Operational Versus Strategic Issues

Issue: The issue is: ☐ Primarily operational ☐ Primarily strategic

	Operational ←		→ Strategic
1. Is the issue on the agenda of the organization's policy board (whether elected or appointed)?	No		Yes
2. Is the issue on the agenda of the organization's chief executive (whether elected or appointed)?	No		Yes
3. When will the strategic issue's challenge or opportunity confront you?	Right now	Next year	2 or more years from now
4. How broad an impact will the issue have?	Single unit or division		Entire organization
5. How large is your organization's financial risk or opportunity?	Minor (≤ 10% of budget)	Moderate (10–15% of budget)	Major (≥ 25% of budget)
6. Will strategies for issue resolution likely require: a. Change in mission?	No		Yes
b. Development of new service goals and programs?	No		Yes
c. Significant changes in revenue sources or amounts?	No		Yes
d. Significant amendments in federal or state statutes or regulations?	No		Yes
e. Significant staff changes?	No		Yes
f. Significant technology changes?	No		Yes
g. Major facility changes?	No		Yes
h. Major changes in stakeholder relationships?	No		Yes
7. How apparent is the best approach for issue resolution?	Obvious, ready to implement	Broad parameters, few details	Wide open
8. What is the lowest level of management that can decide how to deal with this issue?	Line staff supervisor		Head of major department
9. What are the probable consequences of not addressing this issue?	Inconvenience, inefficiency	Significant service disruption, financial losses	Major long-term service disruption and large cost or revenue setbacks
10. How many other groups are affected by this issue and must be involved in resolution?	None	1–3	4 or more
11. How sensitive or "charged" is this issue relative to community, social, political, religious, and cultural values?	Benign	Touchy	Dynamite

Source: Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Plan,

Bryson and Alston, 2005