



The Thin Book of SOAR; Building Strengths-Based Strategy

By Jacqueline M. Stavros, Gina Hinrichs

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SOAR is the acronym of a new strategic planning process that is based on discovering and multiplying what the organization does well. SOAR takes the Appreciative Inquiry philosophy and applies it to provide a strategic thinking and dialogue process. The authors have been instrumental in developing this process and will share the concept and case studies to give you the confidence to try SOAR.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Masterful in its simplicity, this book captures the essence of strengths-based planning in a way that any business could readily adopt.."

----Tim Lukenda, President and CEO, Extendicare Health Services, Inc.

In today's world with its ever increasing speed of change, it is refreshing and hopeful to see frameworks emerge that will help us cope with change in a positive and constructive way. More than ever we need to discover our strengths as only they will help us to find our true identity, that of the communities we live in and the organizations we work for. All of us dealing with change will be inspired by the thinking behind SOAR - and the practical tools suggested - as described in this book. And as such this book is an invitation to start using SOAR to help your community, your organization to move into the direction of its strengths. It was a great pleasure to read this new Thin Book. And, others will find it quite useful. -- **Joep C. de Jong, Director Learning Solutions, BT Global Services, The Netherlands**

Our organization learned how to use the Quick SOAR described in this book and it exceeded our expectations. Not only was it an efficient planning tool, it was inclusive, engaging, flexible, and adaptable. Most importantly Quick SOAR was fun and inspiring. How many hospital meetings achieve that? **Karen Buhler, Acting Head, Department of Family Practice, British Columbia Women's Hospital, Vancouver, Canada**

The Thin Book of SOAR is a practical guide for navigating a world of complexity with an easy to understand framework and questions that can change how we see the world from one of lack to one of possibility. It leads the reader to a new way of seeing based on finding strategic solutions which often results in great than expected outcomes. -- **Deborah Maher, Principal, Touchstone Consulting Group, Washington, D.C.**

This is one of the best strategy books I've read. The SOAR framework and its approach build strength on strength in a practical proactive way. Strengths-based strategy puts right brain and left brain together with a whole brain-whole systems approach for planning in business, government, education, and non-governmental organizations. -- **Dr. Marge Schiller, President, Positive Change Core, Boston, Massachusetts**

This book is excellent! It is an essential read for anyone looking to accomplish extraordinary results. It provides the framework for working with people in a positively deviant fashion that capitalizes on strengths and makes weaknesses irrelevant. The authors do an excellent job explaining what is SOAR and how to simply use SOAR as a whole system collaborative approach that brings out the best in people and their action plans. -- **Fadi Baradihi, Financial Consultant, Hantz Financial Services, Inc., Midland, Michigan**

This is an excellent framework for engaging your organization moving strategy from ideas to execution. Jackie and Gina have given us an inspirational, yet practical frameworks for helping leaders engage people in creating actionable strategies. A short read, but a depth of understanding that can only come from those who have been on the front lines. A must read for those interested in creating strategies and strategic plans that live beyond the annual planning meeting. -- **Mona A. Amodeo, Ph.D., Founder & President, idgroup, Pensacola, Florida**

It is amazing the power that can be derived from focusing on the strengths of our selves and our people. It is also amazing that it surprises us. What could be more natural and more powerful! --**Michael A. Rinkus, Senior Vice President, National Group Manager, International Trade Services, Comerica Bank**

This book is a must read for everyone engaged in organizational change. The SOAR Framework is brilliant! It simultaneously addresses business management solutions while encouraging collaboration among all stakeholders. I experienced exceptional results after applying SOAR principles in my organization. SOAR is easy to use and offers the holistic, strengths-based, approach to decision making necessary for transformation. Large and complex organizations such as the U.S. Department of Defense will benefit when SOAR is used to affect enterprise transformation. -- **Major Loyd Beal, III, Acquisition Officer, U.S. Army, Warren, MI**

I love the stories in this book and wished that I had a book like this to order for all my employees. SOAR offers a way of being in a relationship to the organization. An organization lives in the mind of employees and the results come from an employee's way of thinking, planning, and acting. SOAR is a thought starter to think positive about strategy and new program potentials to inspired action. -- **Tom Heinrichs, Retired Manager of Training and Development, Healthcare Services Organization, Gross Pointe, Michigan**

Without engaging the hearts and aspirations of your teams and employees, your business cannot achieve its real potential. The future of your business depends on every employee - at every level - giving all that they have and doing all that they can. SOAR provides a means to invite everyone into the success of the business and ensures the alignment required to compete in a global market. -- **James R. Jenkins**

In a few short pages, Jackie Stavros and Gina Hinrichs, both pioneers in the use of an Appreciative Inquiry approach to organization change, manage to shift the readers perspective from seeing organization change in parts to an understanding of organization change grounded in holistic thinking the organization as a living and constantly shifting entity totally connected in ways that require an image of organizations as healthy human systems. Beginning with the well-respected parts model for organization change called SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) these two exceptionally innovative and creative women, grounded in a more holistic view of human systems, have managed to take a very useful and often successful SWOT process and shift the focus from dichotomy to wholeness. The process so articulately and powerfully described in this valuable Thin Book is called SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results.) This shift not only results in useful plans and processes, it also leads to energy and excitement within the system and commitment to creating an organization capable of continuous and generative change in response to today's climate that will tolerate nothing less. This Thin Book, like so many others in this series, is a MUST READ! --**Jane Magruder Watkins & Ralph Kelly, Appreciative Inquiry Unlimited, Williamsburg, Virginia**

Masterful in its simplicity, this book captures the essence of strengths-based planning in a way that any business could readily adopt. Stavros and Hinrichs have delivered a whole system approach to strategic planning that harnesses the positive energy embedded in every organization. SOAR provides a flexible framework for strategic planning that has universal application to any business dilemma. -- **Tim Lukenda, President and CEO, Extendicare Health Services, Inc.**

The SOAR concept offers a proven approach for inspired action! It avoids the trap of analysis paralysis, and fosters responsive and nimble decision making. It also provides a framework for timely course corrections, enabled by alignment and teamwork, through continuous collaboration and communication...shaped by relevant world experiences. -- **Pat Pinkston, Vice-President Agriculture and Turf Global Platform Services, John Deere**

This book introduces a straightforward way to identify and unlock the positive energy in organizations by involving multiple stakeholders. You will find the book to be practical and easy to implement to build a strategic foundation in your organization. I recommend that you capitalize on the practical experience and wisdom contained in this book. -- **Kim Cameron, Professor, Ross School of Business and School of Education, University of Michigan**

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The SOAR approach to environmental scanning represents a tremendous innovation to the strategic planning process as well as a generative integration of the appreciative strengths-based approach to building organizational capacity. Leveraging an organization's positive core, the SOAR process seeks to increase organizational capability and performance by pushing it beyond its existing boundaries to a more expansive state integrating strategic goals, objectives and activities (what we do) with values, practices and behaviors (how we do it) thereby creating shared purpose and meaningful engagement. This is a great book and a great contribution to the strategic planning process! -- **Thomas J. Griffin, Ph.D., Vice-President, Organizational Learning, U.S. Cellular, Chicago, Illinois**

The powerful combination found within SOAR of traditional strategic planning and Appreciative Inquiry has created a way for organizations to tap into new levels of strategic opportunity. Organizations have begun to discover that the old strategic planning methods of focusing on the negative aspects of the business lead to a downward spiral of counter-measures, instead of the upward spiral of potential opportunities and growth provided by SOAR. The motivational aspects of SOAR are also incredibly powerful, as employees and stakeholders find their voices resonating in the future plans of the organization. This makes implementation work. It would be a mistake to underestimate the potential of SOAR to dramatically change the strategic planning landscape as we know it. This is very impressive book great job! --**D. Lynn Kelley, Ph.D, Vice-President, Textron Six Sigma, Providence, Rhode Island**

About the Author

Jacqueline Stavros has 20 years experience in strategic planning, marketing, international, and organization development and change. Jackie is an Associate Professor for the College of Management, Lawrence Technological University, where she teaches and integrates strengths-based practices like SOAR, Appreciative Inquiry, and sustainable development concepts in her courses: Leading Organizational Change, Strategic Management, and Organization Development.

She has worked and traveled to over a dozen countries in Asia, Europe, and North America. Clients have included: ACCI Business System, BAE Systems, Fasteners, Inc., General Motors of Mexico, Jefferson Wells, NASA, Girl Scouts USA, gedas International, Orbseal Technologies, Tendercare, United Way, as well as many automotive suppliers, nonprofit organizations, and higher education institutions.

She has co-authored and edited many books, book chapters and articles including: *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living* (with Cheri Torres) and *The First Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: for Leaders of Change* (with David Cooperrider and Diana Whitney), and the third edition of *Practicing Organization Development: A Guide for Leading Change*.

She earned a Doctorate in Management at Case Western Reserve University, an MBA from Michigan State

University, and a BA from Wayne State University. Jackie is an associate for the Taos Institute. She is a board member of the Positive Change Core, a virtual global organization that focuses on strengths-based approaches to learning in primary education (Pk-12th grade). She is a member of the Academy of Management, Organization Development Network, and the Organization Development Institute. Contact her at jstavros@comcast.net.

Gina Hinrichs is founder and president of Hinrichs Consulting, L.L.C., which provides business management consulting for continuous and sustainable improvement. During the last 25 years, Gina has worked in engineering, operations, marketing, and project management. She has led many workshops and projects to achieve shifts in performance and process improvement. Gina consults with a range of organizations from education and social profit organizations to companies with \$20 billion in sales. She works with IBM, John Deere, Schneider National, ProHealth Care, Quad City Bank & Trust, U.S. Cellular, Library Systems, Community Action organizations, and multiple schools systems. Her career and client experience combine to provide a rich understanding of organizations and processes to facilitate change.

She has co-authored and edited several book chapters and articles including: *The Fieldbook for Collaborative Work Systems* and *The Handbook of High-Performance Virtual Teams*. She is working on a new book called, *It takes a Community: Strength-focused Transformation for Schools*.

Gina has earned a Ph.D. in Organization Development, an MBA from Northwestern University, Master's in Organizational Behavior, a BA in History, and a BS in Engineering. Gina is an adjunct professor of management for Capella University, Lawrence Technological University, and Benedictine University and is a past editor of OD Journal. She teaches management courses combining strategy and organization development theory, critical thinking, and practical experience to prepare emerging business leaders. Contact her at hinrichs@geneseo.net

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nancy Hedrick:

Book is definitely written, printed, or outlined for everything. You can recognize everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important matter to bring us around the world. Beside that you can your reading skill was fluently. A publication *The Thin Book of SOAR; Building Strengths-Based Strategy* will make you to always be smarter. You can feel a lot more confidence if you can know about every thing. But some of you think this open or reading any book make you bored. It is not necessarily make you fun. Why they are often thought like that? Have you trying to find best book or appropriate book with you?

Roxanne Pineda:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you need to try to find a new activity honestly, that is look different you can read a book. It is really fun for you personally. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a book. The book *The Thin Book of SOAR; Building Strengths-Based Strategy* it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this

book. Should you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore simply to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book has high quality.

Corinne Parsons:

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Joseph Franson:

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