

Prioritizing strategies using a 2x2 matrix

INTRODUCTION

A strategy is a deliberate and coordinated set of activities that is designed to help you achieve one or more of your student outcome goals. Together, the strategies that you prioritize and implement constitute your overall reform strategy.

The goal of this exercise is to help participants identify and prioritize the system's strategies. It asks participants to rate strategies according to their relative level of difficulty and impact on the goal, using a 2x2 matrix.

This exercise should be completed by a small group (5-10 participants), ideally by the system's leadership team, or by a team of system employees responsible for the achievement of one particular goal.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify strategies that will help the system achieve its goal(s)
- Evaluate potential strategies based on their level of difficulty and potential impact
- Identify strategies to prioritize

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Markers
- Recreate the template on page 4 and post on the wall. You can do this by printing a large version of page 4 and hanging that on the wall, or by recreating the template on a dry erase board, flip chart paper, EDI's signature "brown paper" or in a pinch projection of a computer screen. However you create this, it needs to be visible to the entire group and easy to change and add to.
- Rather than writing directly on the template you've created, you'll need to use small, repositionable cards. These cards can be just small pieces of paper, index cards or Post-Its, and there are a number of ways to make sure they are repositionable. If on a dry erase board, you could use magnets to hold cards in place, and on other surfaces, you could use sticky tack or spray-on adhesive – whatever won't damage your wall.

TIME

- 60 minutes

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Time	Activity	Facilitator notes	Materials
15 minutes	Brainstorm the strategies that are most important to achieving your goals on cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ask participants to share potential strategies while you record them on cards ■ Encourage participants to consider strategies that the system is already implementing as well as those that it could or should implement to support the achievement of the goal ■ If there has been any initial work to identify strategies (in a strategic plan or when creating the delivery plan architecture), you may wish to have those already written on cards to inform this conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cards ■ Markers
20 minutes	Place each of the identified strategies where you think they should fall on the 2x2 matrix template, according to their potential impact (on your goal) and their level of difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If you are leading this with a group, you (as facilitator) can lead the group through placing all of the strategies together, or you can ask participants to take a set of their own cards and place them where they think they should fall then discuss it together as a group; this second option may be faster, especially in larger groups ■ Encourage participants to consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – For impact: Consider both scale (how many of our end user will be reached by this strategy?) and efficacy (for all those reached, how many will reach the goal as a result of this strategy?) – For difficulty: Consider scale, resources needed, skills/knowledge needed, political challenges, etc. – Compare strategy placement to other strategies: “Is this strategy more difficult or more impactful than this other strategy?” ■ Push participants to differentiate between the strategies relative to one another to show which are <i>most</i> difficult and <i>most</i> impactful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Template ■ Cards



Time	Activity	Facilitator notes	Materials
10 minutes	Discuss and reflect on the overall picture to ensure agreement on where strategies have been placed; make any necessary adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Ask participants to reflect on the overall picture and discuss whether the placement of the strategies feels right■ Particularly ask participants consider whether strategies are in the right place relative to one another	Template
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Based on the resulting map, identify the strategies that should be prioritized as most critical to achieving the goals■ Circle or draw a star next to the strategies identified as priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Try to get participants to identify a manageable number (we recommend 5-8) strategies■ When identifying the priority strategies, there is no hard and fast rule as to which “make the cut” and which do not, but encourage participants to keep these principles in mind:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– You will likely choose some that fall into the low difficulty/low impact, as these may be quick wins to show early results– You should definitely choose some that fall into the low difficulty/high impact quadrant, as these will be easy but achieve strong results,– You will likely also choose some that are high difficulty/high impact– Generally we try to avoid strategies that are high difficulty/low impact (and as a facilitator you should push back on these), but in some cases there are political or organizational reasons why some of these may make the list of priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Template■ Markers



TEMPLATE: 2X2 MATRIX

