



Azerbaijan Cooperation University Strategic Plan and Strategy Map

Abstract

During 2015 and 2016 Azerbaijan Cooperation University (ACU) developed a one-page Strategy Map to facilitate communication of the Strategic Plan within the organization and to focus attention on areas of high performance and areas in need of improvement. This presentation will describe the development and use of the Strategy Map within the University. To be effective, a Strategic Plan must cascade into actions, goals and targets and the Strategy Map illustrates the cause-and-effect relationships between the drivers and the desired outcomes. Strategic Planning involves the ongoing review and refinement of priorities to determine whether direction, targets and measures remain appropriate in light of new opportunities, threats and changes in the economic, regulatory or competitive environment in higher education. We are using the Strategy Map to provide regular reports on progress, using a traffic light approach. Areas coded orange or red have become the focus for action at many levels throughout the University.

Introduction

Azerbaijan Cooperation University developed and used a strategy map to facilitate communication of the Strategic Plan within the organization. The map helped focus attention on our areas of high performance and on those areas most in need of improvement. The map was developed within the higher education sector to monitor performance, including measures of the student experience, teaching and learning, research and staffing.

Azerbaijan Cooperation University Strategic Plan and Strategy Map

The University of ACU Strategic Plan 2015-2021 aims to increase our national and international reputation as a University of distinction. Our five strategic priorities for 2015-2021 are:

- We will make the high quality education of professionals a defining feature of the University.
- We will further enhance our international research profile and impact.
- We will extend our reputation as a national and international leader in Indigenous collaboration.
- We will foster partnerships that enrich and develop our communities in mutually beneficial ways.



- We will ensure a financially strong university with sound academic and organizational governance and high quality performance.

The Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with staff and other stakeholders in the University's strategic planning in the longer term. It was always envisaged that the document would evolve and be reassessed in light of changes over time in higher education. The stages of our strategic planning process include:

- Develop – a consultation process led by Top Management
- Action – through a network of implementation and operational plans and initiatives
- Align – organizational units and activities with priority areas
- Communicate – raising awareness of the strategy
- Motivate – supporting and managing performance in line with the plan
- Review – monitor, review and improve processes to achieve the strategy
- Update – revise strategy to account for changing internal and external environment

The early stages of our strategic planning process were completed during 2015-2016 and the focus for 2017 was on embedding the strategy and developing a one-page Strategy Map (Figure 1). The map starts with the clear vision of the University and is color coded in six themes. Five of the themes are as noted in the Strategic Plan as our five strategic priorities. The sixth new theme relates to a learning and growth perspective for the University, with the development of a performance culture. Essentially this relates to strong mindsets within the University to focus on students, research, diversity and continuous improvement. We will continue to build strongly in the performance culture area, improving our capability to transform data into information and then knowledge to aid decision making. The one-page Strategy Map format has enhanced our ability to communicate our strategy simply and clearly to staff and stakeholders. It has allowed us to report progress in our key strategic areas on a simplified traffic light basis, so that areas which need increased focus can be clearly identified. The Strategy Map clearly identifies only eight key outcomes across our five color-coded priority areas (across the top of the map). To be effective, the Strategy Map must help define actions, goals and targets within each of the outcome areas and for each of the drivers.



Azerbaijan Cooperation University

We are a University of distinction. We are leaders in the teaching of professionals. We are responsive, dynamic and strong.

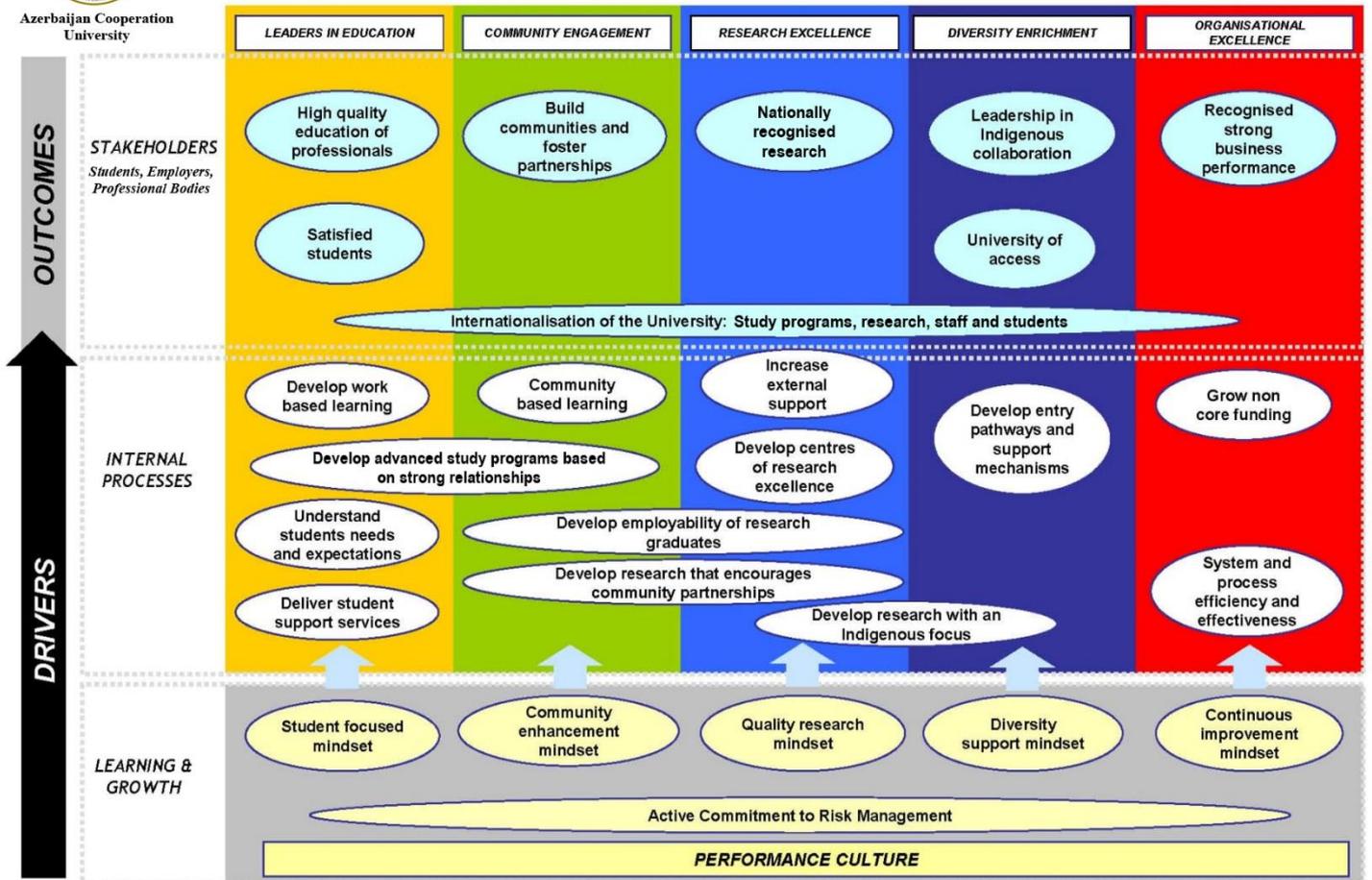


Figure 1: University of ACU Strategy Map



The Strategy Map illustrates the cause-and-effect relationships between the drivers (such as learning and growth and internal processes) and the desired outcomes. Some drivers (eg. risk management) and outcomes (eg.internationalization) span several priority areas. Some outcomes have been included in the map where they are implicitly rather than explicitly described in the Strategic Plan (eg.‘University ofaccess’ and ‘satisfied students’).

Assessment of Position and Priorities

The one-page Strategy Map has allowed the University to communicate its vision and priorities and to provide a regular update to the University on progress against the Strategic Plan, using a traffic light approach to outline areas where goals are being achieved (green), in danger of not meeting target (orange) or where the target will not be met (red). A grey color where measures are still under construction and goals and targets have not yet been set or monitored. Following the workshop, areas coded orange or red have become the focus for discussion and action at many levels throughout the University.

Conclusion

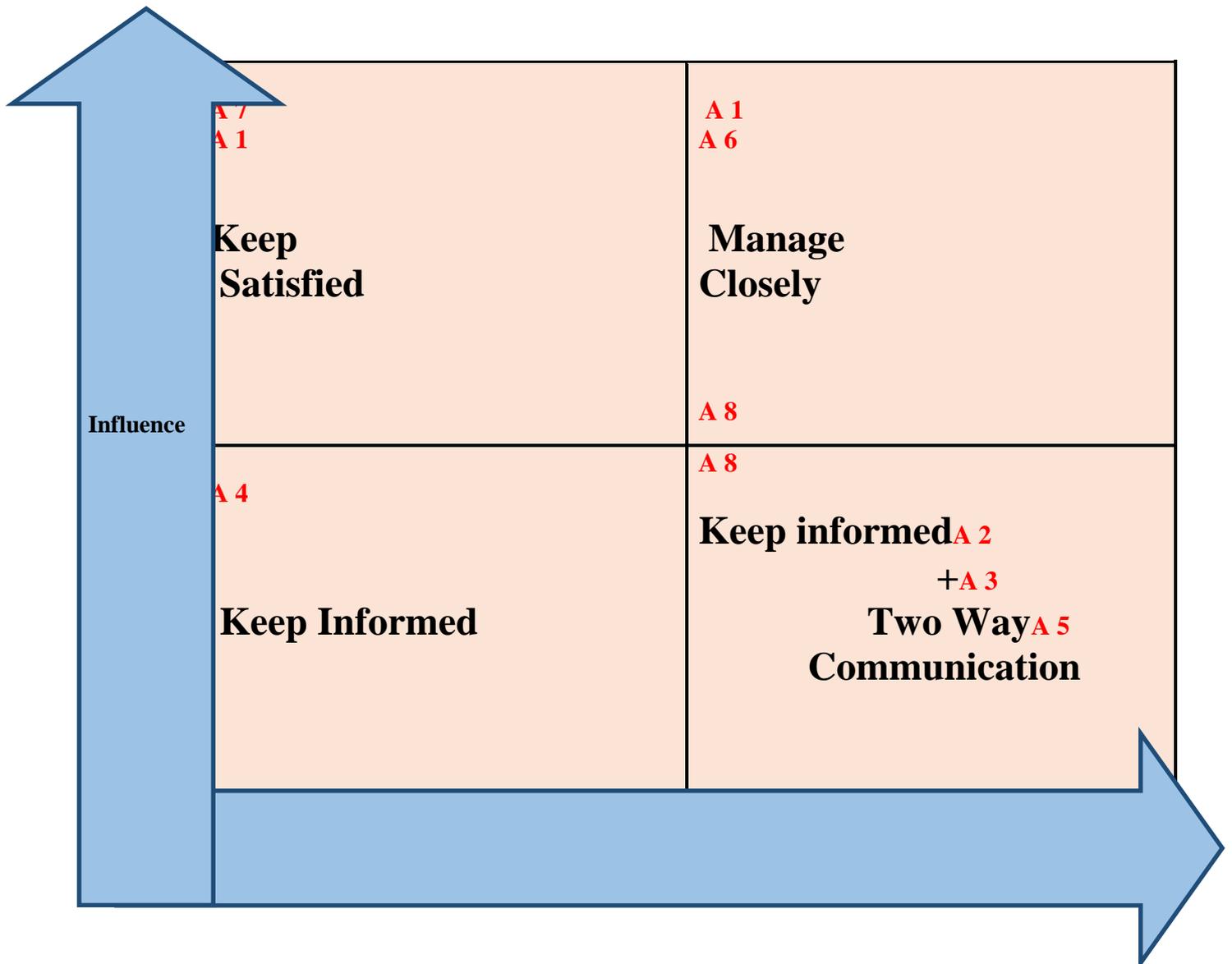
The Strategy Map is tool to help measure and monitor performance in organizations and can be adapted for use in higher education institutions. The measurement of internal drivers of performance and outcomes in higher education and clear specification of standards and external reference points has greatly improved in recent years. Monitoring and reporting capability within universities has developed substantially. Using performance management tools we can meet the challenge of connecting operational excellence with our strategic priorities and vision and encourage a performance culture and student-centered focus within our universities.



Power/Dynamism Matrix Gardner et al (1986)

		Dynamism	
		Low	High
Power	Low	A fever A 4 problems	B Unpredictable but A 5 manageable
	High	A 1 A 7 C Powerful but A 2 A 3 predictable	A 6 D Greatest danger or A 8 opportunities

A1 – Rector; A2 – University employees; A3 – Administrative division employees; A4 – Students; A5 – Organizations/Companies members; A6 – Organizations/ Companies; A7 – Government; A8 – Media.





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Draft Stakeholder Management Plan

Stakeholder	Frequency	Mechanism	Category
Rector	Monthly	Meeting	Internal-strategic
Vice-Rector	Weekly	Meeting, face to face	Internal – tactical progress
Deans ,Centre Heads and Head of Departments	Fortnightly	Email	Internal-strategic
Academic and Professional Staff	Weekly	Website, Email	Internal – strategic building to specific impact
Students	Monthly	Website	Internal – information and broad impact
Government	As per protocol	Through VR's Office	External - information
Media	As required until outcomes known, then proactive announcement	Media release and/or interview	External – strategic
Alumni	Monthly	Email	External - information
Organization/ Company	3 Weekly	Meeting, Regular contact with Organization/	External - information

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		Company delegates	
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