

Strategic Plan for the Harbor City/Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce: 2013-2015

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598 Report

Written by Carter Calhoun, Master of Community Development candidate
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

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Client Supervisor: Joeann Valle

Academic Supervisor: Dr. Budd Hall

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The client for this research project is the Harbor City/Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), a small community-based nonprofit organization that is evolving through rapid and unpredictable change. The Chamber is presented with promising development potential, yet concurrently it is struggling to meet financial sustainability and grow the membership base. The complexity of these circumstances guide the research question, *how can the client identify the goals and implement the strategies necessary to grow the organization and increase services to members?*

This project answers the research question by providing two deliverables for the client:

- 1) A collaborative and engaging strategic planning process, leading to
- 2) A practical, applicable, and relevant strategic plan.

To answer the research question, the project reviews literature on the topics of organizational change, strategic planning, change leadership, and nonprofit strategic planning resources. This review creates a strategic planning process that is designed uniquely for the client, and results in a completed strategic plan that serves as a guiding framework to assist the Chamber to develop organizational assets, seize growth opportunities, and overcome developmental challenges.

The methodology and appendices chapters organize the planning process into five sequential planning *phases*, with each phase engaging a different composition of participants and one or a few specific *steps*.

The researcher served a unique role in this project as both objective researcher and engaged facilitator. This research is thus guided by salient participatory research methods, which identify how to maintain validity while concurrently engaging in direct participation. The methodology delineates these dual roles in the context of each aspect of the planning process and, in this report, the terms *facilitator* and *researcher* are used alternately to identify the author serving in the respective capacity.

The planning process was highly interactive, evolving as necessary through engagement with the planning participants and modified the Chamber's particular needs. Predominantly, the data gathered was qualitative, including informal discussions, surveys, interviews, conference calls, and discussion groups. In some circumstances, participants were asked to objectify findings by nominal group and ranking techniques.

The process was successful in guiding the organizational leaders through a detailed and informed process, resulting in five (5) key goals to pursue over the next three years.

- Goal #1) Increase membership to 130 members by December 31, 2013
- Goal #2) Break even for fiscal year 2013
- Goal #3) Implement a community-based marketing/branding program that generates positive impressions / associations for the chamber by March 31st, 2013
- Goal #4) Retain at least 90% current membership through to 2014
- Goal #5) Improve board operations, development, & accountability

The strategic plan sets objective markers and identifies guides along the path, and organizational leaders will monitor the progress of these goals and strategies throughout the three-year period of the plan.

Effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation are essential pillars to ensure that the organization follows this plan. The *Discussion* chapter describes how the Chamber can implement the plan with effective leadership techniques and monitoring processes.

Finally, the researcher has provided recommendations based upon the assessments of the Chamber's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These include:

- Develop innovative, marketing-focus committees;
- Build strategic partnerships with neighboring chambers
- Identify grant opportunities
- Develop case statements
- Leverage industry information
- Develop the marketing & branding strategy
- Harness political capital for increased exposure
- Evaluate public sector partnerships
- Develop work-study exchanges with local secondary schools and students
- Develop the Member Needs Assessment process
- Improve constituent management processes
- Organize and reward volunteerism
- Utilize personal actions plans to improve organizational efficacy
- Create self-directed teams
- Reinforce 'informal ties' among board members
- Implement project and group task management groupware

With the planning process documented in this project, the Chamber has the capability and tools necessary to forge new plans, identify strategies and goals, and stimulate growth for years to come.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Navigating Change in Community-Based Organizations

The traditional model of the small-scale, locally scoped and funded nonprofit organization is in a process of radical change. Economic, population, and cultural transformations are occurring rapidly, and in recent years, these community-based organizations have faced diminishing funding sources, worsening economic conditions, added demand on services, and increased competition, among various other threats. On the other hand, novel opportunities becoming increasingly significant, including social media, social entrepreneurialism, voluntarism, online learning communities, and many more. The landscape for community-based organizations is undergoing major change with many significant, new, and developing internal and external factors. Community-based organizations must become *more* proficient in implementing organizational change in order to thrive and grow in the face of bigger odds and higher stakes. The need for organizational renewal, growth, and change are the underpinning causes for strategic planning (State of California, p.1; McNamara, 2007; Mittenthal, 2002).

1.2. Client's Rationale for the Study

For many years, the Chamber has been contending with significant operational challenges: declining revenue, diminished human resource capital, and a rapidly changing membership base. To face these challenges, the Harbor City/Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce employs the use of assets including experienced leadership, broad regional credibility, and unique strategic partnerships. Even so, various growth opportunities go underdeveloped.

Chamber leaders, comprised of the Board of Directors and Executive Director, are familiar with the potential of strategic planning, and agreed to collaborate with the researcher in undertaking the intensive planning process in order to focus the organizations efforts and drive organizational growth (*see Appendix 10.1.1*).

1.3. Research Question and Objectives

THE RESEARCH QUESTION: HOW CAN WE IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIES NECESSARY TO GROW OUR ORGANIZATION AND INCREASE SERVICES TO OUR MEMBERS?

Currently, Chamber leaders do not have a clear set of goals and strategies to guide organizational growth and sustainability (*see Appendices 10.2.1, 10.2.3, 10.2.7, and 10.3.3*). The research question addresses these needs through the facilitation of a strategic planning process resulting in the creation of a strategic plan that explicates organizational development goals and sets a path to accomplish these goals. The planning process is guided by collaboration with and participation from the Chamber, thereby resulting in a client-driven strategic plan. This plan is further supported with effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation strategies.

1.4. Listing of Key Deliverables

The planning process yields a practical strategic plan, incorporating research and methods that are customized to the Chamber's specific circumstances and opportunities. The strategic plan exposes development opportunities in organizational areas including governance, leadership, marketing, human resources, internal systems and procedures, and other areas. When coupled with a practical organizational change effort, the strategic plan will yield increased organizational efficiency and expose additional growth opportunities (Proehl, p. 93; Mittenthal, 2002, p.2).

1.5. Brief Discussion of Client

The Chamber is in its 75th year of service to businesses and organizations located in Harbor City and the Harbor Gateway region, and area located in the southern part of Los Angeles leading towards a major national seaport. In the researcher's observations over the past few years, it is evident that the organization is being challenged with diminished revenue and a smaller membership base. The Chamber is a small nonprofit organization with annual revenues between \$40,000 to \$60,000, derived primarily from membership dues, a handful of major donors, and special events (*see appendix 10.5.2*). Yet, even considering these current limitations, the Chamber is strategically significant within the community and continues to provide valuable services to a relatively large number of businesses and community-based organizations.

1.6. Researcher's Relationship to the Client

The researcher works in the Chamber on a daily basis as the Director of Business Development, serving in this capacity since December 2011, and paid as an independent contractor through a program grant with the City of Los Angeles. In this role, the researcher is very familiar with the organizational leaders, stakeholders, and activities, and reports to the executive director and the board of directors. In this report, the

researcher presents an unbiased account that is informed by objective research, yet also seasoned with recommendations but not unduly persuaded by opinion.

1.7. Organization of this Report

The research project is founded in a comprehensive literature review, including topics focused on implementing organizational change in small community-based organizations and designing an effective strategic planning process. A description of methods used to conduct the strategic planning process follows the literature review. The results from the planning process are then presented in the *Findings* chapter. The *Discussion* chapter examines the implications of the strategic plan and connects the research to effective implementation, including monitoring and evaluation objectives. In the chapter *Recommendations*, the researcher integrates findings from the planning process and provides actionable considerations to supplement the organization's future decisions.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Mission

“THE MISSION OF THE HARBOR CITY / HARBOR GATEWAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IS TO HELP BUSINESSES GROW AND PROSPER BY FOSTERING A DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BUSINESS, COMMUNITY, AND GOVERNMENT AND TO ENCOURAGE A HEALTHY AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL CAN THRIVE.”

The Chamber is a membership-driven non-profit organization in its 75th continuous year of service to business, non-profit, and community-based organizations. The Chamber is an association of organizations seeking to further their collective interests, while also advancing the interests community and region (ACCE, 2010). The Chamber is led by a voluntary board of directors (Board) and executive director. The Board is comprised from an expansive array of private, non-profit, and public sector organizational leaders who share a vested interest in community leadership through the Chamber. Together, these leaders guide the organization to deliver services designed to empower, inform, and educate stakeholders, stimulate economic development, conduct community service, and promote advocacy for regional economic growth.

2.2. Culture

“AS MINDSET IS TO THE INDIVIDUAL, CULTURE IS TO THE ORGANIZATION. CULTURE IS A FUNCTION OF PEOPLE’S COLLECTIVE MINDSETS.” (ACKERMAN ANDERSON AND ANDERSON, 2009, P.7).

In small community-based organizations, the organizational culture is an integral component, and one that is substantively distinct from the mission, vision, and values. The culture can be likened to the ‘soul’ of the organization, it is invisible, being expressed in both informal and formal rules and norms that shape and reflect how the organization operates (Philbin & Mikush, 2000, p. 24). In the researcher’s view, the Chamber has developed a culture that encourages *entrepreneurship, autonomy, shared leadership, sharing knowledge and collaboration*. Typically, these traits are found exclusive from one another, yet the fact that they are all expressed in the Chamber’s culture is notable. Within the Chamber, relationship development is a fundamental cultural ideal, as is professional growth, learning, and development. The Chamber’s leadership

recognizes the value of this culture, and aspires to build upon it to achieve organizational goals (as detailed in the *Findings* chapter).

Although Chamber members have divergent interests, ranging the broad spectrum of organizational diversity, they are united by the culture of the Chamber. Members are empowered to create, build, and grow the organization, and they work together to accomplish these goals. Some members are drawn together by the compelling benefit of collaboration, which brings promise for members as well the community as a whole. For many members, Chamber membership denotes prestige. For yet others, membership brings resources to stimulate personal and organizational growth.

2.3. History

Officially incorporated in June of 1939, the Chamber began with a group of businessmen who agreed to meet at Jack Woods Plumbing in Harbor City (*see appendix 10.2.10*). Many of the early members worked, lived, and owned property in Harbor City, and decided they needed more representation in the City of Los Angeles. The Chamber created a voice for the city, and has continued to vocalize the needs of local businesses ever since.

By the early 1980's, the Chamber moved into their first 'true' office, shared with the 15th district councilwoman and deputy. The Chamber helped businesses with permits and licenses, held events, evening mixers and business expos. At the time, the council office supported the Chamber's bid to expand to serve the Harbor Gateway region.

Today, the Chamber provides most of the same services as it did 75 years ago. The current Executive Director, Joann Valle, is well-recognized, friendly face of enthusiasm and determination of the Chamber (*see chapter Findings, Organizational Strengths*). In her tenure of more than 20 years, Joann has demonstrated tremendous knowledge and expertise and continues to push the envelope as the Chamber meets the needs of the 21st century business.

2.4. Programs and Services

Currently, the Chamber's services, as described in the following section (*Functions*), are almost exclusively conducted through efforts of volunteers, predominantly comprised of the board of directors and executive director (who is supported with a small stipend). In spite of its small size, the impact of the Chamber is significant. Most chamber services are offered at no cost to members, yet they provide substantial and direct economic benefit. The chamber is profoundly important for all stakeholders, as it is uniquely situated association with the impartial mission to build coalitions between

business, community, and government interests. Members are afforded exceptional access to regional elected officials and government service providers. The Chamber serves as a central point of influence for many regional organizations (*see Findings: Primary Stakeholders*). Stakeholders are each is recognized for their unique needs, and united by the particular brand of services and advocacy the Chamber imparts.

The chamber organizes several major events that provide networking opportunities and facilitate relationship development. Membership to the Chamber, in addition to providing exceptional benefits, demonstrates an organization's support of Chamber objectives, pride in the community, and serves as a mark of professional prestige.

2.5. Functions

The core Chamber functions are categorized here by the impact created for members, as follows:

The Chamber Empowers

- Participates in community issues and community affairs to empower members;
- Develops relationships with regional elected officials, public service organizations, and advocacy groups in order to improve the quality and availability of public services to members and exert influence on regional public policies;
- Creates opportunities for members to build credibility and prestige in the community;
- Develops connections between all area organizations, businesses, public service, community-based organizations, clubs and fraternal organizations, non-profits, and neighborhood councils;
- Encourages and assists organization with corporate civic responsibility; and
- Builds a membership body promoting the values of shared knowledge, open communication, and community service.

The Chamber Educates

- Builds a repository of information on the resources in the community;
- Provides workforce development and employment resources; and
- Provides informational workshops and organizational development events.

The Chamber Informs

- Identifies issues that affect stakeholders;
- Informs stakeholders through topical newsletters; and
- Provides timely news and information.

2.6. Structure

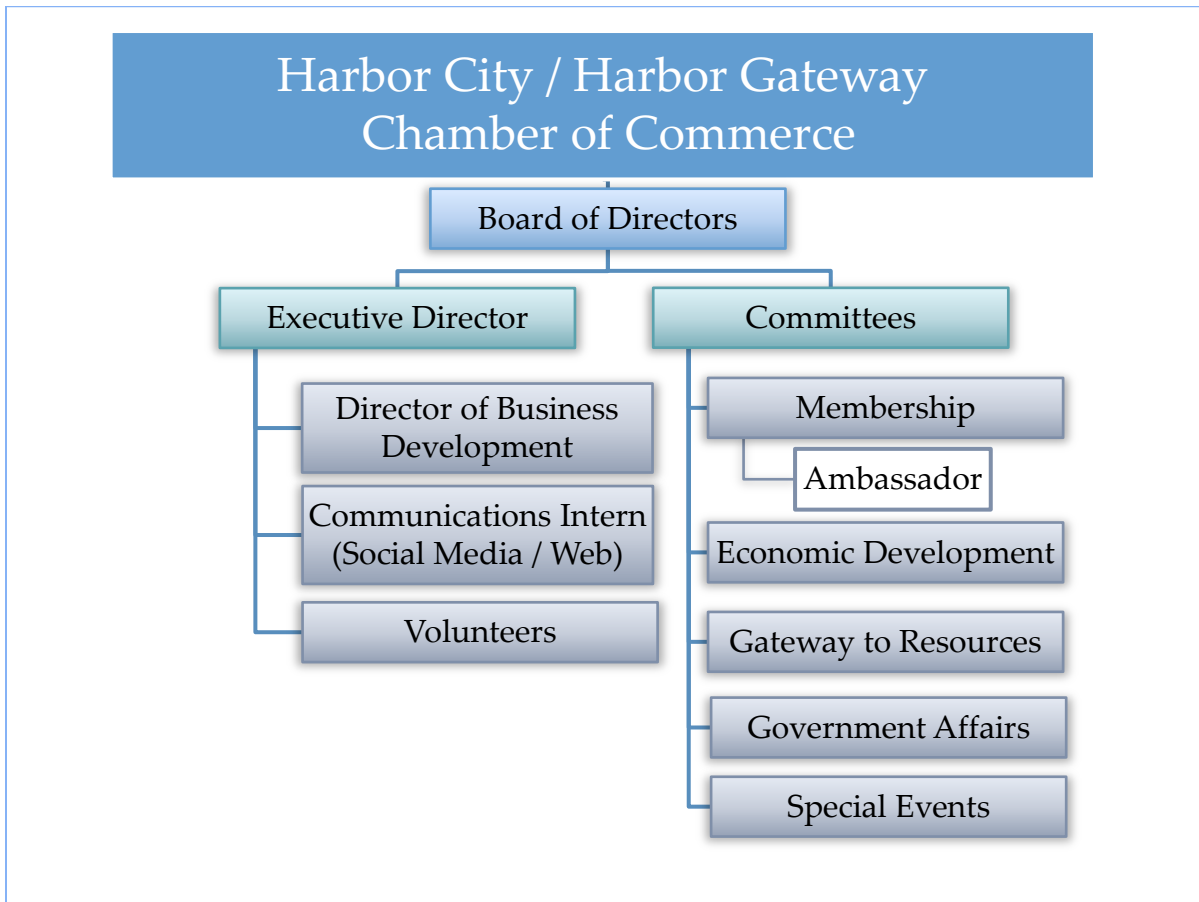


FIGURE 1: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The researcher has created the preceding organizational chart through dialogue and observation with the client. The governance model of the Chamber closely resembles a *traditional* structure in which the board governs and oversees operations through committees and delegates management functions to the executive director (Gill, 2004). The executive director makes day-to-day decisions, and broader decisions are discussed and decided by the board of directors. The executive director organizes the activities, delivers member services, plans events, prepares financial and membership reports, and makes recommendations to the board. The board members are comprised primarily of interdependent leaders who provide substantive involvement in chamber activities and objectives, among other supportive means.

2.7. Demographic Trends of Los Angeles County

The relevant strategic planning process incorporates demographic trends and forecasts that expose external threats and indicate opportunities.

Although Southern California has been significantly affected by the deep recession, the region is continuing to recover by increasing production, boosting trade, and adding jobs. The International trade sector, comprised of logistics, importers/exporters, and manufacturers, represents a major share of the commercial activity in the Chamber's service area. The economic growth of this sector is an important characteristic of the region, and related to the Chamber's mission and services. California's recent export growth is a major indicator showing the enduring competitive edge and demand for California's goods (UCLA Anderson Forecast, 2012). Total taxable sales, which dropped from \$137 billion in 2007 to \$112 billion in 2009, turned the corner in 2010, and are expected to continue the increase by an average of 2.7 percent per year from 2012 to 2017 (California Department of Transportation [CADOT], 2013, pps. 73-74). International trade, a major regional industry and area of increased Chamber focus, is also continuing to rebound with growth of 11.5% in 2011 and 4.3% in 2012. Growth is projected at 3.0% this year and accelerating to 4.9% in 2014 (Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation [LAEDC], 2012, p. 31; LAEDC, 2013, p. 32).

These factors are partly responsible for the continued increase in regional employment. In 2013, employment in Los Angeles County is projected to grow by 1.7% to surpass 3.9 million jobs, continuing a three-year period of consistent job growth (LAEDC, 2013, p. 27). In 2012, the fastest growing private sector growth occurred in leisure and hospitality, administrative and support services, and private education, while manufacturing and the public sector contracted slightly (-1.6% and -1.8%, respectively) (LAEDC, p. 31).

Economic forecasts for the 5-year period between 2012 and 2017 include:

- Construction employment is expected to become the fastest growing sector by a wide margin, along with growth in professional, information, transportation, leisure, retail, and natural resource industries Employment growth will increase an average of 1.5% annually, for total growth of 9.3%;
- Inflation adjusted taxable sales will increase an average of 2.7% annually, for total growth of 17.5%
- Industrial production will increase an average of 2.7% annually;
- Construction employment increase by 21%;
- Total population growth increase of 2.5%, (CADOT, p.73, 76).

These forecasts indicate consistent growth across most industry sectors. This growth will improve the local economy and increase local employment, and create opportunities for the Chamber to reach organizational goals.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

The scope of research literature has been selected in order to provide a sufficiently broad scope of knowledge and while concurrently focused and narrow enough to render the practical, applicable end product: the development and facilitation of a strategic planning process and the creation of a strategic plan that accurately explicates the client's organizational development goals and results in the implementation of the plan. With these goals in mind, this chapter is comprised of research on *organizational development* and *organizational change*, followed with research divulging the key aspects of the *strategic planning process*, *change leadership*, and finally a review of pertinent *demographic trends*.

Furthermore, throughout this report, sections are supplemented with various other research topics, including organizational sustainability, leadership and governance, and other topics whose significance is naturally aligned to the objectives this project, support the development of viable recommendations, and may otherwise be found suitable to promote the client's further development.

3.2. Taking Charge of Organizational Change

3.2.1. *The Cause for Focusing on Organizational Development*

"ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH AN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPS THE INTERNAL CAPACITY TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE IT CAN BE IN ITS MISSION WORK AND TO SUSTAIN ITSELF OVER THE LONG TERM... BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS ARE MOTIVATED TO TACKLE THE HARD WORK OF OD ONLY WHEN THEY ARE CONVINCED OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENT OF MISSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT... THEY ARE GUIDED IN THEIR OD WORK BY A VISION OF AN EFFECTIVE AND WELL-FUNCTIONING ORGANIZATION THAT CAN BETTER ACHIEVE ITS MISSION." (PHILBIN & MIKUSH, 2000, P.2)

The concepts of organizational development, change management, and strategic planning overlap, and can at times elude clear distinction. In practical application, strategic planning closely mirrors organizational development, which can be defined as a planned, organization-wide effort that is managed 'from the top' and designed to increase organizational effectiveness through planned interventions using behavioral-

science knowledge, with each application of principles and processes somewhat unique to the respective organization (Anderson, 2010, pps. 2, 35). The central theme of organizational development, a field of both academic study and professional practice, is *change*. Change, in the context of organizational development, includes the development of “new strategies, economic structures, technologies, organizational structures, and processes”, and respective changes in the skills and behaviors of individuals in an organization (Anderson, pps. 2, 3).

Strategic planning is molded by organizational development theories and methods, in practice and literature. For this reason, organizational development research is aptly suited as the basis to a planned change effort, as it provides the theoretical foundation for the application of change management. By purposefully integrating the tenets of organizational development, the creation and integration of the strategic plan is more likely to be successful.

Organizational development is informed by theories and models of organizational change and, as such, provides many strategies for effective change management (Anderson, p. 29). Framed from the perspective of research literature, organizational development is understood as the field of study, which has evolved in theory and application from the 1940's. Change management and strategic change are thematic evolutions of organizational development that inform the strategic planning processes of today (Anderson, p. 32).

Evolutions of organizational development research have shed light on organizational topics including small-group research, team-building, participative management, quality programs, self-managed teams, culture, and organizational learning (Anderson, p. 32). Each of these topics are significant and informative, although the topics of change management, leadership, and organizational effectiveness are the subject of focus for this research project, due to their immediate and relevant applicability in the strategic planning process.

3.2.2. The Steps to Effective Change Leadership & Management

Strategic planning is a specific process that intended to assess, and thereby leverage, external and internal factors in order to successfully manage change and reach organizational goals. However, even the most astute plans make little difference unless they are implemented effectively (Anderson, 2012, p. 29). It is therefore imperative to discern effective change strategies at the outset of the planning process and to integrate them throughout.

Ackerman Anderson et al. explain organizational change as occurring in one of three types: developmental, an improvement or enhancement of the current state, transitional, the design and implementation of a new state, and transformational, a fundamental change in strategy, operations, behavior, and/or culture (2009, pps. 3-4). Each type requires appropriate *change strategies*, with *transformational* change typically being the most impactful, requiring executive-level involvement due to the “huge impacts on the business, the complex people issues, and the multitude of interdependent change initiatives” (2009, pps. 3-4). Effective strategic planning typically encompasses each of these change types, and is certainly *transformational* in nature. As such, this planning effort utilizes broad change strategies adapted to the particular circumstances of the organization and type of change effort.

Beckard and Harris 1987	Brager and Holloway 1978	Schaeffer 1987	Kotter 1996	Galpin 1996
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the need for change 2. Define the desired future state 3. Describe the present state 4. Assess the present in terms of the future to determine the work to be done 5. Manage the transition state 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial assessment 2. Preinitiation: Set the stage for the change 3. Initiation: Introduce the change 4. Implementation: Actualize the plan 5. Institutionalization: Anchor the change in the system 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify the change imperative 2. Detail the new or changed system 3. Identify required resources 4. Specify resource development activities 5. Schedule activities 6. Budget implementation resources 7. Manage project implementation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a sense of urgency 2. Create the guiding coalition 3. Develop vision and strategy 4. Communicate the vision 5. Empower broad-based action 6. Generate short-term wins 7. Consolidate gains and produce more change 8. Anchor new approach in culture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish need to change 2. Develop and disseminate vision 3. Diagnose current situation 4. Generate recommendations 5. Detail recommendations 6. Pilot test recommendations 7. Prepare recommendations for rollout 8. Roll out changes 9. Measure, reinforce, and refine changes

FIGURE 2: PROEHL'S COMPARISON OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MODELS (PROEHL, 2001, P.92)

In *Organizational Change in the Human Services*, Rebecca Proehl describes an 8-step model of change, created by blending together several different change models (see *Figure 2 above*) (2001). This model, focused on human service organizations like the Chamber, provides a fairly comprehensive set of guidelines and considerations important in affecting change. This model serves as a framework to accommodate the broad set of strategies needed for each step, and informs the methods of this planning effort. The steps below are represented from Proehl’s model and expounded with accompanying explicatory research:

STEP 1. CREATING A SENSE OF URGENCY

Urgency is a state whereby organizational members are convinced of the need for change and share a great deal of cooperation and willingness to make sacrifices in order to change (Proehl, p.88). Leaders must understand this requirement and create urgency

before initiating a change effort. Leaders can inspire this urgency through engaging members in an exercise to assess the internal and external ‘drivers’, or forces, of change.

STEP 2. BUILDING A COALITION FOR CHANGE

Building broad support is a both precursor to planned change and a major component of the enduring efficacy of a change effort. “Organizational change is a complex systemic undertaking...Planning without broad-based participation that gives voice to the opposition almost guarantees stiff resistance later on.” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 378). Participants in the change effort, or *change agents*, must be both willing and able to build a team, which will in turn build momentum and *transform mindsets*, to “extend the realm of support for the change beyond themselves” (Proehl, p.92).

STEP 3. CLARIFYING THE CHANGE IMPERATIVE

There must be a clear target, goal, or objective to guide the how, what, and why of the change effort (Proehl, p.92). During strategic planning process, the change imperative is commonly established by reviewing the organizational *vision* early in the planning process. The *vision* review allows change agents to agree to the ‘*why*’ of the change effort. Clarification can be achieved by holding meetings to communicate direction, obtaining regular feedback, and through visible leadership involvement (Bolman & Deal, p. 395).

STEP 4. ASSESSING THE PRESENT

Making assessments involves the process of examining internal and external organizational factors. During this step, the organization will begin to gather data that is used in the change effort. Unfortunately, this step is sometimes overlooked as an unnecessary or arduous part of the change process (Anderson, p. 118; Proehl, p. 93). However, proper assessments are vital to the change process, and risks from ‘shortcutting’ can be severe. Assessments are useful to expand the organization’s knowledge of its functioning, effectiveness, and health, expose problems and opportunities, inform change agents of the organization’s readiness for change, and inspire an interest in change (Anderson, pps. 118-119; Proehl, p.93).

STEP 5. DEVELOPING A PLAN

“EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS PERIODICALLY TAKE STOCK OF THEIR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY WORK IN ORDER TO SET CLEAR GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND TACTICS.” (PHILBIN & MIKUSH, P. 16)

An effective plan includes the major strategies needed to achieve desired outcomes, recognizable intermediate milestones, and a process to reach the outcomes (Proehl, p.

93). The focus of this change effort is the creation of a comprehensive strategic plan, as explicated in the immediately following section, the *Methodology* chapter, and as discussed and throughout this report.

STEP 6. DEALING WITH THE HUMAN FACTORS

Once the change plan has been established, it is absolutely vital to achieve *critical mass* through *whole system engagement* (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2009, p. 7). In other words, ‘dealing with the human factors’ entails that the preponderance of change agents are engaged, invested, and collaborative in pursuing in the change plan. Mindful change leaders recognize that creating change is emergent, both in process and outcome, and as such the role of leadership is paramount in order to keep on track (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, p. 9; Nasmyth, 2011, pps. 150-151, 154). Achieving critical mass requires strength in leadership that is specialized to the task of guiding people through change and adapting dynamically.

STEP 7. ACTING QUICKLY AND REVISING FREQUENTLY

A major threat to the success of the change effort is the failure to implement plans once the early enthusiasm wanes and the pre-existing, day-to-day work takes over control (Proehl, p. 95). In fact, early discussions with Chamber leaders identified historical challenges with implementation, and the unfortunate likelihood of a strategic plan to ‘sit on a shelf’ (see *appendix 10.3.3*). Acting quickly and revising frequently requires implementation strategies, monitoring and review practices. The key to acting quickly and revising frequently is the implementation of ongoing monitoring systems that are ‘understandable, economical, and flexible’ (Proehl, p. 171).

STEP 8. EVALUATING AND CELEBRATING THE CHANGE

It is important to evaluate the change effort periodically to obtain quantifiable feedback on the change process in order to amend plans accordingly, signal progress to stakeholders, and keep on track. Likewise, change agents must celebrate their efforts and “identify appropriate means of acknowledging the work of members contributing to the change” (Proehl, p. 95).

3.2.3. *Applying the Change Model*

These 8 steps inform the planning process from the earliest stages of engagement with the client and through to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the completed strategic plan. Steps 1 through 5 are integrated into the planning process during the data collection phase that is described in the following section, 3.3: Strategic Planning, as well as the *Methodology* chapter, and the associated data in *Appendices*. Steps 6 through 8

are revisited in the *Discussion* and *Recommendations* chapters, which support the strategic plan with an applied guide to effect change.

3.3. Strategic Planning

3.3.1. Definition

" IN SIMPLE TERMS, STRATEGIC PLANNING HELPS AN AGENCY ASK FOUR BASIC QUESTIONS: WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? HOW DO WE GET THERE? HOW DO WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS?" (STATE OF CALIFORNIA, 1998, P.5)

A strategic plan is a practical guide, based on examinations of internal and external factors, that describes the action steps and resources needed to efficiently accomplish specific organizational goals (State of California, p.2; Mittenthal, 2002, p.2). In terms of the types of plans that guide organizational development, a strategic plan can be readily distinguished from an *operating plan*, a *business plan*, and a *case statement*. An operating plan is a coordinated set of tasks for carrying out the strategic goals, a business plan focuses on income generating actions, products, competitive environment, and revenue assumptions, and a case statement is focused on marketing and fundraising (McNamara, 2010; Mittenthal, p.2). In this project, the intent of the strategic plan is to organize priorities and activities, to improve organizational capabilities, to plan for the next three years, and to pursue specific strategies to achieve organizational goals.

3.3.2. Purpose

"A SUCCESSFUL PLAN IS, BY DEFINITION, A USABLE PLAN—ONE THAT INFORMS THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS ITS LONG-RANGE VIEW, AND ONE THAT YIELDS MEANINGFUL IMPROVEMENTS IN EFFECTIVENESS, CAPACITY AND RELEVANCE."
(MITTENTHAL, 2002, P.2)

There are innumerable strategic planning resources, processes, and research, and most of these sources agree that "the purpose of planning is to improve the chances of reaching desirable possible outcomes." (State of California, 1998, p. 1). Effective strategic planning should consider aspects including revenue generation, service delivery, human resources, voluntarism, marketing, and governance, to name a few (McNamara, n.d.; Murray, n.d.; Pope et al., 2009). *Strategic* considerations are practical,

action-oriented, and explicit, as opposed to overly technical, descriptive, or process-laden (State of California, p. 2).

When accomplished satisfactorily, a strategic plan provides numerous benefits to the organization, including:

- Addressing organizational challenges with applicable strategies and opportunities;
- Serving as an effective guide to identify where the organization is headed;
- Providing a framework for setting and achieving goals for orderly growth and progress;
- Creating a system for measuring progress and evaluating success;
- Increasing efficiency and strategy with regards to the allocation of resources;
- Promoting the client's community-driven mission to potential funders;
- Preparing for contingencies; and
- Guiding strategies, activities, and objectives in the coming 3 to 5 years (State of California, p.1; McNamara, 2007; Mittenthal, 2002).

3.3.3. *Process*

"GET THIS WRONG AND THE REST OF YOUR PLAN AND YOUR STORY IS SUSPECT. GET IT RIGHT AND THE POWER OF YOUR PEOPLE WILL BE UNLEASHED BECAUSE THEY WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE COMPANY IS HEADED. (COKE, 2002, P.28)

The planning process itself is often considered to be as valuable, if not more so, than the resulting plan (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2009; Anderson, p.29; Mittenthal, 2002, p.2). The objective in this project is to create a participatory and collaborative strategic planning process which is engaging, dispels rumors or myths about planning, provides opportunities for all participants to voice their opinion, and manages interpersonal conflicts effectively (McNamara, n.d.).

The *process* of strategic planning, aside from the plan itself, provides several benefits to the organization, including:

- Development of organizational leadership through exercises in collaboration, establishing shared goals, and team-building;
- Discovery and clarification of opportunities for organizational growth; and
- Stimulates concerted organizational change efforts (McNamara, n.d.; Olsen, 2012).

The lack of focus on effective process accounts for a major cause of failure in planning. Without being mindful of the process, intensive and optimistic strategic planning efforts ultimately *'sit on shelves collecting dust'*, to cite the common adage. Mittenenthal identifies the prerequisites to a successful, usable planning process in nonprofit organizations:

- A clear and comprehensive grasp of external opportunities and challenges;
- A realistic and comprehensive assessment of the organization's strengths and limitations;
- An inclusive approach;
- An empowered planning committee;
- Involvement of senior leadership;
- Sharing of responsibility by board and staff members;
- Learning from best practices;
- Clear priorities and implementation plan;
- Patience; and
- A commitment to change.

The researcher has been mindful to purposefully introduce each of these tenets into the planning process, as evidenced in the methodology described in the following chapter.

3.3.4. *Designing the Process*

"THERE ARE A VARIETY OF PERSPECTIVES, MODELS AND APPROACHES USED IN STRATEGIC PLANNING. THE WAY THAT A STRATEGIC PLAN IS DEVELOPED DEPENDS ON THE NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION'S LEADERSHIP, CULTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION, COMPLEXITY OF THE ORGANIZATION'S ENVIRONMENT, SIZE OF THE ORGANIZATION, EXPERTISE OF PLANNERS, ETC. (MCNAMARA, N.D.)

Just as each organization is unique, so to is each planning process (State of California, p.14). For this project, McNamara's *Field Guide for Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation* serves as the primary guide for the planning process and as resources and worksheets for planning participants (2007). McNamara's resources are comprehensive, based in experience and research, and designed with practicality in mind. The *Field Guide* provides substantial attention to the situations of small nonprofits and delivers information in a clear, concise, and cogent, step-wise manner.

3.4. Leading the Change Effort

3.4.1. *The Roles of Effective Change Leaders*

The role of leadership is paramount to guide people through the change process. Leaders need to assess their impact on the organization, both positive and negative, and discover how their mindsets impact the process of organizational change (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2009, p. 7). Success in leading change involves attention to 'content, people, and process' (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2009, p.2, 4). "Training, psychological support, and participation all increase the likelihood that people will understand and feel comfortable with the new methods" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 382).

The *Drivers of Change* model emphasizes leaders' relative unfamiliarity with human factors, and the importance of attending to the 'internal domains' of culture, behavior, and mindset. This model explains that "changes in the larger external domains, such as shifts in the environment or marketplace, demand a response (change) in the more specific domains of culture and people's behaviors and ways of thinking" (Anderson, 2001, p.49). Thus, for systemic change to occur the people involved must also shift their mindsets and behaviors accordingly. It is imperative for leaders to recognize this need and guide organizational members to make the requisite changes.

In examining the leader's role and behavior in the change process, research studies by Higgs and Rowland (2000, 2005, 2011) have identified five broad areas of leadership competency associated with successful change implementation, these areas include:

1. **Creating the case for change:** The foundation of the leading change is effectively engaging others in recognizing the business need for change. Although vital, this step can often be overlooked by leaders who do not seek out wide collaboration in the change process. Leaders must remember that change requires the willing involvement of the majority of organizational members;
2. **Creating structural change:** Leaders must ensure that the change is based on depth of understanding of the issues and supported with a consistent set of tools and processes;
3. **Engaging others in the whole change process and building commitment:** Change leaders must *motivate* people by using *person-oriented skills*, which involve fostering collaboration, supportive social climate, and implementing sound management practices. "Effectiveness at person-oriented behaviors, on the other hand, relies on the ability to show consideration for others as well as to take into account one's own and others' emotion" (Battilana et. al., 2010, p. 423);

4. Implementing and sustaining changes: Change leaders must *direct* people *task-oriented skills*, involving organizational structure, design, control, and processes. “Effectiveness at task-oriented behaviors hinges on the ability to clarify task requirements and structure tasks around an organization's mission and objectives” (Battilana et. al., p. 423);

5. Facilitating and developing capability: Leaders encourage and challenge people to find their own answers, and support them in doing this.

Many of these leadership competencies closely resemble steps found in Proehl's 8-step model of organizational change (p. 92). This close correlation further accentuates the instrumental significance of effective leadership in successful change efforts.

3.4.2. Leading through Transition

Leaders must be cognizant that change requires people to go through a process of *transition*. Although the concepts of change and transition are often used synonymously, transition can more aptly describe the psychological processes that a person experiences while engaged in organizational change. In the context of organizational change, transition is a ‘three-phase psychological reorientation process that people go through when they are coming to terms with change’ (Bridges, 2007, p. 2). The strategic planning process, and especially the resulting plan, will require an extended period of transition for organizational members (as well as clients and partners). Transition is a process that should be managed, in order to allow people to effectively and smoothly integrate new behaviors and processes. As Bridges describes, “Our management books tell us much more about change than transition. We’ve all heard stories of leaders who have played a vital role in planning and executing organizational change, but there are fewer tales of leaders who have successfully managed transition” (Bridges, p. 4.). Bridges’ assertion, therefore, is that people can be led and managed through transition, and this involves specific leadership and management acumen. For the purpose of this project, transition is managed in part through usage of the *force field analysis*.

Kurt Lewin, a pioneer in the field of psychosocial change research, describes the process of change in his seminal work on the *Field Theory*. Change is a process of *unfreezing*: creating an impetus and motivation for change and removing old habits; *moving*: or what Bridges calls the ‘neutral zone’, occurring as old habits are replaced with new habits; and *refreezing*: establishment of the new normal, when new behaviors, systems, and process are reinforced (Bridges; Lewin, 1939; 1951). Planners will recall conducting a *force field analysis* early in the planning process, the results of which are helpful for negotiating the transition stage of change. The results of this analysis are discussed in

the following section, 6.3: Implement, and will be useful to implementation of the strategic plan.

3.4.3. Collaborative Leadership

The Chamber is a nonprofit association in which a major share of the labor is conducted by the voluntary board of directors who serve as both leaders *and* change agents. In consideration of these aforementioned characteristics, one of the most prescient imperatives is to focus on and benefit from collaboration.

Nasmyth provides insight on effective tenets of collaborative leadership, which may be useful to inspire and guide the Chamber leaders towards enhanced collaborative effort and, in so doing, a successful change effort (2011, p. ii). These tenets are:

- A belief in the importance of the mission;
- Putting relationships first;
- Adopting strengths-based practice;
- Demonstrating passion without ego;
- Accepting setbacks and moving on;
- Accepting an emergent process and an emergent outcome;
- Recognizing a collective identity; and
- Magic.

3.5. Conclusion

The research literature expounds on four interrelated concepts: organizational development, change management, strategic planning methods, and change leadership, in order to provide a practical basis for organizing and leading the strategic planning effort. A review of organizational development contextualizes the scope and role of strategic planning. Next, examination of change management clarifies both the methods and objectives needed to impact successful change. Supplementing this research, the discussion of strategic planning literature distinguishes the processes and purposes of planning. Finally, the review of change leadership provides procedural support and perspective to support the planning effort. The following methodology chapter builds upon this framework in order to create a practical and effective project.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Design

4.1.1. *Introduction to the Research Design*

The project research is comprised of two distinct research stages. The first stage is comprised of a thorough analysis of research literature, and the second stage encompasses the strategic planning activities. The researcher serves a unique role in this process as strategic planning *facilitator*, a role with particular responsibilities and more direct engagement with participants than is typical in objective research studies. Throughout this report, the terms *facilitator* and *researcher* are used interchangeably, referring to the same project author serving in the respective capacity. These roles are described in more detail in this chapter. The research for this project is conducted with consent from each research participant and approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (*see Appendix 10.6.4*).

The following methods are greatly informed through McNamara's *Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation* and several strategic planning resources, and, as may be apparent, are particularly consistent with Proehl's 8-step model for change (Bryson, 2005; California State Department of Finance, 1998; Coke, 2002; McNamara, 2007, p. vii; Olsen, 2012; Pakroo, 2012; Proehl, 2001). The composition of participant groups and specific activities of each step are discussed in the following section.

4.1.2. *Methods of Data Collection and Analysis*

Qualitative data gathering makes up the majority of the research activities, including informal discussions, subjective surveys, interviews, conference calls, and discussion groups. The challenge and goal with these methods is to ensure respondent's data is represented fairly (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314; Kvale, 2007). Nearly all of the data that informed the planning process was obtained through group discussions. In these discussions, the group was encouraged to lead the direction of meetings and decide upon the substance of findings that would be brought forward to the next stage of planning. The planning approach is made clear by the explication of planning steps in the following sections of this chapter and within the included appendices.

In order to ascertain quantitative results, when necessary, the researcher configured activities in order to acquire objective results. The quantitative techniques used include nominal group technique and ranking method (McNamara, 2007, p. 145). The nominal group technique was used to create a single list of items from a group of individual's

responses. Ranking method was used to tally voting results from various activities, including the internal organizational assessment, SWOT, and key goals.

4.1.3. The Dual Role of Researcher and Planning Facilitator

The role of the researcher as an objective data collector and interpreter is made clear through research literature, however this project presents a particular challenge, in that the researcher also serves as the strategic planning facilitator, a role that demands an increased level of engagement with participants (McNamara, 2007, p.vii). Namely, a facilitator's role is to aid the organization through a process, while being mindful not to arbitrarily determine the planning process, organizational activities or goals (Mittenthal, 2002, p.8). Similarly, the facilitator's job is to maintain the validity of the process by ensuring that all participants' voices are heard and to enable the views, interests, and active participation of the organization's leaders. The roles are congruent in these respects, yet differ in the proximity of participation. The facilitator utilizes a number of engagement and participation techniques, including brainstorming, consensus-building, discussion, facilitator intervention, and others as needed (McNamara, p.137-140). The facilitator's role is made clear through McNamara's Field Guide, which provides an analysis of who should decide each aspect of the planning process, and why (2007, p.39). The researcher upheld the following relationships with regards to this process:

Aspects the researcher decides:

- The literature sources and research methods
- The model of the strategic planning processes: e.g.- where the interacting pieces are, which aspects can be facilitated to the board and which I must arbitrarily decide.

Aspects the facilitator decides:

- How to engage and encourage involvement the participants;
- Design a planning process that is integrative, collaborative, based on open communication and sharing information.

Aspects the clients decides:

- The specific goals, objectives, and outcomes of the strategic plan
- How to implement goals
- The focal areas driving the researcher's recommendations

Aspects both client and facilitator decide:

- How to achieve maximum 'buy-in' from the planners
- The type of planning and the composition of certain activities

- The frameworks utilized to conduct the planning

4.1.4. Participant Groups

All research participants are associated with at least one of the following groups. The groups that are involved in each phase are described in the following section, *Strategic Planning Activities*. All participants signed the *Participant Consent Form*, which details the nature and scope of the research project, and has been authorized by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (see *Appendix 10.6.4*).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors are the leaders of the organization. They are comprised of volunteers drawn from various stakeholder organizations. Board members chair Chamber committees, set major decisions, and direct staff.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The organizational by-laws stipulate that the executive committee is responsible for strategic planning and setting the direction of the organization. The executive committee is comprised of board officers (president, secretary, treasurer), immediate past president, president-elect, and executive director.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

The planning committee, as specified by McNamara, includes all officers of the Board and all board members who are chairing a Chamber committee (McNamara, 2007, pps. 20-21). The planning committee is responsible to complete a majority of the organizational assessments that lead in to the strategic planning retreat. For the purposes of this research, the terms *planners* and *participants* are used interchangeably.

4.2. Strategic Planning Activities

4.2.1. Phase #1: Preparing for the Planning Process

Phase 1 participants include the board of directors and executive director.

STEP 1: BUILD COLLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT FOR PLANNING

The first step of the planning process requires building collective engagement from organizational leaders and planning participants. As alluded to in the literature review, this step is essential to an effective change process, and as such, the task of building collective engagement is incorporated throughout the planning process.

About two months before the strategic planning process began, the facilitator began communicating with the board to discuss the potential benefits of the planning process and invite questions and suggestions. McNamara provided several straightforward suggestions for building engagement that guided the facilitator's early efforts, in so doing the facilitator had ample opportunity to develop collaborative involvement (*see appendix 10.1.2*).

The facilitator used various methods to take logistical challenges into account and maintain collective engagement among participants throughout the process. For example, early in the planning process, it became apparent that creating time and opportunity for leaders to meet in discussion groups could be a significant challenge, because each serves in a voluntary capacity and has different schedules and commitments. In order to address this challenge, the facilitator utilized several opportunities to discuss planning, including regular discussions with the executive director and board president, planning updates presented in successive board meetings, group emails, informal interactions with participants, conference calls, online surveys, and the two-day strategic planning retreat. The facilitator frequently engaged participants one-on-one to communicate details of the process and inform them of planning activities. Furthermore, the facilitator setup a webpage which provided planning information, served as a locus for planning activities, and provided participants the opportunity to post comments and suggestions, respond to surveys, engage with various planning resources at any time. This resource was made available throughout the planning process at www.hchgchamber.com/plan. Although the webpage engagement format is effective and useful *in principle*, it became less relevant during as the planning process as participants were gradually more engaged in activities through discussion groups and conference calls, among other more traditional methods.

4.2.2. Phase #2: Establish Foundations for Strategic Planning

Phase 2 participants include the executive committee.

PLAN FOR THE PLANNING PROCESS

Several worksheets were completed to clarify the type of planning, identify members of the planning committee, determine the organization of activities, and ascertain how these activities would be carried out (*see appendix 10.2*). McNamara calls this early step, preparing a "plan for the plan" (2007, pps. 16-32). Among one of the key decisions, the executive committee selected 'goals-based planning' over issues-based, organic, and scenario modes of planning for the following reasons:

- Planners believe they can identify goals for the future;

- The environments of the nonprofit are fairly stable;
- Nonprofit includes several, major programs, each of which might conduct its own focused planning and, thus, the program plans will need to be integrated into an overall organizational strategic plan; and
- Planners would like to accomplish a major change in direction for the organization over the next year or so. (McNamara, p. 223).

Following these early exercises, the facilitator supplied a tentative activity schedule to all planning participants, which defined participant roles, detailed the approximate time needed to complete participation activities, and delineated who was involved in which activities (*see appendix 10.2.8*).

4.2.3. Phase #3: Gather Organizational Intelligence

Phase 3 participants include the planning committee.

ESTABLISH READINESS FOR PLANNING

The planning committee worked individually to complete activities and identify the organization's readiness for planning and mitigate obstacles to organizational change early in the process (*see appendices 10.2.7, 0, 10.3.2, and 10.3.3*).

CONDUCT A FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

Kurt Lewin's field theoretical framework is a useful model for assessing factors that are related to impacting organizational change (Burnes, 2004, p. 978; Lewin, 1939; 1951). Lewin developed the Force Field Analysis as a method with broad applicability across many disciplines. It is useful for creating a representation of how an organization currently operates, assessing an organization's opportunity to make change and identifying the necessary factors to impact this change. This activity was selected at this early stage in the planning process in order to affect three purposes, 1) assess the forces in effect, 2) develop the groundwork for successful change, and 3) engage the organizational leadership in a participatory change process.

Although the ideal method for conducting the force field analysis is within a discussion group format, time and resources did not allow for this method. Instead, the researcher created a worksheet and instructions and invited participants to complete the analysis individually (*see Appendix 10.3*). Participants were invited to share their thoughts and feedback on the exercise in phone conference calls (*see Appendix 10.3.2*). The compiled analysis results were anonymized, and then posted to the planning website for participants to review and to continue to provide comments and suggestions.

CONDUCT ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

"AN ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT IS A PROCESS OF TAKING A STEP BACK TO REFLECT AND LOOK AT THE VARIOUS AREAS OF THE ORGANIZATION IN REGARDS TO WHAT IS WORKING AND WHAT COULD BE DIFFERENT. AN ASSESSMENT HELPS TO CREATE AN OBJECTIVE VIEW OF AN ORGANIZATION'S CURRENT REALITY IN REGARDS TO ITS FUNDING STREAMS, WORK FLOW PROCESSES, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT, CLIENT SATISFACTION, EMPLOYEE TURNOVER, BOARD DEVELOPMENT, ETC." (THE FORBES FUND, 2013)

Conducting organizational assessments serves the function to identify "Where we are now" (State of California, p.13). This process requires significant data collection and extensive participant involvement. The outcome of these activities directs the goals, strategies, and action plans to follow.

Conducting situational analyses, external and internal analyses

Participants engaged in discussion groups to conduct the external and internal analyses. McNamara recommends using the discussion group method to 'clarify, analyze, correct and agree on the description of information' within the analyses (p. 57). The discussion groups were held on separate sessions one week apart. The first involved the external analyses, and the second focused on the internal analyses. The external analyses included a *primary client analysis* and *stakeholder analysis*, which included several primarily subjective questions. The internal analysis comprised of an *organizational assessment*, which was a primarily objective assessment of over 200 questions compiled from various organizational assessment tools. The facilitator provided the exercises for both sessions, but encouraged and supported the participants to self-organize and collaborate to reach an integrated, single list of findings. The outcomes of these sessions included the identification of internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats (*see appendices 10.3.5, 10.3.6, 10.3.8, 10.3.9, and 10.3.10*).

In the interests of participant's time, planning committee members were asked to participate in one, or if desired, both sessions. Most members participated in both sessions, a valid measure of participant's engagement to this point in the process. As McNamara recommends, participants were provided a 'planner's guide' for both these sessions (*see appendices 10.3.4 and 10.3.6*).

Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

Building from the results and discussion on the external and internal analyses, the planning committee created a preliminary list of strengths and weaknesses (internal, current factors) and opportunities and threats (external, typically 'future' oriented factors). This list of factors is the *SWOT analysis* (*see appendix 10.3.11*).

4.2.4. Phase #4: Strategic Planning Retreat

Phase 4 engaged the entire board of directors and executive director in focused planning activities over several hours in a two-day period called the strategic planning retreat. The retreat activities were primarily facilitated by the legislative affairs committee chair, who brought extensive experience and knowledge of the organization to this role, having moderated several previous planning retreats for the organization over his several years as board member, and previous role as board president. For clarity sake in the phase 4 sections to follow, *retreat facilitator* is intended to signify this board member. The researcher served as a co-facilitator, providing the data collection and interpretation methods, activities, worksheets, and planner's guides. Various data gathering worksheets were employed to gather data during the retreat, and predominantly discussion groups, ranking method, and the nominal group technique were used to consolidate data results. The group decision-making and problem solving techniques were used to arrive with a collaborative and integrated set of findings.

ESTABLISHING STRATEGIC DIRECTION

At the planning retreat, participants were given a comprehensive planning guide, comprised of notes from the internal and external analyses, literature describing strategic planning, and worksheets to further the collaborative planning process (*see appendix 10.4*). The specific activities of the planning retreat were created and facilitated using methods and worksheets from McNamara's *Field Guide*, and included:

Review mission statement

In this particular process, the mission statement was expected to undergo minor revisions, if any. As such, it was deemed acceptable to include this mission statement review at this stage in the process, as opposed to a traditional designed planning process in which the mission is reviewed earlier in the process (McNamara, 2007, p.50).

Discuss results of the organizational assessments and SWOT analysis

The results of the assessments and discussions are very telling, having a nearly exclusive focus on membership and revenue growth. Planners discussed the assessments and supplemented the results with their opinions. The discussion served to align board members to the organizational priorities.

Rank SWOT analysis

Participants used their organizational experience, the previous discussion, and the strategic planning resources in the planner's packet to rank the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results of this ranking were completed individually and presented to the researcher for interpretation. In the SWOT analysis, both membership and revenue growth are identified as prominent factors. The strategic planning retreat

confirmed this finding, as indicated by the first two key goals and accompanying strategies that are directly related to membership and revenue growth.

Ranking method

The ranking method was used to compile individual responses into an overall rank. The ranking method is an objective method that creates a two-dimensional matrix, tallying individual ranking into an average group ranking (*see appendix 10.4.7*). Responses which are attributed 1st rank are accorded 1 point, 2nd rank is 2 points, and so on. All scores are tallied, and the lowest score objectively indicates higher ranking. The ranked SWOT list was presented to the board for the next activities (*see appendix 10.4.7*).

Identify strategic goals

Participants discussed the ranked SWOT analysis and proceeded to create strategic goals using the worksheet provided (*see appendix 10.4.3*). Using the nominal group, brainstorming, and round-robin techniques, the retreat facilitator led the group to share their ideas of key goals, and compile the individual results into a single list of goals (McNamara, 2007, p.145).

Rank strategic goals

Planners were asked to rank the compiled list of goals. The researcher collected these responses and compiled a final, ranked list of strategic goals using the same ranking method applied for the SWOT analysis (*see appendix 10.4.9*). This process resulted in a list of the most important strategic goals to pursue over the next year. (*see appendix 10.4.7*).

Create Strategies for each Goal

Participants were guided to complete a 'strategies worksheet', to identify strategies for each goal (*see appendices 10.4.4 and 10.4.10*). The strategies are intended to utilize the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats into a realistic and achievable approach to meet the key strategic goals. These strategies were refined in future activities, and are updated accordingly throughout the life of the plan.

Complete Personal Action Plans

Planners completed a personal action plan, outlining their commitment and availability to the Chamber. These action plans were compiled and made available to the executive committee. The purpose of these actions plans is to understand the board resources and distribute the organizational objectives to available and appropriate members (*see appendices 10.4.5 and 10.6.2*).

4.2.5. Phase #5: Finalizing the Plan

Re-energizing participants for final steps in planning

At this point in the planning process, McNamara recommends a few techniques to reduce *planning fatigue* (2007, p. 96). The researcher reminded the planners of the exceptional progress to date and explained the remaining steps in the planning process in order to re-energize and refocus the planners for the final steps in planning (see *appendix 10.5.1*).

Create SMART Goals

The first among the final steps of the planning process is to transform the key strategic goals into *SMART* goals, a commonly used acronym for goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-specific (see *appendix 10.5.2*). This was conducted during the board meeting on February, 19th, 2013.

Finalize list of Strategies

Also during the February board meeting, planners directed the responsibility of respective goals to the appropriate committees. Committees met during their regular monthly schedule and, using results from the planning retreat and according to the worksheet, planners brainstormed, consolidated and finalized the list of strategies for each goal (see *appendices 10.4.4 and 10.4.10*).

Distribute the Strategic Plan

In the March 19th board meeting, the facilitator presented the draft strategic plan for review. This step culminates the researcher's data collection processes. Future revisions of the strategic plan are entrusted to executive committee to be updated as needed.

4.2.6. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

With the data collection processes complete, the researcher directed focus towards implementation, monitoring and evaluation. These topics have been integrated in the chapters *Discussion* and *Recommendations*.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. The 2013 – 2015 Strategic Plan

5.1.1. Introduction

The Strategic Plan is the culmination of six months of collaboration among Chamber leaders by focused planning sessions, internal and external assessments, and member surveys. The resulting plan is practical and appropriate, incorporating growth opportunities and efficient usage of Chamber resources.

5.1.2. Strategic Plan Contents

The Harbor City/Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan includes abbreviated versions of various sections found in this report. The contents of the strategic plan are outlined as follows:

- Title Page
 - Including the scope of the plan, organizational areas and time span (as found in the *Introduction* chapter of this project);
- Introductory Letters
 - Written by executive director and board president;
- Executive Summary
 - Written with the additional objective of incorporating a compelling sales pitch for potential funding sources, including major sponsors and potential grantors (excerpts as found in the *Executive Summary* chapter);
- Description of organization
 - Including background, history, and organizational chart (as found in the *Background* chapter);
- Description of how the plan was developed
 - Including discussions on the organizational assessments, planning committee meetings, planning retreat, and the SWOT analysis (as found in the *Methodology* chapter);
- Key goals and strategies
 - Five key organizational goals (as found in this chapter, *Findings*);
- Action Plans
 - Including action planning and monitoring and evaluation framework (as found in the *Discussion* and *Recommendations* chapters);
- Financial Plans (*currently in committee work, not included in the current draft*).

5.1.3. Scope of the 3-Year Strategic Plan

Chamber leaders identified significant opportunities to impact within the near term. The strategic plan is the organization-wide goals and strategies to pursue over the three-year period between 2013 to 2015.

5.1.4. Organizational Mission

The mission of the Harbor City / Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce is to help businesses grow and prosper by fostering a dynamic partnership between business, community, and government and to encourage a healthy and secure environment where all can thrive.

5.1.5. Key Strategic Goals

The Chamber has undergone an extensive planning process to identify and prioritize strategic goals to address over the period of the strategic plan.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Key Strategic Goals</u>
1	Increase membership
2	Increase revenue and profit
3	Build exposure
4	Improve membership retention
5	Improve board operations, development, & accountability

TABLE 1: KEY STRATEGIC GOALS

5.2. SMART Goals and Strategies

The Chamber has established *SMART* goals and pertinent strategies for each goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Specific) (see *Appendices 10.4.4, 10.4.8, 10.4.10, and 10.5.2*). These goals are listed here with accompanying strategies and a brief description:

GOAL #1)

INCREASE MEMBERSHIP TO 130 MEMBERS BY DECEMBER 31, 2013

Strategies supporting this goal:

- Expand Gateway to Resources program
- Create Ambassador program
- Expand Event content, promotion and communication
- Expand Membership Committee
- Consider a new industry focus

Description:

As of January 2013, the Chamber has the support of over 100 member organizations. Reaching Goal #1 will utilize the synergy of the board committees to apply each strategy effectively and reach the target goal of 130 members. The Membership Committee will expand its ranks, and incorporate an Ambassador program, which utilizes the Chamber's strength as a friendly, inviting group of professionals. The Gateway to Resources Committee has shown great potential to increase membership and will grow to accommodate new members and outreach methods. The Special Events Committee will build upon the success of several recent events to promote new events. The board will consider these and other strategies, and monitor the progress throughout the upcoming year.

GOAL #2)

BREAK EVEN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Strategies supporting this goal:

- Increase event sponsorship and revenue
- Research Grants
- Review membership rates and event fees
- Review event costs
- Consider creating new types of events
- Create presentation policies
- Consider an affinity program

Description:

The Chamber hosts various special events throughout the year, including monthly networking breakfasts and quarterly major events. The major events, especially, are a

source of non-dues revenue, and present an excellent opportunity to showcase the services the Chamber offers to members and constituents. The Special Events Committee plays a fundamental role in the success of these events by inviting guests, securing sponsors, and planning logistics. Likewise, it is important to review event costs and minimize them, where possible, by obtaining agreements from vendors to offer food and services at discounted or donated prices. Furthermore, all of the committees are tasked to attract event sponsors and attendees through outreach and relationship development. The Special Events committee will consider creating a clear action plan, objectives for major events, and sponsorship goals.

GOAL #3)

***IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY-BASED MARKETING/BRANDING PROGRAM
THAT GENERATES POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS / ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE
CHAMBER***

Strategies supporting this goal:

- Email and social media piggybacking
- Create a community / volunteer project
- Host after-hours and offsite events
- Explore advertising on video / cable

Description:

The Chamber will aspire to create a series of “Wall Street Journal moments”, affectionately titled after our recent publicity brought a surge in interest. A community-based marketing and branding program will inform us how to build exposure for events using the aforementioned strategies and improve our branding. There is an excellent opportunity for the Chamber to boost outreach efforts via electronic mediums. The organization enjoys high credibility and visibility through its email distributions, and yet this tool is merely one component of a more robust e-marketing strategy. The board has agreed to develop a community marketing based branding program that generates positive exposure by March 31st, 2013.

GOAL #4)

RETAIN AT LEAST 90% CURRENT MEMBERSHIP THROUGH TO 2014

Strategies supporting this goal:

- Create a renewal communication strategy
- Conduct a members exit interview for departing members
- Conduct a recurring members needs analysis survey
- Track member participation and attract new members to attend events
- Increase the fun of events with incentives such as raffles and door prizes
- Improve sales opportunities for members
- Contact members monthly
- Create a member spotlight in e-newsletter

Description:

Member attrition is typical, however, utilizing these strategies we intend to increase the member retention to 90% by March 2014. In so doing, we will be better positioned to reach our membership and revenue goals.

GOAL #5)

IMPROVE BOARD OPERATIONS, DEVELOPMENT, & ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategies supporting this goal:

- Review committee structures
- Succession planning
- Improve financial reporting
- Maintain strategic partnerships and connections
- Create quarterly goals and hold ourselves accountable

Description:

The board identified several opportunities to grow and develop the leadership capabilities of the organization. These strategies, coupled with effective monitoring and evaluation processes, will continue to improve the efficiency of the organization and improve the quality of services to members.

5.3. SWOT Analysis

Chamber leaders have utilized experience and understanding of internal and external assessments to establish the most significant organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The strengths and weaknesses are understood as current, internal factors, while the opportunities and threats are understood as external, future-oriented factors. Chamber leaders utilize the *SWOT analysis* as the foundation to the key goals and strategies presented in section 5.2: SMART Goals and Strategies. The *SWOT* analysis further informs the ongoing evaluation of strategies through implementation.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Strengths</u> (<i>Internal, Current</i>)
1	CEO is firmly committed and dedicated, and serves as a volunteer
2	Connections to other organizations (political and non-political)
3	Board of directors is committed, knowledgeable, passionate
4	Small but powerful
5-	Perceived by members and guests a warm, friendly, approachable group (<i>tie</i>)
5-	Good Programming, great events (<i>tie</i>)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u> (<i>Internal, Current</i>)
1	Low membership: The focus of the board can/should be directed towards membership growth.
2	No clear roles on board member responsibilities, fundraising, no committees.
3	No succession or resiliency plan: Not enough capital to compensate an Executive Director.
4	Limitations of volunteerism: Board members are volunteers, and can only allot certain time/resources. Uncertainty can strain activities and special events.
5	Implementing goals and accountability: The recurring challenge is putting plans into action.
6	Financial reporting: Need more accurate and complete reporting to board.

Rank

Opportunities *(External, Future)*

1	Membership growth (High number of prospects within the HC/HG region)
2	Outreach: Gateway to Resources program, serving as an extensible model for Chamber development and growth, work with more board members.
3	Political connections, advocacy
4	Strengthen networking events/Breakfast Connection: Building attendance and recidivism, get people interested in coming to events with speakers, education, and participation.
5	Ambassador program: Participation and engagement is key for members, an ambassador program which pairs a board member with a new member can increase member retention.
6	Exposure: Advancing the usage of social media, publicizing events
7	Leadership: Locating board members (to replace outgoing and support existing)

Rank

Threats *(External, Future)*

1	Financial viability: loss of membership base
2	Exposure: Struggle with Regional identity issues ('Zip code' and a "visible community identity") and overall exposure (many businesses are not aware the chamber exists)
3	Inertia in the board of directors: Keeping momentum can be a challenge
4	Unexpected leadership change
5	Competition

5.3.1. Primary Stakeholders

Primary stakeholders include members, current, past, and potential funders, strategic partners, volunteers, nonprofit service providers, community leaders, and government affiliations (see Appendices 10.3.8 and 10.3.9) (McNamara, 2007, p.56). The interests and needs of stakeholders are significant to the long-term success of the Chamber. Likewise, stakeholders support the Chamber in carrying out shared goals and strategies.

- All members
- Organizations within the Harbor City and Harbor Gateway
- President’s Circle (Sponsors)
- Several public service agencies and elected officials
- Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network
- Managed Career Solutions
- Los Angeles Community Development Department
- Mayors office
- Los Angeles City Council 15th District
- Port of Los Angeles
- BizFed
- SBACC
- Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce
- Governors Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- County Supervisors Office
- Congresswoman Waters
- Harbor City Neighborhood Council
- Harbor Gateway South Neighborhood Council
- Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council
- Education: LAUSD, LAHC
- Department of Rec and Parks

5.3.2. Chamber Members by Industry

The following list details the number of members, as of January 2013, as listed by associated industry. Industry focus is a key strategy associated with *Strategic Goal #1*.

- | | | | |
|------------------------|----|------------------|---|
| ➤ Service | 29 | ➤ Industry | 6 |
| ➤ Professional Service | 18 | ➤ Restaurant | 6 |
| ➤ Intl Trade | 14 | ➤ Public Affairs | 5 |
| ➤ Nonprofit | 12 | ➤ Education | 4 |
| ➤ Retail | 9 | ➤ Manufacturing | 3 |
| ➤ Government | 7 | ➤ Hospitality | 1 |
| ➤ Health Care | 6 | ➤ Real Estate | 1 |

5.4. Board Approval

The board formally approved the 2013-2015 strategic plan on May 19th, 2013.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Introduction

This discussion begins with reflections on the planning process, lessons learned, and considerations for future planning efforts. Participants were highly engaged throughout the creation of the plan, and a comparable degree of engagement and commitment will be essential moving ahead towards effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

6.2. Reflections on the Planning Process

The planning process was highly successful on many levels. The key goals and strategies were identified through open discussion among participants and agreed to by consensus, resulting in creation of the first formal strategic plan in Chamber's recent history. Furthermore, a framework and precedent has been set for future planning efforts, and the aptitude of organizational leaders has been likewise supplemented by participating through the process.

Several factors are responsible for success, including an organized and inclusive planning process, the facilitator's attentiveness to participant's needs, time constraints, and capabilities, and perhaps most importantly, the dedication and intrinsic motivation of the participants. Not only is the commitment level of participants perhaps the most vital component of the strategic planning effort, but it can also be the most tenuous condition to cultivate. Many factors can be engineered with an expected degree of precision, but developing participant interest could be particularly elusive. In this case, organizational leaders participated in several hour-long sessions over a period of several months and consistently gave their full attention and thoughtful opinions. In this planning effort, high participant engagement may be due to pre-established group cohesion, passionate affirmation of the organization, interest in organizational growth, and/or existing aptitude in strategic thinking and decision-making. As research has consistently shown, successful organizational change requires building a coalition of willing change agents. Participants were both capable and willing to make the planning effort a success, had they not been, the planning effort may very well have fallen flat.

Likewise, the facilitator is highly related to the success of the planning effort. In future planning sessions, the facilitator must cultivate participant engagement and be attentive to participant needs. Familiarity with the organization and the organizational leaders is also highly significant in facilitating strategic planning. The facilitator should be

identified by the board well in advance of the planning effort, and be prepared to invest significant time to manage the aforementioned factors.

6.3. Implementing the Strategic Plan

6.3.1. *Strategies for Successful Implementation*

The most important aspect of planning, and perhaps most challenging, is to successfully implement the proposed changes. The challenge is to “develop techniques for making the ‘new way’ stick”, (Anderson, p.305). Effective implementation is a process of communicating the case for change, mobilizing support for new work routines, and evaluating and assessing the impact of implementation efforts while also acting quickly and revising frequently (Battilana, p. 424; Proehl, p. 159).

The board can employ a combination of several strategies to aid in successful implementation, including authorizing the strategic plan document (*see p.42, Board Approval*), create action plans and Gantt charts, set performance goals, develop and update policies, procedures, job descriptions, and operational guidelines, utilize reports from the executive director and committee chairs, and conduct program reviews (McNamara, 2007, pps. 122-3; Proehl, p. 95). Some additional implementation suggestions are discussed in the following sections, and others are detailed in the *Recommendations* chapter.

6.3.2. *Developing Action (Operating) Plans*

Action plans help ensure that the necessary resources, time, and personnel have been appropriated to each activity, strategy, and goal. The *personal action plans* created during the planning retreat are one component supporting the development of comprehensive action plans (*see Appendices 10.4.5, 10.5.4, and 10.6.2*). The board may also consider creating a Gantt chart to plot activities and resources along a timetable. The Gantt chart creates a realistic interpretation of work and allows for adjustments to work plans as necessary.

6.3.3. *Updating Policies and Procedures*

Updating policies and procedures shifts what is being changed into the new normal. This is a method of ‘institutionalizing’ change and incorporating it into the organizational culture such that “organizational members no longer think of the change program as a special initiative or project” (Anderson, p. 305). There are several

techniques to institutionalize change that are especially relevant to the Chamber, including:

- Participatory decision-making and active participation;
- Regular communication about the status of change;
- Management of internal and external information (such as surveys and benchmarking metrics)
- Periodic team meetings to share results, perspectives, and opinions about how change is occurring;
- Annual strategic planning meetings;
- Goal-driven performance reviews;
- Documented performance plans; and
- Rewards and recognition (according to Beckhard & Harris, 1977; Armenakis, Harris, & Field, 1999; as found in Anderson, D., pps. 306-308)

Fortunately, many of these techniques are currently exhibited in Chamber activities. The first three techniques occur in monthly board meetings, the fourth, regarding *periodic team meetings*, can be integrated into pre-existing committee meetings, and the fifth point *annual strategic planning meetings* is also a current practice. Therefore, the latter three points, *goal-driven performance reviews*, *performance plans*, and *rewards*, highlight the most significant opportunities for successful change implementation.

6.3.4. *Applying Key Success Factors*

Leo Bottary identifies ten common reasons why a strategic plan can fail during implementation. Framed in the positive, the factors that are **highly important** to success are:

1. Recognizing that a **history** of failure to implement plans discourages people to take new efforts seriously;
2. Understanding **people, culture and sub-cultures** within the organization and having a shared vision and values;
3. A **leadership** team that is committed not just in word, but also in action, by modeling the change throughout the life of the plan;
4. The **discipline** required to undergo real behavioral change;
5. The **communication** necessary to insure that everyone in the organization sees the strategic plan as *their* plan with *their* goals;
6. **Monitoring, measurement, and feedback** to evaluate progress, outputs and outcomes, process feedback, and consider unintended effects in a timely and consistent fashion;

7. **Flexibility** and willpower to adjust plans as necessary in efforts to reach the goals;
8. **Milestones and rewards** to inspire, motivate, and celebrate progress and keep people on track;
9. **Good planning** is inclusive and collaborative and incorporates the right people in the developing a plan with sufficient depth of vision; and
10. A **good plan** is one that gets everyone involved, accurately analyzes the external and internal environments, and taps into everyone's collective talents and dedication (Bottary, 2010).

6.3.5. *Supporting Enhancing Forces*

Through various planning activities, participants have identified *organizational strengths* and *enhancing forces* (see *appendices 10.3.3 and 10.3.11*). The enhancing forces represent internal or external factors that *drive* the implementation of the strategic plan. Knowledge of these factors will be useful for effective implementation of the plan.

- **Committed organizational leaders:** The board of directors is active in event planning and management, fundraising, attending meetings with strategic partners, and numerous other activities. An engaged board is a valuable asset in organizational leadership as well as this planned change effort.
- **Effective outreach methods:** Through social media, e-newsletters, and a modern, regularly-updated website, the Chamber swiftly and adeptly communicates with constituents. Robust communication to constituents aids the change process and allows enduring change to take hold.
- **Clear mission and vision:** The organization has a 75-year history and broad credibility among stakeholders having a clear and well-recognized mission. There is general agreement as to the organizational purpose, composition of the constituency, and the types of service and support to provide members.
- **Engaged stakeholders:** Members and strategic partners alike have vested interest in the Chamber and contribute in various ways. Members participate in events, expose the organization through word-of-mouth marketing, and often times move into Chamber leadership positions. Strategic partners provide logistical support, support in service delivery, expand the viability of events, provide opportunity for growth, and other benefits.
- **Access to volunteers:** Volunteers are frequently drawn from high school and college students as well as adult professionals. Volunteers offset the weakness of limited human resources when they are trained, managed, and rewarded properly.

6.4. Monitoring and Evaluating

6.4.1. Utilizing Monitoring Frameworks

The board may wisely choose to adopt a framework for measuring, monitoring and reporting on the quality, efficiency, speed, cost and other aspects of programs and strategies. Although it is commonly recommended to use existing systems and process for monitoring and evaluation when possible, the following performance measurement tools can be very effective, so long as effects are given enough time and space to be monitored for results.

The board may wish to adopt a framework such as the **balanced scorecard** to improve the measurement of activities. The balanced scorecard, for example, is designed to “align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications, and monitor organization performance against strategic goals”, and is an effective tool for measuring culture and other intangibles aspects of the organization (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2013). The balanced scorecard emphasizes analysis from four perspectives: customer service, financials, business processes, and learning and growth. The regular monthly board meetings provide an excellent opportunity to utilize the organizational frameworks.

6.4.2. Refocusing Meetings and Reporting Expectations

At the planning retreat, the organization reaffirmed expectations for committees and board meetings through *Strategic Goal #5: Improve board operations, development, and accountability*. The Chamber is currently adept at having regular board meetings, and these are a key component of the monitoring and evaluation process, however, these meetings need to accommodate a more formal monitoring and evaluation model. Furthermore, currently board and committee meeting agenda items are not tied to the strategic plan goals or strategies. The risk of the current style of meetings is that the proper activities are not afforded the opportunity to be discussed with adequate time for monitoring and evaluation.

It will be imperative that future meetings adhere to the stated goals and strategies in order to measure and evaluate progress and readjust plans as needed. It may be beneficial to set a fixed schedule for board meetings with time allotments for each agenda item, and with agenda items that are directly correlative to the strategic goals and activities. This can support both ‘staying on track’ and ensuring that the agenda is focused on results, without spending too much time on any one agenda item.

Improving the monitoring and evaluative capacity within the current meeting format is perhaps the most practical way to keep on schedule with goals and track progress. Meetings should be results-driven with detailed reports from committees to encourage successful change.

6.4.3. Evaluations

Periodic evaluations are important to improve operations and measure how people and programs are meeting the needs of the organization. Naturally, as this aspect of change is often loathed, it is also rarely completed. Unfortunately, absence of such accountability is often related to failure of a change effort. In fact, the responsibility of evaluation can be less 'loathsome' if the responsibility is delegated to a committee.

In the context of this change effort, McNamara identifies five priority areas to evaluate performance, including board, staff, program, process, and organizational evaluations (McNamara, 2005, pps. 160-164). Regular evaluations give board members valuable information and a better understanding of how the organization is performing, as well as the ability to understand their own performance. The internal assessment results also discussed the importance of giving a performance review to the executive director (*see appendix 10.3.5*).

6.4.4. Celebrating Change

Celebrating change is nearly important as creating it to begin with, yet it can be easily forgotten. Success must be trumpeted to members, staff, volunteers, and especially, and among organizational leaders as effective agents of change. It is important to use an opportunity at each meeting to celebrate success stories, recognize specific accomplishments in creating organizational change, or reflect upon the valuable services rendered to the community. Organizational leaders can be proud of the renewed vision of the Chamber, and cognizant that boldly embracing change encourages members to do the same.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

The planning process has been successful in identifying organizational development areas, clear goals and strategies. The recommendations offered here are intended to aid the organization in reaching these key strategic goals based on results from the planning process, including the SWOT analysis, organizational assessments, and strategies, as well as the researcher's observations. These recommendations are organized into subsections, grouped by the related key strategic goal, and are supplemented with a description of the *strategic leverage point*. The strategic leverage point describes the recommendation within the context of the organization's strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T). For example, a 'SO' strategic leverage point utilizes the organization's strengths (S) and opportunities (O). This method is likened to the *SWOT Grid Analysis*, which characterizes strategies according to 'quadrants' (McNamara, 2007, p.264).

SWOT Grid Analysis

	Opportunities	Threats
Strengths	<i>Invest</i> Use the strengths to take advantage of the opportunities	<i>Defend</i> Use the strengths to ward off threats
Weaknesses	<i>Decide</i> Decide whether to invest resources to shore up weaknesses to take advantage of opportunities, or divest areas of weaknesses	<i>Divest</i> Threats in this quadrant should be monitored and avoided as much as possible, without extensive investment of resources

(McNamara, 2007, p.264)

7.2. Recommendations for Goal #1: Increase Membership

7.2.1. *Develop Innovative, Marketing-Focus Committees*

The successful Gateway to Resource committee is notable and innovative, in that it leverages a relatively minimal amount of internal human resource capital and in return

generates membership growth and exposure. Increasing membership will require more innovative strategies like the Gateway to Resources committee.

For example, a Restaurant Committee may be suited to engage the Chamber's relatively untapped restaurateur prospects. Again, as in the clever Gateway to Resources committee, the committee could be staffed with independent professionals who are interested in gaining exposure with restaurants, such as social media entrepreneurs, website builders, and advertisers. However, somewhat different in scope than Gateway to Resources, the Restaurant Committee might present a novel marketing program for restaurants. For instance, the Committee could create a restaurant discount program and, using the Chamber's strength of exposure, could reach large employers to promote the program, through a brochure, our website, and even a mobile app. Regional businesses may be interested in providing material to employees on local restaurants, say, that provide healthy menu options and deliver. The Chamber's broad-based credibility encourages employers to be receptive to the Chamber providing this information, and this type of marketing would be far more challenging to restaurants to do alone. Finally, the program could be contingent on restaurants being current members and devoting a small portion of time to distributing the program materials on behalf of the Chamber.

The important factor is to recognize the successful characteristics of the Gateway to Resource committee, reinforce them, and incorporate them into other committees to expose previously untapped potential.

Recommendation: Incorporate innovative strategies into new marketing-focused committees, such as the Restaurant Committee.

Strategic leverage point: An 'SO' strategy that leverages strengths #2: *Connections to other organizations* and #5 *Perceived as warm, friendly, and approachable*, coupled with opportunities #2: *Outreach: Gateway to Resources is an extensible model* and #6: *Exposure*, in order to reach untapped member prospects and minimize weaknesses #1: *low membership* and #4: *limitations of volunteerism*.

7.2.2. Build Strategic Partnerships with Neighboring Chambers

The Chamber competes with neighboring chambers of commerce for members and for 'mindshare'. Although neighboring chambers are readily defined as competitors, there are also various opportunities for collaboration. Collaboration can minimize the risk of a competitor, thereby reducing a threat while also seizing an opportunity. Two strategies are worth further consideration, *co-hosting* and *co-promotion*.

Neighboring chambers have between *two to five times* the number of members. Due to the Chamber's relatively small size, duplication of services offered by neighboring chambers could be an inefficient use of resources and a source of needless competition. For example, if regional businesses depend upon a neighboring chamber for a particular type of event or workshop, the Harbor City / Harbor Gateway Chamber may be unwittingly competing by holding similar events. Although each event reaches a somewhat different constituency, it may ultimately be more beneficial to approach neighboring Chambers and attempt to *co-host*, rather than compete, with similar events. This is not a new concept, but perhaps it is underutilized. In several recent joint-chamber events, the higher attendance and number of 'new faces' has been very obvious. Coupling these 'new faces' with the Ambassador program strategy (in which board members make specific efforts to meet, introduce, and network with potential members) may yield a higher number of member prospects than has previously been possible.

Yet another potential opportunity for collaboration is by way of *co-promotion*. The Chamber's presence in the BizFed organization, excellent relationships with LA city service providers, and expertise and focus on international trade are each unique strengths. These strengths are valued by neighboring chambers, and there may be a way to involve neighboring chambers in these programs in exchange for exposure and promotion. For example, the Chamber's new International Trade Committee will continue to attract increased attention as an innovative resource for businesses. Neighboring Chambers may be interested in helping to promote this program if it were co-branded to include them.

This type of collaboration requires visionary leadership and risk, but the potential returns are significant. Thus, joint-chamber events and co-promotion strategies present the opportunity to gain exposure among a new audience, reduce needless competition, and improve regional relations with other chambers. Ultimately, as a small organization, fostering collaboration may demonstrate itself as a more efficient approach to growth than competition.

Recommendation: Develop a *co-hosting* and *co-promotion* strategies by building relationships with neighboring chambers to mitigate the threat of competition, build exposure, and identify new members. Identify the valuable assets of neighboring chambers, reach out to establish renewed relationships, identify common ground, seek out opportunities to co-host an event or workshop, abandon competing events that are not core programming and do not generate significant revenue and refocus resources on co-hosting events.

Strategic leverage point: An “OT” strategy which *protects* the Chamber by leveraging the opportunities #4: *Strengthen networking events* and #6: *Exposure* to reduce threats #2: *Exposure / regional identity issues* and #5: *competition*.

7.3. Recommendations for Goal #2: Increase Revenue

7.3.1. Identify Grant Opportunities

There are strong possibilities to attract alternate sources of funding through grants. It was further identified that pursuing grant opportunities should be looked at as a key strategy for strategic goal #2, *Increase Revenue*. Grants have not historically been a revenue source, but the recent *Layoff Aversion and Business Retention* grant changes this reality, having brought \$60,000 to the Chamber for the purpose of conducting a regional survey of employers and matching them to workforce development services. In addition to establishing the Chamber as a suitable organization to deliver grant-funded programming, the program also created a regional exposure for the Chamber and directly increased membership and event sponsorships.

The Chamber has the programming capacity and experience to consider grant opportunities related to workforce development, economic development, international trade, and youth development, among other areas. The Chamber has established strong relationships with organizations that are directly or indirectly involved in grant funds, as corroborated through the stakeholder analysis and external analysis (*see Appendices 10.3.8 and 10.3.4*). The researcher, working with the Executive Director, has identified the following stakeholders that are involved in grant-making and/or grant-writing:

- Congresswoman Janice Hahn’s office: Provides the Grant Services Program which is intended to assist small CBO’s with grant-writing;
- Congresswoman Maxine Waters office: Congresswoman’s office has indicated that they may be able to assist in grant search and endorsement;
- LA City Council District 15: The City Council office has been vital in renewing the *Layoff Aversion and Business Retention* program, and they have provided support to Chamber outreach and various programs, including providing Small Business Liason Ana Dragon to serve on the *Gateway to Resources* committee;
- Managed Career Solutions: Chamber sponsor, and board member, who is invested in workforce development in the Harbor area and has indicated interest in collaborating on various programs and grants;
- Governors Office of Economic Development (GO-Biz): The office has supported many Chamber events, and indicates continued support. One of the Chamber’s

- best relationships at the state level of government, may be able to recommend state grants or support Chamber grant applications through endorsement;
- Los Angeles Community Development Department: Current provider of the *Layoff Aversion and Business Retention* program and support of Chamber activities;

Recommendation: Create an action plan to research the aforementioned grant-related resources, identify at least two potential grants by year-end 2013.

Strategic leverage point: An 'SO' strategy, which leverages *Strength #2: Connections to other organizations*, with opportunities #2: *Outreach* and #3: *Political connections*.

7.3.2. *Develop Case Statements*

"A case statement is geared toward marketing and fundraising rather than planning. It describes the organization's goals, capabilities and strengths and the benefits it provides. Its purpose is to secure contributions and grants from individuals, foundations, corporate giving programs and other philanthropic entities" (Mittenthal, 2002). Case statements can be readily adapted into grant applications, and serve to clearly communicate a proposed course of action.

Typical contents of a case statement include:

- Issue At Stake
- Situation Assessment
- Analysis of Alternatives (Approaches)
- Recommendations
- Conclusion
- Fiscal Implications (Mittenthal, 2002)

There may be a few services, programs, or opportunities that warrant the creation of a case statement. For example, there has been some discussion between the Chamber and the LA City Council Office regarding a mutual interest in revitalizing the Gardena Boulevard corridor commercial area through the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID). The BID would require businesses and land-owners on Gardena Blvd. to collaborate on a collective property development plans. The Chamber would be a natural focal point to support the collaboration of these businesses, as well as the required relationships with the City of Los Angeles.

Recommendation: Identify one to two relevant case statements in relation to an applicable grant opportunity, as identified from the previous recommendation.

Strategic leverage point: An 'SO' strategy, which leverages *Strength #2: Connections to other organizations*, with *Opportunity #2: Outreach* and *Opportunity #3: Political connections*.

7.3.3. *Leverage Industry Information*

Timely and relevant industry information can be very important when designing new programs and making strategic decisions. Likewise, industry data can be very useful in supporting the aforementioned recommendations of *identify grant opportunities* and *create case statements*. Currently, there is no clear goal or strategy to review industry information. The Chamber is a member of the *American Chamber of Commerce Executives*, an association that provides a wealth of resources including topical news, research, articles, and events geared towards learning and networking (ACCE, 2010). Hight Performance has numerous informational articles and an abundance of information on how to increase revenue in a chamber of commerce. For example, the Non-Dues Revenue Trends Report, conducted in April 2012, lists the practices of over 120 chambers of commerce throughout the U.S. and Canada (Hight Performance Group, 2013). It may be useful for the Chamber to assemble a directory of similar resources as a tool to keep abreast of resources.

Recommendation: Integrate industry learning as a strategy associated with a key goal, and assign a committee responsible for researching and reporting on industry information periodically.

Strategic leverage point: A 'WT' strategy, which establishes a *defensive plan* to prevent several of the identified weaknesses from increasing the susceptibility to external threats (QuickMBA, 2010).

7.4. Recommendations for Goal #3: Marketing and Outreach

7.4.1. *Develop the Marketing & Branding Strategy*

In developing the brand strategy, it is important to identify the geographically distinct Harbor Gateway area, especially as the Gateway region is a key demographic for expansion of the Chamber's membership base. Presently, organizations in the Gateway are often unaware of the region, assuming instead that the Gateway is a part of Torrance, Gardena, or Carson. The Gateway is readily defined by the 110 Harbor Freeway, and is readily understood to connect LAX to the Port of Los Angeles. The Chamber can develop a brand that emphasizes this unique corridor and makes it obvious to these organizations.

In developing a brand, it is also important to develop a strategic message' and/or unique selling point (USP). Through observation and working with Chamber

constituents, the researcher has identified some recommendations for the brand identity, including:

- Both the 110 Freeway and the HCHG Chamber has a long and storied history of ‘connecting’ businesses. Using imagery and key phrases to maximize the concepts of ‘connecting to trade, long history, and reliability’ may be effective.
- The Gateway region, and function of ‘connecting’, is quite different and unique from other chambers. Also, this concept may identify well with a major growth market of logistics and international trade.

It may also be effective to market the following benefits, which have to date been perhaps under-utilized in current marketing materials:

- Located in the city of Los Angeles with unprecedented access to LA City resources (CDD, Council Office, BusinessSource, EDC, utilities, etc.)
- Close collaboration with various elected officials, as well as public service agencies; and
- Long and deep history of support to community programs and community-based organizations

These unique benefits will be alternatively valuable to the different constituent groups. Thus, it may also prove valuable to define constituent groups based upon their interests and expectations. One recommendation is to tailor brand marketing to 3 distinct yet intertwined types of member groups:

- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Business to Business
- Small Businesses

Recommendation: Consider using imagery of the 110 Freeway, and ‘connecting business, extensive history, and trade’ in the strategic message, USP and marketing / branding strategy.

7.4.2. Harness Political Capital for Increased Exposure

It is commonly found that elected officials provide a significant ‘draw’ to events, creating a sort of ‘celebrity’ appeal. The Chamber has exceptional relations with elected officials, and is commonly able to get their attendance to Chamber hosted events. Likewise, the Chamber has enjoyed recent success with media support, including *Channel 7 news* and the *Daily Breeze Newspaper*, among others. The value of political relationships can readily increase exposure, thereby drawing in more members, corporate sponsors, and other potential revenue streams.

Recommendation: Four point recommendation to (a) increase the number of ‘celebrity-driven’ events, devote more (b) human resources to promoting these events, work closely with (c) media relations, and ensure that the events are (d) priced accordingly to bring profit to the Chamber.

Strategic leverage point: An “SO” strategy, which leverages Strengths #4: *Small but powerful*, #5: *Good programming, great events* and Opportunities #3: *Political connections* and #4: *Strengthen networking events* and #6: *Exposure*.

7.4.3. Evaluate Public Sector Partnerships

The Chamber has long been involved with public-sector organizations. In some cases, these relationships have been very effective, however, in other cases, less so.

It is important to consider that public sector partnerships commonly impact the autonomy and program focus of the organization. Community-based organizations “face a continuum in deciding how cooperative to be and how much control to give up in relating to city hall. At one extreme, organizations may choose to remain small and tackle problems with only the resources of the organization, enabling them to retain complete autonomy. At the other extreme, the organization expands its size, and perhaps some sorts of influence, but ends up serving only the interests of city hall, private corporations, or foundations” (Immergluck, p. 212).

Weir (1999) identified three types of relationships between community development organizations and local political systems: (a) elite domination, (b) political patronage, and (c) inclusion. Elite domination systems are characterized by community development organizations with weak ties to political and economic power. In such systems, the use of adversarial tactics by community organizations or CBDOs are expected to be common, both because they have few other options and have little to lose and because such tactics can enhance solidarity—or what Gittel and Vidal (1998) have called “social bonding capital”—among similar organizations (Jeziarski, 1990)” (Immergluck, 2005, p. 212).

The *Three-Sector Initiative* provided by the United Way further discusses how the Chamber can establish effective through cross-sector partnerships (2005).

Recommendation: Provide the board the opportunity to speak explicitly about the aforementioned research regarding the influence, relevancy, and impact of public sector partnerships. Implement the board’s findings into development strategies.

Strategic leverage point: An “SO” strategy, which leverages strength #4: *Small but powerful* and the opportunities #3: *Political connections*.

7.4.4. *Develop Work-Study Exchanges with Local Secondary Schools And Students*

This process of creating a strategic plan has been achieved in large part due to the academic requirements of the researcher's masters program. Within the Chamber's region, there are many students interested in creating an academic project and may be interested in working with the Chamber to create such a project. For example, students may utilize the Chamber as the client for any number of projects, including the development of a social media strategy, marketing plan, business plan, program development strategy, volunteer retention program, or other topic.

Recommendation: The Chamber can harness this recommendation by building on existing relationships with local secondary schools, including Marymount California University, Westwood College, UEI, LAHC, and others to express interest in collaborating with a student who wishes to complete any of the aforementioned projects.

7.5. Recommendations for Goal# 4: Membership Retention

7.5.1. *Develop the Member Needs Assessment Process*

The Chamber has already implemented a member needs assessment, which has currently been distributed to all members by email (*see Appendix 10.6.1*). This assessment is a key source of information that can be used to increase member retention by providing timely feedback on a member's satisfaction, improve the quality and relevancy of Chamber programming, and much more. This survey can be further distributed by bundling with annual invoice mailings, bringing it to Chamber events, promoting in the e-newsletters, and other strategies. The board can consider asking for a periodic report on the assessment results, and use the information to adjust programming accordingly.

Recommendation: Incorporate the distribution of the member needs assessment into a strategy supported with an action plan. Ensure periodic reporting, board oversight, and program adjustments based on these results.

Strategic leverage point: An "SO" strategy, which supports strengths #5: *Perceived by members as a warm, friendly group* and #5: *Good programming, great events with various opportunities*.

7.5.2. Improve Constituent Management Processes

The current method of managing constituent information is informal, with the executive director maintaining most of this relationship information either in various single-user, desktop software programs or by memory. The lack of extensibility of this type of constituent management is a challenge for collaboration, and the board has remarked on several occasions that most of the organizational knowledge is ‘stored in Joeann’s head’. Likewise, as the Chamber grows, it becomes increasingly challenging to sufficiently organize contact information and relationship details with constituents, members, and prospects, and it is time-intensive complicated to efficiently utilize the support of volunteers.

A more robust constituent management system will organize business details, lists, contact history, member status, member assessment, organizational affiliations and resources, improve outreach efforts, and many more benefits. Effective constituent management can allow constituent data to be shared among organization members.

A long-term solution to this obstacle would involve implementing and training staff and volunteers on a constituent management database. The database would keep up to date details on organizations and contacts and effectively categorize donors, event attendees, volunteers, strategic partners, etc.

In the 4th quarter of 2012, the researcher and executive director briefly reviewed Chamber Master, which is a commonly used software platform to serve this function. The software is reasonably priced, at \$120/mo. for unlimited access.

Recommendation: Research and identify the benefits of a suitable constituent management software database.

7.6. Recommendations for Goal #5: Board Development & Effective Governance

7.6.1. Organize and Reward Volunteerism

Volunteer support is a critical component of the organization’s success. The Chamber regularly has access to volunteers and interns. Some notable examples include involvement in the Hire LA’s Youth program and the Pacific Gateway program, which collectively provided 3 interns and 360 hours of work. Furthermore, the executive director is exceptional at recruiting volunteers. That being said, there are challenges in utilizing volunteers effectively. It is common for there to be confusion as to which roles and activities are necessary, which in turn reduces volunteer efficacy and affects

retention. Volunteers need to be integrated into the organizational needs and activities as closely as possible.

Rewards and Incentives to Encourage Volunteers and build Enthusiasm

Furthermore, it is highly important to ensure that volunteers are rewarded and thanked for their contributions. As Proehl describes, in “organizations where nonmonetary rewards and recognition are the norm, creativity and persistence are needed to identify appropriate means of acknowledging the work of members” (p. 95). Understandably, the contributions of volunteers will be improved by providing recognition and rewards for exceptional effort.

Recommendation: Congratulate and reward long-standing volunteers and board members alike. Create a set of activities to reward volunteer support. Strategies to reward board members might, for example, reward the highest performing small team with free membership dues following year, recognition at Annual Installation, and 3 free breakfast connections.

Recommendation: Implement processes and guidelines to more effectively utilize volunteers to complete activities.

7.6.2. Utilize Personal Action Plans to Improve Organizational Efficacy

Board members are managing their own professional commitments, and don't have a whole lot of time. Crises come up, inevitably, which makes accounting for tasks complicated. It is important to identify how much time can be expected from board members, and how to strategically organize tasks in consideration of that time.

The *personal action plans* is an exercise that was conducted to see how much time our leaders may expect to offer to the Chamber each month. This assessment is coupled with the skills represented. With this information, activities that need to be addressed can be distributed accordingly.

Recommendation: Implement the personal action plan results into a detailed organizational action plan, accounting specifically for board member's time, and directing that available time to the most pertinent activities.

7.6.3. Create Self-Directed Teams

A *self-directed team* is highly autonomous, goal-driven, and self-accountable. Bolman and Deal discuss the potential advantages of self-directed teams, which can “often produce better results and higher morale than groups operating under more traditional

top-down control” by managing themselves, assigning jobs to members, planning and scheduling work, making production or service-related decisions, and taking action to remedy problems (2008, p. 113). The Chamber is comprised of various committees, which possess intrinsic strengths and excellent potential, however, as currently organized, the executive director manages each committee directly. More autonomous, self-directed teams may be able to free up the resources of the executive director to devote towards other priorities.

Recommendation: Implement the tenets of ‘self-directed teams’ into committee structure to increase independence, accountability, efficiency, and production.

7.6.4. Reinforce ‘Informal Ties’ among Board Members

Some relatively small changes may allow the Chamber to achieve a higher efficiency and prosperity. For example, the organization is primarily comprised of *informal groups and networks* (members have different ‘day jobs’ and primarily engage with the Chamber for networking). Bolman and Deal describe the ability of informal networks to form more integrated and effective groups by actively reinforcing ‘informal ties’ among the networks (2008, pps. 183-4). The Chamber can focus activities with the goal to develop this intangible, yet vital, characteristic of effective informal networks.

7.6.5. Implement Project and Group Task Management Groupware

Using online, collaborative *groupware*, the board may hold each other accountable to specific tasks and timetables. There are many options of these software platforms, and of these solutions are focused on supporting the needs of geographically remote teams, offering strong functionality for document sharing and collaboration, shared calendaring, and notifications when something changes (Quinn, 2012). **Asana** which is a functional groupware for managing groups and tasks effectively. Also consider **Huddle** which is full-featured groupware for project management and integration (Huddle, 2012). Likewise, **BaseCamp** is also an option for group collaboration. Basecamp is easy to use, and widely popular, Basecamp might well be a good choice for teams without complex needs.

There is a strong case to expand the usage of groupware in board operations. For example, currently, the executive director and the Director of Business Development utilize **Google docs** to allow for collaborative access to member information, and ensure accountability and contact is made with members. This ensures that current information about members is shared immediately, and improves the quality of service to members. A Google doc is also used for the a prospect call list, which supports the

special events committee as well as temporary volunteers. In yet another example, the Gateway to Resources Committee uses a Google doc to collaborate with all team members, share information easily, and increase the membership prospect 'funnel.

Recommendation: Expand the usage of groupware for all Chamber committees and implement the strategic plan accountability into the groupware system.

8. CONCLUSION

This planning effort clearly demonstrated the enduring will and commitment of organizational leaders to consider the complicated facets of planning and make salient decisions towards organizational growth. In facilitated sessions, participants were agreeable and cordial, worked together on complex issues, and when the dust settled, they agreed to move forward with overwhelming consensus. On several occasions, participants provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, indicating enthusiasm and satisfaction with the planning process. This is a testament to the cohesion of the Chamber, and an excellent foundation for successful implementation of the strategic plan in months ahead.

In addition to solidarity within leadership, the Chamber is fortunate to have many unique assets - including political capital, volunteerism, community relationships, diverse funding sources, and broad skills from organizational leaders. Strategic planning provides the opportunity to utilize these assets to grow and meet organizational goals. The 'complete' strategic planning process, which has been conducted for this project, need only be conducted every three to five years. Smaller, focused planning can be conducted on an annual basis in order to update the organizational goals and resources needed, with plans being reviewed and amended as needed throughout the year. As such, the research, methods, findings and recommendations of this report are useful to the client in future planning initiatives.

The 21st century has ushered in a period of significant change for community-based organizations. New tools and methods are emerging constantly, and once reliable sources of funding and community support are seemingly unpredictable. Change is also ever-present in the field of organizational development research. The research consulted for this project provided a strong basis to stimulate change according to procedures, models, and best practices. On the other hand, the experience of this research project indicates that successful change both stems and endures from organizational culture, dedication of change agents, and the roles of leaders. It is no coincidence that these aspects are generally more pronounced in community-based organizations, and as such, it would seem that these organizations can exert great leverage in the current state of perpetual change. As research on organizational development continues to evolve, the roles of these organizational aspects will be explored further. Future organizational development research in these areas may disproportionately benefit small community-based organizations, which are flush with culture, leadership, and volunteerism.

In spite of the complexity of change, practical solutions will continue to present themselves through adaptability and mindful, focused effort. With a realistic strategic plan in place, and the framework for organizational change established, there is excellent opportunity for the Chamber to realize its goals. Of course, there will be continued challenges and setbacks, some strategies will not pan out, and others will require more energy and investment than originally planned. These changes are to be expected, and with regular monitoring and evaluation, the necessary course corrections will be forthcoming.

Through a willing and active coalition of community leaders, the Chamber will harness this opportunity to stimulate the economic recovery in the region, build upon an esteemed reputation, and lead a proud and progressive vision for the community's future.

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10. APPENDICES

The Appendices are arranged chronologically by the date of data collection, and divided into sub-sections according the research phases (as described in the *Methodology* chapter).

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10.1. Phase #1: Preparing the Planning Process

10.1.1. Board Approval For The Strategic Planning Process

Description: This letter was submitted during the regular board of directors meeting on July 17th, 2012 and was unanimously approved.

Request for Action: Request to create a strategic plan (major project)

Dear Board of Directors,

As a Master's candidate for the University of Victoria, I am requesting your approval to conduct a major research project with the Harbor City / Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce. The project is collaborative by nature, and will request the ongoing support and participation from the board and executive director. The project will require between 9 to 14 months to complete, and culminate in a practical and informed plan to provide useful alternatives and benchmarks for the strategic growth of the organization.

I will begin with a 'literature review', comprised by research of popular and academic resources which discuss strategic planning in the nonprofit sector and organizational development models. This research will further inform the project's activities and methods and result in a project proposal. The project proposal and timeline will be presented to the board within 3 months. The formal project will then begin, including the research to be gathered with chamber members and leadership, among other sources. Throughout the project, the board will have the opportunity to discuss and guide the plan's progress and can expect academic rigor and professionalism on my part.

The resulting strategic plan will be a collaborative effort that provides useful and clear alternatives for the strategic growth of the chamber. Presently, I wish to begin working with the board leadership to further define the scope of the plan.

I kindly request the board's approval to commence the major project and I welcome your questions and feedback.

Sincerely,

Carter Calhoun
Graduate Student
University of Victoria
Victoria, Canada

10.1.2. How Will You Get “Buy-In” When Announcing Process?¹

Select methods that you prefer to use to get buy-in:

- X Announce in meeting with the Board Chair present? If not, then how to show Board support?
- X Announce in meeting with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) present. There are few reasons why the CEO would not be in the meeting.
- X Explain reason(s) for planning, benefits of the process, when it will likely start and stop. Any concerns now?
- X Don't overly “sell” the process. Any concerns?
- X Accompany the announcement with an official memo?
- X Mention any previous strategic planning activities, including successes, failures and what is being done to avoid failures this time around?
- X Mention who will be on the Planning Committee?
- X Provide time for staff reaction, including questions and suggestions?
- X Provide the name of one person who can be contacted regarding any questions about the upcoming process?
- X Mention when additional information will be available, including who will be involved in the process and when?
- Plan some quick successes in the strategic planning process? If so, what might those quick successes be? **Group involvement in the internal / external analyses.**
- Other ideas?

¹ Worksheet is copyrighted and provided for reprint courtesy of “Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation”, McNamara, C. (1997). Authenticity Consulting, LLC Minneapolis, MN

10.2. Phase #2: Establish Foundations for Strategic Planning

Description: The following worksheets were completed between November 2012 and January 25th, 2013 by the executive committee. Phase #2 represents the results of extensive work to set the foundation for a board-inclusive planning retreat.

10.2.1. Notes From 1st Executive Committee Meeting, November 13th 2012

- Meet with BD and JV
- Discussion of the upcoming plan and review of McNamara's text Part 1. Pages x, 3, 5, 6, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28 were reviewed and Worksheets 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 1.4 1.5 were reviewed.
- There was agreement by the committee that the organization lacked a history of being able to implement plans. The researcher suggested a force field analysis as an activity which could assist the board in addressing this obstacle. Researcher was confirmed as the plan facilitator and was asked to continue developing the plan as per the outlined method.
- Work through the definitions and plan.
- Discuss Outcomes: Two areas that need work are implementing plans and some discussion on plan method (q7). The committee decided to have the author facilitate the sessions, and draft the engagement plan for activities. The researcher discussed and received approval to use web-based participation for the majority of activities. This was agreed to be respectful of participants time. The participants confirmed the facilitator's project proposal.

10.2.2. Plan Participants

PLANNING COMMITTEE (BOARD OF DIRECTORS)

	Name	Role On Board
1.	BD	President, chair of planning committee
2.	Joeann Valle	Executive director
4.	JN	Treasurer
5.	LM	President Elect
6.	DB	Co-membership committee chairperson
7.	KM	Co-membership committee chairperson
8.	LB	Legislative Affairs committee chairperson
9.	MP	Special Events committee chairperson
10.	AM	Economic Development committee chairperson
11.	BG	Gateway to Resources committee chairperson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

	Name	Role on Board
	CJ	Incoming member
	PS	Incoming member
	DF	Economic Development Committee
	MW	Legislative Affairs Committee
	JH	
	WJ	
	IM	
	ES	
	RS	

10.2.3. Why Do Strategic Planning Now? ¹

What reason(s) exist for the nonprofit to do strategic planning now?

Planning of this depth has not been conducted before.

10.2.4. What Scope Might Be Used? ²

Look at Program specific or Organization wide?

Focus primarily on organization-wide strategic planning because there are several areas which can be looked at.

10.2.5. What Strategic Planning Approach Might Be Used? ³

Mostly Bottom-Up Planning? Indicate which of the following is true:

- X Members of the Board of Directors are difficult to organize and/or engage.
- X Planning will be focused mostly on one or more programs.
- X Staff have strong expertise in the nonprofit's programs, including needs among clients and how those needs are met.

Is there sufficient reason to choose bottom-up planning? Yes

Mostly Concurrent (Combined) Planning? Indicate which of the following is true:

- X Members of Board of Directors are participative and aware of programs.
- X Staff is participative and aware of programs.
- X Organization highly values participation and teamwork.

Is there sufficient reason to choose concurrent planning? Yes

The mixture between the needs for top-down, bottom-up, and concurrent indicate the best approach is an integrated one.

Will the new strategic plan be incremental, or built mostly from a fresh start?

Fresh start, there is no strategic plan previously created.

¹ Worksheet 1.3, p. 215. Worksheets are copyrighted and provided for reprint courtesy of "Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation", McNamara, C. (1997). Authenticity Consulting, LLC Minneapolis, MN

² Worksheet 1.4, p. 216

³ Worksheet 1.5 and 1.6, pps. 218-225

10.2.6. What Time Span Will Be Used?¹

What time span will be considered for each aspect of the strategic plan?

	3 mos.	6 mos.	1 year	2 yrs.	3 yrs.	5 yrs.	10 yrs.
Goals-based planning, especially goals and strategies					X		
Issues-based planning, especially issues and strategies					X		
Action planning, including who will be doing what and by when for goals-based, critical-issues, other models, etc.			X				
Budgets for any form of planning							

¹ Worksheet 1.7, p. 226. Worksheets are copyrighted and provided for reprint courtesy of “Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation”, McNamara, C. (1997). Authenticity Consulting, LLC Minneapolis, MN

10.2.7. Completed Worksheet: Plan For Plan, Is Organization Ready For Strategic Planning?

Before you start on your “plan for a plan,” you should determine whether your nonprofit organization is ready to begin strategic planning. There are several questions to guide you in this decision. Check off whether you think your organization is ready, based on each question. Make notes near each question to discuss with key individuals, such as the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer. If you realize you are not ready based on one or more of these questions, determine how to get ready and when you might be able to begin strategic planning.

Readiness Questions	Ready	Not Ready	Notes / Responses (some notes are paraphrased from discussions)
Does nonprofit have enough money to pay bills over next six months?	X X X	X X	<p>Yes. There have been no discussion regarding shortfalls at board meetings.</p> <p>Probably not. Certainly not if we were paying a market salary to our exec. dir.</p> <p>Maybe not, The way we are doing we are just cutting cutting cutting, we need to make sure that our events are making money. In the major events, we need all the board members to come, we need to sell tables, in order to be a profit. We are too close. The commitment could be the overriding factor. We are not that far , only the commitment that we need. If a board chamber has businesses and each board member has their own interests... We also have to be part of the main reason AND their own reason. Two way street, and different levels of the street, general members and board members.</p>
Does nonprofit have history of being able to plan and implement its plans?	X	X X X X	<p>Yes. Our committee members are very self motivated to succeed to grow membership and income.</p> <p>Not really.</p> <p>Many times we start, and we get moving on certain things. After some very nice retreats and planning, but plans get diluted. If we lose intensity, we need to know <i>why!</i> Having a good board makes a big difference.</p>

Do Board members get along? Do staff members get along?	X X X X X		Board members, yes; the staff appears to work well together. Yes, pretty much. If they are motivated and things are explained. This board cannot be <i>told</i> . This is what we are doing and <i>why</i> . Then small dissensions will go away if this is followed. Very positive.
Are Board members willing to be involved in top-level planning?	X X X X X		Some yes. Some not so much.
Can Board members and staff find the time to do the planning?	X X X X X		Yes, with concentrated effort. With an appropriate commitment, but time can be a challenge. Part of the commitment, we have to find the time!
No major changes expected in the next 1-2 months?	X X X X X		No, however major changes will be discussed within the next 1-2 months. Agree, no major changes.
Extensive cynicism about planning in our nonprofit? (You shouldn't have.)	X X X X	X	Our nonprofit is a chamber and on the board level I really don't see cynicism displayed; doubts of course, but not cynicism.. There is some cynicism about the process. The challenge lies in execution. Don't think so. We lost some people and have new people. New people need to be given the time and opportunity to understand and to participate. This is not given.

<p>Are you doing strategic planning only because funder wants you to?</p>	<p>X X X X X</p>		<p>This is an interesting question in that I don't think we would have seriously ventured forth (even though we are at the point where we, as a chamber, need to) if it wasn't for the fact that we have a person who will take the reins and guide the board through the process.</p> <p>No, we need to do this, develop a good plan and then get commitment to implement that plan.</p> <p>No, we always do planning in retreats. This is good because it is a multiyear plan, versus a one year with little continuity. If we find the opportunities for funding we should pursue it.</p>
<p>Other considerations or concerns?</p>			<p>Do to business consideration, making sure that I have the time to fulfill my role in the strategic plan process in a meaningful and focused manner.</p> <p>Keeping the group focused as we work through this.</p>

It is important to address questions noted in the “Not Ready” column before beginning planning and to determine when you might be able to start.

Any comments or concerns that you want to be sure to capture and share with the Planning Committee?

Regarding Question #2, challenges history of implementing plans, there will need to be particular focus on identifying threats and opportunities to *implementation itself*. Effective implementation strategies, collaborative planning and engagement will be key.

Is your nonprofit ready to do strategic planning? Yes, concerns in the ‘not ready’ column will be addressed during the planning process.

10.2.8. Strategic Plan - Tentative Schedule Of Activities

Item #	Planning Activities	Persons Involved	Time Required	Dates
1.	Establish readiness for planning	Executive Committee	30 minutes	Nov 20 th -Dec 2 nd , 2012
2.	Organizational profile is created	Director, Planning Committee	1 hour	Dec 3 rd -Dec 16 th , 2012
3.	External analysis	Planning Committee	3 hours	January 16 th , 2013
4.	Internal analysis	Planning Committee	3 hours	January 23 rd , 2013
Planning Retreat Day 1 (Jan 25th) Holiday Inn				
		Full Board	3 hours	January 25th
5.	Review and approve mission statement		30 minutes	
6.	Discuss external / internal analysis results		15 minutes	
7.	Goals brainstorming in committees/groups		2 hours	
Planning Retreat Day 2 (Jan 26th) Holiday Inn				
		Full Board	5 hours	January 26th
8.	Identify and rank top 5 to 8 goals		2 hours	
9.	Strategies are identified, clarified, and ranked for each goal		2 hours	
10.	Identify and review action plans	Various Committees	3 hours	February – March 18 th
11.	Draft plan document	Planning Facilitator	N/A	February 1 st –18 th
12.	Discuss budget priorities	Full Board	1 hour	February 19 th board meeting
13.	Draft Plan goes to Board for 1 st review	Full Board	2 hours	February 19 th board meeting
14.	Final Plan goes to Board for approval	Full Board	1 hour	March 19 th board meeting

10.2.9. *Provide Strategic Planning Guide To Planners*¹

If you want to use a Planning Guide to provide information to your planners, complete the first set of questions.

Select the information that will be in the guide:

- X Cover sheet with title and date
- X Brief explanation of the major reason for conducting strategic planning now
- X Brief description of the strategic planning process designed by the Planning Committee, including any particular model and how that model will be applied
- X Listing of who will be involved in the planning and when, including a schedule
- X Brief description of the organizational scope of the plan
- X Brief description of the time span of the plan
- X Brief description of the role of the Planning Committee
- X Listing of who can be contacted with any questions about the strategic planning process for the nonprofit
- X Any other sources of information about strategic planning?

Who will be responsible to assemble the guide?

Facilitator

To whom will the guide be provided?

Planning Committee

Who will provide it and how?

Facilitator will provide at the board meeting

¹ Worksheet is copyrighted and provided for reprint courtesy of “Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation”, McNamara, C. (1997). Authenticity Consulting, LLC Minneapolis, MN

10.2.10. Organizational Profile¹

Completed with assistance from Joeann Valle, Executive Director

Harbor City / Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce

a) Founded:

In 1928, but incorporated June 1939. Group of businessmen got together and met at Jack Woods Plumbing and decided they needed more representation in the City of Los Angeles. Most of the early members worked, lived, and owned property in HC.

b) The first program(s):

An early major task was to compel LA City to get a post office installed in the area. They served the businesses in Harbor City. The Chamber created a voice for the area, where before there was no such voice.

c) Significant events during the Chamber's history:

In the early 1980's, the Chamber moved into their first 'true' office, shared with the 15th district councilwoman and the deputy. At the time, the council office was interested in encouraging the Chamber to embrace the Gateway area. The Chamber helped businesses with permits and licenses (CUP). The Chamber held events, evening mixers and others. These characteristics are much the same as now. The Chamber used to do Street Fairs semi-annually, and also Business Expos. Also educational events. Took on LA City Council to create a better environment for the region, improve the betterment of HC by lobbying city government. The Chamber was the only catalyst for long time. Assisted with the development of Pacific Coast Highway.

a) Major awards:

Selected as a founding member of BizFed, founding member of SBACC. Recently recognized in the Wall Street Journal for export prowess. Honored by LA City Mayor's Office for supporting the Bike Tour (youth).

b) Collaborations:

The Lions Club has long been a big part in the Chamber's history for many years. Long support of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Close relationship with local CBO's, especially with Boys and Girls Club. The Chamber has served as the fiscal agent for the early Boys and Girl Club. With Director Joeann Valle, the Chamber's particular involvement

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has expanded into a great many regional community based organizations. Joann Valle has been honored in many different community groups, predominantly for Chamber involvement.

c) Funding:

An early collaboration of 3 Chambers, the Harbor-Watts Economic Development Corporation brought funds into the Chamber. Also, the Chamber was a force in later years receiving CDBG funds to improve Gardena Blvd., and the Boys & Girls Club community center.

In the early 2000's, membership was at it's peak, around 200 members. For various reasons, some unknown, a membership decline has continued since that time. There have been many companies moving in and out of the area, with high transition, this has been one of the challenges in maintaining and growing membership. The organizations status as of 4th quarter 2012 is 99 members.

The Chamber does not receive funds from LA city, save for the most recent CDD Layoff Aversion funds (also, historically, for setting up the Harbor-Watts EDC).

Trends that planners should know about:

a) In funding

Members traditionally provide the majority share of revenue. Predominantly, funds have come from members and events. Historically have held a major event for Installation, generally thought to be successful for the politicians in attendance. The 'Gateway to Progress' event held several years ago also brought significant revenue. In recent history, the LA CDD Layoff Aversion grant has brought significant revenue to the Chamber.

b) In staffing

Volunteer driven organization, that has not ever had a paid 'staff', per se. Joe Zacker Sr. kept the Chamber intact when the membership shrank. After some years, the CEO of Bay Harbor Hospital began to rekindle the strength and impact of the Chamber. President Roy Farren, collaborating with Jackie Hoss, went door-to-door to rebuild the membership ranks.

In the late 1970's, the Chamber began to look north to the Harbor Gateway. At the time, the 15th district councilwoman, Joan Flores, and interested Gateway residents banded together in a committee to create an identity for the Gateway. The Chamber was involved in the whole process, and shortly thereafter the city council encouraged the Chamber to rename itself and incorporate the Gateway area. This development changed the Chamber tremendously, growing the Chamber to attract the larger

corporations in the area.

c) Among clients

One of the strongest assets of the Chamber is the board of directors. The organization is internally, self-driven, shaped by the board members and active members.

Generally, the chamber has been comprised of committed board members that want to see growth in the community. Most board members will put personal agendas secondary to the Chamber and the community.

10.2.11. Chamber Programs: Current And Proposed

Current Events

- Installation Luncheon
- Tribute to Military / First Responders
- Tribute to Youth
- Conversation with Government
- Breakfast Connection networking

Current Committees

- Special Events
- Membership
- Legislative Affairs
- Economic Development
- Gateway to Resources

Current Other Programs

- Layoff Aversion / Business Retention

Proposed Events

- After-hour mixers
- Supporting community events
- Joint events with neighboring Chambers
- Contractors / Restaurants / Health Care expos/events

Proposed Committees

- Member Ambassador
- Fundraising / Revenue / Grants
- Export

Proposed Other Programs

- President Circle program
- Youth programs

10.3. Phase #3: Gather Organizational Intelligence

Description: The Planning Committee participated to complete these worksheets and exercises in preparation for the following organizational assessments.

10.3.1. Force Field Analysis Worksheet

For further instructions, visit <http://www.mindtools.com/rs/ForceField>

The strategic plan is nothing without effective implementation. This activity is an early step to help us implement our plan.

Rationale

- In somewhat technical speak: *The goal of this activity is to set the stage for a successful change effort by identifying, and then modifying, the forces that will support or inhibit our implementation of the strategic plan.*
- At this point, we don't know the contents of the plan, but we know our **situation**, our organization, our history of being able to implement plans, the obstacles and supporting assets, which are 'forces'.
- We want to look at the forces affecting our situation, the planning process, and our implementation of the plan.
- We can use this analysis create the necessary conditions for planned organizational change.

The planning facilitator will compile these analyses from all planning committee members and summarize results. The summarized results will give us a more complete picture of what forces we should impact in order to support the change so that it's more successful.

What is a 'force'?

The forces and strengths are drawn from your personal opinions, drawn from day-to-day experience within the organization, inference, and observation.

Directions

1. Identify the current situation:

The organization is going through a process of planned change, and has a history of not implementing plans. There is currently no strategic plan. No plan guides the organization and there is a history of difficulty to implement plans.

2. Describe the desired situation:

Plan should be inclusive, participatory, and relevant in order to inspire organizational growth. We would like to effectively go through the planning process, as a team. Furthermore, the plan should be implemented.

3. **Identify where the current situation will go if no action is taken:** *We will reinforce the current situation, and make future change efforts less likely to be successful.*
4. **List all the forces driving change toward the desired situation:**
5. **List all the forces resisting change toward the desired situation:**
6. Use your best judgment to identify the forces, consider the following questions:
 - What internal and external forces are in effect?
 - How easy will it be to make the change?
 - Do we have enough time and resources to make it work?
 - What benefit will the change deliver?
 - Discuss and interrogate all of the forces: are they valid? Can they be changed? Which are the critical ones?
7. Allocate a score to each of the forces using a numerical scale e.g. 1=extremely weak and 10=extremely strong
8. Chart the forces by listing (using the strength scale) the driving forces on the left and restraining forces on the right.
9. Determine whether change is viable and progress can occur
10. Discuss how the change can be affected by decreasing the strength of the restraining forces or by increasing the strength of driving forces.
11. Keep in mind that increasing the driving forces or decreasing the restraining forces may increase or decrease other forces or even create new ones.

Forces FOR (supporting) Change	Score	<u>Current Situation:</u> There is no strategic plan: No plan guides the organization and there is a history of difficulty to implement plans.	Score	Forces AGAINST (inhibiting) Change
		<u>Proposed Change:</u> Create a strategic plan: Plan should be inclusive, participatory, and relevant in order to inspire organizational growth.		

10.3.2. Online Poll: Creative Engagement To Select Conference Call Times

Description: The researcher decided to use an online poll, provided through the website 'Doodle.com', to provide all planners an opportunity to voice their opinion as to the most effective time for conference calls. This method was used multiple times throughout the planning process. This style of setting a meeting has numerous benefits when coordinating with a group of people.

DECEMBER 2012		Fri 7		Mon 10		Wed 12		Fri 14	
7 participants		Morning	Afternoon	Morning	Afternoon	Morning	Afternoon	Morning	Afternoon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		✓		✓				✓
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						✓		✓
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		✓						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			✓	✓				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				✓				✓
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		2	3	3	5	2	2	2	4

10.3.3. Planning Committee Conference Call – December, Notes:

Description: The premise of these conference calls was to look at the force field analysis, consider the Chamber’s ability to create planned change, discuss impeding and enhancing forces, and general discussion

Monday, December 10th, 3:-00pm. Attendees include LB, J, KM, AM, and Carter Calhoun.

Friday Dec. 14th, 3:00pm: Attendees: DB, JV, Carter Calhoun.

1. Force Field Analysis discussion

- “Given our current situation, what is achievable? We have to pick things that are achievable. We have to understand our problems, and how to get around them. Does that mean we need to go get a grant, to hire a person, to get around this?”

- “We have had a wide variety of personalities, business experiences, and personal experience.”
- “It is very important as we approach the strategic plan we do it in pieces that are manageable.”

2. **Identify the current situation:**

Are we able to implement plans effectively? There is not yet consensus on this point.

- “The organization is going through a process of planned change, and has a history of not implementing plans. There is currently no strategic plan.”
- “Committees come up with ideas and are actually able to implement.”
- “Planning sessions things ‘fall through the cracks’, lack of help? Not a big staff, wanted to do things, but didn’t have staff. Forces against change. Force for change: clear implementation of change.”

3. **Describe the desired situation:**

*Carter’s Comments: The plan should be inclusive, participatory, and **relevant** in order to inspire organizational growth. We would like to effectively go through the planning process, as a team. Furthermore, the plan should be implemented.*

4. **Identify where the current situation will go if no action is taken:**

Carter’s Comments: We would reinforce the current situation, and make future change efforts less likely to be successful.

- “Activities assembled by the consensus.” When we go to the planning session, affect both help affect what it can be.
- “Consensus based on if we accomplish those intermediate steps what do we go to next.”
- “Number one goal is membership. We have Joeann and Emily – our only Chamber staff. As we bring in members, can we pay Joeann. Lets look at bringing in assistants.”

5. **List all the forces driving change toward the desired situation:**

- “A “unique” chamber – we are not definable in the way that other chambers are definable. Q: how do we get our story out?”
- “Community volunteers very well aligned, business and residential community can be involved.”

6. List all the forces *resisting* change toward the desired situation:

- Don’t have the help
- Membership level, cash flow.
- Not enough members
- Cash flow
- Lack of staff
- Issue with a location – where is Harbor City Harbor Gateway?
- Lack of a discernable community feel -

7. Briefly discuss the upcoming activities and schedule (5 - 10 min)

- Question on our organizational profile: “will we look at size and industry? “ How many are non-profit, for-profit, how many are industrial, etc. 5 or 6 categories, find those groups. “Energy”, DWP – municipal, this might help us – where are we weak?”
- “Looking at what business are HERE, versus what we HAVE. WHY can’t we get ConocoPhillips to give us more money, in relation to other organizations, how do we get more money from these partners.”
- “How come this large company is at this level, ...Why isn’t A at the same as B.... They don’t look at us being KEY to their target area. What is our strategic relationship there.”
- “Potential customers – divide them into target groups...have a conversation with the potential customers on how to bring value. If, say, in the goods movement, how does the chamber bring value...or small accountant.”
- “Bob’s group is one of the most successful for membership drive in several years...**discovering hot buttons.**”

- “We need to rethink, redefine, reform, membership committee role. Find some people who want to be active on the membership committee.”
- “Someone can pick up the phone and close the sale. Focus on lead conversion, moving prospects into membership, vis a vis phone call or lunch. **Peer to peer.** Get together. Have a cup of coffee, get acquainted. There is obligation to the role.”
- “Another benefit has been with CDD/Stella, and Layoff Aversion, and MCS.”
- How are we different than others? Because we are smaller, we are also more intimate – everybody knows everybody better. The “friendly chamber”. How can we build on this.
- The thing that builds retention is **participation**. Find opportunities to participate on manageable and affordable.
- Lead generation (build), Lead conversion (take), Lead retention - (keep)
- *“The purpose of business is not to create a profit, it is to get and retain customers. Marketing doesn’t need to be complicated. It is determining your customer wants and needs and selling at a profit”.*
- “Challenge in facilitating will be to keep people focused, draw them out, broad based participation and input.”

8. Open discussion and suggestions going forward

- “Look at the people within the area, that are not members, that ought to be. How do we show value?”
- Look at their alternatives, look at competitors. i.e. Toyota. Honda. We need the big hitters – we need an automotive – TireCo may be a big target, Herbalife, Coca Cola bottling
- What are the ISSUES – supporting the members issues, attract these businesses with their issues.

10.3.4. *Table Of Contents Planners Guide – External Analysis*



Harbor City Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce

Planners Guide – External Analysis

January 16th 12:00pm

Overview

Today we will conduct the Internal Analysis, comprising of two activities– the Client analysis and the Stakeholder analysis.

Table of Contents

- Strategic Plan – Tentative Schedule of Activities
- Description of the Client Analysis (1 page)
- Basic Methods to Assess Client Needs (1 page)
- **Worksheet: Primary Client Analysis** (2 pages)
- Description of the Stakeholder Analysis (1page)
- **Worksheet: Primary Stakeholder Analysis** (2 pages)

Appendices

- Compiled results from “Worksheet: Plan for Plan – Is Chamber ready for planning?” (completed in December) (2 pages)
- Compiled notes from Planning Committee Conference Calls (calls on December 10th and 14th) (2 pages)
- What is Strategic Planning? (1 page)
- Simple Analogy to Understanding Strategic Planning (1 page)

10.3.5. Consolidated Notes From Internal Organizational Assessment

Description: This assessment was compiled by the researcher, adapted from the Checklist of Nonprofit Management Indicators Greater Twin Cities United Way, Center for Nonprofit Management (2013), and Authenticity Consulting, LLC (find in references). The following assessment was completed with the Planning Committee on December 23rd, 2013. The Planning Committee participated in a thorough evaluation process, comprised of over 200 questions directed at identified internal strengths and weaknesses. Questions were quantified with a response of “Met”, “Needs work”, “not met”, and “Don’t know” from a total sample size varied between 8 and 10 participants. In order to provide concise data, only a limited set of these questions is included here. The questions included below are selected for their relevance to the subsequent planning process, they are selected because at least 4 respondents answered “Needs Work” and/or “Not Met”. The questions are categorized by organizational area, as indicated by the headings. The Planning Committee discussed each section briefly, in order to identify the organizational needs, and clarify questions where a majority of respondents answered “Don’t Know”.

ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE: <i>The bedrock for all leadership activity is contained in these dimensions of organizational effectiveness. It is here that the board and staff should find their guidance for ongoing planning, decision-making and problem solving.</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know
Do the vision and mission exist in the “hearts, minds, and behavior” of the board and staff, and not just in a strategic plan or a plaque hanging on the lobby wall?	2	5	0	1
Does the organization have clearly defined goals and objectives, both strategic and operational, and have clear priorities been established among those goals and objectives?	1	5	2	0
Is the current activity of the board and staff focused on organizational priorities?	0	3	2	2
Are priorities regularly reviewed, and when there are changes, are the people most impacted involved in the change decision?	3	5	0	0

LEGAL

The planning committee was presented with several questions relating to legal filings, taxes, and accordance with regulations.

These questions are omitted because there was no formal tally of responses. Instead, the section was discussed among group, the outcome of the discussion led to the weakness 'enhanced financial reporting needed.

GOVERNANCE (BOARD): <i>The following indicators are in regard to ensuring a high-quality Board of Directors.</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know
c. The Board of Directors acts as governing trustees of the organization, on behalf of the community at large and as contributors, while carrying out the organization's mission and goals. To fully meet this goal, the Board actively participates in an overall strategic planning process. (R)	5	3	0	0
e. The Board members receive regular training about the general responsibilities of any nonprofit governing Board (note that training is not the same as orientation – see next question). (E)	0	3	3	1
f. New Board members are oriented to the organization: the organization's mission, bylaws, policies and programs, as well as their roles and responsibilities as Board members. (E)	2	4	2	1
g. Board organization is documented, with a description of the Board and Board committee responsibilities. (A)	4	3	0	1
h. Each Board member has a Board operations manual. (A)	0	1	6	1
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: <i>There are several key elements involved in organizational structure: How will the work of the organization be organized? To whom will it be distributed? How will the work be coordinated so that it all serves the common purpose? It is within the context of organizational structure that</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know

<i>issues such as roles, responsibilities, authority, and standards get addressed</i>				
Does every individual, board and staff, understand how they fit in the organization and why their contributions are important?	5	4	0	0
Is it clear to board and staff as to how their respective work is supposed to get done? Do they know the appropriate policies and methods to follow?	2	5	0	1
Have standards of performance been established for both board and staff, so that every individual in the organization knows what is expected of them and how their contributions will be measured?	0	4	2	3
Are people (board and staff) working within a set of realistic expectations and a recognition of personal and resource limitations?	5	3	1	0
HUMAN RESOURCES (STAFFING): <i>The following indicators are in regard to ensuring high-quality staffing and supervision.</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know
e. The organization's Board of Directors conducts an annual review/evaluation of its Chief Executive Officer in relationship to a previously determined set of expectations. (R)				***
g. The organization requires employee performance appraisals to be conducted and documented at least annually. (R)				***
This remaining questions of this section were deemed largely irrelevant because there are no paid staff, per se.				

WORKING PROCESSES: <i>This analysis includes consideration of areas such as information flow, planning practices, decision making processes, and control mechanisms.</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know
Is the working environment allowing people to do their best work? Are people getting the information they need to do their jobs?	2	4	1	1
Is daily work planned and purposeful, or does there tend to be a reactive, “firefighting” mentality?	2	4	0	3
Who makes what decisions? How are decisions made?	5	3	0	1
Is problem solving and decision making participative, involving those impacted by the decisions?	8	0	0	0
Are there enough controls in place to guide and monitor ongoing work? Are there too many controls that restrict people’s ability to get work done?	4	3	1	0
Are organizational meetings, both at the board and staff level, effective?	4	4	0	0
HUMAN RESOURCES (VOLUNTEERS): <i>The following indicators are in regard to ensuring high-quality volunteer recruitment and management.</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know
g. The organization does volunteer performance appraisals periodically and communicates to the volunteers how well they are doing, or where additional attention is needed. At the same time, volunteers are requested to review and evaluate their involvement in the organization and the people they work with and suggest areas for improvement. (R)	0	1	3	5

STRATEGIC PLANNING: <i>The following indicators are in regard to ensuring progress toward a clear focus and direction for the organization.</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know
b. The organization frequently evaluates, by soliciting community input, whether its mission and activities provide benefit to the community. (R)	1	4	0	1
g. The Board and staff developed and adopted a written strategic plan to achieve its mission. (E)	0	5	1	1
PROGRAM PLANNING: <i>The following indicators are in regard to ensuring high-quality services and programs.</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know
b. The organization actively informs the public about its programs and services. (A)	5	3	0	0
c. Clients and potential clients have the opportunity to participate in program development. (A)	1	2	0	5
g. Each program has performance indicators to insure that the program meets its goals and objectives. (R)	0	3	0	6
h. Performance indicators are reviewed annually. (R)	0	2	1	5
ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAM EVALUATIONS: <i>The following indicators are in regard to ensuring progress toward goals and high-quality program results.</i>	Met	Needs Work	Not Met	Don't Know

e. Periodically, the organization conducts a comprehensive evaluation of its programs. This evaluation measures program outcomes (impacts on clients). (A)	1	4	1	3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: <i>The following indicators are in regard to ensuring high-quality financial transactions, analysis and management.</i>				
d. The organization prepares financial statements on a budget-versus-actual (comparative basis) to achieve a better understanding of their finances. (R)	3	5	1	1
f. The organization monitors unit costs of programs and services through the documentation of staff time and direct expenses and using a process for allocation of management, general and fundraising expenses. (R)	0	3	0	5
g. The organization prepares cash flow projections. (E)	0	3	1	4
GENERAL FUNDRAISING: <i>The following indicators are in regard to ensuring high-quality fundraising planning and activities.</i>				
There are no clear roles on fundraising, no committees				

10.3.6. *Table Of Contents Planners Guide – Internal Analysis*



Harbor City Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce

Planners Guide – Internal Analysis

›January 23rd 12:00pm

Overview

Today we will conduct the Internal Analysis, comprising of various assessments and checklists. We will then review results from these assessments and last week's External Analysis results to identify the top priorities for a SWOT analysis.

Table of Contents

- Strategic Plan – Tentative Schedule of Activities
- Instructions for the Internal Analysis / SWOT Analysis (1 page)
- **Worksheet: Internal Assessment** (14 pages)
- Description of the SWOT Analysis (1 page)
- **Instructions: List and Rank the Top Strengths and Weaknesses** (1 page)
- **Worksheet: Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis** (1 page)

The following pages correspond to the external analysis

- Abbreviated Notes from the Primary Client Analysis

Appendix

- Members Needs Assessment: Valued Member Survey

10.3.7. *Worksheet: Primary Client Analysis*

Primary clients are the people who you intend to directly benefit from your services now. Verify any assumptions about clients. Also, note that there is a difference between what clients want and what they need. Often, they will come to a service based on what they want (usually in regard how a service is packaged), but they will keep using the service, based on what they need (usually in regard to their well-being).

1. What groups of primary clients do we serve now?

- **Regional area- geography based**
- **Member types/industries:** We need to look at by industry and size, who are our members? Like most chambers, we have a little bit of everything. Go through the chamber directory and classify each by type. Fair share of nonprofit category. We need to understand who our members are – is there any one are that we do well in? Get employee size for our members.
- If we really don't know what brought the members, we will have a hard time finding out if we are servicing them.
- We need to carry the G2R ideology over into the general membership. Is there enough being done for them that they will keep renewing?
- **Membership needs assessment :** It has been about 6 year ago since we did a **membership needs assessment**. It would be more effective through survey monkey – at most 3 questions. Then we can bug them to get it done. **Multiple choice – also with subjective comment area.** A survey would be a good start, diversify the membership list by industry, number of employees, npo vs. profit. **Perhaps offer a free breakfast connection, perhaps offer a shorter or longer survey.** It pulls them in, and gives them a chance to see what we are about. Incentivize - invite them to a Breakfast connection. Locate a sponsor.
- **Survey questions include** What reason did you join? (Networking, Social, new business, etc.), How well is your membership fulfilling this purpose?
- **Invite some to a focus group** – invite them to lunch and ask them for feedback, “you have joined – why?”. Also, utilize the different client groups (industries, geography) to diversify. **Similar** to what Bob is doing now – the focus group is really similar.

For each group of clients: ,What do they want from us now? How do we know?

Nonprofit -

Larger business: e.g. Holiday Inn – good stewardship, HI hosts the events – tangible

benefit., informational resource. Also, because it is the right thing to do.

e.g. – Plains – joined, then recognizing it is the right thing to do. Kaiser and Port of LA – right thing to do. ClearChannel – they want advocacy, support, government.

Public affairs – occasionally have projects in the area and when they need support, they look to get it.

Small business – networking, meet more people, new business, some have social needs being met (Bob Dworkin’s story: Originally, for more customers, but, when experiencing the “good”, that the organization does, it made a compelling case to stay involved, like a rotary.)

Exporters – COO stamp,

Comment: We could make a guess as to our 99 members current interests and needs,

About the ones that left, prepare an exit interview – Joeann mentioned that those who left were not able to participate (did not participate), thus value has not been communicated.

Are we providing what they want? How do we know?

- **Answer: We need a survey, we need to ask? For networking, are we hitting the time of day?** It will be interesting to be told whether we are hitting the mark or not.
- **In terms of tangible benefits – how are we doing?** Government, issues, we know the people.
- **The basic need – communication** – is not being done as effectively as the businesses would want.
- **Repetition** - Direct mail goes in the trash, multiple times. Get a “piece of paper” to the decision maker. What if we placed a promotional material (a metal stand/kiosk / poster board?) in the lobby of the business for one week. One advantage is that this may get through building security.
- **Looking at changes** in the way information is gathered about these businesses. Herbalife is a good example that we cannot get access to the building.
- **Current and prospective** want essentially the same thing, thus, in looking at prospecting clients we learn more about what they want.
- **Participation is key:** If we can’t generate participation – we will not generate renewals. Balqon is an example, could not get them engaged.
- **Networking:** are we providing what they want for networking opportunities? Is the time working? There is a certain part of membership which is also social – people enjoy

socializing. **Idea for networking:** We could alternate the times, breakfast one month, evening the next month.

- The members we have know 1: could find us and 2: wanted to be members

What do they need from us now? (Think in terms of outcomes, that is, changes in their knowledge, skills and/or conditions.)

Bob Gomez responds from the G2R perspective – a lot of people respond with “when are the meetings”, others say “communicate with us about what is going on in the area.”. They want to look at the chamber as the source for this information. Perhaps, few prospects come to us with one specific need or request. Airfayre is probably one of the largest brought in by G2R, they main thing they said was communication. Another case, Pacific Homeworks, they would like to see a contractors event, this has huge potential for the Chamber also, because we could bring in these contractors/tradespeople.

2. Are there new groups of clients that we might serve? If so, what are the groups?

Existing target – geographic target, does not lend itself to spreading outside the area, our own backyard. So many prospects that have not been reached, it may not be feasible to look at a specific type.

e.g. - Restaurateurs – number one interest would be “how o you put customers in my seats?”.

Perhaps, **new** types of events specific to the biz/region – like the Pacific Homeworks contractor’s thing.

Looking for the easy sells. Look for the business that are easily appreciable to the idea of the Chamber.

3. Might we do more in the future for our current groups of clients?

Friendly Chamber is a key point: Chambers have to be conscientious that they are not too insular. People need to see that this is a group that people can be a part of. When we do things amongst ourselves that can be an inclusive thing, make sure we are focusing activities on the ‘outside’ segments. Looking

GENERAL COMMENTS

NOTE: Looking to get an industry breakdown for the region.

- **NOTE: Salesmanship** – spending time on businesses and they don’t join. We do not invest our time without a check. “The only people that get to present projects to the board – you need to be a member”. **Get past the idea that we are a charitable organization.** We need to get members to survive.

- **“Low- hanging fruit”** - Are there enough businesses, in the Gateway, who would have value for being a member, that if we put ourselves in front of them, they may join.
- **Identify the needs of the members.**
- **It is a matter of getting the feet on the street – getting the word out there.**
- **The “Zip Code” issue has long been a trying challenge the Chamber faces.** The Gateway is not denoted by a specific zip code, rather the Gateway assumes zip codes from Torrance and Gardena, which makes it very challenging to develop the Chamber’s identity in these areas. Also, the Gateway area is a ‘political football’, that is not recognized by the politicians as a viable ‘community’.
- **Comment:** If the past is a predictor of the future – the session will talk about the need to grow membership, and events – quarterly commitment for events, they have been reasonably successful, **LEAVE THE EVENTS ALONE** – if we cannot turn our focus 100% to membership growth we are in big trouble.
- **On the events,** if we had all of the volunteers that we need to help put those on, how many would you need?
- 5 or 6 needed for special events, **for those that are not already involved, 3 board members per event, one per year.**
- 15-16 needed for membership growth
- **Another idea for board consideration on commitments:** make the commitment, once per month, become a group of two or three, and go out and make some calls. Commitment goes beyond the word – pick the times, match the commitments to scheduled activities, **put it in your calendar now.** **Is this something we are going to require of board members? This would need to be a board action.**
- **Sales training and support for board members:** To encourage members to “do “sales”, being a tag along would be useful. By doing this, this will help members perform better as the opportunity presents itself in general dealings.
- **Following through:** We can spend plenty of time identifying these things – but none of it gets done.
- **Absolutely critical issue - Get our membership straightened out.** – 2011-12 LOST 27 members. Get the information in order. Membership loss issue and an internal systems issue. We need to look at the membership process – administrative.
- **Using Google Docs for the membership current list** - send and print to Gina, a consistent schedule.

10.3.8. Completed Worksheet: Stakeholder Analysis⁸

The more influence that a group of stakeholders, or an individual stakeholder, might have on your nonprofit, the higher you might rate that stakeholder. Rate the stakeholders with the numbers 1, 2 and 3, with 1 indicating the most influential. (These stakeholders might be considered as secondary clients. Current and future clients are analyzed in “Worksheet 2: Primary Client Analysis.”)

Stakeholder Type	Stakeholder Name	Influence (1 being highest)	Questions to Ask Them	How Might We Ask Them?	How Might We Involve Them in Our Nonprofit?
Past clients			What are their candid impressions of our nonprofit? What are their most important needs now? What might they appreciate from our nonprofit in the future?		
Current funders	Pacific Gateway MCS President Circle	1 1 1	What are their candid impressions of our nonprofit? What are their current priorities in funding? Future priorities? How might we work together in the future?	Ask	Using their service to improve our services
Past funders			What are their candid impressions of our nonprofit? What are their current priorities in funding? Future priorities? How might we work together in the future?		

⁸ Worksheet is copyrighted and provided for reprint courtesy of “Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation”, McNamara, C. (1997). Authenticity Consulting, LLC Minneapolis, MN

Potential funders	LA CDD (Stella) Mayor office		What are their current priorities in funding? Future priorities? How might we work together in the future?		
Volunteers			What are their candid impressions of our nonprofit? Would they help us in the future, and why? How can we help them make an impact on the community?		
Nonprofit service providers	City Council (Ana, Jacob) PORT of LA (Arlie) BizFed, HAIC	1 1 1	What trends do they see coming? What would they suggest for our nonprofit now? How might we work together in the future?	Have them ask Joe	
Suppliers	Governor Office Supervisor Office Congresswoman Waters All public service		What are their candid impressions of our nonprofit? What would they suggest for our nonprofit now? What would they suggest for our nonprofit in the future?		
Community leaders	HC Neighborhood Council Gateway NC		What are their candid impressions of our nonprofit? What trends do they see coming in the community? What community needs might we help to meet? Any other nonprofits that we should talk to?		

10.3.9. List Of Primary Stakeholders:

Description: The planning Committee, through a discussion group, identified the following primary stakeholders.

- All members
- Organizations within the Harbor City and Harbor Gateway
- President’s Circle (Sponsors)
- Several public service agencies and elected officials
- Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network
- Managed Career Solutions
- Los Angeles Community Development Department
- Mayors office
- Los Angeles City Council 15th District
- Port of Los Angeles
- BizFed
- SBACC
- Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce
- Governors Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- County Supervisors Office
- Congresswoman Waters
- Harbor City Neighborhood Council
- Harbor Gateway South Neighborhood Council
- Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council
- Education: LAUSD, LAHC
- Department of Rec and Parks

In order to better identify stakeholders interests, the planning committee directed staff to interview these stakeholders and ask:

- What are their candid impressions of our nonprofit?
- What are their most important needs now? What might they appreciate from our nonprofit in the future?

10.3.10. Chamber Members By Industry

Service	29		
Professional Service	18		
Intl Trade	14	Health Care	6
Nonprofit	12	Industry	6
Retail	9	Restaurant	6
Government	7	Public Affairs	5
		Education	4
		Manufacturing	3
		Hospitality	1
		Real Estate	1

10.3.11. Preliminary List Of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities And Threats

Description: The following lists were generated by the planning committee after having conducted both the internal and external analysis. These are **unordered** lists. The process of ordering the lists follows during the strategic planning retreat, which included the feedback of a wider range of participants.

Strengths (Internal)	Rank / Value
CEO is firmly committed and dedicated, and serves as a volunteer	
Connections to other organizations (political and non-political)	
Good Programming, great events	
Perceived by members and guests a warm and friendly, approachable group	
Board of directors is committed, knowledgeable, passionate	
Small but powerful	
Weaknesses (Internal)	
There are no clear roles on fundraising, no committees. Fundraising is 'membership'.	
Financial reporting: Need more accurate and complete reporting to board.	
No succession or resiliency plan: Not enough capital to compensate an Executive Director.	
Low membership: The focus of the board can be directed towards membership growth.	
Limitations of volunteerism: Board members are volunteers, and can only allot certain time/resources. Uncertainty of this can place strains on activities	

and special events.	
Implementing goals and accountability: The recurring challenge is putting plans into action.	
Opportunities (External)	Rank / Value
Membership growth (High number of prospects within the HC/HG region)	
Political connections, advocacy	
Strengthen networking events/Breakfast Connection: Building attendance and recidivism, get people interested in coming to events with speakers, education, and participation.	
Leadership: Locating board members (to replace outgoing and support existing)	
Exposure: Advancing the usage of social media, publicizing events	
Outreach: Gateway to Resources program, serving as an extensible model for Chamber development and growth, work with more board members.	
Ambassador program: Participation and engagement is key for members, an ambassador program which pairs a board member with a new member can increase member retention.	
Threats (External)	
Financial viability: loss of membership base	
Inertia in the board of directors: Keeping momentum can be a challenge	
Exposure: Struggle with Regional identity issues (“Zip code’ and a “visible community identity”) and overall exposure (many businesses are not aware the chamber exists)	

10.4. Phase #4: Strategic Planning Retreat: Worksheets and Notes

Description: By this stage in the planning process, the participant group has grown to include all members of the board and the executive director. This section includes work completed during the two-day strategic planning retreat (January 25th and 26th, 2013). The planners utilized the findings from previous exercises in order to complete and the SWOT analysis, identify the major goals, and identify strategies for each goal. The planners were provided a **Planning Guide**, comprised of the notes from the prior activities, along with information on strategic planning in general, and suggestions for the retreat's activities.

10.4.1. Example Of "Planners Guide – Table Of Contents"

Description: The following picture is an example of the cover page and table of contents from the Planners Guide, provide to all participants of the planning retreat. Some of the contents of this guide are provided in the following appendices.



10.4.2. *Worksheet: Review And Approve Mission Statement*⁹

The Mission of the Harbor City/Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce is to help businesses grow and prosper by fostering a dynamic partnership between Government, Community and Business and to encourage a healthy and secure environment where all can thrive.

As a group, consider the following questions in regards to the mission statement, does it:

- Clearly communicate the mission to people internal and external to the organization (a strong requirement for a mission statement)? If not, then what changes might be needed to it?
- Succinctly describe the purpose of the organization (strong requirement)
- Succinctly describe the overall type(s) of client served by the nonprofit (strong requirements)
- Provide sufficient focus and direction that members of the Board and staff can reference the mission when making major decisions (strong requirement)
- Succinctly describe the particular need(s) met by the nonprofit (recommended)
- Mention the particular results (new knowledge, skills and/or conditions) that the nonprofit tries to help its clients to achieve (recommended)
- Differentiate the nonprofit from other nonprofits in the area (recommended).
- Convey strong, public image (recommended)
- Mention the communities in which the nonprofit operates (optional)
- Mention any particular strengths and opportunities identified during the situational analysis (optional)
- Stay within any legal requirements of the nonprofit, for example, maintain charitable status, conform to church law, conform to national by-laws, maintain foundation status, etc?

⁹ Worksheet is copyrighted and provided for reprint courtesy of “Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation”, McNamara, C. (1997). Authenticity Consulting, LLC Minneapolis, MN

10.4.3. *Worksheet: Strategic Goals*¹⁰

Complete this worksheet for each strategic goal.

Describe the strategic goal (see checklist below):

How is this goal a strategic goal?

Validate this goal using these criteria:

- Is the description of the goal understandable and explainable?
- Is the goal within the legal charter of the organization?
- Is the goal in accordance to mission, vision and/or values of the nonprofit?
- Does the goal have predictable and acceptable effects on stakeholders?
- Does the goal consider the nonprofit's strengths and opportunities, weaknesses and threats?
- Does the description of the goal convey the level of application (organization, program, etc.)?
- Does the description of the goal convey the type of activities associated with the goal (activities versus outcomes)?
- Does the description of the goal convey timing information (start, stop and/or deadlines)?
- Does the description of the goal convey resource requirements?
- Is achievement of the goal realistic and achievable?
- Does working toward the achievement of the goal have more of an upside than downside?

What is the overall ranking of the goal ("1" is the highest) compared to other strategic goals (if known at this time)?

¹⁰ This worksheet, provided in its original form, was provided in the Planners Guide, it is included here for reference purposes only. Worksheet is copyrighted and provided for reprint courtesy of "Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation", McNamara, C. (1997). Authenticity Consulting, LLC Minneapolis, MN

10.4.4. *Worksheet: Strategies*¹¹

Complete this worksheet for each strategy.

Describe the strategy (see checklist below):

What strategic issue or strategic goal do these strategies primarily apply to?

What challenges might exist in implementing the strategy?

How might those challenges be overcome?

Validate the strategy using these criteria:

- Is the description of the strategy understandable and explainable?
- Is implementation of the strategy within the legal charter of the organization?
- Is the strategy in accordance to mission, vision and/or values of the nonprofit?
- Does the strategy have predictable and acceptable effects on stakeholders?
- Does the strategy consider the nonprofit's strengths and opportunities, weaknesses and threats?
- Does the description of the strategy convey the level of application (organization, program, etc.)?
- Does the description of the strategy convey the type of activities associated with the strategy (activities versus outcomes)?
- Does the description of the strategy convey timing information (start, stop and/or deadlines)?
- Does the description of the strategy convey resource requirements?
- Is implementation of the strategy realistic and achievable?
- Does implementation of the strategy have more of an upside than downside?

¹¹ This worksheet, provided in its original form, was provided in the Planners Guide, it is included here for reference purposes only. Worksheet is copyrighted and provided for reprint courtesy of "Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation", McNamara, C. (1997). Authenticity Consulting, LLC Minneapolis, MN

10.4.5. Worksheet: Your Action Plan¹²

Name: _____

Date: _____

What activities would you be able to do to help the Harbor City / Harbor Gateway Chamber fulfill its mission in 2013? Check off what applies and submit this sheet to the facilitator:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Solicit potential donors/sponsors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conduct grant search for potential grants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Print and collate Sponsor packets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chair a committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assist in planning a major event
<input type="checkbox"/>	Invite guests to events
<input type="checkbox"/>	Serve as a new member mentor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make phone calls to Chamber members
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forward our e-newsletter to your colleagues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post comments on website postings
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expand Chamber presence on Social Media
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend the BizFed meetings
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attend Neighborhood Council or other meetings on behalf of HCHG Chamber
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assist in strategic planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assist in sponsor acknowledgements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be an event greeter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Solicit in-kind gifts to the Chamber (eg: water, food, venue)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Donate items to the Chamber office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make a personal financial contribution to HCHG Chamber
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Which Committees would you be interested in serving on?

How many hours per month (inclusive of board and committee meetings) will you provide for the Chamber?

What is the main goal you would like to see the Chamber accomplish in 2013?

¹² This worksheet, developed by the researcher and the Executive Director, is inspired from the researcher’s personal experience in the nonprofit sector. The worksheet was distributed to each board member.

10.4.6. Strategic Planning Retreat Notes – Friday, January 25th

Facilitator: LB

Participants: JV, Carter Calhoun, LB, PS, DB, RS, BG, CJ, DF, BD, KM, M, LM, ES, JN

3:20pm: Commence

3:30pm: Icebreaker

I. Logo and Banner Review

- a. Need consistency in the text under the logo – font used in lower left should be identical to the font used in the lower right. It should also match the font, capitalization and size under the banner.

II. Review and approve the mission statement - Ten items

- a. Suggest reorder of items to follow the priority, with business being the first and also follows the consistency of the logo. Mission statement - reorder “business” and “Government” to read “...fostering a dynamic partnership between Business, Community, and Government”

III. Organizational Profile review

- a. Discussion of the Chamber history and background. The Organizational Profile was reviewed, attention placed to “Trends that Planners should know about”.

IV. Stakeholder and client analysis review

V. Internal analysis review

- a. Pg. 14 - Need to have a review process of the executive director
- b. Pg. 15 – Discussion on Program Planning. Positive feedback on companies that would be willing to sponsor and pay to talk. In respects to Program Planning letter ‘c’, other chambers give clients the opportunity to sponsor events and brand their name.
- c. Organizational evaluations – could have a comment card left on the tables. It is important to collect program evaluations.
- d. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT – Need to get financial team together to create a better understanding and recording system.
- e. Looking at operational issues, member lists, updating and keeping all parties informed. Carter and JV use Google Docs, which doesn’t link into the QB system. Anybody in the organization can be provided access to Google Docs. Technology should make the system automated so that new members don’t fall through the cracks.
- f. GENERAL FUNDRAISING: No strategy to develop our income sources.

10.4.7. SWOT Analysis Review – Rank And Order

Opportunities (External)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7	TOTAL
Membership growth (High number of prospects within the HC/HG region)	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	15
Political connections, advocacy	0	4	0	4	1	1	2	49
Strengthen networking events/Breakfast Connection: Building attendance and recidivism, get people interested in coming to events with speakers, education, and participation.	0	2	1	4	2	0	3	54
Leadership: Locating board members (to replace outgoing and support existing)	0	0	1	2	3	3	3	65
Exposure: Advancing the usage of social media, publicizing events	0	2	1	1	0	5	3	62
Outreach: Gateway to Resources program, serving as an extensible model for Chamber development and growth, work with more board members.	2	1	6	1	1	1	0	37
Ambassador program: Participation and engagement is key for members, an ambassador program which pairs a board member with a new member can increase member retention.	0	2	2	0	4	2	2	56
Threats (External)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5			TOTAL
Financial viability: loss of membership base	6	6	0	0	0			18
Inertia in the board of directors: Keeping momentum can be a challenge	2	0	4	5	1			29
Exposure: Struggle with Regional identity issues ('Zip code' and a "visible community identity") and overall exposure (many businesses are not aware the chamber exists)	4	5	3	0	0			23

Strategic Plan for the Harbor City/Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce: 2013-2015

Competition	0	0	3	3	6			51
Unexpected leadership change	1	1	2	4	4			45

Strengths (Internal)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total
CEO is firmly committed and dedicated, and serves as a volunteer	11	1	0	0	0	0	13
Connections to other organizations (political and non-political)	0	6	2	2	1	1	37
Good Programming, great events	0	0	3	2	5	2	54
Perceived by members and guests a warm and friendly, approachable group	1	0	3	0	3	5	52
Board of directors is committed, knowledgeable, passionate	0	2	3	5	1	1	44
Small but powerful	0	3	1	3	2	3	49
Weaknesses (Internal)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total
There are no clear roles on board member responsibilities, fundraising, no committees.	3	2	2	4	1	0	34
Financial reporting: Need more accurate and complete reporting to board.	0	1	2	2	0	7	58
No succession or resiliency plan: Not enough capital to compensate an executive director.	2	4	2	1	2	1	36
Low membership: The focus of the board can/should be directed towards membership growth.	5	2	3	2	0	0	26
Limitations of volunteerism: Board members are volunteers, and can only allot certain time/resources. Uncertainty of this can place strains on activities and special events.	1	2	3	1	2	3	46
Implementing goals and accountability: The recurring challenge is putting plans into action.	1	1	0	3	5	1	46

Discussion – reading the unordered list to the group and asking the group if there any others to add or if disagreement exists.

- Board members don't know what their responsibilities are as an active board member. That could be added under Opportunities #1 "There are no clear roles under general board member responsibilities."
- External Threats: Add competition, Unexpected leadership changes.
- External Opportunities: Outreach can be changed, board members. Rank order...

10.4.8. Strategic Planning Retreat Notes – Saturday, January 26th

Facilitator: LB

Participants: JV, Carter Calhoun, PSt, DB, RS, BG, DF, BD, KM, LM, ES, JN, MW, WJ, ED

Reasons you joined?, Why you are still a member?

Listed in no particular order

- Advocacy, a way to be involved in other political advocacy groups
- Networking, marketing business
- Opportunity to be involved in community, ability to make a difference / influence
- Long term commitments and involvement works
- Responsibility as a business owner
- Friendly members, feeling of family atmosphere, smaller more intimate Chamber
- Educational value
- Permits and other support
- Joeann reached out
- Requirement to reach out to business community
- Job description/ type of business requires Chamber membership
- The pleasure and benefits of sitting on the board
- Stay involved because of relationships created

Individual Responses:

- DF: Joined for more business, networking. Lots of growth potential,
- DB: It is being a good corporate citizen, plus, Joeann.
- ED: Member for over 20 years, leave and then bounce back! Tie in to LA City Council. Amazed that, whoever she talks to, they all know Joeann. Also, she has seen the organization go up and down, but the director is steadfast.
- ES: Joined to network and find out who the community members are. Enjoyed finding out how the board works as a team, interested in growing with.
- JN: Enjoys making long term commitments.
- LM: Joined for business, got more and more involved. Liked how the group was a more inviting group. Learned so much, from the events, from the board, this is her main priority, more business is a bonus. Excellent educational value.
- RS: Needed the Chamber for what he does. It is more apparent overseas the value. He came in to get COO endorsement. It is prestige to be on a Board, carries a lot of weight. And he enjoys being here!
- WJ: Won has only his wife and daughter with him in the states. Not only business, feel like these are his friends and family.

- PS: Starting with a contract to provide services to SP and Wilmington. Once found the Chamber to be a valuable asset to the whole region he decided to focus services to the area. This is the way we are able to outreach to the business community to provide services.
- BG: Began getting interested in 'non-traditional' ways to build his business. Joined to get more business, but after joining, his interest has expanded and changed completely. Wants to bridge the gap between the business world and political world, and help these businesses.
- MW: Was an intern for former Councilman Svornich, needed to get the feel of the business community. This is where he got his start, he has an emotional basis, and would not leave Joeann.
- KM: Part of her charge of business. But being involved, really getting to see how things work. She is fascinated by the role of the chamber, and getting to learn how things come together at the grass roots level. Sitting on the board is a wonderful experience. It shows her that there are so many that are interested in coming together to make things work.
- BD: So many of the same thoughts of KM. The first goal is networking. Stay for the mission. Stay for finding out how to help people. Seeing more about politics and solidifying his position: *not* to be a politician!
- LB: He believes that we 'bat way more than our weight' in political influence and advocacy, which is crucial because advocacy is his business. Likewise, this was a great place to get involved in the other organizations (BizFed, SBACC). The Chamber has a great reputation across Southern California. Also, this is a more family style board. He stays involved because of the relationships and friendships, especially Joeann. His company is a member of 9 chambers, LB actively participates in only two Chambers, this being the most effective chamber that he can belong to.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION: **The real problem of implementing plans.** Execution, execution, execution, commitment, commitment, commitment, accountability, accountability, accountability. We have never done it! We come together to come up with a plan, but we have never executed. DB made a commitment to participate in the planning sessions, at no less a sacrifice than many of the board members. If we don't make this commitment, we wont be here next year to do this work, because we wont be in business.

Membership Report: KM's report – what we lost/gained – Goal was to get an idea of what the numbers were in a given year, so they can be rolled over to the new year and get a fix on what income would be. Numbers show who stayed, who dropped out. Membership is driven by all the elements described above. Study showed that we are not getting the data from the book keeper. When it comes they have to figure out what numbers come from what. They were constantly trying to catch up. It also impacted other committees. Membership has to be driven by the figures that come from the book keeper – the bottom line. In one of the best membership drives we have ever had, we still lost net, because we didn't retain members. We are at a very low level of membership right now.

10.4.9. Data Table – List Of Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals	1	2	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	Score	RANK
Increase Membership	8	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	22	1
Membership Retention	0	4	4	0	0	2	2	0	1	55	4
Exposure	2	3	0	5	1	1	1	0	0	46	3
Increase Revenue and Profit	3	1	4	2	1	2	0	0	0	42	2
Board dev/ effectiveness/accountability	0	0	0	2	4	3	4	0	0	74	5
Succession Plan	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	3	5	89	7
Create a Committee Structure	0	0	1	1	4	3	0	3	1	78	6
Improve Financial Reporting	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	4	2	91	9
Maintaining Connections	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	3	4	89	7

10.4.10. Key Strategies Supporting The Goals

Description: In the latter half of the planning retreat, the Board reviewed the goals and looked to create specific strategies to achieve each goal. The board also decided to consolidate goals 5 through 9 into the goal Board development/ effectiveness/accountability. _____

#1) INCREASE MEMBERSHIP

- Gateway to Resources program
 - Host mini events/coffee carts at local businesses
- Ambassador program
 - First 3 board members to show up at an event are made ambassadors
 - For non-members, to welcome them and invite them to join
 - For members, to welcome them and educate them, etc.
- Event content, promotion and communication
 - Breakfast connection – bring people in with good speakers providing, education, value
 - Develop valuable programs and market them, promote them
 - Being able to sell the “why” from the attendees standpoint
- New Member Incentives
 - Free food, other ideas
- Membership Committee
- Industry focus
 - Opportunity to reach out to a sector that we are not reaching out to
- Email / Social media
- Membership Drive, focused effort to get new members
- Paid membership salesperson
- Board quota, members bring in members

#2) INCREASE REVENUE / PROFIT

- Grants
- Event sponsorship / revenue
- Membership rates / event fees
- Cost of events
- New types of events
- Signature events
- Export expo
- Presentation policies
- when we provide support and services to companies and developers
- Affinity program
- Member to member with kickback

#3) EXPOSURE

- Email and social media piggybacking
- Develop a hot spot (wifi)
- Video/ cable
- Offsite events
- Community / volunteer project
- After hours events
- Speakers Bureau
- Member windows stickers, member IDs

#4) MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

- Ambassador program
- Renewal communication strategy
- Lost members / exit interview: Modify form for those who do not renew
- Members needs analysis
- Track member participation / Attract new members to attend
- Up the 'FUN' on events
- Tactic: raffle/door prizes
- Sales opportunity for members
- Monthly contact members
- Member spotlight (in e-newsletter)

#5) IMPROVE BOARD OPERATIONS, DEVELOPMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY

(Combining the goals of: **Board development/ effectiveness/accountability / committee structure, Succession Plan, Maintaining Connections, Improve Financial Reporting**)

- Look at committee structures
- Succession planning
- Financial reporting
- Maintaining connections
- Government affairs meetings
- Quarterly goals, hold ourselves accountable

COMMITTEES

Discussion on committee structure. All committees should focus on member development.

- Executive
- Operations
- Membership
 - Ambassadors
- Gateway to Resources
- Economic Development
- Special Events
- Legislative Affairs

10.5. Phase #5: Post Retreat Planning Activities and Notes

10.5.1. *The Final Steps In The Strategic Plan*

Description: *The following introduction was provided to the board of directors at the February 19th board of directors meeting.*

At this point, each of you has made significant contributions to the strategic planning process. To date, you have:

- Performed an external and internal assessment of the organization
- Created a prioritized list of the most important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Identified and ranked the most important strategic goals
- Identified the most important strategies for each goal.
- Complete your personal action plan to reach organizational goals
-

You are *almost finished* with the planning process. The final planning activities include:

Activity #1) Create SMART Goals

Turn each goal into a SMART Goal. Discussion group, about 30 minutes required.

Activity #2) Finalize strategies

Finalize list of strategies for each goal, decide who is responsible. Discussion group, about 30 minutes required.

Activity #3) Identify objectives for each strategy

Create objectives that detail how each strategy is being carried out. Done in committees, discussion group format. About 30 minutes, *per goal*, required.

10.5.2. *Completed Worksheet: Create SMART Goals*

Description: The following worksheet was provided to the board of directors at the February 19th board of directors meeting. The SMART goals below were identified during by discussion group at this meeting.

Objective: Expand the goals into SMART goals, which are:

- S – Specific
- M- Measurable
- A – Achievable
- R – Realistic
- T- Time-specific

SMART Goal #1) Increase membership to 130 members by December 31, 2013

Goal #1) Increase membership

Discussion on what is realistic, what has happened last year.

SMART Goal #2) Break even for fiscal year 2013

Goal #2) Increase Revenue / Profit

Joeann is asked to give an average revenue and expenses per year. She claims \$35-\$50 (avg. \$45K). Currently, the organization is at negative cash flow.

SMART Goal #3): By march 31st, implement a community based marketing/branding program that generates positive impressions / associations for the chamber.

Goal #3) Exposure

Think “Wall Street Journal moments”. Push one event per month using most of the strategies, look at exposure. Find out how to brand ourselves better. Create the marketing plan for the rest of the year. Implement a community marketing based branding program that generates positive exposure by March 31st, 2013. “Create an ongoing series of wall street journal moments”.

SMART Goal #4): Retain at least 90% current membership through to 2014.

Goal #4) Membership Retention

We are going to have a normal turnover. Retain at least 90%

SMART Goal #5): *not identified*

Goal #5) Improve Board Operations, Development, Accountability

10.5.3. *Worksheet: Finalize The Strategies For Each Goal*

Description:

Objective: Create a final list of strategies for each goal

- Look for duplicate/repeated strategies (e.g. – ‘Ambassador program’ in Goal #1 and Goal #4, ‘social media’ in Goal #1 and Goal #3).
- Look for strategies that don’t belong (e.g. – they are not clearly ‘strategic’ or they more resemble objectives)
- Identify the committee(s) responsible for the goals and strategies

GOAL #1) INCREASE MEMBERSHIP

- Gateway to Resources program
 - Host mini events/coffee carts at local businesses
- Ambassador program
 - First 3 board members to show up at an event are made ambassadors
 - For non-members, to welcome them and invite them to join
 - For members, to welcome them and educate them, etc.
- Event content, promotion and communication
 - Breakfast connection – bring people in with good speakers providing, education, value
 - Develop valuable programs and market them, promote them
 - Being able to sell the “why” from the attendees standpoint
- New Member Incentives
 - Free food, other ideas
- Membership Committee
- Industry focus
 - Opportunity to reach out to a sector that we are not reaching out to
- Email / Social media
- Membership Drive, focused effort to get new members
- Paid membership salesperson
- Board quota, members bring in members

GOAL #2) INCREASE REVENUE / PROFIT

- Grants
- Event sponsorship / revenue
- Membership rates / event fees
- Cost of events
- New types of events

- Signature events
- Export expo
- Presentation policies
 - when we provide support and services to companies and developers
- Affinity program
 - Member to member with kickback

GOAL #3) EXPOSURE

- Email and social media piggybacking
- Develop a hot spot (wifi)
- Video/ cable
- Offsite events
- Community / volunteer project
- After hours events
- Speakers Bureau
- Member windows stickers, member IDs

GOAL #4) MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

- Ambassador program
- Renewal communication strategy
- Lost members / exit interview: Modify form for those who do not renew
- Members needs analysis
- Track member participation / Attract new members to attend
- Up the 'FUN' on events
- Tactic: raffle/door prizes
- Sales opportunity for members
- Monthly contact members
- Member spotlight (in e-newsletter)

GOAL #5) IMPROVE BOARD OPERATIONS, DEVELOPMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY

(Board development/ effectiveness/accountability / committee structure, Succession Plan, Maintaining Connections, Improve Financial Reporting, Board Development / Accountability)

- Look at committee structures
- Succession planning
- Financial reporting
- Maintaining connections
- Government affairs meetings
- Quarterly goals, hold ourselves accountable

10.5.4. *Worksheet: Action Planning*

Complete the Strategies and Action Plans

During the last board meeting, the board created SMART goals and directed the work of these goals to the various chamber committees.

At this stage, the Membership committee should look carefully at the **strategies** that have been identified for Goals #1 and #3, identify with as much specificity as possible:

- Is this list of strategies complete?
- Are there any others to be included, or removed?
- Which strategies should be focused first?
- What are a few specific activities to be done for each strategy?
- Identify how many 'man-hours' should be devoted to each strategy?
- Set some objective markers to measure against.

This process will be the foundation of an action plan. The Membership Committee can then present this information to the board. At each successive board meeting the membership committee report will discuss what progress has been made in each strategy.

This will help the Chamber accomplish goals #1, #3, and #5. #1 being related to member growth, #3 being related to a marketing/branding plan, and #5 being related to board accountability.

Action planning specifies who will do what and by when in order to implement each strategy. Complete this worksheet for each strategy, identifying actions to implement that strategy. The "Status and Date" column can be used to record when the plan was last monitored and the status of implementation. The format of the following worksheet might be helpful to you. Complete this worksheet for each strategy.

Actions for Strategy #	Date of Completion	Responsibility	Status and Date

10.6. Supplemental Resources

10.6.1. Member Needs Assessment

Description: *The planning committee identified the need to collect information on the organization's members in order to better plan for the future. Planners worked with the researcher to create the following survey. This survey was selected by the planning committee in order to distribute to the Chamber's membership body.* _____

Valued Member Survey

In order to better serve you, the Board of Directors would like you to fill out the following short survey so we can better provide the services and programs that you desire. First, we would like to ask you about your business:

Organization Name

Optional, leave this blank to complete an anonymous survey

Are you a

For-profit Not-for-profit

What industry are you in?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Retail | <input type="radio"/> Energy |
| <input type="radio"/> Construction, Engineering,
Architecture | <input type="radio"/> Health Care |
| <input type="radio"/> Public Relations, Marketing,
Advertising, Printing | <input type="radio"/> Professional Service (e.g. Attorney,
CPA) |
| <input type="radio"/> Food/Hospitality | <input type="radio"/> Government |
| <input type="radio"/> Manufacturing | <input type="radio"/> Telecomm/Web/Internet |
| <input type="radio"/> Logistics | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |

How many years has your business been in operation?

0-1 1-5 5-10 10+

How many employees does your business have?

1 2-5 5-20 25-100 100+

Are you planning to add or reduce your workforce in the next 12 months?

Add Reduce No change expected

Next, we would like to see how we have been addressing your needs as a chamber member.

What are the main reasons you joined the chamber?

Select all that apply

- Networking
- Advocacy
- Savings and discounts
- Being a part of a social group
- The 'right thing to do'
- Marketing and advertising
- Other, _____

How effectively have we met your expectations in providing these services?

- Very well
- Acceptable
- Below my expectations
- Not at all

Comments: _____

What is(are) the primary reason(s) you continue to be a member?

What can we do better?

Lastly, we want to see if the time and content of our programming is serving your needs:

Our current programming consists of monthly Breakfast Connections and quarterly lunch programs based around special topics (Tribute to the Military, Installation of Officers, Tribute to Education, Legislative Lunch) How often do you attend the breakfast connections?

- Regularly
- Sometimes
- Never

If you answered never, why?

- Too early
- Working/busy
- Not interested in topics
- Other (_____)

Which programming would you be interested in?

- Networking Mixer- No speakers
- Networking Mixer w speakers
- Dinner w Speaker

Would information on the following resources be useful for your organization?

- Financing, Loans, Lines of Credit
- Employee training and/or recruitment
- Permits, Licenses, and/or Recruitment
- Business planning
- Employee safety
- Marketing
- Business counseling
- Entrepreneurial information
- Labor market information
- Tax credit information

Do you have any further comments, suggestions, or feedback?

10.6.2. Compiled Action Plans

Description: A the planning retreat, the board members were asked to complete the “Action Plan” worksheet in order to identify who would be suited to which task, as well as get a clear idea of how much time the organization might expect from board members.. The compiled results have been stripped of personally identifiable information and provided here.

Would you be able to....	# of Respondents
Solicit potential donors/sponsors	2
Conduct grant search for potential grants	1
Print and collate Sponsor packets	3
Chair a committee	7
Assist in planning a major event	9
Invite guests to events	8
Serve as a new member mentor	7
Make phone calls to Chamber members	9
Forward our e-newsletter to your colleagues	8
Post comments on website postings	3
Expand Chamber presence on Social Media	3
Attend the BizFed meetings	2
Attend Neighborhood Council or other meetings on behalf of HCHG Chamber	2
Assist in strategic planning	9
Assist in sponsor acknowledgements	1
Be an event greeter	7
Solicit in-kind gifts to the Chamber (eg: water, food, venue)	3
Donate items to the Chamber office	5
Make a personal financial contribution to HCHG Chamber	0

10.6.3. Schedule Of Activities - Actual

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Date / Notes</u>
Establish readiness for planning	Meeting with ED and President, <i>Completed Worksheets 1.1 – 1.10 with ED and President early November meeting.</i>
Planning Conference Call	Monday, December 10th, 2012 3:00pm.
Planning Conference Call	Friday, December 14th, 2013 3:00pm.
External Analysis	Wednesday, January 16th, 2013 12pm
Internal Analysis	Wednesday, January 23rd, 2013 12pm
Organizational Analysis	Joeann and Carter, January 20th, 2013
Planning Session	January 25th and 26th, 2013

10.6.4. Participant Consent Form



Participant Consent Form

Strategic marketing plan for the Harbor City Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Strategic marketing plan for the Harbor City Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce* that is being conducted by Carter Calhoun.

Carter Calhoun is a graduate student in the department of public administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by email at carter@c3co.org and phone at (310) 978-5704.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Community Economic Development. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Budd Hall. You may contact my supervisor by email at bhall@uvic.ca and phone at (250) 721-8062.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to develop a strategic plan for the Harbor City Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce (client). The plan will identify and detail development opportunities in organizational areas including governance, leadership, marketing, outreach, human resources, internal systems and procedures, and other areas. The intent of the strategic plan will be to organize priorities and activities, to improve organizational capabilities, to plan for the next few years, to pursue specific strategies to achieve organizational goals, and other goals, as primary research will identify.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it expands understanding of the nonprofit sector and directly benefits a vital community-based organization. The nonprofit sector is undergoing rapid and unpredictable external changes. This project will utilize research to create a practical strategic plan that is tailored to the specific circumstances of the client. In so doing, this research may be utilized for the benefit of the client, as well as other nonprofit organizations.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are directly affiliated with the client, or have been identified by the client as a valuable participant to this study.

What is involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will vary, depending upon your research group.

Research group 1 participants include members of the Board of Directors of the Harbor City Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce. Participation will require between 15 to 20 hours, over a period of 2 to 3 months. The research will include group participation, surveys, and activities related to strategic planning and organizational development. Participation will take place at the client location, 1400 240th St., Harbor City, CA 90710.

Research group 2 participants are not directly affiliated with the Harbor City Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce. Participation will require between 2 to 5 hours. The research will include interviews and surveys. Participation can take place at a location of the participant's choosing.

For both research groups, audio recordings, and written notes, will be collected. A transcription will be made.

Please be advised that information about you that is gathered for this research study may include personally identifiable information and uses an online program located in the U.S. As such, there is a possibility that information about you may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act.

Inconvenience and Ongoing Consent

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including loss of your time during your work hours. You will be requested to participate in several activities. Participation in each activity will not be required in order for the researcher to obtain a complete data set. As such, your participation will be solely at your discretion. At each point of contact with the researcher, you will be asked if you wish to continue to participate.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include supporting the ongoing growth and development of the client organization, supporting the growth and development of the business and community constituents of Harbor City and Harbor Gateway, and increasing the state of knowledge in regards to nonprofit sector strategic planning and organizational development.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. When linked to group data (e.g. group interviews), your data will be used in summarized form with no identifying information. If you decide to withdraw from the study, your data will be used in the analysis if you agree to this. You will be asked if you wish for your data results to remain in the study. If you consent, you will do so in writing.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have an existing relationship to potential participants, especially in the service of the client as a contractor and service provider. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken: You may contact the research supervisor anonymously to report any situation of coercion or perceived coercion. Furthermore, you may voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time with no consequence.

Anonymity

You will not be anonymous in either the collection of the data or the dissemination of results. The primary reason your anonymity cannot be assured is due to the fact that your identity will be known to the researcher. Personally identifiable information will NOT be used in the research report, however, your personally identifiable

information will be stored in electronic data in the researcher's possession until 6 months after the conclusion of the study.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality cannot be assured during the data collection phase of research due to the nature of the research design, which invites group participation. While participating in a group, your responses will be public to other participants and observers of the group. Furthermore, the nature and size of the sample from which participants are drawn makes it possible to identify individual participants. Furthermore, the procedures for recruiting or selecting participants may compromise the confidentiality of participants.

However, your identity, data, and personal information will be held confidential in the reporting of findings, dissemination of data, and storage of data after the study is complete. You may waive certain rights to confidentiality by providing your initials in the respective *Waiving Confidentiality* section below.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others by a) dissemination to the client organization in print and digital editions and b) published online at the University of Victoria website as a master project.

Disposal of Data

Data will be kept exclusively on the researcher's laptop computer and backup hard disk. Data will be password secured and data-encrypted. Data from this study will be disposed of after the study has been accepted by the research institution. This is expected to occur within 18 months after data has been collected. Data will be destroyed no later than 18 months after it was collected. Electronic files will be erased and paper copies will be shredded.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher, Carter Calhoun by email at carter@c3co.org and phone at (310) 978-5704; or the research supervisor, Dr. Budd Hall, by email at bhall@uvic.ca and phone at (250) 721-8062. In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.