



Mission Impact vs. Achievability

A Strategic Decision Tool for Nonprofits

Grace Olechowski, Potrero Group Consultant

Imagine you are deep into strategic planning with your nonprofit's planning committee. Over the past few months, you have gathered input on your organization's future, unveiling insights and opportunities, affirming current initiatives, and identifying new areas for growth.

The number of strategic directions and opportunities emerging is exciting—and overwhelming. You now face the challenge of selecting specific strategic objectives to help achieve your goals. The crucial question now is: where should we focus?

One effective tool to help you answer that question is a 2x2 chart assessing mission impact versus organizational achievability. This tool offers a starting point to begin prioritizing strategic objectives by considering two key factors:

- **Mission Impact.** The extent to which an objective will create meaningful, measurable, and sustainable mission-aligned change.
- **Achievability.** Measures how feasible it is for an organization to accomplish an objective, considering available resources, capacity, skills, and time.

2x2 Chart: Mission Impact vs. Achievability



Using the 2x2 Chart

Use this chart to evaluate each strategic objective and determine:

- Will this objective create a high or low mission impact?
- Is this objective reasonably achievable for the organization?

Based on these assessments, assign each objective to one of four quadrants:

- 1. High Impact/Low Achievability.** These might be worth pursuing or possibly deferring. Consider whether the high impact justifies the investment of resources to improve achievability.
- 2. High Impact/High Achievability.** Pursue these; these are likely to be significant wins.
- 3. Low Impact/High Achievability.** Pursue these; these might be quick wins. Consider whether the ease of achievement justifies the low impact.
- 4. Low Impact/Low Achievability.** Avoid these. These are likely to be time-wasters.

By analyzing options across the full spectrum of the chart, you can easily see which objectives merit prioritization, which require further deliberation, and which may be postponed or discarded for the time being. Additionally, it may highlight areas where you might consider investing resources to bolster the achievability of certain high-impact objectives in the future.

Considerations Beyond the 2x2 Chart

While this chart is a valuable starting point for decision making, it doesn't capture all complexities. For instance, it doesn't consider whether other organizations might be better suited to lead an objective. This raises additional questions such as:

- Does this objective align with your strengths and future growth, or should another organization take the lead?
- Could you form a partnership or provide support to achieve this objective?

Ultimately, this tool is best suited to help organize strategic objectives and spark further discussion. It won't answer every question, but it will provide a clear, structured approach to prioritize your nonprofit's strategy.

For more about strategic planning and decision making, contact us at info@potrerogroup.com.

***Note: 2x2 charts that assess value versus feasibility are a well-established practice across many sectors. Potrero Group acknowledges that we did not invent this process and encourages organizations to adapt this framework for their own purposes.*