



Creating Connection

CSCN's 2023-2026 Guiding Strategy



It's about people

Our Story So Far

The Community Services Coordination Network (CSCN) started as the Children's Services Network (CSN) in response to the "Making it Work Better" initiative led by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCCSS). Through the initiative, the Ministry aimed to develop a collaborative model that would provide children with fair and equitable access to MCCSS-funded live-in services. In 1993, CSN recruited its first Board of Directors, and in 1995, the organization officially incorporated.

In 1999, MCCSS, through a Request for Proposal Process, chose CSN as the successful proponent to implement a Coordinated Access to Services Model in London-Middlesex, Oxford/Elgin, and Huron/Perth counties. Planning began in early 2000 to close the Children Services Network and to open a new organization with a new name, governance structure, and Board of Directors. The Children's Services Network was closed effective June 30, 2000, and the Community Services Coordination Network opened simultaneously.

Today, our core function is to coordinate access to various services and supports for adults with a developmental disability and for children and adolescents with complex needs, who may require a response from more than one service provider. CSCN's dedicated staff connect, collaborate, and engage with community partners to support people in navigating the complex landscape of developmental services and children's mental health support. CSCN acts as a bridge between the people we serve and various community-based services and supports. We do this work in our three service areas: Children's Services, Developmental Services Ontario South West Region (DSO SWR), and the Passport Program.

We don't provide direct service at CSCN; we are part of a planning team that includes the individual, their family, and various service providers. Our role is to link individuals and families to appropriate services and supports in their community. Our process doesn't replace but augments the good planning done by families and service providers across the area.

Our CSCN children's services serve Elgin County, Huron County, London-Middlesex, Oxford County, and Perth County. Our adult services (DSO SWR and Passport) serve Elgin County, Huron County, London-Middlesex, Oxford County, Perth County, Sarnia-Lambton, Windsor-Essex, and Grey-Bruce.

Introduction

Whitesell & Company, Inc. was invited to facilitate the creation of the first formal strategic plan for Community Services Coordination Network (CSCN) by the CEO, Andrea Topham, and the Board of Directors in late November 2022. Dr. John Whitesell was the project leader, and was assisted by Jacki Turner and Susan Brown.

The strategic planning process was inclusive as opposed to top-down. CSCN's Board of Directors, Leadership Team, and Staff Members all contributed to development of this plan. The consultants reached out and interviewed 26 external agencies during the five-month period when the strategic plan was in development. The process was comprehensive, positive, and highly productive.

The multi-faceted initiative was anchored by establishing priorities that would engage all three CSCN Departments: Children's Services, Passport Program, and DSO. Using the Strategic Opportunity Grid (SOG®) as the starting point for discussion, debate, and analysis, the members of the strategic planning team identified four priorities for CSCN centered around Community Awareness, Workplace Culture, Operational Excellence, and Expanding Opportunities for the people serviced by CSCN.

Each of the four priorities are accompanied by overarching strategic objectives and key results (OKRs). The intent is to make the strategic plan an "evergreen" document that is updated on a regular basis to adjust to the realities of the sector environment over time. The four priorities will act as pillars for the organizational strategic plan and the strategic plan will be reviewed and updated in 2026. CSCN will explore and pilot tracking technology to help integrate the strategy into departmental activities.

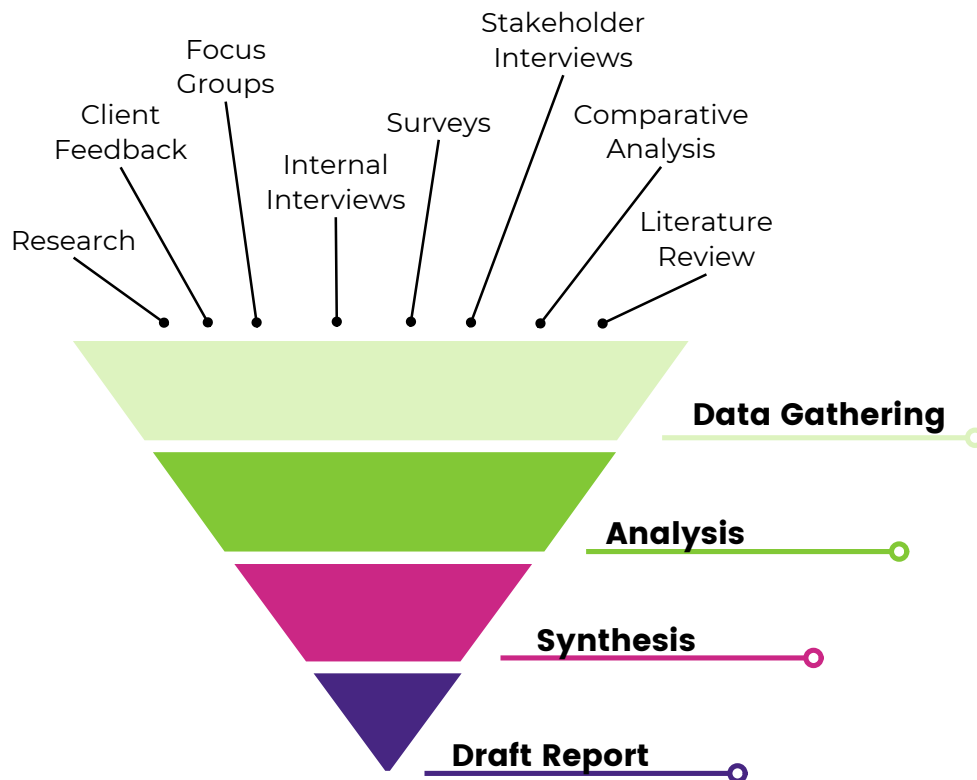
Developing an organizational strategy is "...more like improv and less like scripted TV" according to Rosabeth Moss Kanter, the Ernest L. Arbuckle Professor at Harvard Business School who warns that it's better to focus on executing and refining a strategy rather than waiting for the ideal one to come along fully intact. Kanter recommends that organizational leaders remain willing to question all assumptions and plans, keep information flowing to all parties, empower others to experiment, and see what sticks, reminding us that "top leaders can provide the framework and tools for a team, but the game is won on the playing field."

The consultants recommend that CSCN's new Mission and four Strategic Priorities guide Departmental OKRs to be developed during the fall and winter of 2023, tailored to the specific circumstances of each team by their respective managers and staff. CSCN's new shared values will inform an updated branding strategy that will communicate clearly what CSCN represents to all stakeholders.

Methodology

The CSCN strategic planning initiative involved multiple activities designed to develop an accurate representation of current reality as well as project the contours of the unfolding future. Figure 1 illustrates a sample of the information sources that were used during the process:

Figure 1

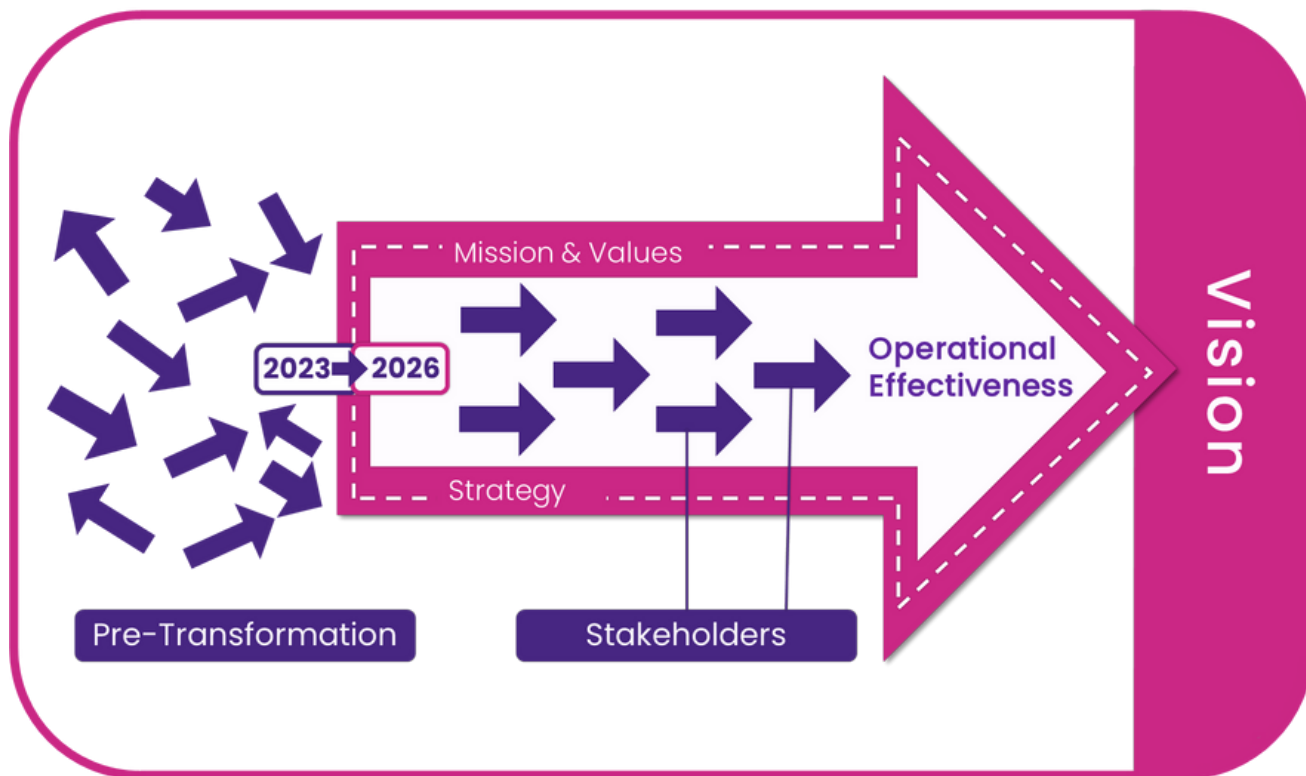


The most valuable information came from the experiences and perceptions of the people who work for CSCN. There were 89 total CSCN staff when the project began and 70% of the staff were interviewed by the consultants. The staff also participated in a 99-question online, anonymous survey that complemented the semi-structured personal interviews. The survey results were consistent with the interviews and 88% of the staff participated.

The staff are proud to work for CSCN and 82% of the survey respondents had confidence in the leadership team. The positive responses to the interviews and survey were—in the view of the consultants—unprecedented when compared with other organizations of the same size whether in the public, private, or non-profit sectors. Alignment and engagement are key factors in the success of any organization.

Figure 2 illustrates how the people involved with CSCN (as represented by the small arrows) are the critical factor for operational effectiveness, teamwork, and delivering results.

Figure 2



If an organizational culture is not aligned or the level of negativity erodes the ability of the organization to perform effectively in the service of its purpose, the organization will struggle. CSCN is unique in that respect. It's not unusual to have 5-7% of the people in an organization questioning the leadership or their own commitment, but CSCN staff are unusual in both their commitment to the work and their trust in leadership. The transparent strategic planning process was an opportunity to acknowledge that an organization—in its essence—is only successful when the majority of the people share a common understanding about the mission, vision, and strategy of the organization.

Interviews & Research

CSCN's Director of Service, Sandi Evans, provided the consultants with a list of 46 partner agencies that were well positioned to contribute to the strategic planning process. The original target was to obtain feedback from one-third of the agencies using a structured interview format. The consultants were able to connect with 26 (57%) of the agencies.

The agency interviews were also useful to provide context for the background research and document review that was conducted by the consultants. This information contributed to the facilitation of the workshops. CSCN internal documents were also informative during this phase of the project.

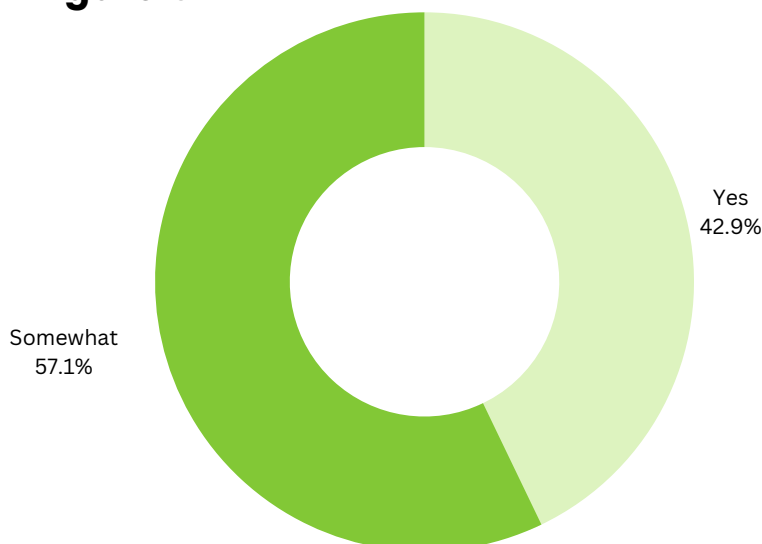
The agencies were consistently positive about their relationship with CSCN staff indicating that the staff were professional, responsive, productive, communicative, and knowledgeable. Criticism included issues with long wait times and the “grueling” intake process. The partner agencies were also in agreement that CSCN should have more presence in their communities and that CSCN should engage in more strategic, high-level communication about how to improve service to their clients.

Strategic Planning Workshops

To provide a framework that would guide the development of the strategic plan, the consultants facilitated five strategic planning workshops that included participants from the Board of Directors (including the Chair, operational leaders, and staff team members from across CSCN. The workshops were participative and allowed for candid discussions about the future of CSCN, current constraints, and opportunities for improvement. The focus was on refining and delivering three important components of the strategic plan: 1) an updated Mission Statement, 2) identifying and defining the Strategic Priorities for the next three years, and 3) developing OKRs.

In a separate, online survey the committee was asked the following question, Does the current Mission Statement adequately describe the raison d’être or purpose of CSCN? The participants’ responses were split. Figure 3 reflects the results from the online survey.

Figure 3



During one of the workshops, additional feedback about the current mission suggested that it was too long and that it didn't adequately describe CSCN's purpose in the current environment. It was decided that the planning team would work on an updated Purpose statement to replace the current Mission. The importance of having a concise Purpose was never disputed by the participants. The Board Chair was tasked with creating some options that offered a starting point for discussion at a subsequent workshop.

Strategic Opportunity Grid (SOG®).

The four strategic priorities are the pillars for the three-year plan, and they provide a framework for short, medium, and long-term decision-making. The objectives translate the priorities into actions that will deliver the intended results—hence OKRs—objectives and key results.

The following definitions will clarify how organizational performance is tracked over time:

- Priorities are the high-level strategic aims that CSCN has identified for the next three years.
- Objectives are like destinations on a map, they are easy to understand and clearly describe what CSCN wants to achieve.
- Key Results measure CSCN's progress toward achieving Objectives. They are ambitious, specific, measurable, and timebound.
- Initiatives are the work needed to influence key results. If an Objective is the end destination, and key result indicates the distance to go, an initiative describes what needs to be done to get there.

Identifying the strategic priorities involved using the Strategic Opportunity Grid (SOG®) as a starting point. The workshop participants engaged in a lengthy, robust discussion about the issues that CSCN faces in the next three years. The issues were distilled by the participants into 10 priorities with definitions for each one to provide common understanding before taking the next step.

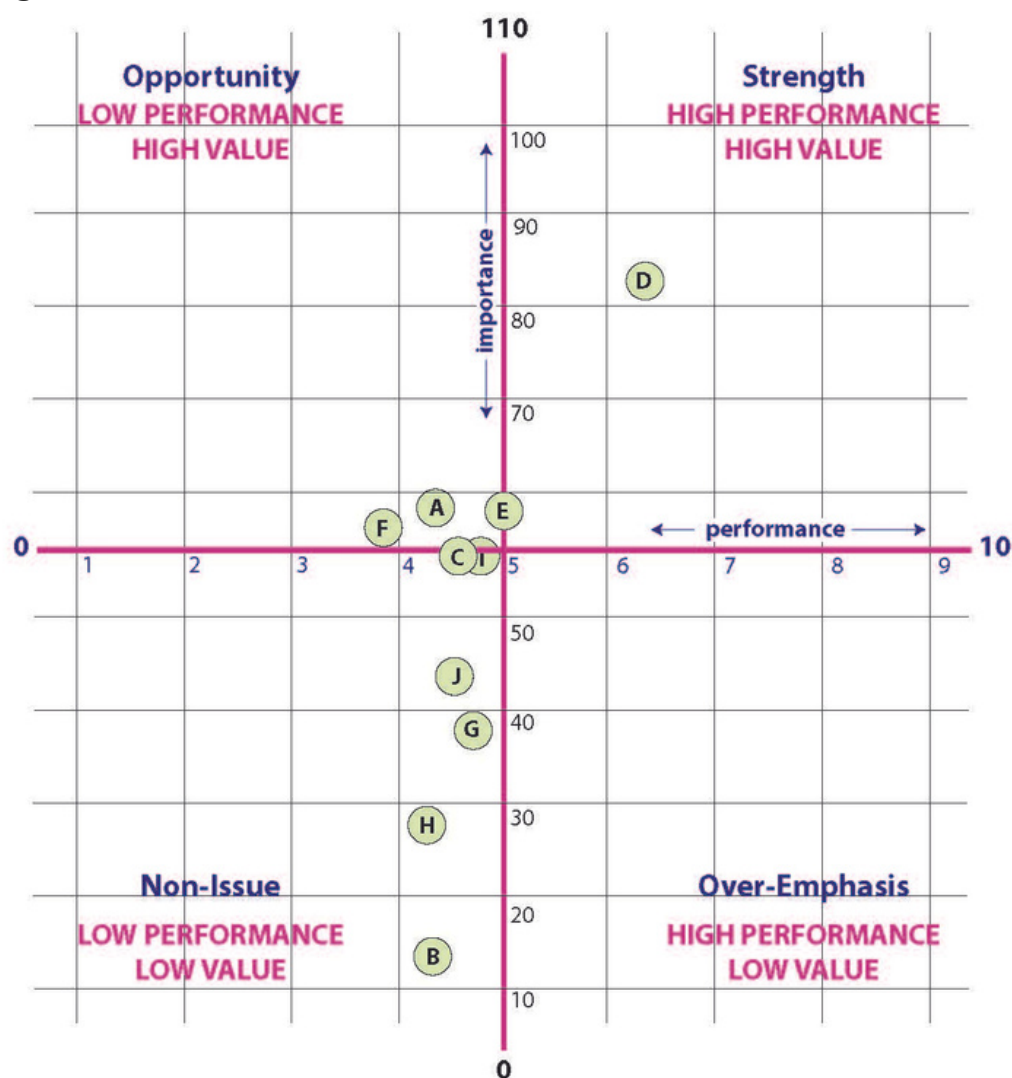
The next step involved each of the 11 workshop participants making individual, comparative choices about each of the 10 priorities: Which priority is more important to CSCN in the next three years? The SOG® is comprised of two axes. The vertical axis is a scale from 0 to 110 (11 participants multiplied by 10 priorities) while the horizontal axis is a scale of 1 to 9 that measures how each participant thinks that CSCN is currently performing for each priority.

A forced-choice scale question—also known as an ipsative—is a rating system that, unlike the Likert scale, does not allow for an undecided, neutral, doesn't know, or no opinion response. In other words, the binary choice forces the respondent to commit to a selection based on their thoughts, feelings, experience, knowledge, and biases. In psychology, ipsative questionnaires (Latin: ipse, 'of the self') are those where the sum of scale scores from each respondent adds to a constant value.

When forced choice is used with the SOG®, the results provide the participants with an opportunity to discuss, debate, and adjust the results through consensus.

The consultants aggregated and plotted the data on the quadrants. Figure 4 was the result of the SOG® process.

Figure 4



PRIORITIES	COORDINATES
A. Defining our shared identity	59 4.4
B. Physical spaces	13 4.4
C. Elevate and strengthen CSCN profile and position	55 4.5
D. Staff Satisfaction	82 6.4
E. Communication & Collaboration across departments	59 5.0
F. Lack of Resources within System	58 3.9
G. Technology	39 4.8
H. Risk Matrix	28 4.3
I. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)	55 4.8
J. Measuring Operational Efficiency	44 4.6

Once the SOG® results were processed by the participants, they continued to distill, consolidate, and further define the 10 priorities until four priorities emerged:

- Community Awareness - Elevate & Strengthen CSCN Profile, Position, and Perception
- Workplace Culture- Promote a Positive Workplace Experience
- Operational Excellence - Use Our Strengths to Operate with Integrity
- Expanded Opportunities - Impact Broader System Change to Expand Service Opportunities for the people we serve.

The four priorities were defined to the point that many of the strategic objectives for each priority were evident in the definitions.

Values & Branding

The CEO, Andrea Topham, engaged the staff in a deep analysis of the values that they share as members of the CSCN organization. This process was led and conducted by Andrea parallel to the strategic planning process. The results of the values exercise will inform the updating of the CSCN brand and complement the strategic planning process.

The values held by individuals within CSCN collectively shape its culture, identity, and behavior. Aligning the branding strategy with these values creates a powerful connection that resonates with employees, clients, and stakeholders. It fosters authenticity, trust, and loyalty, and ultimately will help drive the ongoing success of the organization.

Branding is not just about logos and slogans; it is about the emotions, perceptions, and associations that people have with a brand. By aligning the CSCN brand with the purpose and values of the organization, a distinctive identity is formed that sets it apart from other organizations in the sector. This identity becomes the foundation for building a consistent and recognizable brand presence across all departmental touchpoints, creating a cohesive and memorable experience for stakeholders and, especially, clients.

Social Strategy Leadership

The ability to move strategy into action, and constantly innovate and adapt to change, has now become the baseline for 21st century organizations. Organizations that can execute in a coordinated way, and with agility, will stay aligned to their priorities, objectives, and key results. CSCN's Board and Senior Leadership team are committed to shifting the organization to embrace a non-hierarchical social strategy leadership model.

An important element of social-strategy leadership is honestly assessing the readiness of the people in the organization to help determine the best way to stimulate engagement and reveal the level of support for organizational change. This means figuring out ways to genuinely “hear” and engage dissenting voices.

Enabling people to communicate through ambient signals instead of relying on words and elaborated opinions — that vary in factual understanding regarding the situation — can help inform the leader beyond surveys, interviews, and appreciative inquiry. Familiar examples of engaging in ambient dialogue include X Polls (formerly Twitter), “liking” on Facebook, anonymous Dropbox polls — simple, fast methods that allow participants to express an opinion without feeling uncomfortable or exposed.

The social-strategy approach is a major shift from leaders being “all-knowing decision makers” into distributed leadership encouraging critical thinking, autonomy and problem solving skills across the organization. The social strategy approach enables people to be “social architects” who invest time thinking about how to create the processes and incentives that reveal the best ideas, encouraging everyone to engage and participate in creating an adaptable, sustainable organization.

Summary

CSCN, like most organizations, is in a state of constant strategy implementation, transformation, and innovation. This was emphasized throughout the strategic planning process evidenced in discussions such as the implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for CSCN in the immediate and long-term future. Organizations face a common set of challenges as they execute their strategy in the face of accelerating change. Organizational Leaders need to encourage CSCN to stay aligned around its common purpose, priorities, and objectives. This will ensure the ongoing development of solutions that meet CSCN's original purpose and definition of success.

Many of challenges arise from not having a process in place to translate strategy into execution. IT architecture is often a missing link between strategy and execution. That is why the consultants discussed the use of a common set of performance tracking tools such as Profit.com, Monday.com, Asana, etc. When the architecture is in place with comprehensive training and support, CSCN can more easily take a cross-department, objectives-driven approach to designing and planning change. This flows into a coordinated set of actions for conducting day-to-day activities and special initiatives resulting in increased speed from concept to implementation and the ability to ensure CSCN is focused on the four priorities over the next three years.

CSCN is a rare organization that has retained the loyalty and commitment of its employees following a change in leadership and the unprecedented stress of the recent pandemic. The strategic planning initiative was successful because it was inclusive, thorough, and realistic. And the work continues to ensure that the Strategic Plan 2023–2026 remains a living, evolving document.

Message From Our Leaders

We started with a goal to create a people-focused plan to guide us in navigating a rapidly evolving landscape of profound and dynamic change.

Throughout this process, we've realized that the journey toward our end result was, and continues to be, as important as the plan itself.

Through the engagement of all staff, management, and members of the Board of Directors, we are creating a collective responsibility for our future.

The success of our strategic plan comes from introspection, openness to new ideas and directions, and ownership by everyone who takes part in the success of CSCN.

**We are creating a
collective
responsibility for our
future**

In this era of ever-increasing community need, as challenges become more complex, we strive not just to respond, but to be the architect of solutions.

We believe we have such a plan, and while it may morph over time into healthy and timely responses to changing circumstances, we know where we are going, and we know we are going there together.



Andrea Topham,
Chief Executive
Officer



Jon Lavkulich,
Chair, Board of
Directors

Our Purpose

We:

Support people and communities through connection, opportunity, and information.

Statement of Rights

CSCN's Services and Supports:

are founded on respect for, and the dignity of, the individual.

Our Shared Values

At CSCN we believe in and are committed to:

Listening and Understanding

We will listen to and value the opinions and experiences of those we serve, and each other

Respect and Dignity

We will respect human dignity by accepting people for who they are and caring about how we impact others.

Diversity and Inclusion

We celebrate belonging and recognize the value that diversity brings to us all.

Community Collaboration

We believe we are stronger when we work together

Human-Centric Practices

We put people first by valuing their unique strengths and supporting individual circumstances.

Advocating for Others

We use our voice to expand opportunities, to inform, and to educate for the needs of others

Our Priorities

Over the next three years we will focus on Objectives, Key Results, and Initiatives associated with the following four priority areas:



01. Expanded Opportunities

We will impact broader system change to expand opportunities for those we serve.



02. Positive workplace

We will promote a positive workplace experience grounded in wellness, belonging, flexibility, and learning.



03. Operational Excellence

We will use our strengths to operate with integrity.



04. Community awareness

We will elevate & strengthen the profile, position, and perception of CSCN.

The Plan Our 2023–2026

OBJECTIVES & KEY RESULTS



Expanded Opportunities

We will **impact broader system change to expand opportunities for those we serve** as demonstrated by the following Objectives, Key Results, and Initiatives:



Year	Objective	Key Results	Initiatives
1	Use our unique position to facilitate new ways of community collaboration	• Increase community partnerships by 3% • 2 new cross agency pilots developed and underway	• Encourage all staff across the agency to attend community meetings • Lead 2 cross agency pilot programs
2	Share our knowledge, and data to identify system gaps	• Communication mechanism for staff to share service barriers with leadership • Quarterly shared data sets with Ministry and Community Partners	• Develop external CSCN communication mechanisms • Create a data collecting & reporting process
3	Advocate for increased opportunities to address system gaps	• Completed report detailing significant service gaps • 3 meetings with key decision makers attended by CEO and Board Representative	• Research and write service gap report using CSCN and service system data • Share report and schedule follow up meetings with decision makers

Positive Workplace

We will **promote a positive workplace experience grounded in wellness, belonging, flexibility, and learning** as demonstrated by the following Objectives, Key Results, and Initiatives:



Year	Objective	Key Results	Initiatives
1	Enhance employee wellness and work-life balance	• 4 Wellness initiatives • 75 % staff engagement • 80 % vacation utilization • Completed salary benchmark analysis	• Support Wellness Committee • Conduct employee Engagement Survey • Conduct salary benchmark analysis
2	Strengthen Trust, Collaboration and Communication	• Increased and new communication channels • 4 drop-in Sessions with CEO • 4 cross department events • Access to safe, and collaborative physical	• Create internal communication channels • Hold quarterly drop-in sessions • Assess physical space needs
3	Foster Mentorship and Learning across the organization	• 2 all staff in-person meetings • In-place formal mentorship programs • Everyone has a new PD opportunity yearly	• Strike staff-day planning committee • Develop mentorship program • Include PD planning in Performance Appraisals

Operational Excellence

We will use our strengths to operate with integrity and provide service excellence as demonstrated by the following Objectives, Key Results, and Initiatives:



Year	Objective	Key Results	Initiatives
1	Ensure we work through a heightened Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion(EDI) lens	• Completed EDI Framework • Completed EDI Implementation Plan • 100% of Staff and Board trained in EDI	• Create EDI Committee • Map Key EDI Priorities • Create EDI plan • Train staff & Board
2	Employ the right technology to make our work easier	• All staff have texting ability • In-place automated appointment setting software solution • Completed multi-year IT strategy	• Investigate options and allocate resources for required tech. • Conduct an IT audit • Develop an IT strategy
3	Improve CSCN's HR Practices and Staff's HR Experiences	• 1 Consolidated HR information system • Updated onboarding and orientation process • 75% reported staff HR satisfaction rate	• Consolidate HR Platforms • Systemize Onboarding • Conduct Staff Survey

Community Awareness

We will elevate & strengthen the profile, position, and perception of CSCN as demonstrated by the following Objectives, Key Results, and Initiatives:



Year	Objective	Key Results	Initiatives
1	Develop a fresh, cohesive branding strategy	• Updated Brand Assets • In-place targeted audience communications plan	• Complete a Brand refresh process • Develop and implement Communications Plan
2	Increase Brand Visibility, Social Media Presence, and Engagement	• 30% increase in social media followers • 25% increase in social media engagement	• Develop Content • Create Social Media sites • Update website
3	Establish CSCN's Expertise and Thought Leadership	• 2 earned media pieces • 2 speaking opportunities at industry conferences	• Publish 1 article and 1 whitepaper

Year One OKR Dashboard

The following dashboard allows us to clearly report our progress. Given the growing complexity of need and rapid changes across our communities , we can easily adjust our OKRs.

Timeframe	Progress	Status
2023	30%	

01. Expanded Opportunities

We will impact broader system change to expand opportunities for those we serve

OBJECTIVE: Use our unique position to facilitate new methods of community collaboration							
Key Result	How is it calculated?	How often do we measure?	Base Value	Target Value	Current Value	Progress	Status
Increase community partnerships by 3%	% of new partnerships	Quarterly					
2 new cross agency pilots underway	# of pilot programs	Quarterly					
Initiative # 1 Encourage all staff across the agency to attend community meetings							
Initiative # 2 Develop and lead 2 cross agency pilot programs							

02. Positive workplace

We will promote a positive workplace experience grounded in wellness, belonging, flexibility, and learning

OBJECTIVE: Enhance Employee Wellness and Work-Life Balance							
Key Result	How is it calculated?	How often do we measure?	Base Value	Target Value	Current Value	Progress	Status
4 Wellness Initiatives delivered to staff	# of Wellness Initiatives	Quarterly					
75% of employees are actively engaged	% of positive Survey Responses	Annually					
Completed Salary Benchmark Analysis	1 Completed Analysis	Once					
80% vacation time utilization rate	% of total available vacation time used	Monthly					
Initiative # 1 Allocate management and budget support to Wellness Committee							
Initiative # 2 Develop and conduct employee engagement survey							
Initiative # 3 Conduct Sectoral Salary Benchmark Analysis							

Year One OKR Dashboard

Depending on capacity, resources and organizational and client needs we can add additional OKRs, adapt the reporting frequency or move OKRs up or down the proposed timeline.

Timeframe	Progress	Status
2023	30%	

03. Operational Excellence

We will use our strengths to operate with integrity

OBJECTIVE: Ensure we work through a heightened Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lens							
Key Result	How is it calculated?	How often do we measure?	Base Value	Target Value	Current Value	Progress	Status
EDI Framework	Completed Framework	Once					
EDI Implementation Plan	EDI Plan Fully Implemented	Once					
100% of Staff and Board trained in EDI	% of Board and Staff Trained	Quarterly					
Initiative # 1	Create EDI Committee						
Initiative # 2	Map Key EDI Priorities						
Initiative # 3	Create EDI Plan						
Initiative # 4	Hold Training Sessions For Staff and Board in EDI						

04. Community awareness

We will elevate & strengthen the profile, position, and perception of CSCN

OBJECTIVE: Develop a fresh, cohesive branding strategy							
Key Result	How is it calculated?	How often do we measure?	Base Value	Target Value	Current Value	Progress	Status
Updated Brand Assets	# Assets	Quarterly					
In place targeted audience comms plan	1 Completed Plan	Quarterly					
Initiative # 1 Completed a Brand Refresh Process							
Initiative # 2 Develop and Implement a Targeted Audience Communications Plan							

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- Al Hendry
- Barb Smith
- Lisa Tennant
- Lois Warden

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- Rory Patten
- Sharon Rich
- Mike Smith

A very special thanks to our Community Partners. We aren't able to list you all, but please know that we appreciate everything you do everyday to support those we serve.

**“We know where we
are going, and we
know we are going
there together.”**

~Jon Lavkulich





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