

Ner LeElef Monthly Newsletter

June, 2002

Visions, Goals and Strategies

Management by objectives works if you first think through your objectives. Ninety percent of the time you haven't.

Peter F Drucker

Four Basic Questions to Get Started
Understanding your Community
Mission Statement
Goals
Strategy
Criteria for Success
Feedback Mechanisms
Evaluations

Step Three: Stay Focused & Energised

Four Basic Questions to Get Started

1. *Where are you now?*
2. *Where do you want to get to?*
3. *How do you propose to get from here to there?*
4. *Who do you want to join you in this endeavor?*

These four questions translate into your short, medium and long-term goals for the organization. But first you need to understand your community. The long-term goal for the organization we call the vision of the organization and is contained in the mission statement. You cannot be an effective kiruv worker if you do not know where you are trying to get to. You need a vision for yourself and the organization before you get going. Once you have a vision, you need to translate this into goals for the next year. To achieve these goals you need a strategy. And at the end of the year you need to evaluate whether or not you were successful. And, to make this evaluation you have to define at the outset what defines success and what defines failure.

Later, we will talk about how to evaluate individual programs. Whereas evaluating a program is a function of management, creating the vision and goals of an organization is very much a function of leadership.

Understanding your Community

You cannot get going on visions and goals until you have basic information about the community you are working in. (In fancy language, this is called the current picture document.) This will prevent some basic mistakes such as setting up your organization on the wrong side of town. (I have seen this happen at least twice in North America.) It will help you to realize, for example, that your vision for the organization should be to set up a series of branches or new kiruv communities in different parts of the town. It will help you to answer basic questions such as whether you should be an independent outreach organization, or a service organization to existing communal structures.

Consider the following variables:

- A) *Demographics*: Where are the Jews living? Are they spread out or concentrated in certain areas? Where are they working? How many of the women are working? What kind of schedules are people keeping? Does the city have a large, growing and youngish Jewish population or is it in decline?
- B) *Quality of local professional* (rabbi, principal, center director, etc) *leadership*. Are you going to get on with them? Do you threaten them? Are they going to be of help to you in terms of advice, as speakers or as other resources? What do you have to do to avoid conflict with them and to get them on your side?
- C) *Quality of local lay leadership*. Same questions as B).
- D) *Your mandate*. Are those hiring you, paying you giving you their full support to achieve your vision for this town? Or do they have a different idea of what should be done?
- E) *Financial viability and stability of operation*. If you are supported in part or in whole by funding from outside of the community, will you be able, in the medium term, to raise all the money locally? (Outside funding never lasts.)
- F) *Reputation* of the organization you are joining amongst different segments of the population.
- G) *Quantity and quality of Jewish cultural – educational activity*. Is the place highly programmed with all sorts of talks on the political situation in Israel or the holocaust or Jewish basket-weaving which is going to compete with your programs? Is there a strong Conservative and Reform?
- H) Availability and operativeness of key *Jewish institutions and facilities* (schools, synagogue, mikva, kashrut).
- I) General assessment of the *kiruv potential* of the city.
- J) General assessment of Assimilation, Alienation, and *Intermarriage* in the city

Mission Statement

Once you understand your community, you need to make a mission statement, what Stephen Covey calls beginning with the end in mind. *This represents the long-term vision of the organization*¹. You would be amazed how making a tight mission statement will help you

¹In more advanced thinking, the vision of an organization would be a separate definition, building on the mission statement. The project's Vision defines how its mission is expected to be accomplished in the long term. (This is not the same as strategy, which are the specific steps of implementation that need

If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there.

Lewis Carroll

to understand issues, which you had left fuzzy, and to articulate this to others with passion and

articulation.

If you were to be setting up a new organization, then you should formulate a mission statement at least six months to a year prior to this. But it is never too late to develop a mission statement. Rabbi Benzi Epstein, head of outreach for DATA, the Dallas Kollel, reported what a huge difference to the his Kollel making such a mission statement was, after many years without one.

It is important for your organization to have a statement of purpose for two reasons:
a-It makes it clear to yourself (and your partners/chabura/employees) what you are all about. It is the first stage in getting really clear what your goals are.
b-It ought to become the most concise way to communicate with others what you are all about. The Project's Mission Statement should serve as the basis for assuring that all its components and members share a common understanding of purpose and direction

Let's take a simple example where the vision may be fairly easy to articulate, a day school. If you are opening up a new school (or taking one over) ask yourself, "What kind of graduate do I want to produce?" Asking, "What kind of school do I want to see?" is the wrong question and will lead you astray. The school is the means not the ends. I was once at a Jewish Board of Education convention where they proudly announced that they ran the best Jewish day schools in the world. That would be a good response to the wrong question, to the question of what kind of school do you run. What they didn't answer, nay, what they didn't even ask, was "What kind of Jewish commitment and involvement do our graduates express?" For I know for certain that had they asked that question, they would have gotten a disappointing answer indeed.

Examples of Mission Statements:

A.

"The Yagidu veYomru Torah Center has the Mission of guaranteeing the continuity of the Jewish Communities and Jewish individuals around the world, centering on the traditional religious concepts, precepts and beliefs. This is to be achieved by upgrading Jewish education and raising the levels of Jewish literacy."

to be taken. It is a very important communication tool to establish direction and to assure consistency amongst all of its parts

Sample Vision

"The perpetuation of the existence of the Katmadu Jewish Community depends upon the creation of a Torah Center focused on Torah study and structured to reach out, and to multiply and continue throughout the future generations".

B.

K Kollel was created by a coalition of organizations and individuals who felt the urgent need to vastly and rapidly expand the scope of outreach in the city. The Kollel families are comprised of young, energetic men and women who are learned and steeped in Jewish tradition and values and who desire to share this with the broader community.

K Kollel is committed to standards of excellence in everything that it does. This will be reflected both in the establishment and development of a thriving Beit Midrash as well as its interfacing with community by teaching, programming and personal contact. The motto of the Kollel is contained in the clear directive to every Jew: תלמוד ולימוד – to study and to teach.

The intended goals of the Kollel are:

- To fight assimilation and intermarriage.
- To target those Jews ignorant and alienated from their Jewish heritage and to introduce them to the depth, beauty, sophistication and relevance of Torah learning and observance.
- To raise the overall spiritual level of the Jewish community.
- To target potential future leaders and invest in teaching them and nurturing them into a sense of responsibility for the broader Jewish community.
- To take those who have are somewhat Jewishly identified and to increase their passion for the study of Torah and the observance of Judaism.
- To strengthen and expand existing Torah institutions.

The Kollel intends to target all age groups in the community, i.e.:

- People with leadership potential
- Children of all ages, especially but not limited to students at the Bar Ilan school.
- Parents of the children in Bar Ilan
- University Students
- Adults of all ages
- Women of all ages

C.

Sometimes it is good to define basic terms as a part of your mission statement. E.g.

What Is A Kollel?

Torah study in the tradition of millennia of Jews
a home for prayer and study for all Jews, regardless of background
learning opportunities for the most experienced and the beginner alike
a chance for men and women to attain independence in the choices they make about Judaism
a warm and welcoming environment encouraging questions and exploration, from ancient texts to modern philosophy

(Fall Into Learning, Valley Jewish Learning Center, CA, Fall 2000)

D.

Our Goal

Judaism has entered the new millennium fraught with challenges. Parents are finding it increasingly difficult to encourage their children to embrace their heritage.

Most Jews do not receive an education that allows them to synthesize their Jewish values with their lives in modern society. It is the belief of those who stand behind the Jewish Study Network that all Jews are entitled to an intellectually honest search into Judaism and the Torah. The Jewish Study Network strives to raise the level of Jewish literacy amongst the population of Silicon Valley and Bay Area. We believe that Jews of all backgrounds have the right to know that their heritage is valid, vibrant and relevant as ever.

(Jewish Study Network, Palo Alto Kollel, Silicon Valley, CA)

Our Network

The Jewish Study Network of Silicon Valley is an association of young Jewish scholars who have come together to share their knowledge of Jewish tradition with the Jewish population of the Bay Area. Each of these dynamic individuals has spent several years immersed in the study of Talmud and a myriad of other fundamental texts. They have been brought together by a shared commitment to the values of community and education, both central tenets of our rich heritage.

The Jewish Study Network provides an opportunity for Jews to experience Jewish concepts in an engaging and stimulating environment. Participants are welcome regardless of previous Jewish educational experience. Aware of the time constraints many face in demanding work environments, the scholars teach in homes, offices, local community facilities and even outdoors. The group consists of six married couples who function as a team in order to fit the needs of the entire spectrum of the Jewish community.

Goals

Now besides one's vision one has to make goals, quite specific ones for the next year and more general ones for the next two to five years. Without goals, you have no way of knowing whether you have been successful or not. And without goals, you will be amazed how the year will just slip by. You must ask yourself the question: How do our goals for the next year fit in with our mission statement? And then you must develop ways of assessing along the way whether you are achieving your goals or not.

A sample goal might be:

By the end of the first year the East Victoria outreach organization aims to have achieved the following:

- 15 weekly shiurim attended by at least 250 people
- 50 people who have significantly upgraded their Yiddishkeit (e.g. started keeping Kashrut, started attending Friday night services, etc.)
- 10 people who are seriously on their way to becoming observant
- 4 Shabatonim over the year
- a weekly parsha sheet-bulletin
- a beginners minyan

Goals for Rest of the Year

The Avreichim themselves are required to fill in these goals. However, by the end of April, the minimum expectations of the Kollel are as follows:

- Each Avreich will be giving one shiur per day.
- A minimum of eight people per night learning in the Beis Midrash (other than the Chavrei Kollel)
- At least 3 guest lecturers
- A minimum of three, weekly home-groups
- At least one shiur will have been delivered in the majority of the Batei Kneset in the city.
- The Maslul Torani will be running
- There will be a weekly Parsha Sheet
- A major event on Purim
- A daily shiur or Beit Midrash for the students of the school
- A weekly shiur for women
- Rav Havlin will have come to give a chaburah to the Avreichim at least once
- The Rosh Kollel will be giving weekly Chaburahs.
- The Kollel will have begun the regular learning of a machshava sefer.
- One Baal Habayis will be involved in the planning and organizing of events.

We stress that these are minimum goals.

By the end of June, the Kollel will have added to the above list the following:

- At least two more home-groups
- One seminar or major Shabbaton
- An activity targeting the parents of the school students
- One regular shiur in another part of town
- A minimum of 12 people per night learning in the Beit Midrash
- One lunch-time shiur targeting business-men
- One more shiur for women, hopefully targeting a different type of women than the first shiur.
- Another two Baal Habatim actively involved in helping the Kollel

We stress that these are minimum goals.

Case Study:

RUSSIAN TEN CITIES PLAN

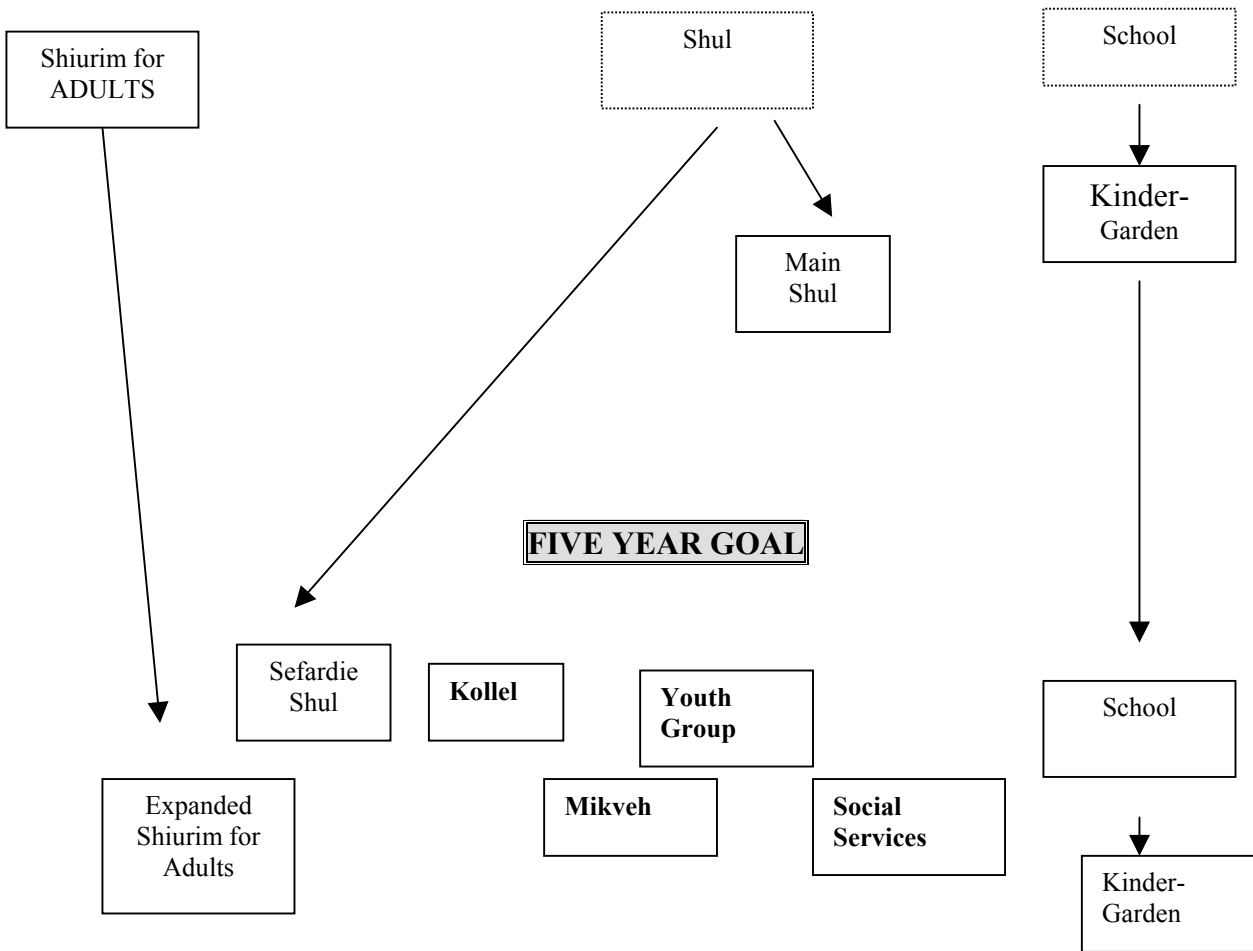
The Russian 10 cities project is an ongoing project involving the joint cooperation of several bodies. Ten new communities were started in ten different cities across Russia. In most of these places there is no mikveh, and many had no shul at the outset. The new rabbi had to go around and make a minyan from scratch. This project was very exciting, very pioneering and seemed to present a clear vision. The goal, after all, was to establish a vibrant community in each city. Yet Ner LeElef, one of the founders and funders of the project and its primary source of manpower, did not stop at that. It spent and spends many hours trying to fine-tune this vision, and to create the specific steps that are needed to develop the project. Below is but a simplified diagram of the basic vision and goals of the project. (The actual plan for this project, is many pages long and would be cumbersome for the reader not into the Russian scene.)

VISION:

- A thriving community which has a core of observant people, growing in their Yiddishkeit and Torah observance.
- A strong outreach arm
- Financially self-supporting
- All communal institutions

CURRENT COMMUNITY PICTURE

Strategy	<i>Manpower:</i> One family	<i>Financing:</i> Keroor, Ner LeElef, Reichman, Keren Lauder, the Joint	<i>Programming:</i> Shiurim & minyanim in Shul; Communal seder, chagim.	<i>Networking with other Organizations:</i> Generic Parsha Sheet from Shevut Ami; Ner LeElef supervision and Programming
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Strategy	<i>Manpower:</i> Rabbis Family & 4 man kollel	<i>Financing:</i> 50% from above sources; 10% from new outside sources; 40% local	<i>Programming:</i> As above plus bi-annual seminars, beis midrash night (one for men & one for women), kosher restaurant, and	<i>Networking with Other Organizations:</i> Same as above, plus chinuch input from Torah U'Mesorah or other, Aish Hatorah
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