The Role of Members of the Evergreen Strategy Team (EST)

The **EST members** typically serve on the team for 18 months to two years. A third to a half rotate off the team at intervals when the work of the team reaches stages of completion (not a fixed calendar date). Members may volunteer, but are generally screened by the leadership group. The team represents all areas of the unit for which planning is done and is a diagonal slice of the organization (not all from the same level and not a preexisting standing group).

**The primary task of the EST** is to continuously scan the environment for trends and shifts that could/should be addressed as the unit makes decisions about its future. The team is literally making the map of the field on which the unit will be playing for now and the foreseeable future. Imagine the team standing in the middle of a space that has the four directions:

- **North** - the unit’s internal trajectory, the momentum that it has from its past successes and failures, the history and values that it carries with it, the strengths, propensities and paradigms of its key players.
- **South** - all the mandates imposed upon the unit for its broader organization at all levels and from any regulatory agencies under which it operates.
- **East** - the collection of trended user group profiles of all the unit’s current customer groups and proposed future customer groups.
- **West** - the practices and trends of the alternative providers that offer competing services to the unit’s customer groups, inside the organization, within the local community, and from the broader marketplace accessible by the customer groups.

**The profiles of individuals** who are strong contributors to the team will vary. They may be introverts or extraverts; they may be strongly rooted in the unit’s past successes or eager to move on to new approaches. Yet there are a few consistent qualities that lead to productivity in the role:

- They are good listeners and seek to understand what others are presenting before making a response.
- They practice the art of doing the homework and use it to set the stage for decision-making.
- They accept the concept that there are more ways of knowing in this world than secondary research (studying the work of others) and that primary research (taking in information directly through one’s own senses) can offer value.
- They know that well managed conflict can be a way of teasing out the truth and is a tool rather than a problem.
- They embody a bent for action and understand that research can go on ever more; therefore it is important to call time when a decision needs to be made based on the best we know and understand today.

While no single person is likely to have all these qualities, it is important for members to be willing to move in these directions and to value the diversity of mindsets within the team.