

PLANNING



Planning

A key issue in club governance is planning. It is a systematic and structured way of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the club.

Planning:

- provides an opportunity for those within the club, and those who contribute to it, to agree the purpose for which the club exists;
- sets out agreed objectives and importantly the activities that are necessary to get there.
- sorts out priorities
- establishes performance standards;
- assists in the allocation of resources;
- allows the committee and its members the chance to measure performance and progress; and,
- involves members in decision making; it becomes part of the corporate governance of the club

At times planning is deferred as unimportant or to be done at some later time. This will not help the club attain continuity of purpose and direction or maximise club cohesion for any period of time.

At times, members could be deterred by the variance in terminology that is commonly used – it is unnecessary to be sidetracked in this way because in the end the document is specifically for your club.

A plan need not be either a complicated or a big document. It simply may be a series of statements that identify a series of activities that the club wishes to achieve.

The time frames that the plan covers may vary and it is usual for them to cover the forthcoming 3-4 years. This provides continuity of purpose and allows annual assessment of progress and adjustment if necessary.

Planning is also based on the best judgement and choice of options at the time - there are varying degrees of uncertainty associated with its formulation and hence amendments may be made in the light of changes in the internal and external environment.

Preferably, a plan should have:

- A **MISSION** – a definition of the purpose for which the club exists
- A **VISION** - a concept of where the club wishes to be in a given period of time
- **GOALS** - statements that explain what the club wishes to achieve
- **STRATEGIES**- a list of broad approaches that best will allow the attainment of the goals
- **ACTIONS** – specific activities that underpin the strategies. These should be allocated to identified personnel and include a target completion date.
- **PERFORMANCE MEASURES** – these are both qualitative and quantitative statements that allow progress to be assessed.

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Where it suits the clubs managerial style, the actions/activities can be part of a complementary **Operational Plan**. In this way it can be linked more directly to operational issues with which committee members are often more familiar and comfortable. While this may assist in separating long term (strategic) issues from daily (operational) matters, progress in both spheres need to be evaluated and, if done separately, need to be brought together regularly.

The Process:

Commitment to any plan is more likely to be achieved where there is involvement of all stakeholders and sections of the club. Involvement enhances ownership. Creating a plan is time consuming but the benefits to both the club and its members become self-evident.

When planning a planning day there are some obvious steps to be taken. Appropriate facilities and material must be available, and a program for the day prepared. This will help minimise disruptions while encouraging thinking, debate and feedback. (Details for arranging and conducting a planning meeting can be found on the Australian Sports Commission website – www.ausport.gov.au and the NSW Department of Sport & Recreation website – www.dsr.nsw.gov.au)

An independent facilitator may also be valuable in keeping the whole process moving, increasing objectivity and allowing participants to be fully involved.

One approach to planning is to commence with a SWOT analysis (the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats environments in which the club exists). This helps in broadening the thinking of those structuring any plan and the thoughts that arise can be reworked into the plan later.

Another option is to comprehensively review the club's existing situation. Then look ahead to where the club wants to be in 3-4 years. Not only do you consider where you want to be but how are you going to get there.

In all cases the group needs to consider:

- Global influences;
- Political backgrounds;
- Social environments;
- Economic issues;
- Legal & regulatory frameworks;
- Technology;
- The physical environment;
- Resources; and,
- Customers & competitors

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The Result:

The format of the document is less important than its content. A common lay-out is a series of columns under a Goal and/or Strategy

eg

Goal: *To broaden the opportunities to participate in rugby*

Strategy: *Undertake a broad based campaign to highlight the fun in rugby*

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>KPI</i>

Once the plan has been drafted it should be distributed to all participants and significant others for comment and the inclusion of any subsequent amendments.

Once adopted the plan becomes the focus for at least annual appraisal. The appraisal may lead to amendments and adjustments. The whole process is cyclic and would roll continuously within a 3-4 year timeframe.

Some Examples:

Mission:

1. "To enrich the lives of all Australians through sport" - Australian Sports Commission
2. "To promote the interests of motorists in good roads, safety and consumer protection. To provide a range of quality services for members at the lowest possible cost consistent with sound financial management" - NRMA

Objectives:

1. "Increased participation in sport and sports activities by all Australians" & "Excellence in sports performance by Australians" – Australian Sports Commission
2. "In co-operation with other agencies, contribute to a concerted attack on the profit motive in organised crime" – National Crime Authority

Strategies:

1. "Develop and implement policies, programs and practices aimed at improving access and equity in all aspects of sport" – Australian Sports Commission
2. "Promote ethics and safety in sport" – Australian Sports Commission
3. "Develop and use investigative strategies to attack organised criminal groups as profit driven enterprises" – National Crime Authority

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Some Examples – cont:

Actions:

1. Prepare an annual program of meetings that includes at least two for performance appraisal
2. Establish a club sponsorship committee to create and manage all proposals
3. Assess the club's needs for new equipment & uniforms in sufficient time to organise funding and replacement where necessary.

Measures

1. System implemented within the month – (quantitative)
2. Number of coaches appointed – (quantitative)
3. Club Constitution is in place – (quantitative)
4. Club Constitution accurately reflects the club's needs- (quantitative)
5. System developed to specifications – (qualitative)
6. Responsiveness to issues/feedback – (qualitative)

Summary:

Planning has many benefits:

- It's a framework against which both long term and short term activities can be assessed;
- It need not be a complex, complicated document;
- Made part of an integrated process, including monthly meetings, budget formulation and on-going discussions, a plan gives meaning, structure and direction;
- Full benefit can be gleaned by setting time aside for formulation of the plan and, subsequently, its evaluation;
- A plan brings home to all involved with the club its purpose, progress and performance; and as such,
- The plan should be a vital reference document for all members, particularly those who run the club and those who participated in the plan's creation.

References:

- Planning in Sport – Australian Sports Commission
- Australian Sports Commission website - www.ausport.gov.au
 - Planning by C Auld & G. Coskelly, Griffith University, Brisbane
- NSW Department of Sport & Recreation website - www.dsr.nsw.gov.au
 - Running Your Club; Planning
- Paul W Jones & Assoc Pty Ltd, HR Development & Management Consultants,
 - Planning & the Manager