

RPTA 322 Administration of Leisure Services
Organizational Goals

A goal is a desired state of affairs, a desired outcome.

An *organizational goal* is a specific state of affairs an organization wishes to achieve.

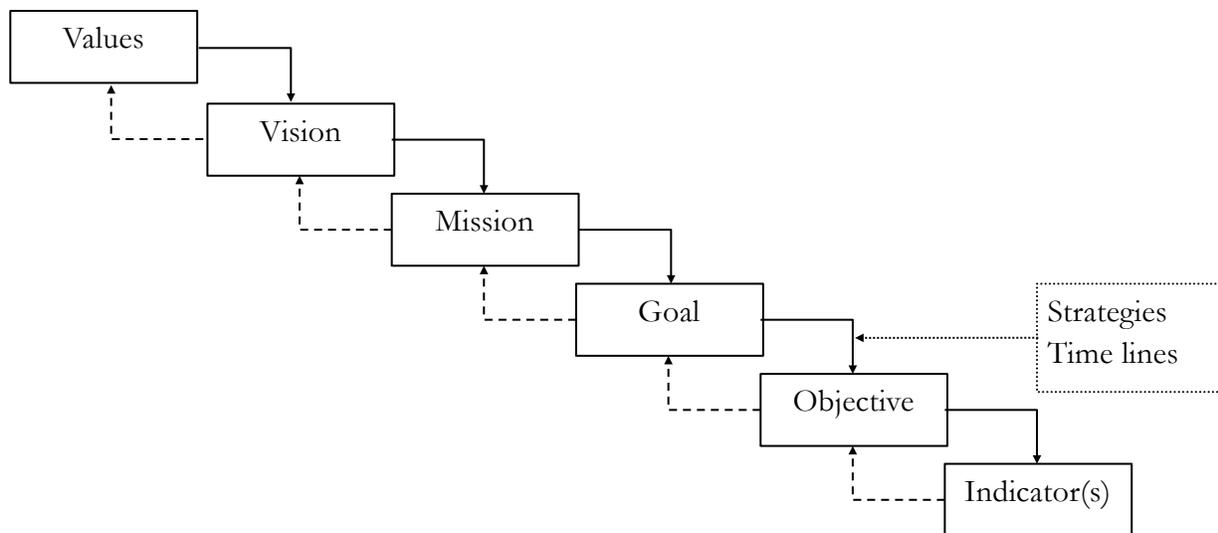
Formal organization goals are those specifically adopted by an organization and stated publicly, often in strategic plans, annual plans, and management by objective documents.

Informal organization goals are not adopted or stated publicly, but are instead evident in day-to-day activities of the organization's managers and employees. Informal goals may be compatible or incompatible with an organization's formal goals.

The best means to identify what an organization's actual goals are is simply to observe where the organization's resources are concentrated.

Organizational effectiveness is the extent to which its formal goals are achieved; *organizational efficiency* is the resources expended in doing so.

There is a hierarchy of which organizational goals are part:



Note the two-way flow involved in this hierarchy. Vision flows from values, mission from vision, goal from mission, objective from goal, and indicator(s) from objective. To evaluate organizational effectiveness, however, the flow is reversed: We measure indicators to determine if objectives have been met, which tells us in turn how well goals have been achieved, from which we then know the extent to which the mission has been accomplished and the vision fulfilled.

We measure *indicators* and not objectives or goals. It is therefore essential that the relationships among goals, objectives, and indicators be direct, clearly articulated, and logical.

Strategies and *time lines* must be attached to goals and objectives. Goals and objectives are guidelines for action. Effective and efficient action requires identifying *how* we will meet our objectives and *when*. Strategies and time lines are essential for administrators to be able to plan, direct, coordinate, and control.

Goal distortion: The danger of over-emphasizing goals and objectives

Although goals and objectives are basic management tools, but they have at least one significant inherent danger. In A. Etzioni's words, over-emphasizing measurement of indicators "tends to encourage over-production of highly measurable items and neglect of less measurable ones" (*Modern organizations*, Prentice-Hall, 1964, p. 9). This is called *goal distortion*.

There is a known tendency in organizations for managers and administrators to concentrate on goals whose indicators are more readily measured because success or failure is more readily visible. For example, resources may be shifted *away from* goals with less easily measured indicators and *shifted toward* goals whose indicators are more easily measured. Such a shift may occur even though the goals with less easily measured indicators are in fact more central to the overall mission of the organization. The understandable desire to demonstrate success can lead individual managers – and sometimes organizations as a whole – to narrow their focus to those goals whose attainment can be most readily established. The process of goal distortion is often subconscious, which makes it all the more necessary to monitor the strategies administrators are pursuing and how they distribute resources.

Individual and organizational goals

There is never total congruence between an employee's individual goals and those of the organization, nor need there be. Individual goals are highly variable. The manager's task is to find the means by which the individual can advance her/his individual goals while also advancing the organization's goals (the precise balance between them will change as circumstances change). Imposing absolute adherence to organizational goals and allowing absolute freedom to pursue individual goals are equally destructive.