

Staying Connected

January 2003
Volume 5 Issue 1

Mission

Provide dynamic group processes and state-of-the-art systems to accelerate group decision-making.

Vision

Maximize the human potential of collaborative groups to make and implement decisions that achieve their preferred future.

GHS FCU update

For the second consecutive year Prism facilitated GHS Federal Credit Union's management retreat. The one-day session updated the strategic plan. Page 2.

Homeland security

Prism has begun the process of obtaining security clearance in order to assist RGS Associates, Inc. of Arlington, Va. with work at the National Security Agency.

School benchmarking

Prism's Frontier Analyst[®] study of nearly 4000 NYS schools identifies benchmark schools for regional best practice conference. Page 2.

Training

Prism delivers training in efficient team planning and decision making. Other training opportunities are on page 2.

Consulting services

Prism Decision Systems, LLC uses a variety of decision support tools to help clients accelerate and improve planning and decision-making.

Strategic planning

Prism can assist throughout the full strategic planning cycle from setting up an annual planning process to facilitating a one-day planning session with CoNexus[®]. CoNexus[®] is a radio response, group decision support technology. Its real-time voting applications help teams to

- Identify strategic opportunities and immediate priorities.
- Align resources with newly prioritized strategy.
- Make sound decisions by assessing multiple options against weighted criteria.

Web-based plans & assessments

Use the Concept System[®] for web-based needs assessments, focus groups, and planning. With the Concept System[®], any number of participants from anywhere on the globe can brainstorm, sort and rate ideas from their desktops at their convenience.

Benchmarking and target setting

Frontier Analyst[®] can determine your organization's overall efficiency, help set its performance targets and identify benchmark peers.

Credit union planning

"After a one-day retreat with Prism Decision Systems, our team is armed with a fresh set of three-year strategies and immediate priorities," said Arthur D. Field, president and CEO, First Heritage Federal Credit Union. "Without Prism's process and CoNexus[®], we would have required three or four full days to complete this work."

Planning with quality and speed

What generates this kind of client satisfaction? The answer is simple: Prism delivers efficient process and effective group decision support.

Efficient process

Before the retreat, Prism meets with the planning team to help them define the key strategic issues facing the organization. Volunteers then research each issue and formulate strategic responses.

Consequently, First Heritage's retreat began with a bang: a series of rich

presentations advocated clearly defined strategies. Prism's skilled facilitation helped the team expand upon and refine this preliminary work. They agreed to a set of three-year strategies shortly after lunch.

CoNexus[®]: identifying leverage

The First Heritage team then used the CoNexus[®] strategic profiling application to agree to four high-leverage, immediate priorities.

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Credit union cont'd

"PRISM and CoNexus[®] delivered great value to us in this process." Mr. Field said. Indeed, organizations often grind through their planning process, fail to agree to priorities, and finish spent and frustrated.

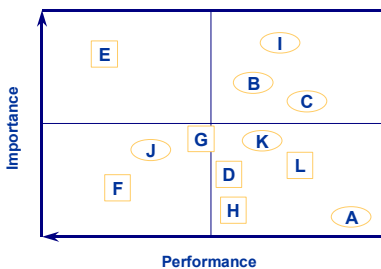
In contrast, the First Heritage team left energized with a succinct plan that identified a clear path forward: quantifiable performance targets, a set of nine strategies, and four immediate priorities.

GHS FCU update

For the second consecutive year PRISM facilitated the GHS Federal Credit Union's annual management retreat. "Because of the impact of last year's planning, we've made PRISM a member of our planning team," said CEO Steve Gardner.

After assessing progress against the 2002 plan, the GHS team updated their three-year strategy. Using CoNexus[®], they assessed the new strategies to understand their (a) relative importance to great success and (b) current performance. The team reviewed the vote results displayed in an "opportunity

GHS 2003 Opportunity Profile



profile"(see above.) They quickly converged on three priorities. Strategies I, B and C in the profile's upper right hand quadrant are very important and under performing. As such, they represent immediate, high-leverage opportunities for GHS.

"Once again, with PRISM's help, our board, management and employees are very focused on the strategies that are most critical to our future success," CEO Gardner said.

Optimal thinking tips

Often when problem solving, we converge too quickly and do not explore all available options. Creativity experts call this premature closure. And it can be hazardous. One easy strategy for sustaining divergence is to reframe the problem being solved. Case in point: I know a surgeon, a really sharp guy. He is building a wooden kayak in his basement and has decided that he needs more room. His old, octopus furnace is taking up too much space.

The problem first defined

He framed the challenge: In what ways might I extend my basement to create more space? His initial plan: rip up the back deck, excavate beneath it, remove and add foundation walls, address new drainage concerns, and extend the basement underneath the back yard.

The problem reframed

With some gentle prodding, he redefined the challenge: In what ways might I increase the usable space within the basement's existing footprint? His revised plan: Replace the giant old octopus with a small, high efficiency furnace. The benefit: he gains both the space he needs *and* lower energy bills—for a fraction of first option's cost.



When problem solving, avoid premature closure: reframe the problem, generate all possible options, and increase the likelihood that you'll converge on the optimal solution!

School benchmarking

PRISM can provide detailed benchmarking analysis for 4000 schools in New York State. The analysis is based on a Frontier Analyst[®] study of three-year trend data in the State report card.

Recently PRISM was retained to use this study to identify four rural, four suburban and two urban schools from across the State that demonstrated benchmark performance in middle level math. These schools presented to a capacity audience of nearly 300 educators at the Broome-Tioga BOCES' inaugural best practices conference for middle level math.

For more information regarding Frontier Analyst[®], benchmarking in business and industry, or supporting a local school's benchmarking efforts, please contact PRISM.

Training

PRISM delivers training in efficient team planning and decision making, creative problem solving, conflict resolution and consensus building. Other training opportunities include:

18th Annual International Conference on The Positive Power of

Humor, Hope and Healing: April 4-6, 2003, in Saratoga Springs, New York. Go to www.humorproject.com

The 48th Annual Creative Problem Solving Institute: June 22-27, 2003, Adams Mark Hotel, Buffalo, NY. Go to www.cpsiconference.com

Sample engagements

Arnot Medical Services
Binghamton City School District
Borough of Fanwood, NJ
Broome County, NY
Chenango Memorial Hospital
City of Grand Rapids, MI
City School District of Albany
Education 21, Inc.
First Heritage Federal Credit Union
GHS Federal Credit Union
The Greater Boston Visitor and Convention Bureau
Johnson City School District
The Los Angeles Times
Lockport City School District
Mercy Health System of Philadelphia
National Institute for Health
New York State Education Department
New York State Electric & Gas
Oswego City School District
Science Applications International Corp.
Syracuse City School District
Telcordia Technologies
Times Mirror Company
United Health Services
United Medical Associates
Washington, DC Metro Transit Authority