



EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANNING STRATEGIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract

The paper evaluates the effectiveness of planning strategies on organizational productivity. Drawing exclusively on peer-reviewed literature and industry research published between 2024 and 2026, the paper examines the nexus between planning and productivity. The paper is based on a theoretical review and empirical studies, whose findings are synthesized across diverse organizational contexts including healthcare, manufacturing, public sector, and enterprise technology sectors. It reveals that while strategic planning positively influences organizational performance, the magnitude and nature of this relationship are contingent upon planning approach, execution capability, and environmental dynamism. Meta-analytic evidence confirms that strategic planning serves as an antecedent of organizational performance, with effects mediated by implementation quality and moderated by organizational complexity. Emerging evidence demonstrates that organizations employing adaptive planning approaches, characterized by scenario planning, frequent portfolio re-evaluation, and integrated portfolio processes, achieve substantially higher ROI on projects compared to organizations using traditional static planning methods. Furthermore, planning complexity exhibits an inverted U-shaped relationship with execution success: plans with fewer than 20 strategic elements succeed 68% of the time, whereas those exceeding 60 elements succeed only 8% of the time. It makes actionable recommendations for organizational leaders, practitioners, and future researchers.

Keywords: *Strategic planning, organizational productivity, operational efficiency, adaptive planning, scenario planning, performance management, & resource allocation*

Introduction

Planning strategies represent a cornerstone of organizational management, providing the structured processes through which organizations set direction, allocate resources, and coordinate activities toward desired outcomes (Okech & Aosa, 2025; Wongsin et al., 2025). The relationship between planning and productivity has attracted sustained scholarly attention across multiple decades, yet the nature and strength of this relationship remain contested. As organizations face increasing environmental dynamism, characterized by technological disruption, geopolitical uncertainty, and evolving market conditions, the question of how planning strategies affect organizational productivity has gained renewed urgency.

The importance of understanding the planning–productivity nexus is underscored by compelling evidence of the costs of planning failures. Recent research indicates that nearly one in three enterprise projects fails to deliver meaningful return on investment, with organizations losing an estimated \$260 million in annual value due to misalignment, delays, and low-value initiatives (Tempo Software, 2026). These findings suggest that the consequences of ineffective planning extend beyond operational inefficiency to substantial financial losses that threaten organizational sustainability.

Despite the practical significance of planning effectiveness, the empirical evidence base exhibits several limitations. First, the literature presents mixed findings on the relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance, with some studies demonstrating positive effects while others suggest planning may not consistently deliver anticipated benefits (Okech & Aosa, 2025). Second, research has traditionally focused on planning content rather than planning processes, potentially overlooking critical execution dynamics that mediate the planning–productivity relationship. Third, the rapid evolution of planning technologies, including artificial intelligence, scenario planning tools, and integrated portfolio management platforms, has outpaced academic research, creating gaps in understanding how digital planning capabilities affect productivity outcomes.

This review aims to address these gaps by providing a comprehensive and critical synthesis of recent empirical evidence on the relationship between planning strategies and organizational productivity. Drawing on studies published between 2024 and 2026, with particular emphasis on research from 2025 and 2026, the review addresses the following questions: (1) What theoretical frameworks explain the relationship between planning strategies and organizational productivity? (2) What does the empirical evidence reveal about the magnitude and nature of planning effects on productivity? (3) How do different planning approaches, including traditional, adaptive, and scenario-based planning, compare in their productivity effects? (4) What factors moderate the planning–productivity relationship? and (5) What implications do the findings have for organizational practice and future research?

Conceptualizing Planning Strategies in Organizations

Planning strategies encompass the systematic processes through which organizations formulate objectives, analyze internal and external environments, develop action plans, allocate resources, and establish monitoring mechanisms. The systematic review conducted by Wongsin et al. (2025) defines strategic planning in the public health sector as "a methodical approach to generate fundamental decisions and actions that influence and direct the nature, function, and rationale" of organizations. This definition captures the dual nature of planning as both a decision-making process and a framework for subsequent action.

Building on this foundation, Okech and Aosa (2025) distinguish between planning as a formal process and planning as an organizational capability. The former refers to the structured activities and documentation associated with strategy formulation, while the latter encompasses the organizational competencies that enable effective planning, including analytical capacity, cross-functional collaboration, and adaptive learning.

Planning Strategies and Organizational Productivity: A Theoretical Review

The theoretical literature identifies several mechanisms through which planning strategies influence organizational productivity. The scoping review by Wongsin et al. (2025) confirms that strategic planning serves as an antecedent of organizational performance, with effects mediated by implementation quality and moderated by organizational context. Drawing on the industrial organizational economic theory and transformational leadership theory, Okech and Aosa (2025) identify four primary mechanisms linking strategic planning to organizational performance. First, resource allocation efficiency improves through systematic evaluation of investment priorities and alignment with strategic objectives.

Second, coordination enhancement reduces duplication and conflict by establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and decision rights. Third, environmental alignment enables organizations to adapt strategies to changing market conditions through systematic environmental scanning. Fourth, stakeholder alignment ensures that diverse organizational constituents work toward common goals, reducing friction and enhancing collective effort.

The systematic review conducted by Wildan et al. (2025) in healthcare contexts provides complementary evidence on planning mechanisms, demonstrating that strategic planning combined with effective managerial roles significantly improves nursing resource performance. Their analysis reveals that planning enables managers to optimize staffing, align competencies with patient needs, and establish performance monitoring systems that drive continuous improvement.

The relationship between planning and productivity is not uniform across contexts but varies according to environmental conditions. Okech and Aosa (2025) emphasize that environmental dynamism—the rate and unpredictability of change in an organization's external environment—moderates the planning–performance relationship. In stable environments, formal strategic planning may yield significant benefits through improved coordination and resource allocation. However, in dynamic environments characterized by rapid technological change or market volatility, traditional planning approaches may become obsolete before implementation, potentially reducing productivity.

This theoretical insight aligns with the concept of adaptive planning capabilities emphasized in recent industry research. Tempo Software (2026) demonstrates that organizations employing scenario planning and frequent portfolio re-evaluation achieve substantially higher project ROI compared to organizations using traditional static planning methods. This finding suggests that planning approaches that build in flexibility and continuous adjustment may be better suited to dynamic environments.

The literature identifies several dimensions of planning that may differentially affect productivity outcomes. Table 1 presents a conceptual framework distinguishing planning types based on their characteristics and hypothesized effects on productivity.

Table 1. *Planning Strategies and Productivity Effects*

Planning Type	Key Characteristics	Hypothesized Productivity Effects	Representative References
Traditional Strategic Planning	Fixed annual cycles; top-down formulation; static resource allocation; emphasis on documentation	Moderate positive effects in stable environments; potential rigidity in dynamic contexts	Okech & Aosa (2025); ClearPoint Strategy (2025)
Adaptive Strategic Portfolio Management	Continuous review cycles; scenario planning; integrated portfolio processes; frequent re-forecasting	Strong positive effects; enables rapid resource reallocation; higher ROI	Tempo Software Board (2026); Board (2026)
Scenario Planning	Multiple plausible futures; contingency preparation; environmental scanning; strategic flexibility	Enhanced resilience; improved decision confidence; better adaptation to uncertainty	Tempo Software Board (2026); Okech & Aosa (2025)
Integrated Business Planning	Cross-functional alignment; single semantic model; reconciled demand signal; executive decision loops	Improved alignment; reduced fragmentation; measurable EBIT improvements	Board (2026)
Continuous/Agile Planning	Rolling forecasts; iterative adjustments; decentralized decision authority; rapid feedback cycles	Enhanced responsiveness; reduced planning cycle times; improved adaptability	Board (2026); Duran et al. (2025)

Source: *Author's Tabulation*

The most comprehensive evidence on the planning–productivity relationship comes from systematic reviews and meta-analyses published in recent years. The scoping review conducted by Wongsin et al. (2025) analyzed 16 studies published between January 2015 and May 2024, examining strategic planning and organizational performance in the public health sector. The review confirmed a positive relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance, with potential factors contributing to organizational performance identified primarily as human resource-related aspects. The authors conclude that strategic planning serves as an antecedent of public health sector performance, with evaluation tools, supply chain management, transformative change, and strategic management identified as critical for organizational development.

The systematic review by Wildan et al. (2025) provides complementary evidence from healthcare contexts, analyzing 8 articles from 78,200 initially identified sources. Their analysis demonstrates that with appropriate strategic planning and effective managerial roles, nurse performance improves significantly, leading to enhanced service quality and achievement of organizational goals. The review specifically identifies that managers' abilities in planning, organizing, staffing, actuating, and controlling—functions directly enabled by strategic planning—facilitate achievement of organizational vision and mission.

A foundational meta-analysis by George et al. (2019), cited in the Ghent University bibliography, examined whether strategic planning improves organizational performance across 1,082 organizations. The meta-analysis, published in *Public Administration Review*, synthesized evidence from multiple sectors and found that strategic planning does improve organizational performance, with effect sizes that are statistically significant and practically meaningful. This meta-analytic evidence provides robust support for the planning–performance relationship while highlighting the importance of implementation quality.

Planning Strategies and Productivity: Evidence from Healthcare and Public Sectors

The healthcare sector has been a particular focus of recent research on planning and productivity, reflecting the sector's complexity, resource intensity, and critical public importance. Table 2 summarizes recent empirical findings from healthcare and public sector contexts.

Table 2. *Recent Empirical Evidence on Planning and Productivity in Healthcare and Public Sectors*

Context	Sample/Scope	Key Findings (Keywords)	Method	References
Public Health (Global)	16 studies (2015-2024)	Strategic planning → organizational performance; HR factors mediate	Scoping review (PRISMA)	Wongsin et al. (2025)
Nursing Resources (Indonesia)	8 systematic reviews	Strategic planning → managerial roles → nurse performance	Systematic review (PRISMA)	Wildan et al. (2025)
Public Hospitals (Iran)	Qualitative study	Succession planning; strategic leadership → key performance factors	Qualitative analysis	Vahdat et al. (2024)
Private Hospitals (Jordan)	Organizational climate survey	Strategic leadership → organizational innovation; climate mediates	Quantitative survey	Agrizat & Megdadi (2025)
Regional Hospital (Indonesia)	HR planning case	Situation analysis → addresses HR constraints	Case study	Mintarsih et al. (2025)

Source: *Author's Tabulation*

The systematic review by Wildan et al. (2025) provides particularly granular evidence on planning mechanisms. The analysis identifies that managers' planning functions, including workload analysis, competency assessment, and resource allocation—directly influence nursing performance. Effective planning enables managers to address workload imbalances, ensure appropriate skill mix, and align staffing levels with patient acuity, all of which contribute to improved productivity and service quality.

Planning Strategies and Productivity: Evidence from Manufacturing and Enterprise Sectors

Recent industry research provides compelling evidence on planning strategies and productivity in manufacturing and enterprise contexts. The 2025 Manufacturing Industry Pulse Survey conducted by Sikich (2025) surveyed manufacturing executives across the United States, revealing that operational efficiency emerged as the top strategic priority heading into the end of 2025, cited by 39% of respondents and far outpacing cost cutting or innovation. This finding

reflects an industry focused on strengthening foundational capabilities, modernizing processes, improving margins, and positioning for sustainable growth.

The survey also revealed substantial planned investments in planning-enabling technologies: 56% of manufacturers reported planning major investments in new equipment and automation in the next 6-12 months, while 28% planned investments in AI or data analytics to improve decision-making, forecasting, and productivity. These investment patterns suggest that organizations recognize the critical role of planning technologies in enhancing operational efficiency.

The 2026 State of Strategic Portfolio Management Report by Tempo Software (2026) provides the most comprehensive quantitative evidence on planning effectiveness. Based on a global survey of 667 planning and PMO leaders across 43 countries, the report reveals striking differences in productivity outcomes based on planning approach. Key findings include:

Dynamic planners—organizations combining scenario planning, integrated portfolio processes, and continuous adjustment—achieve measurable ROI or strategic value on 81% of projects, compared to just 45% for traditional planning organizations.

Organizations using *scenario planning* report a 17-percentage-point higher rate of projects delivering measurable ROI compared to organizations not using scenario planning.

Companies with *integrated portfolio processes* report 14-percentage-point higher project ROI delivery rates than organizations operating in silos.

Teams that *review and adjust priorities frequently* cancel 8 percentage points more projects than infrequent reviewers, yet deliver nearly 8 percentage points higher ROI—a phenomenon termed the "cancellation paradox."

The report also quantifies the financial consequences of planning failures. For an illustrative enterprise with \$880 million in strategic spend, misalignment, delays, and low-value work contribute to as much as \$260 million in lost value annually, with \$75-85 million in recoverable waste. This analysis underscores that the costs of ineffective planning extend beyond operational inefficiency to substantial financial losses.

Complexity–Success Relationship

A particularly significant finding emerges from the analysis of planning complexity and execution success. The ClearPoint Strategy (2025) report, analyzing 20,582 strategic plans spanning eight years and representing over 31.2 million records, reveals a powerful inverted U-shaped relationship between planning complexity and execution outcomes. Table 3 presents the key findings.

Table 3. Relationship Between Planning Complexity and Execution Success

Plan Complexity (Total Elements)	Success Rate	Key Characteristics	Reference
Fewer than 20 elements	68%	Focused goals, limited projects, clear measures	ClearPoint Strategy (2025)
20-40 elements	Moderate (declining)	Increasing complexity begins to affect follow-through	ClearPoint Strategy (2025)
40-60 elements	Low (further decline)	Coordination challenges, diluted focus	ClearPoint Strategy (2025)
More than 60 elements	8%	Overwhelming complexity; execution failure	ClearPoint Strategy (2025)

Source: Author's Tabulation

The report's analysis of actual strategic planning and execution data demonstrates that complexity destroys follow-through: strategic plans with fewer than 20 total elements succeed 68% of the time, whereas those exceeding 60 elements succeed just 8% of the time. The report concludes that "focus, not volume, drives results"—a finding with profound implications for organizations seeking to enhance productivity through strategic planning.

The analysis also reveals troubling trends in planning practice. From 2017 to 2024, the number of projects per plan rose by 60%, indicating that organizations are doing more to achieve less. This finding suggests that the proliferation of initiatives, rather than enhancing productivity, may be diluting focus and undermining execution. Additionally, most projects launch in January, while nearly 30% end in December, creating a front-loaded start and year-end crunch that overloads teams and weakens strategic momentum.

Planning Maturity and Productivity

The continuous planning maturity model proposed by Board (2026) provides a framework for understanding how planning capabilities evolve and how maturity affects productivity outcomes. Table 4 summarizes the five stages of planning maturity and their associated productivity characteristics.

Table 4. *Planning Maturity Stages and Productivity Outcomes*

Maturity Stage	Key Characteristics	Productivity Implications	Common Limitations
Stage 1: Spreadsheet Wrangling	Manual processes; emailed workbooks; manual reconciliations; fragile formulas	Low; finance teams spend hours on manual tasks; errors common; slow cycle times	Brittle plans; poor lineage; hidden operational costs
Stage 2: High-Contribution Planning	Standardized platform; EPM driver-based scenario planning; workflow simulation; internal telemetry with external indicators; reconciled demand signal	Improved; faster scenario execution; fewer errors; higher planner productivity	Still reactive; limited external signal integration
Stage 3: Plan with Internal & External Signals	Blended operational telemetry with external indicators; reconciled demand signal	Enhanced; better decision confidence; actionable alignment across functions	Requires data integration capabilities
Stage 4: Agentic Capabilities	Purpose-built agents monitor signals; run what-ifs; detect anomalies; surface recommendations	Advanced; reduced repetitive work; orders-of-magnitude faster scenario runs	Requires trust-building; human-in-the-loop controls essential
Stage 5: Integrated Business Planning	Single semantic model; reconciled demand signal; executive decision loop; cross-functional alignment	Transformative; 1-2% EBIT improvement; 15% freight cost reduction; 50% reduction in delivery penalties	Highest capability requirements; cultural change needed

Source: *Author's Tabulation*

The maturity model demonstrates that organizations progress from manual, siloed planning toward integrated, continuously aligned capabilities. At each stage, productivity improvements become evident, with the most advanced organizations achieving transformative outcomes

including measurable EBIT improvements, substantial cost reductions, and significant operational performance gains.

Moderating Factors of Planning Strategies and Productivity

Organizational Capabilities and Resources

The relationship between planning strategies and productivity is moderated by organizational capabilities and resources. Tempo Software (2026) identifies understanding team capacity as the number one barrier to executing strategy, cited by 30% of respondents, followed closely by prioritization and resource allocation. This finding suggests that even well-formulated plans may fail to enhance productivity if organizations lack the capacity to implement them effectively.

Wildan et al. (2025) emphasize the critical role of managerial capabilities in translating planning into performance. Their systematic review demonstrates that managers' abilities in planning, organizing, staffing, actuating, and controlling directly influence whether strategic plans achieve their intended outcomes. Organizations with stronger managerial capabilities may realize greater productivity benefits from strategic planning compared to organizations with weaker management.

Cross-Functional Alignment

Cross-functional alignment emerges as a critical moderator of the planning–productivity relationship. Tempo Software (2026) reports that while 90% of organizations say they encourage adaptability and alignment, cross-functional alignment remains the top improvement area, cited by 27% of planning leaders. Companies with integrated portfolio processes report 14-percentage-point higher project ROI delivery rates than organizations operating in silos, suggesting that alignment across functions substantially amplifies the productivity effects of planning.

Board (2026) emphasizes that Integrated Business Planning, characterized by a single semantic model, reconciled demand signal, and regular executive-grade decision loops, represents the stage at which organizations achieve transformative productivity outcomes. When planning is integrated across finance, commercial, and operations, organizations realize measurable benefits including 1-2 percentage points higher EBIT, 15% lower freight costs, and 50% reduction in customer delivery penalties.

Planning Frequency and Adaptability

The frequency of planning reviews and adjustments significantly moderates planning effectiveness. Tempo Software (2026) demonstrates that teams that review and adjust priorities frequently cancel more projects than infrequent reviewers yet deliver higher ROI, suggesting that adaptability enhances planning effectiveness. Organizations with fully integrated portfolio processes are nearly three times more likely to use AI extensively in planning (36% vs. 12%) and report significantly higher confidence in their ability to adapt to change (85% vs. 46%).

These findings align with the concept of "strategic drift" identified in the Tempo report, the gradual misalignment between strategy and execution that occurs when organizations fail to adjust plans in response to changing conditions. The report estimates that for an organization with \$880 million in strategic spend, strategic drift can contribute to as much as \$260 million in lost value annually, with \$75-85 million representing recoverable waste.

Methodological Approaches to Measuring Planning and Productivity

A critical challenge in synthesizing evidence on the planning–productivity relationship is the diverse conceptualization and measurement of both planning and productivity across studies. Table 5 presents common measurement approaches and their associated strengths and limitations.

Table 5. *Approaches to Measuring Planning and Productivity in Empirical Research*

Construct	Measurement Approach	Examples	Strengths	Limitations	Rep. References
Planning Strategy	Planning formality/comprehensiveness	Degree of formal planning; comprehensiveness of analysis	Standardized widely used	Ignores planning process quality	Okech & Aosa (2025)
Planning Process	Planning maturity assessment	Maturity stage (1-5); capability assessment	Captures process sophistication	Subjective; context-dependent	Board (2026)
Planning Frequency	Review cadence	Annual quarterly vs. continuous	Objective; measurable	May not capture review quality	Tempo Software (2026)
Planning Complexity	Number of strategic elements	Goals; measures; projects; milestones	Objective; large-scale data available	Assumes all elements equal	ClearPoint Strategy (2025)
Organizational Productivity	ROI on projects	Percentage of projects delivering measurable return	Direct financial measure	May not capture strategic value	Tempo Software (2026)
Operational Efficiency	Cost metrics; cycle times	Freight costs; delivery penalties; inventory turns	Specific; measurable	May not reflect overall productivity	Board (2026)
Performance Indicators	Balanced scorecard; KPIs	Financial; customer; internal process; learning	Comprehensive; balanced	Variability in indicator selection	Wongsin et al. (2025)

Source: *Author’s Tabulation*

Comparative Analysis of Planning Approaches

The evidence reviewed enables comparative evaluation of different planning approaches and their productivity effects. Table 6 presents a comparative synthesis of planning approaches based on recent empirical evidence.

Table 6. *Comparative Analysis of Planning Approaches and Productivity Effects*

Planning Approach	Productivity Effect	Key Conditions for Effectiveness	Limitations/Risks	Representative References
Traditional Annual Planning	Moderate positive (stable environments)	Stable markets; predictable demand; established capabilities	Rigidity; strategic drift; resource misallocation	Tempo Software (2026); ClearPoint Strategy (2025)
Scenario Planning	Strong positive (uncertain environments)	Multiple plausible futures; environmental scanning capability; flexible resource allocation	Resource intensive; requires analytical capabilities	Tempo Software (2026); Okech & Aosa (2025)
Integrated Business Planning	Transformative (cross-functional contexts)	Cross-functional alignment; semantic executive loops	High capability requirements; cultural change needed	Board (2026)
Focused Planning	Strong positive (all contexts)	Clear priorities; limited strategic elements; disciplined execution	May miss important opportunities; requires prioritization discipline	ClearPoint Strategy (2025)

Source: *Author's Tabulation*

Methodological Challenges of Planning and Productivity

Several methodological challenges complicate the study of planning–productivity relationships. Endogeneity concerns arise because planning may be endogenous to organizational performance—organizations with higher productivity may have greater resources to invest in planning, or poor performance may trigger increased planning activity. Studies employing instrumental variables or panel data with fixed effects address this concern, though such approaches remain relatively rare in the planning literature.

Measurement validity challenges arise from the reliance on self-reported planning practices and performance outcomes. The ClearPoint Strategy (2025) report addresses this limitation by analyzing actual platform data rather than survey responses, providing objective measures of planning complexity and execution outcomes. This approach represents a methodological advance that reduces common method bias concerns.

Publication bias may affect the planning literature, as studies reporting non-significant or negative planning effects may be less likely to be published. The meta-analytic evidence from George et al. (2019) and the systematic reviews by Wongsin et al. (2025) and Wildan et al. (2025) address this limitation by synthesizing across multiple studies, allowing publication bias to be identified and corrected.

Causality concerns persist in the predominantly cross-sectional literature. While meta-analyses and systematic reviews provide evidence of association, establishing causal direction requires longitudinal designs that track planning interventions and subsequent productivity changes over time.

Implications for Organizational Practice

The cumulative evidence from recent empirical studies supports the conclusion that planning strategies positively influence organizational productivity, though the strength and nature of this relationship depend critically on planning approach, execution capability, and organizational context. The meta-analytic evidence from George et al. (2019) and the systematic reviews by Wongsin et al. (2025) and Wildan et al. (2025) provide robust support for a positive planning–performance relationship.

Industry research from Tempo Software (2026), Board (2026), and ClearPoint Strategy (2025) reinforces these findings while providing more granular insights into the mechanisms through which planning affects productivity. The Tempo research demonstrates that organizations employing adaptive planning approaches achieve substantially higher ROI on projects compared to traditional organizations. The ClearPoint research reveals that planning complexity exhibits a powerful inverted U-shaped relationship with execution success, with focused plans dramatically outperforming complex plans.

The evidence reviewed has several implications for organizational leaders and practitioners. Given the superior productivity outcomes associated with adaptive planning, including scenario planning, frequent portfolio re-evaluation, and integrated processes, organizations should move beyond traditional annual planning cycles toward more continuous, responsive approaches.

The ClearPoint finding that focused plans dramatically outperform complex plans suggests organizations should prioritize clarity and focus over comprehensiveness. Limiting strategic elements to fewer than 20 may substantially improve execution success.

The maturity model evidence indicates that planning capabilities develop over time, with productivity benefits increasing at higher maturity stages. Organizations should invest systematically in planning technologies, processes, and skills.

The Tempo finding that integrated portfolio processes yield substantially higher ROI suggests organizations should prioritize breaking down functional silos and establishing shared planning processes.

The "cancellation paradox," frequent reviewers cancel more projects yet achieve higher ROI, suggests that organizations should develop the discipline to cancel low-value work early, reallocating resources to higher-value initiatives.

The evidence also suggests several policy priorities for organizations and policymakers. Given the productivity benefits associated with planning maturity, organizations should invest in training, tools, and processes that enhance planning capabilities. The ClearPoint finding that data-driven planning analysis yields actionable insights suggests value in policies that encourage systematic measurement and evaluation of planning effectiveness. The trend toward increasing planning complexity suggests value in organizational policies that limit the number of strategic initiatives to maintain focus and execution capacity.

Conclusion

This comprehensive literature review has critically examined recent empirical evidence on the relationship between planning strategies and organizational productivity. The synthesis of studies published between 2024 and 2026, complemented by meta-analytic evidence from foundational studies, reveals that planning strategies positively influence organizational productivity, though

the magnitude and nature of this relationship depend critically on planning approach, execution capability, and organizational context. The evidence demonstrates that organizations employing adaptive planning approaches, characterized by scenario planning, frequent portfolio re-evaluation, and integrated portfolio processes—achieve substantially higher ROI on projects compared to organizations using traditional static planning methods. Furthermore, planning complexity exhibits an inverted U-shaped relationship with execution success: focused plans with fewer than 20 strategic elements succeed 68% of the time, whereas complex plans exceeding 60 elements succeed just 8% of the time.

The evidence reviewed has important implications for organizational leaders, practitioners, and policymakers. For leaders, the findings underscore the value of adaptive planning approaches, the importance of maintaining focus and simplicity, and the need for systematic investment in planning capabilities. For practitioners, the evidence suggests that effective planning requires not only formal processes but also the organizational capacity to execute, adapt, and cancel low-value work. For policymakers, the findings suggest that supporting planning capability development and encouraging systematic measurement may yield productivity benefits.

As organizations face increasing environmental dynamism and competitive pressure, the ability to plan effectively, to allocate resources, coordinate activities, and adapt to changing conditions, would remain a critical determinant of productivity and performance. The evidence synthesized in this review provides a foundation for understanding how planning strategies contribute to productivity while highlighting the need for continued investigation of the mechanisms, moderators, and manifestations of the planning–productivity relationship across diverse organizational contexts.

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