Twelve Best Practices

There is no single best practice for how to do successful strategic planning.
But there are several proven and effective practices that are common to the planning processes
of highly successful organizations.

1. **Systematic** – the well-defined and repeatable planning process outlines who does what, when, and why

2. **Fact-based** – the plan is built from extracting larger meaning from data and information; analysis of these facts supports improvement, innovation, and prioritization

3. **Participatory** – key stakeholders are involved in all stages of the development and implementation of strategy

4. **Leverages** – the organization's plan builds on the organization's strengths, core competencies, and competitive advantages

5. **Challenges** – the planning process challenges assumptions about the organization, drives out-of-the box thinking, and generates stretch goals

6. **Flexible** – the process is guided by a philosophy of continuous improvement, and the plan is flexible enough to allow changes to the plan as conditions change

7. **Balanced** – the plan balances short- and long-term challenges and opportunities, as well as balances the need of all key stakeholders

8. **Actionable** – translating strategy into action is a key to making sure your strategic thinking results in positive, sustainable change for your organization

9. *Communicated* – there is transparency about the process; once the goals are set, *every member of the organization* knows the goals and regularly communicates about strategy/performance

10. *Measured* – a performance measure system exists which enables members of the organization to systematically monitor and assess actual performance against goals

11. *Linked* – budgets are linked to strategy; individual plans are linked to organizational plans; performance reviews are linked to strategy

12. **Accountable** – *every member of the organization* knows his/her role in ensuring the organization meets its goals and is held accountable for doing his/her part to achieve success