



# A Fresh Approach to Project Planning



**A**S THE HUSTLE and bustle of the holiday season slowly fades away, we find ourselves searching for that temporarily forgotten pace of everyday life. Social calendars renew as we flip into January and a clean slate of opportunity presents itself. While some of us attempt to catch our breath and rejuvenate by simply enjoying quiet moments alone, others recharge by committing to formal resolutions, both personal and professional. As always, there are those who continue marching forward without hesitation.

The varying techniques used to plot action plans are unique, just like our individual goals and objectives, as well as those of the organizations we represent. Despite popular misconception, goals and objectives do not share the same meaning. According to Webster's Dictionary, goals are identified as "the end toward which effort is directed." They are broad visions of purpose that commonly portray big picture concepts and abstract thinking.

Objectives are described as clear and measurable statements of anticipated results. While an identified goal might be to produce a successful program, the objectives might be defined as increased attendance, improved satisfaction, and richer educational content.

It is helpful to note that the practice of establishing a clear vision and delivering its product is the same in the world of meeting management as it is in our personal lives. The key is to determine, in advance, whether the resources are available to produce a quality product that will meet expectations.

### **History**

Once the overall purpose of a project has been established (and documented in writing), the first step in the planning process is to review historical data. Gaining perspective on what has worked in the past will help identify important details for the future. Carefully examine old files and past