objectives and measurements from the previous two exercises. Select three of these and describe what actions the strategy will include to ensure success:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives:</th>
<th>Measurement(s):</th>
<th>Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eg Space rocket will be manned</td>
<td>Five astronauts recruited</td>
<td>• Identify candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hold interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirm successful candidates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember, when developing your objectives, measurements and actions, be prompted by:

Tactical nous – putting the strategy into play

Although we have now attached actions to our strategy, as we highlighted earlier, a strategy without the ‘how’ is actually not a strategy at all.

So far we have defined:

- At the top we had our long-term strategy – our vision.
- Below that we identified the medium term, four-year strategy cycles containing the objectives.
- And finally, below that, the short-term actions.

In order to achieve our actions we need to break them down into smaller, more specific and clearly defined tasks. This area of strategy is known as tactics. In the same way that we have used four-year strategy cycles because it would be unwise to design a 12-year strategy, it would also be unwise to design the detail four years in advance. We need a shorter cycle for the real detail. This is where we do our short-term or tactical planning.

This is not a new concept; it is used in workplaces around the world under the name ‘work programme’. It is important to recognise that such programming is part of a strategy, not a separate entity as is often mistakenly assumed. By considering it part of a strategy, we ensure that we cover all the strategic objectives and actions.

An example:

This concept will be recognised by coaches who use (or have used) periodised training.

- The 12-year vision is the equivalent of a macrocycle.
- The four-year strategy cycles are the equivalent of periods and phases.
- The one-year tactical plan is the equivalent of a microcycle.

Splitting the tactical plan into shorter work programmes creates the equivalent of sessions and units, typically six and three months respectively.

Exercise: Recognising Your Tactics

From the exercises you completed before, select one of the actions you identified to help achieve your measurable objective. Now consider the first year of specific tasks (tactics) that will be required to help ensure your action achieves its measurable outcome. (You can use this template to go on and develop tactics for all your identified actions.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action:</th>
<th>Tactic:</th>
<th>Measured by?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eg Employ appropriate astronauts</td>
<td>eg write job description</td>
<td>JD completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>locate suitable press for job description</td>
<td>JD received confirmation of press release and deadline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise (continued)

Getting down to the absolute detail of your strategy, think about breaking down your tactics or actions into how they will be achieved. This can be done by introducing who, what, when, why, and how.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>eg Write job description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of needs for successful applicants</td>
<td>To ensure person is suitable and has appropriate skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who develops the strategy?

Although they may consult widely, the design of the higher level strategy and strategic direction (ie the mission, values, vision, length of strategy cycles and objectives) will be led, but not solely conducted, at Director level.

Taking the objectives and turning them into actions will be a strategic management issue. Management will also lead on the creation of tactical plans for their (strategic) deliverers to follow.

At all stages there should be communication horizontally (ie between departments in your organisation) and vertically (ie between directors, management and delivery) to ensure that no element of the strategy is overlooked as it is broken into the bite-size, deliverable chunks of tactical plans.

Rather than divorcing or ignoring important elements, by applying this model, all elements of the strategy are recognised. At the same time the model provides a management structure which is easy for all to follow.

The structure works for both the development of strategy and for its delivery.
A solid strategy needs to be monitored and evaluated to ensure you are heading in the right direction and heading towards your vision. The monitoring and evaluation process should then lead to regular periods of review and hence amendments to your actions and objectives. Governments change and funders’ requirements change – this is a fact of sport. A robust strategy will enable you to amend various aspects and still lead your organisation in the direction which is right for your sport (for further information on future proofing your strategy, see Appendix 1). This section will help you identify all the above processes and allow for further thought when taking your coaching strategy further.

Integration of your strategy
In order to maximise the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of your strategy, it is wise to consider how well integrated it is. This integration happens in a number of ways on a number of different levels.

Most high-quality management structures are both horizontally and vertically integrated.

Within any single level of the organisation, communications and actions are integrated to avoid duplication and to ensure everyone understands each other’s function. This is called ‘horizontal integration’.

Those same organisations will also ensure that between different levels communications and actions are also integrated (‘vertical integration’).
This ensures that the company’s objectives and vision are being driven by all parts of the organisation and no department is falling behind or being pulled in a wrong direction. It also means lower levels do not feel they are lacking direction, management and/or leadership.

Unfortunately, many organisations who understand the need for a vertically integrated management structure overlook the advantages of vertically integrated strategy. The Board or senior management team will meet regularly with a membership, which represents a vertically integrated structure, but, all too frequently, will then develop isolated strategies.

It is rare, especially in sport, that any strategy stands alone (i.e., does not rely on and impact upon others). Consider a strategy for the development of coaching. In isolation, more better qualified coaches, with increased knowledge through easier access to quality CPD opportunities, might look like success. But who are they going to coach? Where are they going to coach? What competition is available to those they do coach? and so on.

We could have separate plans for each of these requirements, but what if the strategy for increasing membership is focusing on under-11s with a view to the future, while the coaches are focusing on elite performance?

What if architects are consulting on facilities with a view to competition but don’t consult with coaches as to the needs of preparing for competition?

Now, consider this horizontal integration of strategy (a strategy that doesn’t consider or link with other related strategies) across even the small range of components listed in our ‘brick wall of requirements’ on page 23. You will see that the sensible way to service all the requirements of proper sports development and its many component parts is by vertically integrating the strategy.

Unfortunately, for many, it will be unlikely that strategy is vertically integrated and so it will be necessary to ensure that the single issue strategy they are developing and delivering is as vertically integrated as possible by cross referencing other strategies.

This will likely be required both for internal and external strategy. For example, a county coaching strategy will need to integrate with other sports development strategies within the county; with single governing bodies of sport strategies for coaching development; governing bodies of sport strategies for developing other parts of the sport; and consider strategies which exist in schools and clubs, not to mention Sport England and other bodies.
Exercise: Integration

Referring to your current organisational structure, the Coaching System diagram on page 22 and the requirements of your strategy outlined on page 24, can your existing organisational structure support the requirements of your strategy at the following levels:

- strategic direction
- strategic management
- strategic delivery
- strategic support?

Is responsibility clearly defined in your strategic direction?
Developing Your Coaching Strategy

Your organisational structure
This is not the management structure but the actual structure of your organisation. In corporate terms it is the different departments, the regional offices and even the job titles.

It is important because structure should always be the servant of strategy, although seldom is. As function defines form, so strategy (should) defines structure. Shoehorning strategy to existing structure may be convenient but will not be as effective, efficient or economical.

The structure of your organisation should be designed to take it where it is going – its vision. The route map for that journey is strategy and that strategy will be far more successful if the structure is designed to aid and enhance delivery.

Monitoring and evaluation
Monitoring and evaluating is pointless if the results gathered are not used to some end in the review process. The review is pointless if it does not inform future plans and actions whether at tactical level or higher:

Consider:
• what are we monitoring and evaluating
• when is the appropriate time (or times) to measure – when should we review for highest quality feedback and usefulness in feeding forward
• why are we measuring/reviewing
• where should we measure

• who should be measuring/monitoring/evaluating – who is being measured/monitored/evaluated
• how should we measure to maximise data gained – how will we evaluate that data?

Employ them in monitoring and evaluating the progress of the strategy, the tactics and those involved in direction, management, delivery and support.

Review process
It is important to build into your strategy regular reviews, as there is little point in having the measures described so far if they are not then acted upon.

Tactical delivery can be reviewed every three months before planning the next three months, allowing for lessons learnt to be included, targets missed to be appraised and (importantly) workloads to be kept at reasonable levels.

By doing this, we take feedback and feed it forward while it is still fresh enough to be of value and while shortfalls are recent enough to be quickly recoverable. Doing this on an annual basis (as is traditional) removes some of this immediacy.

The same process can be conducted annually to examine objectives and actions against their measures. At four-year intervals it will prove part of the process which informs the next four-year strategy cycle. Provided this is done at the tactical (delivery) level regularly, the ‘feed back–feed forward’ process will ensure delivery stays focused and on schedule.

The review is pointless if it does not inform future plans and actions whether at tactical level or higher.

Figure 8: The review process

Deliver
Measure
Review
Plan
New/Amended Plan
It is a communication document!
When finalising your strategy and preparing it for publication, don’t forget that it is a communication document.

Why is this important?
Like all communications, the easier it is to understand, the more successful it is likely to be. Conversely, if people don’t understand it, how will they deliver it?

Think of communication not only as an act of relaying or sharing information but also, importantly, one of being understood.

Your strategy should contain:
• an Executive Summary which will provide an overview for the reader
• some background to provide the reader with context
• an explanation of the process, including details of any consultation
• the strategy itself, including your vision, mission, values, objectives, milestones and tactics
• a glossary of terms if you have used acronyms or other specific terms
• contact details for your organisation
• graphics and pictures, which are as valuable as words; don’t forget to break the document up with relevant pictures.

Even restricting your strategy document to terms we have used such as ‘objective’ and ‘tactic’ might confuse. How about explaining your strategy in terms of:
• what we are going to do
• why we are doing it
• where it will be done
• when we will do it by
• who will be doing it
• how we/they will be doing it.

Exercise: Organisational structure
Refer to your current organisational structure and compare it to the requirements of your strategy. Will your current structure fully facilitate the effective, efficient and economical delivery of your strategy? If not, where does it need to be changed?
## Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>A means of gathering information and seeking commitment ideally in an inclusive and accessible way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five degrees of partnership</td>
<td>Co-existence, Cooperation, Coordination, Collaboration, Co-ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See Appendix 3 for further information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal integration</td>
<td>Integrating on one level or one topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insanity planning</td>
<td>Doing the same thing today and tomorrow that you did yesterday and expecting different results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Data and other information which will inform your strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue-based strategy</td>
<td>Identify the issue(s) and plan forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key words</td>
<td>What, where, why, when, who and how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term</td>
<td>To the vision — usually 10–12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>One strategy cycle — usually 3–4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrics</td>
<td>Measurement of progress/success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milestones</td>
<td>Pre-defined markers on your route which show you are on course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement</td>
<td>Why you exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Key aims within a strategy cycle which maintain progress towards vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Working together to mutual benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEST analysis</td>
<td>Analysis of your operating environment – political, economic, social and technological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Measure of quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Measure of quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review process</td>
<td>Feed back, feed forward, plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>One tactical cycle – typically one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single subject strategy</td>
<td>Lacking cross referencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports development continuum</td>
<td>Foundation — Participation — Performance — Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>Of or pertaining to strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>A plan or design for achieving one’s aims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>Capable of being continued</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Developing Your Coaching Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWOT analysis</td>
<td>Analysis of your organisation – assessment of strengths and weaknesses internally and opportunities and threats externally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactics</td>
<td>Any procedure or set of manoeuvres engaged in to achieve some end or aim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To consult</td>
<td>To seek advice or information from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To have regard for; to consider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To exchange views, to confer with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values statement</td>
<td>What you stand for/believe in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical integration</td>
<td>Integration across levels or topics – multiple subject strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Where you are going/what success looks like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision-based strategy</td>
<td>Define the future and work back to plan</td>
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Developing Your Coaching Strategy

One of the principle concerns in sport is that governments change and funders release new objectives or targets continually.

Developing a strategy for sport can be fraught with concerns regarding these or other unexpected issues arising, which will require either readjustment or, occasionally, a complete change in direction.

Issues should have been considered as part of your SWOT and PEST analyses and integrated into your planning. Although it is an oversight if they have not, the fact is, such changes are often unpredictable and difficult to plan for.

The issue is primarily one of who you are planning for and which partners support the achievement of your aims. In sport, you will be planning to improve the experience for those already involved through, for example, competition, clubs and coaching, as well as developing and delivering ways to increase the number of participants and of those achieving excellence. This will be done by ensuring a strong structure for your sport along The Sports Development Continuum (see page 23).

If you focus on how you are going to grow and sustain your sport and where you want to be, you should be in a stronger position to achieve your funders’ aims. You should avoid the trap of planning for the funding rather than the sport.

If a funder changes priorities and their new aims are still relevant, then adjustment may only be required via shorter term action planning within the larger strategy (which will be subject to regular review anyway).

If the new aims do not still fit with the strategy, it may be that the natural life of the partnership has reached its conclusion. However, give further consideration to the importance of the income to the overall well-being of the sport. If the funding is vital to the well-being but not to the strategy, then it may be that a separate issue-based strategy is required to address the funding/income issue (see Appendix 2).

It should be added that the lifespan of all funding is known from the outset, so a good strategy will address the possibility of its end. If long-term sustainability is an issue, your strategy planning should consider and take into account how to fill any financial (or other) gap. It is also worth bearing in mind that planning for the workforce should be based on the sport’s needs. If funding priorities change, however, your workforce may also need to change.

The following table offers tips on how to avoid some common mistakes in planning, which could create difficulty in addressing change part-way through one of your planning cycles.

Appendix 1 – Top Tips for Future Proofing Your Strategy
Don’t assume stability

When planning, don’t assume that nothing will change during the life of your strategy. Build in some flexibility to allow for change whether it be political, financial or otherwise.

Commit 90% not 100%

Leave capacity to react to the unexpected; don’t commit 100% of your resources.

Don’t be blinded by research

Most (if not all) data gathered via your research and consultation will be based on historical information and/or knowledge. While this is very useful, don’t forget to apply some common sense and intuition as you utilise this data in planning for the future.

Don’t be too ‘risk averse’

Have a place for creativity and accept there will always be uncertainty.

Accept that change will be inevitable

Reality will throw up new and different challenges to those you had planned for in your strategy. Be sure to review regularly and be prepared to alter your strategy if a new reality or new data leaves it underperforming, outdated or even dysfunctional.

Successful strategy delivery is a team effort

Strive to take people with you on your journey, share the successes and recognise the effort and input of all involved.

Don’t confuse management with leadership

Good management means optimising the resources at your disposal, whereas good leadership is taking people with you in an agreed direction. Don’t confuse one for the other and don’t overlook either.

Above all, be realistic

Dreams are great but if they are not attainable don’t waste time creating strategies to chase them. Identify what can be achieved and pursue that.

Control the controllables

Many strategies fail by attempting to exercise influence over elements outside their control. Focus time, energy and effort on what you can control, don’t squander it on what you can’t.

Funding is rarely forever

If you need long-term sustainability, plan on the assumption that funding will cease as per your contract with the funder; Don’t plan by crossing your fingers and hoping funding will continue.

Governments (and ministers) are never forever

Don’t plan assuming that policy from central government will never change.
How many different models of strategy are there? Probably over 1000 and, as in many other areas of life, some are good, many are mediocre, most lag behind or have fallen by the wayside.

Fundamentally, nearly all of the successful models fall into one of two camps.

Model One: Vision-based strategy (aka goals-based planning)
This will be the more familiar model to most working in sport. It is ‘vision-based’ in that it defines the future before working back to the present by identifying specific objectives that will need to be achieved against a set timescale if the vision is to become reality.

These objectives will typically be specific (eg to increase the number of Level 3 coaches in the county by 25% in the next four years). Actions will be attached to each goal clarifying the what, when, why, where, who and how to each objective.

A good vision-based strategy will consider both external and internal factors, clearly identify organisational priorities and utilise both historical intelligence and analysis of current factors. In looking to the future, consideration will be given to informed forecasts, intuition and common sense.

Vision-based strategy tends to be longer-term planning; certainly over three years, with sounder models looking 10–12 years ahead.

Model Two: Issue-based strategy
This model will be less familiar in the world of sport, although that is not to say it doesn’t have its place.

This model begins with the present and works to the future. As the name suggests, it is typically used to identify issues faced by the organisation and work them forward toward solutions.

Common practice is to identify issues as questions (eg ‘how will we recruit our Board of Trustees?’ or ‘how will we address the shortfall in expected funding?’). Action plans are then compiled describing the what, when, why, where, who and how required to address each issue.

Although this model can be used to address external factors, it is more commonly used to focus on internal matters and the establishment of strong internal structures and systems.

Issue-based strategy tends to be shorter term, typically one year and never more than three. It is generally beneficial for young organisations, those facing critical current issues and/or those with far less resources (eg personnel or funding) than is required for its desired development. Generally, through sound issue-based strategy, once issues have been addressed, organisations will emerge stronger and then benefit from more vision-based planning.
Developing Your Coaching Strategy

Appendix 3 - Working in Partnership

It can be important to understand varying levels of partnership to allow you to recognise where you need support and where you currently have and do not have support. These levels of partnership can also be called ‘degrees’.

The following five degrees may serve to provide you with an outline and understanding of what your current partners can support you with and where your gaps in support are:

The first degree is ‘Co-existence’. This is where two (or more) partners have agreed to work together but haven’t decided on how, don’t really care about each other’s aims and end up adopting a stance of ‘you stay on your turf and I’ll stay on mine’. This is fine if you are paying someone to do a specific job and you aren’t interested in a longer-term relationship, but not so good if either partner is hoping for more, either now or in the future. The word ‘partnership’ might be applied but, as partnerships go, this is about as token as it gets.

The second degree is ‘Cooperation’. At this level, the partners have agreed to work together but identify each other’s goals as a very low priority; frequently, because either the partnership is a mismatch or because staff are not fully versed on its importance. The key description phrase of the second degree of partnership working is: ‘I’ll lend you a hand, but only when my own work is done.’

The third degree of partnership working is where we start seeing genuine partnerships emerge. This stage is ‘Coordination’. This is the first stage at which proper consideration is given to the work and objectives of each partner. If you are involved in developing strategy and wish to avoid getting trapped into silo mentality planning, you should be aiming for at least this level of partnership, working not just externally but internally too. Key descriptive phrase: ‘We need to adjust what we do to avoid overlap and confusion.’

The fourth degree is ‘Collaboration’. At this stage, real thought is now being given to achieving success for all parties within the partnership. It is also at this level that good examples start to become more rare and yet if the partnership was entered into with the aim of mutually benefitting from each other’s skills, products, abilities (or whatever), it is only really at this level that successful, long-term partnerships are built and maintained. ‘Let’s all work on this together’ describes this tier perfectly.

The fifth degree of partnership working is where we find pure partnerships; this stage can be termed ‘Co-ownership’. By taking on ownership of each other’s wants and needs, aims and objectives, we effectively increase our chances of success by multiplying the numbers addressing our own targets and by also adopting our partners’. It is very rare to see this level of partnership in operation; yet it can produce fantastic results. Especially in those sectors where the workforce is either low or unpaid, such as volunteers in sport, or where motivation and/or enthusiasm are low. Key phrase: ‘We all feel totally responsible.’
Developing Your Coaching Strategy

This resource outlines all the key components you will need to develop a successful and robust coaching strategy. It can be used by governing bodies of sport and county sports partnerships – indeed, any organisation that is looking to develop a strategy.