Preface

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the rationale for why this book was written with a focus on the main research aim of producing a better format for a strategic plan and why architecture should be considered to give structure to the presentation of the key information in a strategic plan. Because information is a central theme throughout the book, the importance of the topic is reviewed together with the relationship of information systems and the necessity of their alignment with business directions. Finally, in this preface there is a section on the organisation of the book containing a brief description of each chapter.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This book presents a well structured and easily understood strategic planning process in conjunction with the development of a clear and useable planning document. The process and document together provide an effective solution to the strategic planning problem; where all necessary stakeholder representatives can be involved and the result provides essential transparency of the organisational intentions. Implementation of requirements is effective because all staff are able to simply locate and understand the planning information relevant to their contribution to the achievement of the organisational goals.

Today’s global economy means that problems have grown in diversity, size, and complexity to such an extent that there is a need for better tools to assist in developing solutions. In the building industry, high rise buildings today have greater flexibility of design shape, and depending on location, have to be built to withstand high winds, torrential rain, earthquakes, and other natural phenomena; luckily, the builders have a long history of an organizing process for the solution development which is of course the architectural discipline. The same is true of many organisations in the information technology industry that uses an architectural discipline for the large scale information systems projects, which is now being discussed to also include the main business development. Allied to the architectural structure of the solution development, is the structure of the planning document, this planning document has an added benefit of allowing all the specialized members of the project team to know where to find the information relevant to their needs and in a format that is readily recognizable by their discipline.

However other problems areas often search for solutions in a less organised fashion, and this research in this book offers a way for other disciplines to make use of the structural advantages that can be derived from examination of the architectural principles and for those structural advantages to be used for other complex problems than just for buildings or information technology.
This book is about a better process and document format required for business strategic planning and uses the normative research model to develop an improved format for the strategic plan. The research model essentially recommends a philosophy of thinking, which promotes a systematic way to tackle any large problem by first gathering information belonging to the problem area and solution spaces before tackling the problem resolution itself. The principles derived from information technology (IT) architecture are then used to organise the most important information relevant to the situation into a structure that provides an easy to read solution framework.

The term architectural “principle” is used in the context of being the ultimate source or primary element from which all else is derived; the search is for the underlying structural guidelines rather than the characteristics of information technology (IT) architecture per se. It is not about just extending the idea of architecture to say that it encompasses the strategic planning aspect but is about developing a specifically detailed architectural model that allows for the required structure of the information that is necessary to give ease of use to a strategic plan. The organizing principles derived from examining IT architecture will be used as guidelines to develop a solution architecture and to demonstrate a strategic planning model which will show how the application of a solution architecture to the development of a strategic plan can create significant advantages of clarity and usability to the solution and its documentation.

The better organisation and clearer structure of the documentation will allow better understanding of the planning requirements for all participants in the implementation process. The guiding principles described more fully later, will include listing all the essential components required and describing them in detail. The architectural principles can also give sustainability and longevity to any plan by requiring the inclusion of the rationale for important inclusions and by clearly presenting the essential interaction between the different information components that comprise the project.

To demonstrate an example of the use of these architectural principles, the area of business strategic planning is investigated because of its complexity, its high cost and its many failures to be successful. There is particular emphasis on problems with the strategic planning documentation and how this might be improved by using architectural principles as a basis for the development of a solution architecture.

The starting point for this investigation is the difficulty that occurs with the use of strategic planning documentation to implement strategic business requirements and the ancillary need for alignment of the information systems required to run the organisation. Because a strategic plan is about describing the information (rather than the financial, personnel, and functional elements) required to determine the strategic direction of the organisation, the most appropriate architectural modeling vehicle for this investigation is the concept of information architecture. The principles of architecture are introduced to assist with this problem by using them to help create an information architecture which is then used to develop a reference model and diagrams for the planning information which will assist by providing guidance and an organising structure for the strategic planning documentation.

To examine this proposal in more depth the interaction of the related themes which will form the focus of this book are discussed; they are strategic planning, information systems alignment with business planning, and information architecture. In order to develop the information architecture for the strategic planning information it is first necessary to determine the key information components of business strategic planning, and to support the implementation of strategic requirements, it is useful to align the executive information systems with the required strategic direction.

The idea of determining the key information that concerns any project should not be underestimated and for strategic planning it is of paramount importance; the next section will spend some time discussing
the importance given by many authors to *information and the determination of information from mere data*. The key role of useful, ready to use information in any endeavour is so important that there is an urgent need to distinguish critical information from the huge amount of irrelevant data.

The arguments for and against strategic planning are investigated and a perspective enunciated that means whatever view is held, the use of the architectural principles in the development of documentation for organisational planning can be a distinct advantage in communicating future intentions. When considering strategic planning, one must consider that there are in fact two major projects involved: one is the creation of the strategic plan and the other is the implementation of that plan. Both projects can suffer project management difficulties and require good documentation to assist the project. It will be shown how the use of the architectural principles to develop an information architecture for the construction of the strategic plan can help both with the creation of the plan and with its implementation.

It is possible that the time and cost of preparing strategic planning documentation can be reduced by getting more staff involved both in the planning and in the implementation process. This can be done by having a well structured scheme that allows a plan to be constructed piece by piece using whichever is the correct and relevant expertise in the organization. This has an added benefit that when the staff of an organization feel they are part of the planning process required to achieve the organization’s objectives, they are better able to deliver on the essential actions required to implement those objectives.

In order to develop an information architecture for the business strategic plan it is necessary to first determine what kind of key elements of information should comprise the plan, and this will be done by reviewing what terms management authors use in describing strategic planning schemes and also by surveying what organisations regard as the key information elements of their planning process.

A key component of good production management is effective feedback monitoring which provides quality and quantity control. Similarly, effective strategy implementation and good organizational management, requires setting targets for objectives and choosing the correct key performance indicators for performance measurement and control to achieve those targets.

This means choosing strategic objectives and determining the means (actions) to achieve them along with the indicators to monitor progress toward success. It is important that these factors (the objectives, actions, indicators) are hierarchically linked together in an architecture in order to show the essential interrelationship between them so that the whole organization knows what and how, strategic intentions are to be achieved.

These factors might comprise: the strategic objective and the target value to be achieved, the actions to achieve the objective, the critical factors that might jeopardize achievement, and the key indicators to monitor performance. These various factors can then be developed into an architectural diagram to show clearly what the essential intentions are and how they are to be achieved.

If the framework of strategic objectives is set down by top management or the planning team, they can be passed down through the organization for comment and allow for the rest of the staff to be involved in fleshing out the requisite supporting information down to the necessary actions. The staff would also be involved in indicating what problems might arise and refining the objectives and actions until there is adequate clarification for the rest of the organization to be able to follow. The resulting set of strategic requirements would be built into high level strategic information architecture as a key component of a strategic plan.

The strategic plan will thus contain the major directions the organization wishes to take and the supporting information on how this should be achieved. Implementation of the plan should be supported by the executive information system providing essential strategic monitoring information. However, the
information systems currently in use often have their genesis in managing operational activities, and these systems often do not relate well to providing strategic information requirements. The challenge is to develop an executive information system that is better related to supporting the management of the organization's direction.

The strategic plan should contain sufficient information clearly presented to enable the staff to achieve the strategic direction and to monitor the progress toward the objectives. This performance information, if built into the executive information system would enable the automatic collection and analysis of appropriate data to monitor performance and progress toward the strategic objectives. Because of the importance of information and in fact information is the main theme through each of the topics that are discussed in this book, it is worth looking at what is meant by information, and the next section has a look at what other writers have to say about its importance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION

Organisations are becoming increasingly information driven and are shifting focus rapidly from processing data to requiring information, much of which is external to the organisation (Drucker 1998). The information of course is not useful unless it is being communicated and it particularly needs to be communicated to the person that needs it, “[e]verything a manager does involves communication. Not something but everything! A manager can’t make a decision without information. That information has to be communicated” (Robbins and DeCenzo, 2001, p. 376).

Information systems (the computer software to help run the organisation’s business) have two primary functions: one function is to provide the operational features for day to day activities and the other increasingly important function is to support an organisation by providing essential information to managers. For the information system to be designed correctly to provide the essential information, it is necessary for the information system developers to know what essential information is needed to help run the organisation.

The seed idea for this research started with the author being appointed to a large scale information system/ information technology (IS/IT) reengineering project for a major system. The immediate need was to investigate any available documentation in order to understand what the overall project requirements were. It was also necessary find the background to the new strategic directions and therefore what if any changes would be required to the operational systems. The documentation that was available was either incredibly detailed data models containing hundreds of data entities and thousands of data elements; or it comprised high level management documents containing general directions and objectives for the organisation as a whole. There were no documents that explicitly led from the visionary high level objectives of the organisation to the major business processes, or from the related high level information requirements, down to the general level of the information system processes and the relevant data entities.

The architecture group of this organisation, which included the author, was required to set out all the high level design requirements to future proof new information systems by developing the enterprise architecture for the organisation. The enterprise architecture would include a technology policy, applications architecture, infrastructure architecture and information architecture. A difficulty soon became apparent in that the concept of what was understood to be an information architecture was not easily discovered and was generally thought to be the data models (the term information architecture will be discussed more fully in chapter 10). Moreover these very detailed data models were not very useful when
trying to identify the high level critical information about the organisation and its determined future
direction that was necessary to achieve the organisation’s objectives.

There are a number of alternative descriptions of enterprise information architecture, and several
are presented later in chapter 9; however, one interesting description specifically includes the strategic
information of the organisation. Perkins describes enterprise information architecture as the “organisation
of information pertaining to the following corporate-level enterprise-wide elements:

- Strategic goals, objectives and strategies
- Business rules and measures
- Information requirements
- Application systems
- Relationships between applications and data elements

The difficulties encountered in the start of the above reengineering project led to examining the
proposition that existing strategic planning processes and their resultant documentation were often not
in a user friendly format for communication of both the organisation’s objectives and the action require-
ments throughout the organisation. This book is not concerned with information concerning the whole
organisation but rather just the information about the strategic direction, therefore the term information
architecture will be used rather than enterprise information architecture. Would the principles of an infor-
mation architecture which set out the strategic direction of an organisation in a concise and unambiguous
manner be useful? An information architecture could structure and present those pieces of information
(information elements) critical to describing both the organisational direction and how to achieve that
direction, e.g. objectives and actions, in an organised and clear manner.

Part of this concept is a proposal that these information elements would be best derived as part of
the organisation’s strategic planning (OSP) process and should form part of the essential strategic plan
documentation. The thought was that this documentation would enhance the communication process
throughout the organisation and also assist the development of the strategic information system planning
(SISP) within the organisation. Better strategic plan documentation could provide better requirements
determination toward improved alignment between the organisation’s strategic planning (OSP), the SISP,
and the resultant information systems (IS).

Many authors would argue that information systems (IS) are not always successful in providing the
information a manager requires and they state that it is necessary to better align the IS with the organi-
sational strategic direction. The lack of success in having the right information available for managers
may be due in part to the lack of alignment between the SISP and the organisation’s direction and goals.
This lack of alignment could inhibit the resultant IS from fully supporting the organisation’s direction.
To develop an IS that meets the organisation’s goals, the developers need to know and understand what
the organisation’s goals are and what strategies are to be implemented to achieve them, such that the IS
can effectively support the organisation.

It follows from the arguments for alignment, that it would be incongruous to have a process for de-
veloping a SISP without relating it to the organisation’s strategic plan (OSP); the two plans need to be
developed in conjunction with each other. This would ensure the two plans are integrated for optimum
advantage to both plans. In order for information systems to support an organisation effectively, those
responsible for the development of the information systems need to know what the organisation’s in-
intentions are, what future activities the organisation is going to be involved in and what the information requirements of the organisation will be. It might be expected that these information requirements should be organized and described in the strategic plan of the organisation.

It is widely recognised by many authors (Campbell, Kay & Avison, 2004; Ward & Peppard, 2002; Teo & King, 1997; Martin, 1990; Earl, 1989; Lederer & Mendelow, 1986) that the SISP process must be related to the OSP process and the two processes should be developed in conjunction.

The importance of management information to an organisation is raised by several authors “The availability of effective management information is essential when coping with today’s complexity and dynamism, both within and around organisations” (Lohman, Sol, & de Vreede, 2003, p. 1). Lohman, Sol, and de Vreede go on to write that “[i]nformation [t]echnology can be used to derive such information … However the contribution of the management information generated is disappointing. Many projects do not produce the results that organisations expect”. This disappointing view is also expressed by Davenport and Prusak who cite Gell-Mann as saying “[t]he ‘information explosion’ about which so much has been said and written, is to a great extent an explosion of misinformation and badly organised information … the digital revolution has only made the problems more acute” (Gell-Mann 1995, cited in Davenport & Prusak 1997, p.3).

One significant problem is the definition of ‘information’ and this will be examined together with the problems caused by using the term inappropriately. This may be aggravated by lack of understanding that what is considered to be information at one level of the organisation may only be data at a more senior level. This creates an imperative to determine what ‘information’ is required to drive the organisation effectively, at each major level in the organisation.

The strategic plan is possibly the essential document for the purpose of communicating the business intentions to the whole organisation, setting out the organisation’s goals and strategies. This raises the questions: is there a need for strategic planning in the organisation? What are the arguments that have been put forward for saying it is unnecessary? What are the factors that seem to lead to a failure in the strategic planning process or in the implementation of the plan?

With regard to the amount of strategic planning that should be carried out by an organisation, Mintzberg writes “too much planning would lead to chaos, but so too would too little, and more directly” (1994, p. 416). This is a crucial point in the arguments for and against planning. The problem is, therefore, to have just enough planning to be optimally effective in managing the strategic direction of the organisation. It is possible that the critical planning information belongs in the strategic plan and therefore this document should not be too complex for staff to follow, nor so brief that the document has insufficient explanation or lacks the informative statements of actions needed for successful implementation.

One way to achieve the concepts of alignment and communication is to have a planning methodology to follow; one that gathers a wide spectrum of input into the planning process and massages the proposed strategic ideas and concepts from the planning team into a documented set of objectives and action statements that can be shared with the whole organisation. It would be useful if these objectives and action statements (information elements) have embedded performance indicators clearly defined, that will allow monitoring of the business performance of each objective, to allow decision makers to know if the strategy is working or not. The documentation of the performance indicators would be more specific if it also showed the related operational activity the measurement stems from.

A lack of formality in the planning process, leading to either a lack of documentation that can be distributed, or a poorly organised document that is unable to communicate organisational intent; may be a key issue in some failures concerning the strategic plan implementation. The aim of this research is to
improve the documentation of the strategic plan and allow simple unambiguous communication of the strategic information via a well structured, concise presentation. The search is, firstly, for the nature of the important pieces of information that form the core of the strategic plan - the information elements (e.g., objectives, action statements, and measurements) that are the key structural elements of the forward planning in a strategic plan (SP), separating these elements from the background information and the justification statements. Secondly, for a model that would present the information elements in the clearest way. The model for the presentation of the information elements of the SP will use the principles of information architecture (IA), and a reference model is proposed for the IA that would allow the information elements (IEs) to be organised and presented in a simple way, as part of the documentation of the SP.

In summary, the primary aim is: to improve the documentation of a strategic plan and in the process will need to achieve the following objectives:

- Note that the literature review is expected to raise a number of issues that will need up-to-date clarification that the issues are still current. This will be done by a variety of methods including a survey of organisations.
- Identify the strategic information (information elements) such as objectives, action statements, target measurements, which would be most useful in a strategic plan.
- Derive architectural principles from IT architecture to be used to construct an information architecture which would present this information (by way of a reference model) in a clearer and more succinct way than narrative alone.
- Explain how the resulting documentation would allow for better communication of organisational intentions, which could improve management generally and also allow better alignment between SISP and OSP.

**ORGANISATION OF THE BOOK**

The preface was primarily about why the subject material of this book is considered to be important, chapter one will review the main elements of the subject and then chapter 2 gives an overview of the research methodology that has the normative approach as the main research focus with some descriptive research required to support the review of strategic planning literature. Strategic planning is covered in the chapters 3 to 7 with chapter 8 giving the results of the descriptive research. Chapters 9 to 11 discuss the use of architecture to give structure to project management and planning documentation and Chapters 11 to 13 develop and test a strategic planning reference model, chapter 14 provides a summary conclusion. A chapter by chapter explanation of the organisation of the book follows below.

The book is organized into 14 chapters, with chapter 1 entitled “Strategic Planning, Information Systems Alignment, and Architecture.” This chapter introduces a discussion on the themes and their interaction which comprise the subjects of interest impinging on the primary aim of a better format and process for the strategic plan. Each topic is discussed individually in more detail in later chapters. This chapter will introduce the need for a better document presentation for the strategic plan which is considered as imperative to achieve the forward direction of the organisation, together with brief introduction to the use of the principles of information architecture (IA) to provide the better structure and better readability. Also considered is the need for alignment between strategic planning and the information systems needed to run the business, and therefore the necessary alignment between strategic information
systems planning (SISP) and business or organisational strategic planning (OSP) and the role that would be played by having a strategic plan that is easier to follow and has greater definition of information.

A proposition is introduced suggesting that if an IS is to truly support an organisation, it must not only maintain the operational activities of the organisation but must also be able to monitor those activities through performance indicators. More importantly, the IS needs to be able to monitor, where possible, key performance indicators relating to the strategic objectives, to ensure the organisation is on track to achieve the organisational goals set out in the OSP. These objectives and key performance indicators, therefore, can best be achieved by information systems developed from an SISP aligned with an OSP that spells out these information requirements.

Chapter 2, “Research Methodology,” reviews the use of the normative research model to provide the investigative format for the review and analysis of the strategic planning situation and for the evaluation of the models that are developed to provide a better solution for documenting a strategic plan. The four steps of normative research are described by Routio (2005, p. 3) as:

1. Evaluative description of the initial state (defining the need for improvement)
2. Analysis of relationships and possibilities to change things
3. Synthesis: provide a proposal for improvement
4. Evaluation of the proposal.

Point one leads to a review of the arguments for and against strategic planning and what problems are currently associated with strategic planning documentation.

Point two is determined by looking at ways to improve the presentation of the information contained in a strategic plan, and in the process it is necessary to investigate the processes of business strategic planning and determine the commonalities of approach by reviewing a range of theorists and practitioners and determine what information elements can be considered as key critical pieces of information that are necessary to be incorporated into a business strategic plan. The ideas are tested by various organisation surveys, the evaluation of strategic planning methodologies and strategic planning documentation.

Point three asks specifically whether the principles of information architecture can be used to improve the presentation of strategic planning information. It then becomes possible to build strategic planning reference models based on the determined information elements and architectural principles.

To demonstrate point four, the resultant IS architecture reference model (IARM) is used to evaluate a published strategic plan when it has been reformatted using the (IARM). The IARM is also validated against a constructed imaginary segment of a strategic plan as an instance of way the strategic plan would look if the IARM had been used to construct the strategic planning model.

Chapter 3 argues the question “Is it Necessary to Plan Strategically?,” and the work of various authors is considered and evaluated in the context of strategic planning including the position that strategy development is too creative to be a planned function. Mintzberg’s famous quote that “strategic planning is an oxymoron” (1994) is intended to mean that an organization cannot ‘plan’ to develop strategy and that it is a creative process. This position however begs the question of what happens when the organisation has to implement the creative strategic objectives, and the management heads of marketing, production, logistics etc. have to achieve the creative strategic objectives and the need to plan for them to be able to implement the strategies. Another argument is that too much market change inhibits the idea of strategic planning, but there is then an alternative view which is to develop an organization that is able to deal with change and to therefore it could be considered necessary to plan to manage the changing environ-
ment. This chapter also looks in more detail at the topics of governance, teamwork and communication and performance measurement together with the reasons why they should be considered collectively as part of strategic planning.

Chapter 4 is “Approaches to Strategy Development,” and several different authors writing on strategic management are reviewed to obtain a sample of different views of strategic management theory, the authors reviewed include:


These approaches are examined for their commonality of process steps and requirements toward strategic planning in conjunction with their use of particular elements of planning information with a view to developing a process reference model for use with the reference model for the strategic plan.

Chapter 5 discusses “What Goes Wrong with Strategic Plans” looking on the one hand at complaints that the strategic plan is too detailed and too complex or on the other hand too informal and unstructured. There are also complaints that there can be a lack of a measurement system to measure progress and therefore the organisation is unable to identify risks in time to mitigate them. If the organisation uses outside consultants this can mean lack of buy in by the staff of the organisation, it can also be very costly and require a lengthy time to complete. The resulting plan can be too voluminous and difficult to read, with staff unable to see the relevance to their specific role necessary to achieve the strategic objectives. There is also the danger that the market has moved since the plan was drawn up due to the length of time in preparation and persuading the staff of the organisation to read, comprehend and to get behind the plan. These problems become one of the phases of the normative research model as part of finding out what needs to be addressed and what can be improved in the existing planning situation.

Chapter 6 looks at “Improving Strategic Plan Documentation.” The thought is that by incorporating essential management performance monitoring information in the strategic plan, this would assist in providing an executive information system (EIS) that could help with managing the implementation of the strategic plan. To pursue this thought further, the arguments for aligning the strategic information systems planning (SISP) with the business planning are investigated together with some of the planning methodologies that are used in SISP to see what advantages can be gained from the methodology and used to assist with the documentation of OSP. The limitations of the methodologies are reviewed, and possible enhancements to the planning methodologies are suggested.

Chapter 7 identifies and discusses several “Strategic Planning Considerations” to develop a summary of points from chapters 3, 4, and 5, that have an impact on the concept of improving strategic planning documentation. The review of management literature with particular reference to strategic planning issues, shows different authors using various terminology and different pieces of information that can be considered as components of the strategic planning landscape, these are reviewed for commonality of purpose and a list of elements that would be useful to create the information architecture are listed.

Chapter 8 details the “Research (Surveys and Review of Documentation)” that was considered necessary in support of the research aim, and there is a description of the surveys conducted and the strategic documentation that was reviewed, as the first stage of the normative research model to help determine
the initial state of the strategic planning problem. The first survey examined the strategic planning processes of organisations, to determine an up-to-date view of strategic planning, the information elements included in the planning and the degree of formality in the process. The second survey investigated the perception of staff within a particular organisation that has a formal strategic planning process, as to the usability of the strategic planning documentation.

Survey data was investigated for indication of support for the proposed information elements required for the information architecture. Following the survey investigations, there are several case studies of the strategic planning processes in different organisations and a detailed analysis of a strategic plan from a single organisation will be presented. The analysis of the strategic plan will investigate the content and structure of the OSP documentation and will highlight the omissions that reduce the effectiveness of the documentation.

Chapter 9 discusses “The Why and Benefits of Architecture” looking at why people use architecture and what benefits might be accrued from using architecture. It is suggested that architecture has a guiding role in the planning process by setting out the rationale for why the components are there, what their functions are intended to be and the way various components link together. It is discussed what assistance is offered by the use of the architectural principles to improve the presentation of the key information elements of an OSP. Does information architecture address any of the problems that were reviewed in the previous section on strategic planning? The concept and organisational principles of architecture are well understood in the area of town planning and building design and are particularly useful in dealing with complex building and urban planning structures and the development of documentation that allow all concerned to build what is required. These guiding principles are extracted and used to construct an information architecture to assist in the development of a solution to many of the planning problems that have been reviewed.

Do the same principles of architecture offer a solution to the development of other large scale project plans particularly for business strategic planning? It is possible that the advantages are so significant that they should be a greater part of university studies; building architecture can occupy entire university courses, however in IT, architecture barely gets a mention, and does not appear in Management courses at all.

Chapter 10 looks at “The Role of Information Architecture,” including its use in database design, website design, the use in library management, and its relevance in being used more generically for any situation calling for large amounts of information to be used. In particular, the chapter works from the point of view of the main proposition here, that there needs to be an improvement in the organisation of information associated with strategic planning documentation and that the organisational principles associated with architecture will assist in the development of an information architecture for the key information elements of the strategic planning documentation which will assist in this improvement.

Chapter 11 looks at “A Structure for Strategic Planning Information.” The idea of a formalized structure to the information in a strategic plan is so that all the staff in an organisation understands the format and knows where to find information relevant to them, and what is required of them to successfully achieve the strategic requirements.

A reference model for both the planning process and the information architecture for the plan presentation are presented in the next chapter, together with a before and after example of strategic plan documentation. First, however, the arguments in support of the reference models are presented.

A model can help to record information in a structured way and to communicate the information to other people: “A model is a representation of an important aspect of the real world. Sometimes the
term abstraction is used because we abstract (separate out) an aspect of particular importance to us” (Satzinger et al., 2004, p. 45). This separating out of aspects of particular importance is the primary aim behind modelling the information architecture: to identify and highlight the key information elements of the business strategic direction.

Chapter 12 develops the “Strategic Planning Reference Models” using the material reviewed in chapter 3 to chapter 7. This is a proposal for a strategic planning reference model (SPRM), which is an abstract representation of the concepts and components that can make up the strategic planning process. The SPRM can act as a reference for those people involved in strategic planning and assist the development of the strategic plan and aid the design of the strategic information model that will lead to an effective implementation plan.

The SPRM will comprise both a process reference model (PRM) for the strategic planning process and an information architecture reference model (IARM) to present the information elements of the strategic plan. An IARM will be developed to demonstrate an improved presentation of information elements of strategic planning. There will be discussion on the premise that the information architecture reference model will improve communication of strategic intent throughout the organisation which would allow the organisational strategic plan and strategic information systems plan to be better aligned.

Chapter 13 shows an example of “Using the IA Reference Model.” The example of the published documentation for university strategic planning that was summarised in the research section in chapter 8 and is reformatted using the IARM as a guide to demonstrate the use of the IARM to highlight limitations in the university strategic plans and show that by following the IARM the planners would have been guided to include essential additional information. The IARM is also validated against a constructed imaginary segment of a strategic plan as an instance of the way the strategic plan would look if the IARM had been used to construct the strategic planning model.

Chapter 14 presents the “Conclusion,” which summarises both the strategic planning problems identified in the literature and the findings of the surveys and interviews. The final section describes the benefits that could result from the proposed IARM and link relationships between surveys, interviews, strategic plan analysis and the proposed IARM.

Following this preface, chapter one is an introduction to the topics covered by this book, in particular the status of strategic planning and related topics that have an interaction with strategic planning and would be very useful if they were considered at the same time.

REFERENCES


