



Past Event: 2025 NCSBN Annual Meeting - Bringing Clarity to Action: From Mission to Strategy Video Transcript

Event

2025 NCSBN Annual Meeting

More info: <https://www.ncsbn.org/events/2025-nlc-annual-meeting>

Presenters

Phyllis Polk Johnson, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, President, NCSBN Board of Directors; Executive Director, Mississippi Board of Nursing;

Phil Dickison, PhD, RN, CEO, NCSBN

- [Phyllis] So, we're back. And this particular section, you're not going to see me, nor hear me, you're going to hear from Phil. But I think it's so important. He's going to be talking about bringing clarity to action. On behalf of the board of directors of NCSBN, we want to thank you, the members, membership, for your input, for attending the focus groups, for being so attentive.

Like we told you before, we're in listening mode. So many times as the ED, I don't feel like I'm listening to a herd. And so, that was one of the things that we wanted to hear from the membership, to make sure we were meeting your needs, but not only that, to make sure we were doing what the mission of NCSBN says we should be doing, to make sure that what your needs are aligned with the mission.

Because the mission is to support nursing regulators, you, each and every one of you, in your mandate of public protection. So, Phil is going to clarify the hard work that your board of directors has been at over the past year to address your issues, your concerns, and your input. Without further ado, let us welcome... This is the other half of P-Square.

That's the nickname they gave us, P-Square. We're so similar in a lot of ways that it's dangerous. So, Phil, take it away.

- [Phil] Thank you so much. Appreciate it. So it's really good to be back with you. Before I get started, someone say, what's up with the black suit? All right, so I got to tell you, as I was walking up here... So, I think my wife, she's quite the fashionista, and so, uses me as a little Ken Doll to dress me up.

I don't get it, it works though, right? But I got to tell you about this suit, because I'm not sure what message she's trying to send, because this has always been referred to as my marrying and burying suit. Yeah, get it?

So, let's hope she's not sending some message and I'm not getting buried today, all right? Strategic thinking, that is really the phrase I've been using a lot with the board of directors, and they have adopted it so well. It's a movement away from simply strategic planning and checklists to thinking bigger. And last year, as we prepared for this upcoming year, which is our new strategic year, we moved from strategic planning as a board to strategic thinking.

And what is that? Why do that? I think what we have to start understanding is, as a board, we need to think bigger. It's about understanding the bigger picture of our work in the world. It lets us look further out at the landscape.

It helps us guide planning to know where we're going and why we're doing it. So, it's not just about what we do. It's about how we think. And this is where the board was going. And so, strategic planning does provide you a checklist.

That's really what it does, right? And if you're doing strategic planning, it tells you how you're going to get from step A to step B. What it doesn't do is tell you why or how you think. And if what we do... when I said yesterday, didn't I tell you yesterday? Like, the landscape is changing just fast, right?

And you've got to be more agile. When you create a plan... Any project managers in here? [vocalization] No? Where's Tasha? Here's what I would say about that. You probably chose the right profession because project management, ah, right?

Like nobody wants to follow the plan. And so, I get it. And that's not what I'm asking our board to do. I don't need them to create a plan. I need them to think so that we can look out to the future. It gives us agility. It's not about predicting the future.

That's the shift here. It's not predicting the future. It's being prepared for it so that we become much more agile. It's not just following a plan. It's about reading the landscape, spotting the opportunities pretty much in real time so that we can actually shift.

This shift would help us empower all of us. You in the room, everybody, staff leadership, it empowers all of us to think bigger, move faster, lead smarter. And as a part of this effort, we made the board go through a strategic thinking process every board meeting starting day one. Two of those sessions were about, how are we going to plan our next strategic cycle?

Meaning, what does that look like? Where are we going? What's the landscape? And there were a lot of thinking processes going on in there. In fact, what they first did, and I'm going to go over this with you so you see it because it's something you will vote on, but what they first had to do was reevaluate, reaffirm. And by the way, they did, Tony told you that yesterday, reaffirm the mission, the visions, and the values.

Those need to be reaffirmed because quite frankly, they are why we exist. They put the guardrails around strategic thinking. So, our mission is our purpose. Phyllis gave it to you. Our vision is our destination, a vision that needs to be ambitious and achievable. Perhaps it seems aspirational.

It may be years before we get there, but it's always that vision, if you will, where we're heading. And finally, our values, which define how we operate with one another. And so, what's important about these? I'm going to talk to you about it. We understand that the strategy is important, but it has to be guided by these foundational anchors. And so, the mission, if you can't quote it, Phyllis has got it pretty

well, the purpose or the mission for the council is that we empower and support nursing regulators in their mandate to protect the public.

Our vision statement is, leading regulatory excellence worldwide. I need to say something about that because I think people get this confused. It is not being the worldwide regulator. That is not what that statement says, is it? It says, leading regulatory excellence worldwide. That is, we need to be support across the world to be that exemplar.

I called you yesterday the flagship, the flagship of regulatory excellence. That's what we're talking about here. And we have to all do that with insight, a value set. We have to have our one NCSBN culture. You know, one of the rules about a culture is it must have a set of agreed upon values. And we've agreed upon the values, collaboration, transparency, innovation, integrity, and excellence.

And those form the boundaries for a strategic statement, which will be our plan of action. Now, the power of a strategy statement is what I've already told you. But before I go on, let me see a show of hands.

How many know how many strategic, initiative statements we have right now? Anybody find that to be a problem? Yeah, I do, too. Let me go one step further. Guessing you don't know them, any of you can quote just one, just one of those to me right now without looking it up.

Yeah, that seems to be a problem, too. And I don't blame you because here is a little secret, neither can I. Your CEO can't do it either. That doesn't help us. If those are supposed to be our North Star, where we're going, our clarity, the action, and we cannot even tell the number of them or what they say, we need to fix it.

And that's what the board has said. We've got to fix this. And so, we're going to take a different approach. So, we started looking at a lot of ways to make strategy statements. And how do you do that? What is the right way? And there are a lot of different theories out there.

But almost all of them say this. You have to have three elements. You need to be able to, in your strategy statement, define your ultimate objective. What is it that you do? Second is, what unique advantage do you bring to that thing that you do? There's a song like that, isn't there?

Yeah. And third, what is the scope? What is the area in which you work in? You have to have those three things. Now, to put it more simply, here you go, what spaces are we in? What results do we want? And what actions best get us there?

You can turn those into a strategic statement. Now, the exercise the board had was, I came to them originally and said, here's a board going beyond. I said, it's got to be 60 words or less. I prefer 30.

Fifteen would be great. Because you have to be able to remember it. You have to be able to say it when your legislator talks to you, when your stakeholders talk to you. You've got to be able to say it to each other. You've got to be able to remember it, right? And so, 60 words, that's a lot, but I was willing to live with that. The board got less than 60 words.

They got it under 30 words. That's really great. And we were able to define in that very statement all of these things. An excellent strategy statement does these things. And I'm not a word slide guy, so I'm not going to read to you because you are all really smart and I'm pretty sure you can read.

But I want to point out a couple of these. It needs to balance comprehensiveness with brevity. It's got to be clear. It's got to be clear on those three points. And it needs to be brief. The real sweet spot for most of research is get it between 15 and 30 words.

How many have heard that before? Fifteen and thirty words. Can you do it? Not 20 of them. One, one to encapsulate the whole thing, right? It needs to be compelling and it needs to be able to be shared and remembered by both internal and external audiences.

Those are the ones I want to point out to you. And we need to get there in order to drive the ability for you. This group as we listen to you, staff as expert planners, how do we plan inside this strategic statement? And so, we started with this structure. And this is important for you to see because this is the exercise the board of directors went through.

Is this a countdown or a count up? Countdown. All right. I always have to watch because I will go over. The goal. By the advantages, the goal. What is it that we want to do?

And by how will we do that? So, what powered by why and how. Those are two elements. The third element has to encapsulate all of that, and that is what we call the scope. What? Why? And in what area do we do that?

And so, the board started the exercise this way. They were asked, one, to write their own strategic statement independent. By the way, if you want to be on board, this is the way it works now. No group think. The board was forced to go around the table and write a single statement their own, all right? And then we brought them back and said, "Okay, we got your statements, but let's now just start strategically thinking about the three elements we need."

And so, the board started doing what we... We just throw out the words. So, what's our objective? And you can see the words right here on the screen. This is what the board set. This is our objective. We did the same thing for advantages.

By the advantages, what are the unique things we bring to the table that nobody else could bring? What are they? So, you started seeing these as advantages. We didn't ask them to come up with one. Just throw out as many as you can. And then our scope. Where do we work?

In what arenas do we operate? Where do we have an impact? Where do we want our strategy to be contained? And these are where we got those. So, when we got those all back, staff got to work and started sort of crunching that down into recognizable parts.

So, the objective is, if you looked at all of those statements that the board came up with, the objectives really came into two places. What is it that we do? We protect the public and the moment of nursing care patient interaction. Why is that important?

That's something new that we haven't talked about since we started the moment campaign. But before that, we didn't really talk about it. We just say public protection. Why is it important for regulator also be in the space of the trust in that moment of care? It's really because the public needs to know.

They need to feel that you are providing them safe. We are making sure that when someone takes care of them, they have safe and competent care. That's that trust moment. That public trust. What are our advantages? Solutions, resources and programs. That was one group.

Or we called them buckets, by the way, but the buckets were insights, data, research, and expertise, people, and voices. And what is the scope? The scope out of all of that was these areas, it's public protection, regulation, and nursing. Seems pretty simple, right?

But we did go through an entire exercise to reconfirm, this is where we are at. And if you start looking at that, nothing of those violate our mission, vision, or values. They are still in line with every one of those things. And so, let me go back. I'm going to give you this statement right now.

I'm going to give it to you a couple of times though because I want you to see what you will be voting on as a strategic statement, then I'm going to break it down just a little bit more for you. This is the statement we've come up with, to protect the public and the trust in nursing by providing innovative regulatory solutions, insights, and expertise.

Now, you have to be able to understand what we mean by that. And you've got to be able to talk about that. So, how do we talk about this statement? To protect the public and the trust in nursing by providing innovative regulatory solutions, insights, and expertise.

Let's break it down by the three parts. So, it does set the objective. The objective was why do we exist? What do we do? Protect the public and the trust in nursing. Clearly got that element. Defines the scope.

That big circle or square I had around the equation, the scope. What is the scope? The scope is nursing, public, and regulatory. It's all in the statement right here. The one that I think was really brilliant by the board of directors is this next one. I would not have gotten here.

It was really, really powerful when the board of directors got here, for me anyway. Because, state the advantages, right? Now, I want to go through each of these one at a time. But the advantages are, look at it, innovation, solutions, insights, and expertise. Let's start with innovation before I go to the others.

Because I think it's really important. We don't innovate just to have fun. Although it is fun, right? It is. I'm a geek, I'm a nerd. It's really fun. But we don't do it just for the sake of innovation.

Why do we do it? I think Joey said it great yesterday, look at all the things we've been able to do, right? If we don't innovate, we don't lead. Does that make sense? If we stop innovating, we don't lead. If we stop innovating, we cannot be leader of regulatory excellence worldwide. If we stop innovating, we can't be that one thing I said yesterday, the flagship of regulatory excellence.

You must innovate to do it. Because the world is changing and we need to keep up. We need to keep up so that you can be the exemplars of regulatory excellence when you go back home. We need to be able to do that. So, solutions, insights, and expertise are interesting.

I want to talk to them so you know and understand where we're going with this. As you look at solutions... Did I get the right thing? Yeah. No, here. So, solutions... I'm going to break these down into different categories for you, but hope you understand. Our solutions are actual solutions. What do I mean?

And I'll show you a slide with this in a minute. But a solution, NCLEX is a solution. Get it? Nursys is a solution. ORBS is a solution. The NLC is a solution. These are things we actually do.

Inside that statement, they are actual solutions to problems. And where do we get need for those? From you. You came to us. We listen, we hear, we build, we innovate. That is what we need to continue to do to lead. Intellect is a very interesting thing.

But if you listened to me yesterday, I hinted at this. What did I tell you when we collect data? If you remember yesterday, I said we don't just collect data at points. We don't just analyze data. And we don't just publish research studies. Where is the real importance of that duty?

One, NCSBN, remember that duty? I hope you do. And that was, it isn't about doing those tasks. It was about, I use this word, the insights, the intelligence that is provided to you, the policymakers, the regulatory bodies to solve critical solutions, to inform health care policy, to be the exemplar of regulatory excellence.

It is that. Those are the intellectual insights. We do that. You got JNR, you got the workforce. These aren't just data points. It is the intellect of people behind that, you included, who helped tell that story. And finally, it's the expertise.

And the expertise is people. These aren't abstract things. It's you. You are the expertise. Staff is the expertise. The board is the expertise. As one NCSBN, we are the experts in nursing regulation.

And that makes us unique. There is no other... Tell me, where other you're going to find a group of regulators of this size, this influence in any one room or organization? I don't know.

Name it. I don't see it, right? Because that is our unique advantage. You, the brilliant staff you've allowed us to hire, those are real people. And so, you look at this, you got U.S. members, you got expertise in people and policy and licensure and examination, in education, ICRS, right?

All of these things, the member engagement, all of these things, consolidated service. These are places and people you may not know, but they are the experts that are making sure you get what you need when you need it.

And so, let's say, did it meet our needs? Remember I didn't read the whole list to you. I promised I wouldn't. But I want to make sure we did, in fact, get to all these things. We know one, we can say with certainty, it sets the objective. We know it does that. It defines the scope.

And it states the advantages. You know what? Now, I'm sounding very corporate. When you trial test this, it actually gets an emotional impact from people who read it. They like this emotion that we're doing that public protection and the trust in nursing.

That added statement was huge, more than I thought it would be. It was huge in terms of people going, "Yeah, that, that gets me. That I get. I need that. I can get behind that. I can think about that in a big way." Certainly defines where we work and where... By the way, by defining where you work, what are you also defining?

Where you don't work. Ouch. But it's true. It is true. This needs to be inside this scope, where we work.

I told you that yesterday in priorities, right? We need to be able to one in the sense, define, make decisions, deliver decision, informed decision about what we will do and what we won't do. And part of that is we don't need to be doing things that are outside of our scope. Why?

It also came down to something else I said, if you're thinking about synergy and advancing our mission, I am doing the strategic... Remember, I said we're start this strategic planning cycle. I said these this to you yesterday, is that we need to check, ask this question. Hope you remember, because I'm going to keep the board on track on this, ask this question.

And that is if an opportunity comes our way, what was the question? Anybody remember? I'm going to have to have this written big. It was, we evaluate every opportunity with this question, how does this advance our mission? Because if the answer is it does not, I'll bet you, it's outside scope.

If it's inside the scope, it probably will, right? So, you see how all of this starts tying together very tightly and how we work together. What I really think is this will drive excellence and improvement, innovations. And that is a hallmark.

We have to do that. So, if it will drive that, here's what it allows you to do. It allows you to trust the staff that you have allowed us to hire and their expertise to come back to you with plans on how to do that innovation after we've listened to you. We've done listening to us.

We've done focus groups all year long, listening, right? And now, we need to take that information and make it real. And we do that through our advantages of solutions, insights, and expertise. That is how this statement works. It's simple. It's clear to remember, but it's comprehensive. You know, like, when you just read it, you might not think, but if you take time to just think about this for a minute, how comprehensive this is really great.

And so, our strategy statement that you will be asked to vote on is this, to protect the public and the trust in nursing by providing innovative regulatory solutions, insights, and expertise. I'm going to open it up for no questions.

I planned it that way, just so you know. No, I didn't. Mike says I still have six minutes. Do I really have six minutes? I don't think I do by my watch. Okay, sorry, he says I don't. So, yes, I planned it that way.

And remember, I'm wearing my burying suit, so you can kill me now. All right. Thank you so much.