

## Book Review

***Strategic Planning for the Chiropractic Office*, by Michael R. Wiles, BS, MEd, DC.  
Published by Jones & Bartlett, Sudbury, MA, 2008. 154 pages**

***Reviewed by Michael Sackett, DC, MS, DABCO***

In today's health care environment, to be a successful doctor of chiropractic requires not only clinical competence but also significant business and entrepreneurial skills. Business success requires a strategic plan, and many DCs have developed business plans. This is particularly true when DCs seek loans because lenders expect to see a plan that would appear to ensure the likelihood of success. The strategic plan designed for the office of a doctor of chiropractic goes into much detail. It starts with a mission and a vision, followed by the levels of planning required to achieve success.

While this book is not difficult reading, it does require some thoughtful study of the contents. Readers must expect to go back and review chapters and redo the exercises. If this is done, however, the book does give all the ingredients to successfully develop a strategic plan.

It is difficult to write such a book with the solo practice in mind. Most of the concepts discussed are more commonly practiced by larger organizations. The author has done a good job of trying to bring the necessary information to the solo practitioner at a useful level without watering down the process.

**Chapter I:** Introduces strategic planning, as well as goals and objectives. Gives a least 5 major reasons to develop a planning document for a practice.

**Chapter II:** Discusses long-range planning. The classic SWOT analysis is discussed—a useful exercise when reviewing all aspects of a practice.

**Chapter III:** Creating mission and vision statements. Although this is commonly done in a larger organization, it is rare in a DC's office. Because a mission describes the clinic's reason to exist, however, it is useful to have one. Examples are given.

**Chapter IV:** Moving from a mission statement into strategic goals. The chapter is very brief, but it allows readers to understand the link between mission and vision. Includes a useful exercise.

**Chapter V:** Tactical planning. This chapter does a good job of defining the characteristics of objectives and includes exercises designed to help practitioners develop objectives and carry out tactical planning. Some of these examples, however, may be overly complex and may not be as practical for the small office.

**Chapter VI:** Gives excellent attention to the details of establishing operational plans.

It also discusses terminology such as differences among rules, procedures, and policies. Provides an excellent exercise that would be helpful in establishing an operational plan. The terminology and process may be somewhat overwhelming to a novice the first time around. It would take time to master this chapter and make it work in the real world, but this would be time well spent.

**Chapter VII:** Discusses 2 approaches to practice planning—1 for the established practice and 1 for a new practice. A matrix is given that can be used to involve staff members and other potential practitioners in the decision-making process. The guideline is good, but perhaps too detailed for a doctor with just 1 front-office staff member.

**Chapter VIII:** The author states that discipline is required to make a plan successful. He recommends creating a list of daily critical action steps and says if readers get nothing else out of reading the book, the habit of creating those steps is of tremendous value. Creating a daily and weekly action checklist is very important to remind the doctor of all the tasks at hand. Without checklists, it becomes very easy to skip a task or 2 that may be essential to furthering one's goals.

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**Chapter IX:** This excellent chapter is called “Final Preparations.” If you read nothing else in the book, read this. The author goes through the minimal components for a strategic plan. He discusses 5 minimum components and utilizes examples from his practice, including material generally provided by practice management firms. The author does an excellent job of breaking the components down and giving the reader simple

steps to achieve success. After all, if having a strategic plan does not yield a full practice, then the plan needs to be re-worked. The author also discusses the 5 P’s for success, which is excellent. I think readers will find this to be their favorite chapter.

**Chapter X:** Appendices are superior and contain examples of strategic plans along with templates. Appendix IV creates an executive summary for a

strategic plan—an excellent overview.

*Rating:* On a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate this book as a 9.■

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