



# Planning your Club's Future

Club Development Information Seminar

TRAINING • FACILITATION • CONSULTING • STRATEGY • ACTION



The Sia Group

# Introduction

1. Why plan at all?
2. Questions a plan answers
3. Steps in preparing a plan
4. Topics to cover in a plan
5. Main problems encountered
6. Do's and don'ts in planning
7. Implementation

# Why plan?



Research and practice shows that plans and planning:

- Help deliver better outcomes.
- Are an indicator of good practice.
- Focus effort – particularly important with scarce resources.
- Get the relevant people on board.
- Secure funding and sponsorships.
- Allocate resources more efficiently.
- Show how much you have achieved.
- Show the potential the club has to new members/volunteers.
- Prioritise goals and objectives.
- Involve members and improve morale.

# A good plan should answer the following questions



- What do we want to achieve as a club over the next 1-3 years?
- What is our starting point – where are we now?
- What will be the key things the plan should tackle?
- What have we got that will help achieve the things we have set out to do?
- What do we need to change to achieve our objectives?
- What's happening in the community, in our sport, in other sports that we should take into account?
- What resources do we have to deliver this plan – money, facilities, members and volunteers, reputation etc and how are we going to use them in the implementation of the plan?
- Who is going to do what to deliver on the plan?
- How will we know how we are progressing with the plan?
- What are the 'must haves' and the 'nice to haves'?

# Steps in developing a plan

1. Establish the planning team and the scope of the plan e.g. term, timeframe, topics to be covered, functional areas to include e.g. funding, budgets, new membership, marketing & communication, etc. Get approval for the approach from the Committee/board or other governance structure.
2. Allocate aspects to individuals to lead and agree the work plan for developing each aspect or Key Performance Aspect (KPAs) and regular meetings to discuss inputs and agree decisions.
3. The planning team meets to decide what is to be done on each KPA, based on the work done by the team leader and the proposals and options put forward. The team leader consults with the relevant people in formulating the analysis and the options and recommendations. Consensus is good but sometimes leadership is needed.
4. The finalised plan is put to the Committee/board for approval/adoption/amendment.
5. The planning team is charged with monitoring the implementation of the plan and reporting back on progress and any adjustments.

# Strategic vs. operational plan

- Strategic plan looks at a longer time frame.
- A strategy takes the external context into account.
- A strategic plan focuses on chosen actions rather than managing the effort in all aspects of the business/club/sport.
- A strategic plan defines the basis for 'competitive advantage' over the 'competition' –e.g. competition for active members can be from the TV, the pub, the garden, the poker school, as well as other sports clubs.
- An operational plan is usually done for one year but can extend to two or three.
- Operational plans deal with all of the key aspects of running a club i.e. from money to coaching, child protection, competition, facilities maintenance, to health and safety etc.
- Operational planning is about smooth and efficient running of the club.
- Strategic planning is about achieving longer term goals and objectives for the club.
- You need both good strategic and operational planning to succeed in the mid to longer term.

# A Two-page Club Development Plan



- Introduction – what the plan covers and how it was developed.
- Objectives – what the club is about and what the club wants to achieve – e.g. raise €X funds; increase membership by Y; attract Z additional volunteers; increase team competition from X to Y; win a particular championship.  
Summary of where the club is now on these and other important aspects of the club.
- Key Performance Aspects – Describe the main actions being taken to achieve the objectives and who is responsible for them. What resources – people, facilities, money, skills will be needed to implement properly.
- Monitoring – describe how progress will be monitored and how it will be reported on.
- Contacts – identify those who are responsible for the club’s development and where they can be contacted. List any web site or social media the club uses for communications.

# Common pitfalls

- Finding the time to do the planning work.
- Getting the data required to do a good plan e.g. numbers of potential members in your area by age category; availability of facilities for hire/part-time access.
- Being given the task of pulling the plan together and finding yourself on your own.
- You do the thankless task of pulling a draft plan together and the other committee members/club members turn into critics.
- Limited 'buy-in' and so poor implementation.
- Getting agreement on priorities – particularly when there are strong advocates for different aspects e.g. junior member facilities v elite player development.
- Great detail on one aspect e.g. competition but limited cover for equally important items.



# Do's and Don'ts

- Do get a group or committee together – don't leave it to one person.
- Do keep it simple – complicated plans don't gather support.
- Do set out to do a good plan – but don't strive for a perfect plan.
- Do involve members for their ideas, knowledge and enthusiasm.
- Don't expect to finish a plan in less than three months and call a halt if you have spent more than six months at it.
- Do encourage ideas and suggestions but don't expect that they will all agree.
- Don't allow an individual or group to have a veto – the club plan is for everyone.
- Do have lots of patience – but don't allow groups to make a meal of it.
- Do enjoy the relief and satisfaction when the job is done and the plan finished.



# Implementation

- Planning is everything – plans are nothing.
- Great planners often make poor implementers.
- Buy-in by those who will make the plan a reality is the fuel of progress.
- Have someone responsible for each Key Performance Aspect.
- Review progress regularly.
- Spot issues and slippage early and adjust actions to fix it.
- Early wins encourage and give confidence/energy to the harder tasks.
- Doers self select for the role of implementers – recognize them and get them signed up early in the planning process.
- Celebrate successes. Give failures a quick funeral after a good post mortem.