

My Progression.....

PLANNING

Today competition for funds, sponsorship money, members and volunteers is tight. While good management practices and governance have become standard requirements for even the smallest club, the key to success is to plan. It is the most effective way to sustain, improve and develop your club and map out a better future.

About Planning

Clubs want to increase membership, raise funds, attract and retain volunteers, develop coaches and officials and maintain good financial and governance management practices. Strategic business planning is a process of mapping out how a club or association can successfully achieve these goals.

Before you start

Before you start preparing your plan, check with your NGB about their plans for the sport.

A 'whole of sport' approach to the planning process and the development and implementation of the sports plan is encouraged. LGFA provides leadership in developing the 'whole of sport' strategic plan, clearly identifying which levels of the sport have a role in its delivery.

You may find one of their strategies could involve your club. For example, the national sporting association may want to increase the number of qualified coaches for the sport. This may require your club to incorporate coaching training as part of your own strategic plan.

Basics of planning

A strategic business plan is the summary and evaluation of the planning process and outlines where your club or association wants to go and the necessary steps to get there.

A strategic business plan describes:

- How your club fits together
- Why your club is a vibrant sport that can meet its management goals and objectives
- The distinctive competencies of your club and its unique point of difference.

Benefits of Planning

Planning your club future will help you to:

1. Prioritise goals and objectives
2. Establish performance and evaluation criteria
3. Assess progress
4. Ensure a professional approach
5. Secure funding and win sponsorship deals
6. Identify promotion and marketing strategies
7. Allocate resources more efficiently
8. Show what your club can offer potential new players/members
9. Help volunteers better understand the business of running a club
10. Involve members in decision-making therefore improve team morale.

Seven Essentials of a Good Plan

Understanding the main strategies of business planning will help you achieve the best possible outcome for your club.

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| Vision | Without a vision, your club will have no focus. |
| Commitment | Be committed to the vision, otherwise your club is unlikely to succeed. |
| Timelines | Create timelines showing when particular targets or milestones will be achieved. |
| Objectives | Avoid a long list of objectives as it is probably not realistic and will make it difficult for you to achieve. |
| Reporting | Focus on performance and trends that help determine change. Reports on membership numbers over the past few years, volunteer commitment, methods of fundraising provide an overview of past and present club operations. |
| Contingencies | Account for the risks your club might face and work out contingency plans. A SWOT analysis template will determine a club threats and weaknesses. |
| Change | Any major changes affecting your club should be indicated in the business plan. A local school closing could impact on membership numbers at a club. A good plan will incorporate measures to prepare for this change so that member numbers remain stable or increase. |

Step by Step Guide to Planning

Strategic business planning can be a simple, uncomplicated process if you take it step by step. Here is a guide to help you develop a business plan.

1. Set up planning structure
2. Establish current status and broad strategy
3. Map what to include
4. Write the plan
5. Implement, monitor and review

Step 1: Set up planning structure

- Form a planning committee.
- Schedule meetings separate to executive meetings.
- Identify key people who should be involved in your planning process – executive members, management, sponsors.
- If possible appoint an experienced external facilitator – someone who isn't involved in the club – to drive the planning process.

Establish best practice from the start – use the planning checklist as a guide.

Step 2: Establish current status and broad strategy

- Review club's past outcomes and present position, including club mission statement and values. Your mission is what your club wants to achieve in the larger environment.
- Find out trends within the sport industry. For example there may be an increase or decrease in participation, access to funds, alliances with other club or associations etc.
- Find out trends within your club. For example there could be an increase in females aged 18 – 25 participating at your club.
- Understand where you club is placed within the operating environment by undertaking a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Establish realistic and timely performance indicators. For example: a club plans to conduct 2 coaching courses in one year.
- Draft action plans, assign responsibilities to key people.
- Analyse current financial status including forecast balance sheet, cash flow and profit and loss statement.

Step 3: Map what to include

You will now have enough information to incorporate into a formal business plan and to help you work out the layout and structure.

Step 4: Write the plan

Once you have established the plan's sections and structure, you are ready to write the business plan.

If you need assistance, customise our sample plan to suit the needs of your club, including:

- Key Performance Areas (KPA's)
- Sample SWOT analysis
- Implementation plans
- Financial explanations with sample cash flow forecast and budget forecast.

Step 5: Implement, monitor and review

A business plan creates the structure for you to put in place strategies and objectives identified in the plan.

To make the whole planning process a valuable and worthwhile activity for your club, you need to:

- Assign responsibilities for implementation of strategies
- Create realistic timelines for implementation of action plans
- Evaluate and update entire plan at least annually, ideally before budget planning.
- Regularly evaluate your plan:
 - Targets should be evaluated quarterly
 - Financial plans should be evaluated monthly
 - Action plans should be evaluated monthly, weekly and daily.