

# Strategic Doing

Guiding Measurable Outcomes Through  
Action-Oriented Collaboration



Center for Regional Development  
Advancing Collaboration : Energizing Regions

## Table of contents

**01**

The basics

**02**

Case studies & testimonials

**03**

The backstory

**04**

Our university network

**05**

Training options

**06**

How you can engage

# the basics

**What is Strategic Doing?**

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**How does it work?**

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**Why does it work?**

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**Who uses Strategic Doing?**

## The basics

# The Strategic Doing Credo

The Credo focuses us on what matters.

In October 2011 at Turkey Run State Park, our Strategic Doing Design Team drafted this clear statement of beliefs that guide the development of Strategic Doing.

Learn more about our Design Team on page 19.

1

We believe we have a responsibility to build a prosperous, sustainable future for ourselves and future generations.

2

No individual, organization or place can build that future alone.

3

Open, honest, focused and caring collaboration among diverse participants is the path to accomplishing clear, valuable, shared outcomes.

4

We believe in doing, not just talking—and in behavior in alignment with our beliefs.

## The basics

# What is Strategic Doing?

Strategic Doing enables people to form action-oriented collaborations quickly, guide them toward measurable outcomes and make adjustments along the way.

Nearly everywhere we turn these days, people talk about the importance of collaboration. But how do we design these collaborations? How do we manage them? Strategic Doing provides a simple set of rules to answer these questions.

With Strategic Doing, people:

- Link and leverage their assets to create new opportunities
- Convert high-priority opportunities into measurable outcomes
- Define pathfinder projects that move toward these outcomes

Strategic Doing is designed for open, loosely connected networks—the common situation in which nobody can tell anyone else what to do.

Managing complexity requires simple rules. We have designed Strategic Doing to be intuitive and concise. In a matter of hours, a loosely organized network of people can generate a sophisticated strategic action plan and begin implementing their ideas.

Watch a [video introduction](#).



**Strategic Doing™**  
*Do More Together.*

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In today's world we need strategic thinking more than ever, but we cannot rely on slow, cumbersome traditional approaches.

*Strategic Doing is designed for today's world.*

## The basics

# How does it work?

Collaborations are born and live in conversation.

Strategic Doing focuses our conversation on the two critical questions of strategy:

Where are we going?

How will we get there?

By keeping our conversations focused on these critical questions, Strategic Doing generates all the components we need for practical strategic action plans. Over time, we make continuous adjustments to these plans, as we learn by doing.

Strategic Doing works by focusing intensively and relentlessly on the critical questions of strategy for collaborations.

## The basics

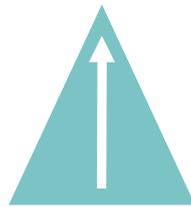
# Why does it work?

Strategic Doing works because it is intuitive and stimulates learning by doing.



### Intuitive

Each of us is experienced in making strategic decisions in our personal lives. Yet, we rarely bring this experience into our collaborations. Strategic Doing builds off of these personal experiences.



### Inductive

At the same time, most of us recognize that we cannot forecast the future. We often do not know what will work. By stimulating a spirit of experimentation, Strategic Doing encourages us to learn continuously.



### Fun

Finally, Strategic Doing promotes the deeper conversations, as well as the collaborative action, that most of us find fun and engaging. Strategy sessions are focused, short and pragmatic.

## The basics

# Who uses Strategic Doing?

Strategic Doing is designed for strategy and open, loosely connected networks.

As a lean, agile strategy discipline, Strategic Doing has applications in a wide range of situations.

### Dealing with messy challenges in communities and regions

We are increasingly confronting complex, messy problems. In these situations, multiple organizations, each with a unique set of assets, need a practical approach to designing and guiding collaborations.

### Focusing an organization

As organizations become flatter and more networked, traditional approaches to strategy no longer work as well. Strategic Doing fills a void.

### University engagement

Alongside teaching and research, university engagement represents the Third Mission of higher education. Increasingly, universities are being called upon to improve engagement with their regional economy. Strategic Doing delivers a lean and scalable solution to leveraging university assets in new and different ways.

### University transformations

An increasing number of universities are turning to Strategic Doing to guide the complex moves needed to transform the student experience. Strategic Doing provides a simple discipline to guide these transformations.

### Moving a professional association forward

Guiding an association forward can be difficult without a simple process to engage and align members.

### Building clusters

Clusters are an important feature of dynamic regional economies, and Strategic Doing is a fast way to build these networks.

Strategic Doing can be applied to any complex situation in which collaboration represents the only practical alternative.

# case studies & testimonials

**Workforce innovations in  
Indiana**

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**Rebuilding neighborhoods in  
Flint**

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**Launching a clean energy  
cluster in Florida**

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**Filling the manufacturing  
skills gap in Indiana**

## Case studies & testimonials

# Workforce innovations in Indiana

In 2006, Purdue received a \$15 million federal grant to design new workforce innovations in a 14-county region surrounding its flagship campus. The U.S. Department of Labor selected 13 regions nationally to experiment with new workforce collaborations.

Fast forward four years...

With 8 percent of the money awarded nationally, Purdue generated 40 percent of the national results.

In four strategic focus areas, we initiated over 60 new collaborations and 80 percent of these initiatives continued past the initial funding.

Among the initiatives:

- A [guitar summer camp](#) to teach manufacturing skills to high school students, which is now a national model
- The nation's first [green collar manufacturing certification](#)
- The [Energy Systems Network](#)

The team also responded quickly to a deep and unexpected layoff of engineers in Kokomo, Indiana. Watch a [video](#) that explains the story.

## Case studies & testimonials

# Rebuilding neighborhoods in Flint, Michigan

In neighborhoods besieged by complex, wicked problems, **Strategic Doing creates hope through the power of taking action with the assets or gifts that we already possess.**

In that moment when we combine assets, we begin to tell a new story of opportunity and possibility. Strategic Doing gives us the power to change our lives, our neighborhoods and our communities.

### **Bob Brown**

Michigan State University

In the wake of a failed federal grant application, a group of neighborhood leaders in Flint, Michigan, turned to Strategic Doing. After working so hard on the grant application, they wanted to stay together and actually do something. With the support of Michigan State University, the neighborhood leaders launched Neighborhoods Without Borders.

The core team continues to come together and build new networks with practical collaborations. Although it is impossible to say for certain, the work of these leaders has likely contributed to the dramatic reduction of violent crime in Flint.

More important, perhaps, the neighborhood leaders have, according to one, "broken their grant addiction." They are focused on mobilizing the many assets they have within their neighborhood.

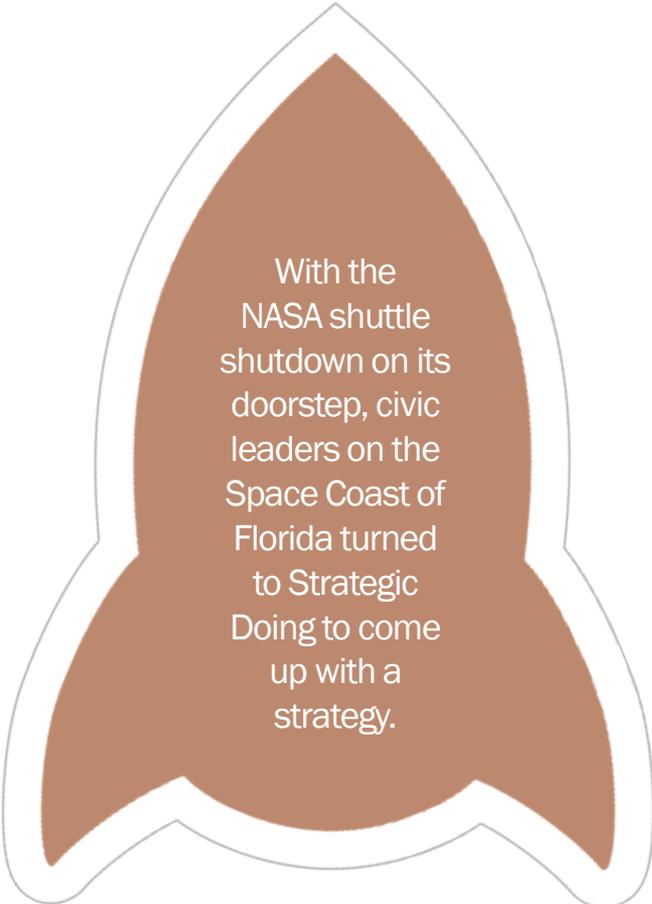
## Case studies & testimonials

# Launching a clean energy cluster in Florida

With the pending NASA shuttle shutdown, the Space Coast region of Florida found itself struggling to define a strategy to respond. They turned to Strategic Doing.

In a series of large-scale workshops, a small group of civic leaders on the Space Coast saw the opportunity to launch a new clean energy cluster. Now, [Energy Florida](#) is leading the development of new business opportunities and the Space Coast is transforming.

Check out the backstory with a video [here](#).



With the NASA shuttle shutdown on its doorstep, civic leaders on the Space Coast of Florida turned to Strategic Doing to come up with a strategy.

## Case studies & testimonials

# Filling the manufacturing skills gap in Lafayette, Indiana

Our colleague Craig Lamb worked with us on our workforce innovation (page 10). He took the concepts of Strategic Doing to launch a new manufacturing skills initiative, [Advancing Manufacturing](#). Ivy Tech is now replicating this model throughout the state. Kim Thurlow has spearheaded this initiative in Richmond (page 15). Here's what Craig says:

**Craig Lamb**  
Ivy Tech

Starting a program like our Advancing Manufacturing initiative meant aligning several community players into a functioning unit under a single brand.

Strategic Doing provided the framework for us to find common purpose, identify interdependencies and define mutually-beneficial metrics and inter-institutional processes.

The result of the cooperation fostered through Strategic Doing for us has been development of a new program without adding any overhead or administrative costs—every resource came from linking and leveraging existing entities' strengths.

As we have rolled our Advancing Manufacturing model out to other communities, we always include

Strategic Doing as a part of our ramping-up process.

The process allows for all voices to be heard while making steady progress toward our vision. **Strategic Doing's simplicity means everyone on the team can understand and own the process while its elegance means it leaves no important issue unaddressed.**

I appreciate and utilize the concepts of Strategic Doing **every time** I am faced with aligning resources in the civic space and encouraging the concepts of shared vision and shared value among our partners.

**Craig Lamb**

Ivy Tech

## Case studies & testimonials

# Filling the manufacturing skills gap in Richmond, Indiana

Manufacturers in the region surrounding Richmond, Indiana, faced a common problem: available jobs with not enough people to fill them.

Manufacturers came to Ivy Tech, the community college, and asked, “Why can’t we fix this problem?”

It turns out that fixing a workforce problem is not easy. It’s another one of the really messy problems that our civic leaders are facing. Ivy Tech took the lead and, partnering with Purdue, conducted a Strategic Doing workshop to identify potential collaborations and get them moving.

In a few months, Manufacturing Matters launched with a new certification initiative, and the region has responded. [Learn more](#). The Manufacturing Matters initiative is a replication of the Advancing Manufacturing initiative in Lafayette, Indiana.

Strategic Doing is the tool that had the greatest impact in really being something that we could activate.

**Kim Thurlow**

Ivy Tech

## Case studies & testimonials

# Building an aerospace cluster in Rockford, Illinois

### Rena Cotsones

Northern Illinois University

Decision-making in higher education institutions is infamously slow, with multiple layers of approvals and an emphasis on the need for new resources.

Strategic Doing's focus on what we could, should and will do with the existing talents, resources and authority of the people in the room at the time **breaks people free of that limited thinking and helps them move forward in real time.**

Northern Illinois University (NIU) and the City of Rockford have embraced Strategic Doing as a valuable way to build the collaborations needed to transform their economy.

Rena Cotsones, assistant vice president for regional engagement at NIU, leads a core team that has built a dynamic aerospace cluster.

You can learn more about the Rockford Area Aerospace Network [here](#).

# the backstory

**Where did Strategic Doing  
come from?**

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**What is the Strategic Doing  
Design Team?**

## The backstory

# Where did Strategic Doing come from?

Strategic Doing has evolved from over 20 years of field experience in complex environments.

## 1994

The roots of Strategic Doing can be traced back to Oklahoma City in 1994. There, a group of professionals needed bold, fast action to turn their city around. Ed Morrison guided a handful of city leaders in a strategy process that focused on “learning by doing.” They transformed their city through collaboration and continuous adjustment.

In the late 1990s, the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development contracted with Morrison to develop strategic action plans for multiple distressed counties. Within five years, a team of economic developers launched over 22 county strategic action plans. These plans were each designed with a team of six to eight professionals in the space of two days. When the Cabinet reviewed the performance of these plans, they found that 18 of 22 counties made measurable progress.

## 1997

## 2001

By early 2001, Morrison worked with Ernest Andrade in Charleston, South Carolina, to design a strategy for the Charleston Digital Corridor. Charleston is now a hotbed of Internet startup companies.

Morrison took his Strategic Doing work to Purdue in 2005. Purdue deployed the model with a \$15 million federal grant to generate workforce innovations in a region of 14 counties. In four strategic focus areas, Purdue’s team launched over 60 different collaborative initiatives, with 80 percent of these initiatives continuing beyond initial founding.

## 2005

## Now

The Purdue Center for Regional Development continues to incubate this new strategy discipline.

## The backstory

# What is the Strategic Doing Design Team?

The Design Team includes professionals committed to the development and deployment of Strategic Doing. They:



our  
university  
network

**The Strategic Doing university  
network**

## Our university network

# The Strategic Doing University Network

The Memorandum of Understanding is designed to encourage the sharing of Strategic Doing training materials and curriculum within the university network.

Purdue is building an international network of colleges and universities to support the continued development and deployment of Strategic Doing.

Organizations affiliated with a college or university join the network by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU encourages the sharing of intellectual property related to Strategic Doing among members of the network.

Initial members of the network include Purdue University, Michigan State University, The University of Akron, the University of Alaska and the University of Missouri.



For colleges and universities interested in the Strategic Doing Network, please contact Ed Morrison at

[edmorrison@purdue.edu](mailto:edmorrison@purdue.edu)

# training options

**Introduction to Strategic  
Doing**

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**Strategic Doing: The Game**

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**Practitioner training**

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**Certification and faculty**

## Training options

# Training options

Purdue offers a range of training options in Strategic Doing to improve your skills at designing and guiding collaborations.



Time

## Training options

# Training prices

Type	Training option	Face to Face Version		Online Version	
Introduction	Introduction to Strategic Doing	1 day	\$275	5 weeks	\$395
	Strategic Doing: The Game	3 hours	\$100/player Minimum 20 people	X	X
	Strategic Doing: The Game & Briefing	1 day	\$275/player Minimum 20 people	X	X
	Strategic Doing Table Guide	1 hour	Included in a Strategic Doing workshop	1 hour	Included in a workshop
Practitioner	Practitioner Training	3 days	\$1,275	X	X
Certification	Practitioner Training & Capstone Course	3 days & Capstone	\$1,575	X	X
Faculty	Certification & Purdue Residency	3 day Residency at Purdue	\$1,200	X	X

## Training options

# Introduction to Strategic Doing workshop

An introductory workshop in Strategic Doing provides participants with an overview of how strategy gets done in open, loosely connected networks.

The workshop introduces the basic concepts of Strategic Doing and illustrates how others are using the discipline.

The workshop concludes by exploring your “next steps” in developing the skills needed to design and guide collaborations.

After you complete Introduction to Strategic Doing, you will be able to apply these principles to your professional and personal life.

## Training options

# Strategic Doing: The Game

Participants in The Game learn that they can develop sophisticated strategies quickly if they keep their conversation focused on answering strategic questions.



Strategic Doing: The Game introduces the skills of designing and guiding collaborations through a simulations.

Participants gain some valuable insights by focusing on the challenges of transforming the economy of a fictional Midwestern city.

Purdue is developing other versions of the game, and we can work with you to customize a version that meets your needs.

## Training options

# Practitioner training: 3 day deep dive

Practitioner training is geared for professionals who need a deeper grounding in the theory and practice of collaboration in open networks.

In this three day training program, participants learn by doing. They learn how to incorporate Strategic Doing into their own work and collaborations.

With this training, professionals will be able to design and guide collaboration using Strategic Doing workshops.

## Training options

# Certification: practitioner training & capstone experience



Strategic Doing certification enables professionals to teach Strategic Doing workshops and conduct Strategic Doing: The Game.

The capstone experience includes field work that is supervised by a member of the Strategic Doing faculty. During this fieldwork, professionals learn to design and guide Strategic Doing workshops.

## Training options

# Faculty: certification & Purdue residency

Strategic Doing faculty design new curriculum and they lead the development of Strategic Doing in anchor universities.

Certified professionals are eligible to join the Strategic Doing faculty. In order to take that step, the professional participates in a residency at Purdue.

During this experience, the professional develops a plan for contributing to the Strategic Doing curriculum. In addition, the existing faculty provide suggestions for improving presentations and teaching styles.



how you  
can engage

**Keep up with our work**

## How you can engage

# Keep up with our work



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**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY



**Center for Regional Development**  
Advancing Collaboration : Energizing Regions

The Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) seeks to pioneer new ideas and strategies that contribute to regional collaboration, innovation and prosperity.

**For more information**

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