

Winning Strategies

Green Management

Spend Less Energy – Get More Accomplished

We are told it is very responsible to be Green. We need to reduce the carbon footprint by expending less energy. These concepts are notable. Many clubs are environmentally sensitive and try to be good citizens. At the same time it is not uncommon for clubs to spend incredible amounts of time at the committee and Board level just spinning their wheels. They spend a lot of energy and are not really accomplishing much work for the time invested. Maybe there is a GREEN (less energy for more productivity) solution.

This is not to say all organizations are dysfunctional. Many clubs run like fine tuned machines. Unfortunately this is not the majority situation as many managers will attest. So how can this trend be reversed? It may be as simple as one piece of paper.

In the Strategic Management Handbook for private clubs published by Clubwise in 2009 and revised in 2010 there is a concept for managing your strategic and operating goals and objectives. The concept is to focus staff, committees and club boards on task management eliminating the round and round problem that is too often prevalent. How is this accomplished? By identifying the departmental mission and concentrating the staff and committee time to meet that mission. Obviously each departmental mission is designed to fulfill a greater vision for what the club is and where it needs to go.

You say this sounds complicated. Actually it is very simple to implement at both the board and committee level. It is kind of like a checklist concept. We all use checklists in both business and our daily lives. The key to this checklist is that it has a focus and vision of what will happen as the checklist is completed.

Each year the staff develops their operating goals and objectives. Some may be tied to greater strategic initiatives or even capital expenditures. They are then listed on a sheet similar to Figure I. Each year at the first committee meeting the sheet is passed out with all the staff goals and objectives for that department. It is the staff and committee responsibility to develop an area mission for the year based on their annual vision. Then it is the staff's job to devise a focus as to how they will accomplish the mission and what role the committee will play in the process. Each of the staff goals and objectives are reviewed as to their relevance.

The Board then reviews the individual committee work. They may add strategic direction or specific action items. The individual sheets for each committee make up the greater operation / strategic plan for the club for the year.

Each committee meeting begins with a status report on the goals and objectives listed on the sheet. The objectives have target dates, the person responsible and a status of completion. As things are accomplished they are marked completed. New things can be added during the year as circumstances dictate. The departmental sheets are the center of all reporting to the board with a copy of the minutes

Area Designation _____				
Area Mission				
Board or Committee Annual Vision				
Staff Focus				
ID	Initiative	Responsibility	Target	Status

Figure I

Once the program is initiated it becomes a living process. Each year the existing vision and mission is revisited at the beginning of the year and modified where appropriate. New goals and objectives are added and others modified or removed.

What about a club where the manager can not get the leaders to strategically plan. It is suggested to start small. Make sure all department heads prepare their annual goals in the coded format. Prepare the template using only operational goals. Show the spreadsheet to the leadership showing them how you plan to manage these goals and track progress. In most cases club leaders should respond positively. Make the GM goals both operational and strategic in nature. Eliminate or change those strategic goals where there appears to be kickback from the Board. Eventually the GM should be able to convince the president or executive committee to commit some time discussing strategic issues and bringing them to the board for further discussion. The process has now begun.

Some of the most prosperous clubs in the country that have generated extensive strategic plans have been unable to manage them effectively. Establishing the template approach can pay big dividends for all involved. The worst thing that can happen is investing heavily in a plan and then letting it collect dust in an office.

Be careful as the club leadership changes. Many times new leaders don't like the results of prior planning. Their approach is to ignore prior planning until it can be replaced. This type of club just flounders from year to year with continual changes in direction. Insure there is a process in place for goals and initiatives to be implemented and those not completed to move to a high priority in the next year.

It is not uncommon for consultants to get blind calls from club board members. Many times they think their club needs help in developing strategic direction. They feel like they have been floundering without purpose or leadership. Leadership begins with the GM/COO. Leadership does not have to take sides and result in problems. It does however have to provide a logical approach to solid decision making. The template process described is such an approach.

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