

STRATEGY



Bill McMahon, Jr.

How do successful clubs maintain their relevance?

IN TODAY'S WORLD, the term relevancy is used quite a bit and has become a good catch phrase for any business whether you are selling Stanley Cup merchandise (Let's Go Blues!) or a membership to a private club. What does the customer want and how do we ensure we maintain their loyalty? Every club board should be asking this question. Clubs need to identify what makes them attractive to their membership as well as what gives them the edge in attracting the next generation.

Clubs must take a strong look at who they are and identify their purpose today and in the future, while still respecting the traditions of the past. This delicate balance needs thought, attention and leadership. A comprehensive strategic plan will put your club's leadership on the path to ensure success. A plan identifies the mission, vision and core values of your club—the strategic foundation that will be the guiding principle for all decisions confronting club leadership.

With a clear understanding of the club's purpose, you can start to identify the goals and action items you need to achieve to be relevant for the future. From membership, facilities and recreation to governance, management and communication, each is vital to the success of your club.

Keep in mind a strategic plan is a living document that is developed at a 30,000-foot level that identifies the issues, not the direct solutions. As part of the process, certain individuals, committees or task forces will be responsible for the in-depth research and come back to the board with a solution.

With a strategic plan developed, board meetings will become less about the day-to-day issues that management handles

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and keeps the board abreast of, and more about the long-term vision for your club.

I advise that strategic plans should be developed by the board and not an appointed committee. If a board develops it, they take ownership. A strategic plan is such an important tool for leadership at any organization that it must be done with those leading the charge, not delegated to another group who would have to send it back for board approval. What if the board doesn't like it?

The clubs that embrace a strategic planning culture are experiencing success and growth, ensuring their relevance to current members and the next generation looking for that special club experience for themselves and their family. 

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