

Carpe Diem! Time to Seize the Opportunity

SLOWLY YOUR STRATEGIC PLANNING HAPPENS. A NEW DIRECTION AND CLUB CULTURE IS DEVELOPING THROUGH THE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE OF PAID MANAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERS.

Collaborative governance is the key as the club's strategic planning and decision-making, instead of being initiated top down, comes from the efforts of the club's paid management, the volunteers and club members. It's a vital initiative on the path to success of the strategic plan.

Up to this point in the process of developing a new culture and a strong collaborative governance base, the club's volunteers have played a more critical role in establishing the direction. Volunteers are telling club management (through the strategic plan) what direction they want the club to take in every key result area.

Now it's management's turn...it's action time. The club's managers must make good on these directives and deliver them in the most timely and cost effective manner. At the same time, it allows the membership to evaluate management's performance on their delivery and effectiveness, and just how successful the club can be.

It's a huge transition as the club's strategic planning process moves from the big picture (the vision) to the nuts and bolts activities, leading eventually to development of the club's business plan.

Remember, this all started by developing a strong foundation, the painstaking approval of the club's core values, a unique, differentiating mission and a clearly defined vision for the strategic plan by way of the lean, mean planning machine. And with your vision, for five years, you know what you want your club to become in that time.

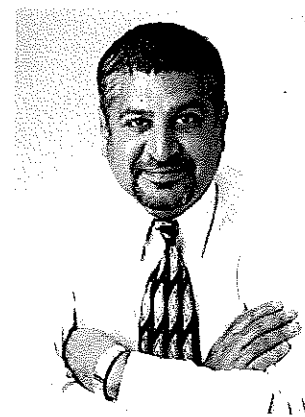
Key result areas must be identified and clearly articulated with objectives, thus defining SMART goals with well thought-out strategies and a plan for implementation.

To reiterate, it's vitally important to stake out positions...and how you're going to make it all happen. This requires a critical path of the initiatives to be tackled, and when and within each initiative what specific section or pieces will be achieved. It's important their priority be established. What do you want to do first...second?

The whole process of course, has moved into high gear with the realization that private clubs today need a solid foundation, with a flexible structure and a very strong connectivity between the two.

By building in a slow deliberate way, no one group in the club community becomes alienated. It can be frustratingly slow, but building trust and changing behaviors takes time.

People have to take ownership and hope they don't get lynched in the process. To repeat: A club's vision is only as good as its buy-in from every-



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one, and once established, the core values, mission and vision become non-negotiable.

A key to success of course, is acceptance of the three key ingredients of the strategic planning process – participation, inclusion and transparent governance. All stakeholders must be encouraged to actively participate with a transparency that all can see.

Members are club owners and have the same right in knowing what decisions are being made, why they are being made and what has led to the decisions, as does the club's elected volunteer board and paid management. In fact, it's cause for even greater concentrated efforts from everyone to be transparent by communicating, communicating, communicating.

NO MICROMANAGEMENT

In this manner, the integrity of the strategic planning process is maintained, the volunteer board and management governs collaboratively, leading to sustained success for the club.

Collaborative governance means a strong commitment to operating your club through the strategic planning process...training and disciplining volunteer leaders to NOT interfere in the daily operation of the club, but

rather setting policing and giving guidelines. This is a strong, necessary commitment meaning emphatically that micro-management is a NO NO.

Because there's a transitional leadership (volunteer boards and committees can change members every year), there's an additional requirement to ensure continuity in the club's focus and direction. There must be continuity, connectivity and consistency...the three essential Cs of private clubs.

All too often, a new board president or chair of the green committee takes control with their "new" agenda. Traditional private club governance often gives rise to disparate and tangential directions, and that's what we don't want to have happen.

"Change" (or agenda-setting, or a personal agendas) happens every year, really creating a challenge for management to connect with the volunteer leadership. Ultimately, this agenda setting hampers management's ability to continuously deliver a consistent experience for the entire membership.

If management clearly understands the direction the board has taken, through the strategic planning process, management will seize the reins, provide staff leadership and jump in with both feet to make it happen.

It's a two-way street. If you want a club culture where volunteers respect the professionals, and give them the autonomy needed, then management must pony up and take ownership of the plan.

To review: Our core values, mission and vision, the foundation of the club, are non-negotiables developed by the strategic planning committee in concert with the membership and the management and approval by the board.

This dovetails with the structure of the club, which is flexible, and dynamic, and includes the key result areas, the objectives, goals, and strategies for each of these goals along with action plans for achievement.

The responsibility lies with management including establishing goals and objectives for each department, which are then vetted by senior management before going to the key result area task force (for example, the golf committee) or the strategic planning committee.

Key result areas are the different areas of the club that require dedicated work to achieve the club's vision, which paints a clear picture and tells the present and future boards of directors what needs to be done, where the club wants to head.

But how do you turn that vision into reality? It requires work within each key result area of the club, such as on food and beverage, business services, social programming, membership sales, accounting and finance, fitness and recreation.

And from each of these KRAs is derived one or more broad objectives you want to see accomplished; to do that requires development of written goals and an all-encompassing strat-

Keep your board and members focused on tangible and measurable goals that further the strategic planning process by focusing on changing behavior, building trust, in addition to working on the mechanics of developing plans. This will address a frequent problem in many private clubs where professional staff continually is pulled in different directions to meet the whims and desires of vocal boards and members. A common question I get from the leadership is: "How much autonomy should paid management be given?" and from management: "How much interference should paid management tolerate?"

egy for each SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time) goal...to be accomplished over the next five years of the strategic plan.

Goals must be written and measurable to gauge change. When volunteer board members are given verbal, non-measurable goals, you have in fact given the board and members the freedom to identify and diagnose the problems, and give their 'expert' solutions. This does nothing more than set the stage for members to make the comments they do...and micromanage your managers.

Plenty of autonomy and no interference! (Tarunism...)

Let's face it, if the goal is not written and not measurable, the volunteer board just isn't going to see it...the club's paid management and staff will continue to be micromanaged because everyone's so-called 'goals' are different.

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These key questions must be considered when developing the "new" club culture and articulating the goals for your club. And my answers are: plenty of autonomy and no interference!

However, it's worth noting that it's likely taken your club years to get to this point, where the board and members unconsciously micromanage the professional managers, so it's obviously going to take a few more years to break the habit, build the trust relationships and change everyone's behavior.

As I've said before, this is where the rubber meets the road...where the professionals have to trust their staff and demonstrate their expertise. Now they will need to rely on research, which they will conduct related to their competitors, trends, club and/or department strengths and weaknesses, member survey results, etc.

It's incumbent upon each manager and department head to research the information for needed for each key result area, each objective and each goal derived from those objectives.

Goals must be evaluated, given priority and ranked by the management before presenting them to the key result area task force. And it's vital to get a buy-in from both the task force and the strategic planning committee before presentation to the board for approval.

Carpe diem! Now's the time, this is the opportunity for managers and department heads to seize the day, tap into their expertise and showcase their creativity by finding unique strategies, their chosen ways to achieve the goals, to transform their clubs key result area by key result area. **BR**

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