BLUE DOOR consulting

Wisconsin Association of PEG Channels

Strategic Planning Session & Recommendations

Facilitated by Blue Door Consulting, Heidi Strand Snr. Consultant

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Overview

The WAPC has a strong working board of directors that has been the backbone of the organization's success and growth. Due to this success, the board members have continually taken on additional responsibilities to the point that these responsibilities are greater than the members are willing or able to manage. It became imperative that the WAPC board seek answers to the organization's long-term future and the realistic responsibilities of the board itself.

The WAPC's board voted to hold a strategic planning session to discuss and plan the future steps for the WAPC and its membership. Blue Door Consulting was contracted to prepare, facilitate and recap the planning session, scheduled for January 16th and 17th, 2004 in Wisconsin Dells.

The planning session began with a S.W.O.T. Analysis to dissect the WAPC's issues and challenges. The identified issues were reviewed and core values were identified. These core values the foundation for the organization's new mission and vision statements.

Following the construction of the mission and vision statements, the board was relegated to group exercises that would become the foundation of discussion for potential goals and organizational structure. The group exercises proved to be a significant source of possible directions and ideas; it therefore became necessary to clarify realistic directions and prioritize strategies.

Concluding the prioritization and financial assessment, the WAPC board chose to develop a more involved committee-based organization with the goal of hiring an Executive Director in the future.

The contents, notes and basic observations of the planning session follow, along with preliminary one and three year goal recommendations for the WAPC board.

S.W.O.T Analysis

A S.W.O.T Analysis was the first phase in a day and a half strategic planning session for the board of the Wisconsin Association of PEG Channels. The board was split into two groups, purple and orange, that worked simultaneously throughout the planning session, contributing different perspectives when the full board convened.

Strengths

- Membership – *a significant number of Wisconsin stations are current members*

- Networking – *members have a positive comfort level in requesting help and information*
- E-group – *efficient and cost-effective networking tool*
- $10,000 - *money in the bank; growth in fund*
- Webmaster - *J. Quirk*
- Station diversity – *size; variety of resources; variety in cities*
- Good reputation - *internal and external (reflective of city government)*
- Bicycling programs – *good networking/resource tool*
- Conferences & video festival
- Significant video awards
- Quality of individual membership

Weaknesses

- Recruitment - *no process in place*
- Cost of membership – *too expensive?*
- Lack of volunteers - *small board; board-driven committees*
- WAPC brand – *who are we?; difficult name*
- Franchise challenges - *affects funding; WAPC has limited support in this circumstance*
- Communication - *distance; lack of time; needing survey of membership*
- Staff – *lack of someone dedicated to the logistics, funding and development of the WAPC besides board members*
- Website – *further develop to be a better resource*
- Variety/diversity – *less attractive to join for education or government-only stations*
- Variety of sizes – *offer different challenges; offer different resources*
- Non tax-- *fundraising limitations*

Opportunities

- $10,000 in the bank
- Pooling resources – *PSA's; programming; shared outsourcing*
- Website – *under utilized; requires timely maintenance*
- Newsletter – *non-existent; requires maintenance*
- New Membership – *potential new membership categories; make new members feel more comfortable through an orientation process; encourage members to help*
- Wisconsin Eye – *WAPC potential partner; paid resource*
- Niche marketing – *utilize cable in local marketing; local communities; ability to cater to a community*

- Staff – *need someone to handle logistics; conferences; recruitment; communication*
- Website – *development of the tool as an information resource*
- Newsletter & e-news – *could be an important communication tool*
- Recruitment – *need to increase educational station memberships*
- Develop a WAPC tag
- Awareness of formula in the creation of PEG access; can be a marketing resource

Threats

- Video festival – *awarding process causes contention and hurt feelings; too big; too much to organize*
- Wisconsin Eye – *cable may utilize access channels for Wisconsin Eye; take away stations' thunder*
- Court challenges to franchises – *undermines membership & funding*
- Satellites - *don't have to provide PEG channels*
- Funding – *budget cuts; potential membership loss*
- Board burnout – *need to expand board; delegate responsibilities*

Core Values

Through the S.W.O.T. Analysis, it became evident that there were core issues underlying the identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These core elements would become the foundation for the mission and vision statements.

- Membership
- Networking
- Diversity
- Comminication
- Funding
- Resource

Mission Statement

The Wisconsin Association of PEG Channels provides networking and resources that support and promote Wisconsin's diverse PEG access community.

Vision Ideals & Statement

- Strong active and diverse membership
- United
- Financially secure

- Share information and resources internally
- Growth of PEG access community
- Representation of all channels
- Growth of membership
- Promote and inform citizenry
- Strengthen communities

The Wisconsin Association of PEG Channels will be an involved, growing and diverse membership that strengthens the value of Wisconsin PEG access channels and enriches communities across the state.

Role Playing Facilitation Notes

The board was separated in order to role-play a panel discussion scenario that would help facilitate goal setting later in the day. One group acted as "futurists" in the PEG channel industry. The futurists were knowledgeable of the access channel trends, Wisconsin's issues and WAPC's direction. The other group acted as "informed stakeholders," including station general managers, city council people, volunteers, etc. The informed stakeholders asked questions of the futurists to issues and concerns relevant to their personal characters.

The exercise offered insight into how stakeholders may perceive changes and decisions within WAPC, as well as bringing to light realistic goals and objectives for the board.

Note Highlights From The Exercise

- Staff would help with the communication and logistic issues the WAPC is facing.
- Offer shared station case studies as a resource.
- Staff/board needs to communicate benefits.
- Seek corporate sponsorship; may be easier if WAPC was 501(c)3 status.
- Develop relationships with city clerks and school administration offices.
- Use the e-group/web site to provide resource tools, such as policies and station procedures.
- Develop First Amendment-related workshops or policies for stations to refer to.
- Organize regional meetings and regional leadership.
- Mail directories to all stations and include city demographics for comparison.
- Track membership recruitment and retention.
- Reward volunteers.
- Seek organizational help for the video festival.
- Increase membership participation.

- Make WAPC needs known to its membership and ask for resources.
- Create a newsletter and solicit paid advertising.
- Have volunteers be project-based versus ongoing to minimize burnout.
- Research a grant writer.
- Evaluate current budgetary expenditures and determine if reallocations are feasible.

Funding/Budget Exercise

Following the role-playing exercise, the group reviewed the exercise discussions and began to brainstorm goals and objectives. These goals and objectives led to the facilitator categorizing the goals into potential committees for further examination. Four committees were assigned with two board members comprising each committee.

Committee Assignments

- Executive Director
- Marketing/Volunteer
- Communications
- Funding/Financial

The committees reported their thoughts to the entire group and at that time it became apparent that the Executive Director's role was to help coordinate the committees and act as the logistics specialist for WAPC. The committee members had assigned a significant amount of work for each committee, with some tasks overlapping other committee objectives.

In order to determine the next step, it was necessary to analyze the feasibility and expense of the Executive Director position. The groups were again split – one to review new revenue possibilities and the other to review possible budgetary reallocations or savings. The exercise was to accurately determine if an Executive Director was fiscally possible. The outcome of the exercise would lead the WAPC to decisions regarding what the board wanted to achieve for the future and how that should best be accomplished with the current resources.

New Revenue Possibilities

Increase by 5 new members	$800-$1000
Corporate sponsorship	$750-$1500
Ad revenue	$2000
Total estimated increased revenue 2004	$4500

Corporate Sponsorship Levels

Silver	$250

1/4 advertising space in newsletter
Vendor fair participation

Gold $500
1/4 advertising space in newsletter
Vendor fair participation
Banner web ad

Platinum $1000
1/2 advertising space in newsletter
Vendor fair participation
Banner web ad
Tech column in newsletter

Diamond $2000
Full advertising space in newsletter
Vendor fair participation
Banner web ad
Tech column in newsletter
Official spring conference sponsor
Receive conference mailing list

Other Revenue Ideas

Individual memberships
Membership categories
Incentives for first year members
Educational channel membership fee structure

Funding Reallocation Possibilities

Audit
Professional Development
1099 professional help
Total estimated budgetary savings 2004 $1850

Audit
Professional Development
1099 professional help
Long-range planning
Total estimated budgetary savings 2005 $3250

Scenario Realities

Based on the exercise and the initial goals that had been brainstormed, three scenarios and possible outcomes were discussed:

1. Hire an Executive Director immediately – Thereby depleting the $10,000 fund without adequate revenue to sustain the position long-term, but immediate help.
2. Hire an Executive Director 2005-06 – Increase committee and volunteer involvement, membership and revenue streams to prepare the organization for an Executive Director in '05-'06. The committees would be maintained after the hiring of an E.D. with the primary responsibilities of the E.D. to oversee, motivate and coordinate the committees' efforts.
3. Never hire an Executive Director and remain committee/volunteer structured – Determine that it is not be fiscally feasible to ever hire an Executive Director; the committees and volunteers would be increased to help with board burnout, but no person would be solely responsible for the coordination/logistics of the committees or WAPC.

The group's decision was to consider hiring an Executive Director in '05-'06 and commit to a committee structure at this time that would serve to expedite achieving current goals, as well as developing an active and involved membership.

The board then deliberated on the key concerns and objectives for 2004 based on a committee structure without an Executive Director in place. The board also discussed the possibility of outsourcing some of the projects to successfully accomplish the goals. This conversation led to the design of the committees and their prospective assigned goals.

Committee Structure & Goals

Membership/Volunteer

Chairperson – Dawn
Board Committee Members – Mary & Larry
Meets Monthly

- Coordinate regional meetings; regional leadership
- Increase membership; focus on educational stations; keep current members happy
- Develop list of membership benefits
- Create and develop partners (i.e. Tech schools)
- Survey current members and establish database; get feedback; understand demographics

- Reward volunteers
- Website; e-group

Communications

Chairperson – Alan
Board Committee Members – Joel & Scott
Meets Quarterly

- Newsletter with paid advertising
- Website development; e-group
- Mail directories
- Initiate plan for program and resource sharing
- Regional meetings
- WAPC tag

Fundraising/Financial

Chairperson - Gary
Board Committee Members - Jon & Dawn
Meets Quarterly

- Explore new revenue streams – grants; video festival; increased membership fees; new membership categories; sponsorship; advertisers; donations
- Get access centers involved
- Review budgetary expenditures
- Explore 501(c)3 status

Resources Committee

A Resources Committee was discussed, but at this time was determined not needed. The future may present itself with an opportunity to convene this committee, with its primary focus on the programming and shared resources of the membership.

Ad Hoc Executive Committee

Chairperson – President
Board Committee Members – Vice President, Treasurer

- Expand board (13)
- Executive Director/staff decisions
- Update By-laws

Ad Hoc Conferences Committee

- Video festival
- Fall conference

Timeline

An initial timeline was established to give the board direction for the next three months. During that time the By-laws will be amended, new board members appointed, committees organized and the video festival coordinated.

February Meeting

Approve By-law amendments
Adopt strategic plan
Solicit board members nominations

March Meeting

Nominate and appoint board members
Finalize committee appointments and first scheduled meeting

April Meeting

Review committee reports – budgets, priorities, time frames

Facilitator Recommendations

One Year Goal Outline

Goals

1. Develop and build a working committee structure that is involved, dedicated and active.
2. Ensure the committees prioritize goals and consider outsourcing projects where appropriate.
3. Develop a plan for increasing revenue.
4. Find and consistently use effective methods of communication with the membership.

Process Recommendations

Goal 1 - It will be necessary to achieve positive, timely results through the new committee structure in order to raise the needed funds and membership support for a potential Executive Director hire in 2005-06. Begin by convening the committees and soliciting new members within WAPC. It is essential to explain to potential new members the expected time commitment and activity level.

Encourage new members' participation immediately and include their ideas with those in this proposal to later be prioritized.

Goals 2-4 - Once new members are orientated, evaluate the ideas and prioritize them according to the most effective relative to their budgetary commitments.

It is Blue Door's recommendation that the communications committee prioritize the e-group and the web site as high. An e-newsletter could be created after those initiatives are in place. The two projects, if done well, may require six to nine months to achieve final results and would provide a cost-efficient and consistent method of communication.

The membership/volunteer committee should be responsible for convening and coordinating the regional meetings, and dispersing the information from those meetings to the other committees. Additionally, the committee should actively recruit five new members in 2004, as well as identify the benefits of becoming a member.

The fundraising/financial committee should begin its prioritization with developing a plan for increased revenue and starting that initiative in association with the other committees. Additionally it would be beneficial to begin researching the pros and cons of the WAPC becoming a 501(c)3.

Third Year Goal Outline

Goals

1. Hire an Executive Director to coordinate and orchestrate the operations of the WAPC.
2. Increase benefits for membership, specifically related to policy standards, case studies and pooled programming resources.
3. Continue to increase membership annually.
4. Continue to ensure membership activity through regional meetings and leadership, as well as retention efforts of the committees.