

Practical Strategic Planning Associations Forum National Conference: 5 July 2016

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Disclaimer: This is practical advice based on our work with associations and charities. The contents of this presentation do not constitute legal advice, are not intended to be a substitute for legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. You should seek specialist advice in relation to any particular matters you or your organisation may have.



Case Study: Australian Constitutional Reform Association

- *"Hung Parliaments and lack of Senate majority by Commonwealth Government lead to inertia and lack of decisions being able to implement their policy agenda."*
- *The Australian Constitutional Reform Association seeks to change the Commonwealth Constitution to allow annual joint sittings of Parliament to pass deadlocked Bills."*



Plans: Strategic? Operational? Business? Financial?

1. Every association needs a plan and budget (ie financial plan)
2. The term "strategic" is widely used – it is an important concept, although not everyone will agree what is strategic and what is not strategic
3. The plan structure needs to allow for ranking of priorities
4. Always only ever have one Plan: if you have a strategic and operation parts of a plan, they must be linked
5. *The key is to use the Mission and Goals to cascade down to the details, plus add priorities*

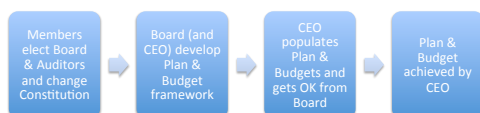


Plans must be flexible and allow (or disallow) new ideas

1. Every association must plan
2. Plans must be flexible – there is no point following a Plan that becomes wrong
3. Plans are a filter through which new ideas must pass:
 - Does the new idea fits the plan?
 - Can it be afforded?
 - What needs to be stopped to allow new idea in?



Simplified flow



Interrelationship between Board & CEO

1. When funds allow, associations employ (or contract) staff
2. When people are employed for administration, Board still makes the decisions
3. When management-level staff (led by CEO) are employed, Board needs to let go of management and have less Office Bearers
4. *Boards are willing (and sometimes even pleased) to let go if they can see the CEO has a Plan and knows their role*



Roles of Boards & CEO in Planning

1. Early clarification of the roles is necessary
2. Both parties must have their priorities & insights built into the Planning process
3. Board confirms Mission, Goals, strategic direction & gives initial input into plan
4. CEO/Management develops the operational & budgetary plan including risk analysis
5. Board approves detailed Plan & Budget



Ownership of the Plan within the association

1. Members of the Board must feel ownership of the 'big picture' of where the association is heading
2. Where staff are employed, they need ownership of the details and should not be micromanaged
3. The 'big picture' plan should be shared with the membership, excluding confidential aspects, operational details of the Plan and budget
4. Engaging the Board with the Mission and Goals is the key to keeping operations separate



Plans don't solve systemic problems – however, you can plan to solve these

1. If the structure or culture is problematic (eg factions, federal tensions, broke), systemic difficulties will remain – no matter how good your Plan
2. Ensure the Board & management understand that governance is distinct from management
3. Delay in correcting structural or cultural issues will hold back your association



Statements of Purpose

1. VISION is big picture for the industry, profession or cause – optional
2. MISSION is vital: purpose for the organisation's existence
3. GOALS are longer term and are there to achieve the Mission
4. Specific ACTIVITIES are current and are there to achieve the Goals



Clarifying Mission

1. Mission (easy to change) & official "objects" in Constitution (hard to change) must be aligned
2. Mission statements must be clear, practical, & contemporary – yet wise older words are OK
3. If the process of reviewing Mission is poorly handled, it can damage Governing Committee focus and cohesion (only allow 90 minutes)
4. Once set and agreed on by the Governing Committee, the Mission is a powerful force & motivator – as is the Plan



Do associations need a Vision and values?

1. You do not necessarily need a "Vision" statement (but you *must* have a Mission/Purpose statement)
2. Vision statements are different to Mission statements – they are higher, broader and a direction to head in – not necessarily what can be achieved
3. Visions can apply to the very broad industry or cause (eg "eradicate cancer"), whereas Mission statements are the purpose of the association or charity
4. Values statements are noble but harder to implement – perhaps have Charter for Governing Board



Goals must cascade from Mission

1. Once the Mission is set, agree on 5-7 areas for Goals to achieve the Mission
2. E.g. advocacy, education, professional standards, member services, fundraising, governance & operational support
3. Once the Goals are set by Board, management populate the matrix of activities, responsibilities, resources & timing
4. Details must cascade from big picture



Example of Statement of Purpose

Mission

The Mission of XYZ association is to advance the XYZ profession and to represent the interests of members.

Goals

In order to achieve our Mission, we will: *(this is the "linking" piece that is often missed)*

1. Educate
2. Inform
3. Advocate
4. Expand business opportunities
5. Have good governance



Once Mission & Goals are decided, move to details in grid format

GOAL	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE	TIMING	NOTE	PRIORITY
1 Educate	1.1 Conference	Event Mgr	May '17	Meas	B1
	1.2 On line learning	External	Jul '18		A3
2 Inform	2.1 Newsletter	Comms Mgr	Qtrly	Meas	
	2.2 Website	Comms Mgr	Ongoing	Meas	B2
3 Advocate	3.1 Develop policies	Board	Dec '16		
	3.2 Meet Minister	President	Jan '18		A2
4 Expansion	4.1 Trade mission	CEO	Aug '18	Meas	
	4.2 Economic analysis	External	Nov '16		B3
5 Governance/ Management	5.1 New database	CEO	Jul '18		
	5.2 Review Constit'n	Sub C'tee	May '17		A1
	5.3 Govern training	CEO	Nov '17		



Management response to draft plan by Board

1. Board must rank priorities
2. This will influence CEO/management planning of staff & financial resource allocations
3. A rigorous review process is required, including whether sometimes to stop activities
4. Plans need a capability assessment, including quantum and potential of staff & need for external resources



Preparation for the Planning Day

1. Make it part of the annual Board cycle (eg every September)
2. Allocate adequate time for effective planning
3. Set the date months in advance
4. Give Board members brief but thought-provoking materials & key information in advance
5. Small key group to set planning expectations
6. Expert external facilitator must draft the agenda



Typical Agenda for the Planning Day

- **Session 1:** Reconfirm Mission and Goals, environmental scan, big picture
- **Session 2:** Goals in order to achieve Mission, satisfy strategic imperatives and improve business-as-usual
- **Session 3:** Review strategic imperatives, agree broad priorities
- **Session 4:** Practicalities, resources, structures, culture and next steps



Insights from Planning Day experience

1. Boards vary greatly in their expectation & experience of the Planning Day
2. Expert External Facilitator must control the flow, interaction & speakers list
3. Facilitators need to know what to ask early so that the foundations can be build on
4. Move discussions ahead swiftly enough so that they can see achievement in stages



More insights from experience

5. Don't close off productive discussions & force decisions early
6. *Capture words live via laptop and data projector: everyone will see the words develop and will own them*
7. Expunge previous superseded Plans
8. Set reasonable expectations and outperform
9. Associations and charities must live and act on the plan all year round!



Selling benefits of the planning process

- What is your Board's attitude to Planning?
- It is fundamental to good Board governance
- Plans establish:
 - resource allocation priorities
 - Performance management criteria
 - Timetable for achievement
- Delivers stakeholder value proposition



Why do some association plans fail?

1. Big picture purpose and goals to achieve purpose not set
2. Too many objectives and too complicated
3. Board not involved
4. CEO not involved
5. No clear or realistic implementation plan with prioritisation and resource allocation
6. Poor utilisation and follow-up



Conclusion

1. Associations and charities need to realise the importance of having a Plan and Budget
2. An annual Planning Day is crucial and motivational
3. Use an association-aware external facilitator
4. Structure it: Mission – Goal – Activities – \$'s
5. Budgets can be linked to Plans if "Activity Based Costing" is used – the heading of individual budgets will be the same as the Goals in the Plan ☺



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