



LEARNING LAB

Welcome to Medic 101. I'm Doc Studnek and we are in week four of the Learning Lab. Let's continue our quest to understand the process Medic uses to guide our Agency. This week, we will be discussing two more steps in the process of developing Medic's objectives. We call them Abstraction and Strategic Approach.

Abstraction and Strategic Approach are a *diverging* and *converging* idea generation and selection process. Similar to last week's discussion, these two objectives focus on a narrow range of topics. We also developed a set of common themes that could be presented to Agency Leadership. Once those themes are developed, one must ask the following questions:

1. What are the critical issues or areas of opportunity, within each theme?
2. What are the fundamental causes behind the information in each theme?
3. What are the implications of the theme to the organization and organizations purpose?

Why do we ask these questions? The answer is simple, my lofty coeds: *to provoke a deeper level of thinking related to the issues or opportunities facing our organization.*

Asking questions is fundamentally important when dissecting a complicated problem. Think of how care providers use questions to determine a likely diagnosis for a patient. Sometimes the critical issue is easily identifiable, upon initial assessment. But sometimes, it takes a lot more information to understand an individual's current acute health need(s). And what's the best way to get more information? A question!

This scenario is similar to how we determine our strategic objectives. Sometimes, an organization's critical issues (or areas of opportunity) are readily apparent and easy to find - using a few *questions*. Sometimes "clearly delineated" themes, at first blush, can become nuanced and complicated when the questions are brought to light. The ability to pick apart common themes and identify the nuance helps us form a strategic approach that might solve a complicated problem.

The Strategic Approach is the first draft of our Strategic Objectives. It addresses the issues and areas of opportunity identified in Abstraction. So again, we are taking a set of ideas and *converging*. Next to selection of the strategic objectives, this convergence is perhaps the most difficult step in the process. This step requires us to utilize learned information and clearly articulate a direction the Agency may want to create, with consensus and commonality of definitions.

Well, it's been a fun-filled week in the Learning Lab. Next week, we will tackle the most difficult step: selecting our strategic objectives from the numerous approaches we have identified.

Don't forget to email your questions to Tiffany at tiffany@medic911.com. And for past Learning Labs, visit medic911.com and log in to the extranet.



MODULE FOUR: ABSTRACT APPROACH