

**Association of
Fundraising Professionals**

2004-2006 STRATEGIC PLAN

Approved by AFP Board – 10/24/03



OVERVIEW:

This document contains the Strategic Planning framework developed by the AFP Strategic Planning Committee, the AFP association board, the Canadian and U.S. foundation boards, and the communications task force of the Strategic Planning Committee. The committee has employed several targeted and substantively similar surveys of individual members, chapter delegates, AFP boards and chapters. Every AFP member and chapter with an email address (and who has not opted out of email communications) has been provided with an opportunity to comment on the plan.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2000, the AFP Board of Directors began to implement a new strategic governance process that was knowledge-based. This represented a new approach to governance and decision-making based on an underlying process of strategic thinking and monitoring of outcomes. It allowed volunteer leaders to focus on the strategic aspects of governance rather than operational and administrative matters.

Using this process over the past two and half years, the AFP Board of Directors has identified strategic or “mega” issues of importance to the profession. Mega issues considered by the AFP Board since the Strategic Governance Process began include: Research on Educational Needs of Fundraisers, Research Baseline for Programming Decisions, Communications Strategy and Segmentation of Messages, Licensing of Fundraising Professionals, Questions Relating to the Profession and Professionalism and Questions Related to AFP Internal Structures, Processes and Services. The identification of these issues has resulted in adjustments to the current AFP Strategic Plan.

A natural evolution of the knowledge-based governance process has been the implementation of a strategic planning process in 2002 that is not only knowledge-based, but “outcomes” focused. **Therefore, you will notice that some of the terminology is different in this plan from our previous strategic planning processes. The model employed for the current strategic planning effort is not based on the traditional “mission, vision, values” approach.**

AFP selected Ms. Cate Bower of Tecker Consultants to assist the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board with the planning process. Ms. Bower has worked with AFP over the past two and half years in developing the knowledge-based governance process. As a result of her involvement, she is keenly aware of the issues facing the fundraising profession and has a good understanding of the AFP culture.

One of the most evident changes to the strategic planning model involves the terminology. For example, you will notice that the “big audacious goal” and “envisioned future” *replace* the current *vision* for AFP. The *mission* statement becomes a *description* of the way AFP will fulfill the *purpose* during the life of the plan. **“Core purpose” is also what does not change for AFP – it is the preservation of what is core. The**

mission can change as the way to fulfill the market niche changes, even as the purpose remains constant. Again, the focus is on being more strategic and less operational and thinking about key elements that have evolved since the last planning exercise.

The new Strategic Planning cycle began in the fall of 2002 with the appointment of the AFP Chair-elect, Alphonse Brown, ACFRE, who serves as the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. Mr. Brown selected a 20-member Strategic Planning Committee, representing a diverse cross-section of AFP membership, to assist with the strategic planning process.

In December 2002, qualitative telephone surveys were conducted with key AFP internal and external stakeholders. The interview findings served as input for the AFP Executive and Strategic Planning committees as they began their work on the new strategic planning process. In addition, initial input was received from AFP Chapter leaders, the AFP Executive Committee at its January Retreat, and the three AFP Boards and the chapter Metro groups at the March 2003 meetings in Toronto, Ontario. Generous input from each of these groups was processed and used by the Strategic Planning Committee in preparation for its April 2003 retreat. **The plan that follows is the product of all of these inputs and the survey process of the entire membership, outlined in the Strategic Planning Timetable below.**

TIMELINE: AFP operates on a three-year planning cycle; the current plan runs through December 2003. The timeline below contains the major milestones for the 2004-2006 Strategic Planning process.

Strategic Planning Timeline

MONTH/YEAR	MILESTONE
December 2002	Telephone Interviews with Key Stakeholders
January 2003	Joint Executive Committee Retreat
February 2003	Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) Teleconference
March 2003	Toronto Meetings – Boards, Metros & SPC
April 2003	Strategic Planning Committee Retreat: Purpose, Values, Goals, Objectives
May – September 2003	Test Plan Direction with Members/Chapters (iterative)
June 2003	Strategic Planning Committee Teleconference
July 2003	Board Meets to Approve Preliminary Plan, Direction and Priorities
August 2003	Strategic Planning Committee revisions to plan
August – September 2003	Foundation Strategic Planning 2004 Budget Preparation
October 23-27, 2003	Board Approves Final Plan and Budget Delegate Assembly Presentation
January 1, 2004	New Strategic Plan Goes Into Effect

TERMINOLOGY:

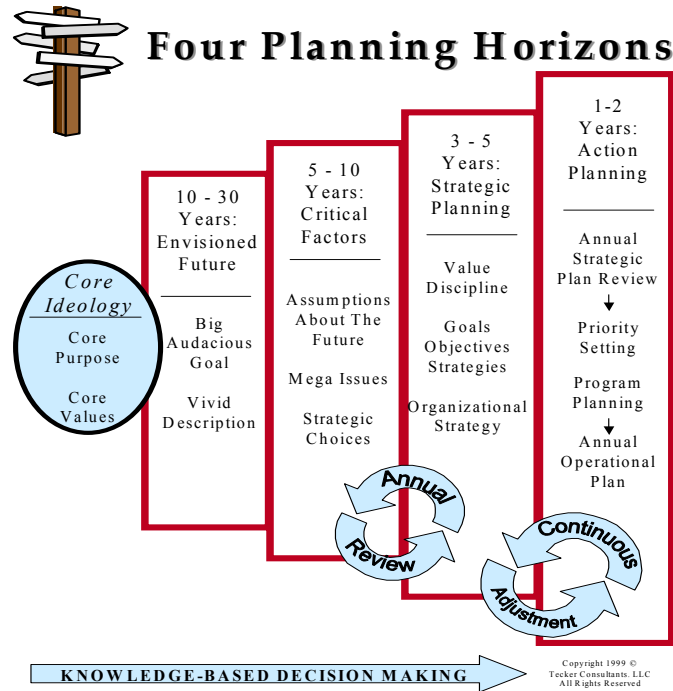
The following are terms of use for this planning process

- **Core Ideology** is a set of basic precepts that answer the fundamental questions: *Who are we? What are we about? What do we stand for?*
- **Core Ideology** clarifies what doesn't change for an organization despite changes in the business environment.
- **Core Purpose** is a concise statement of the organization's reason for being.
- **Core Values** are essential and enduring tenets of the organization – a small set of timeless, guiding principles.
- **Big Audacious Goal** is a huge 10- to 30-year challenge, with a clear finish point, that energizes the organization.
- **Envisioned Future** describes how things will look if we achieve our Big Audacious Goal.
- **Critical Factors/Conditions** are assumptions about the future.
- **Mega Issues** are broad challenges that the organization needs to face in a 5- to 10-year time frame.
- **Goals** are unbounded statements describing conditions or attributes to be obtained.
- **Objectives** are measurable, attainable milestones to achieve by a specific time on the way to accomplishing a goal.
- **Strategies** describe how resources and actions will be focused to accomplish objectives effectively and efficiently.
- **Business Plan** is the annual operating plan developed by staff for the coming year.
- **Body of Knowledge** is the theoretical and experiential basis for the practice of ethical and effective fundraising.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS:

The planning model being used by Tecker Consultants and AFP is based on the Four Horizons approach to planning:

STRATEGIC PLANNING FLOW:



Strategic planning is an iterative process operating within the context of AFP's Core Ideology (Core Purpose and Values). The process consists of the following steps:

1. Being clear about what the organization is and what it exists to accomplish through definition of Core Purpose and Values
2. Describing the 10-30 year Envisioned Future of the organization – what will ultimately be accomplished by the completion of a series of strategic plans over time
3. Developing a set of Assumptions about the future environment of AFP during the life of the plan, so that the plan anticipates what is likely to occur and is responsive to those likely situations
4. Identifying Mega Issues that will have an impact on the organization during the life of the plan (this is an ongoing part of the Strategic Governance Process used by the AFP Board since 2001)
5. Specifying Goals and Objectives
6. Creating a Tactical Plan which includes strategies and the budget to accomplish those strategies in the next operational year
7. Implementation

STRATEGIC PLAN

The following plan is presented from each of the Planning Horizons in the model shown above.

10-30 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

CORE IDEOLOGY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONALS

CORE PURPOSE

To Advance Ethical and Effective Fundraising.

CORE VALUES

- **Philanthropy:** The belief that ethical and effective fundraising are the cornerstones of philanthropy and that philanthropy changes the world.
- **Inclusiveness:** Embracing diversity in the fundraising community, with a commitment to understanding and addressing the shared and unique needs of all members of that community.
- **Excellence:** Providing the fundraising community with the highest quality of knowledge, research, advocacy, career support, news and information, strategic alliances, and related tools and insights to ensure a successful future.
- **Integrity and Credibility:** Conducting business according to the highest ethical principles and serving as trustworthy stewards of our resources.
- **Collaboration:** Recognizing that we can accomplish our purpose only with the strong support and partnership of other individuals, AFP chapters and other groups who share our vision.
- **Service Responsiveness:** Understanding that our focus is on service to our members, our chapters, stakeholders and customers and that it is provided in a timely and thoughtful manner, open to new ideas, and exceeding expectations.

Mission

AFP, an association of professionals throughout the world, advances philanthropy by enabling people and organizations to practice ethical and effective fundraising. The core activities through which AFP fulfills this mission include education, training, mentoring, research, credentialing and advocacy.

ENVISIONED FUTURE

BIG AUDACIOUS GOAL

Fundraising is viewed as a credible and respected profession for civic betterment throughout the world.

VIVID DESCRIPTION

1. The contributions of fundraising to advancing the needs of society will be understood and recognized by donors, policy-makers, and the general public.
2. There will be a well-developed, widely accepted and utilized body of knowledge (knowledge and skills required to effectively discharge fundraising roles and responsibilities) that reflects the best practices of the fundraising profession within culturally diverse societies.
3. Ethical, effective fundraising will be practiced worldwide and will be guided by ethical standards appropriate to the cultural context in which it is practiced.
4. An AFP member will be viewed as credible and possessing integrity; AFP as an organization will be described as a credible community of professionals.
5. AFP and the AFP Foundations will be perceived as the ultimate resource for the fundraising profession. Members of AFP will be recognized as the best in their field, known to have excellent skills and a high degree of training.
6. There will be a curriculum in higher education for undergraduate majors/minors in fundraising or in nonprofit management with a fundraising component.
7. Fundraising credentials will be internationally recognized and valued as indicators of trained and experienced professionals.

5-10 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE RELEVANT FUTURE ENVIRONMENT

Note: These assumptions were developed by the Strategic Planning Committee on a 3-to-5 year horizon.

Societal

- ◆ Shifts in demographics will have an impact on members/chapters and the profession, donors and volunteers, as well as on who gives and for what reasons.
 - ◆ Aging/Extended Lives
 - ◆ Race/Ethnicity
 - ◆ Cultural/International
 - ◆ Generational issues

- ◆ Accountability will be placed even higher on the public/government agendas.
- ◆ Donor understanding of fundraising and organization operations will lead to higher expectations.
- ◆ Public awareness (perceptions) of the fundraising profession will lead to higher expectations.

- ◆ The current proliferation of nonprofits will continue and lead to more:
 - ◆ Competition for revenues
 - ◆ Competition for members
 - ◆ Competition for donors
 - ◆ Competition for professional staff
 - ◆ Competition for volunteers

- ◆ Fundraising will be driven more by professional staff.
- ◆ New ways to work with volunteers will emerge.
- ◆ A potential vacuum/difficulty in finding leaders at all levels of AFP will increase.
- ◆ Models and methods of belonging to organizations will change during the next three years.
- ◆ Loyalty to organizational structures will decrease.
- ◆ Vocabulary of fundraising will have to be broadened.
- ◆ Generational issues: Who is instilling philanthropy into the future generation of donors will have to be examined and clarified.

Technological

- ◆ The availability of new technologies will continue to drive a paradigm shift in the expectations of the public (members, donors, etc.).
- ◆ There will be a blurring of lines between nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and for-profits (donor perception).
- ◆ A “Digital divide” among NPOs will be a critical issue.
- ◆ There will be a potential for donors to be bombarded with requests via technology, leading to donor fatigue.
- ◆ The effects relating to human interaction may be both positive and negative.
- ◆ The potential will exist for access to under-used technology infrastructure through collaboration with installed technology owners (schools, hospitals, etc.).

Governmental

- ◆ Legislative and regulatory actions will continue to escalate on many levels – local, provincial, state and national – and will include focus on sector-specific (how NPOs conduct business) and profession-specific (practitioner and consultant) practices. (Shift of responsibility from government to nonprofits.)
- ◆ Government philosophy regarding legislative and regulatory incentives for giving and volunteering, as well as related tax laws that regulate individual and corporate donations, will continue to change/evolve.
- ◆ Judicial actions will increase as a result of egregious fundraising and stewardship abuses.
- ◆ Influence in the political environment will require active involvement through association PACs.
- ◆ Tighter government budgets will result in increased demand for nonprofit organizations and their services.

Economic/Business

- ◆ The volatility of the global economy will create challenges for the fundraising profession:
 - ◆ Endowment fundraising will be challenged.
 - ◆ There will be a demand for increased accountability/stewardship.
 - ◆ Globalization will affect local giving.
 - ◆ Individual and venture philanthropy will increase.
 - ◆ The sophistication of the fundraising professional will have to increase with further education.
 - ◆ Continuous and cyclical adaptation to the changing environment will be necessary, and AFP will need to fill a leadership role in this change.
- ◆ Competition from both for-profit and nonprofit organizations for our members’ attention will increase.
- ◆ Expectations molded by private sector experiences will be transferred to the nonprofit sector and the fundraising profession.
- ◆ Market changes must be anticipated rather than dealt with in a reactionary manner.

Profession's Culture and Structure

- ◆ Greater influence of non-dominant cultures will challenge traditional ideas and fundraising approaches.
- ◆ Profession will be more political savvy and pro-active.
- ◆ Fundraisers will demand more satisfaction from the profession (economic, lifestyle, education, leadership expectations, etc.).
- ◆ Fundraising will become driven more by the professional rather than volunteers.
- ◆ Public perception of the fundraising profession will improve.
- ◆ As demands upon the NPOs increase for government support, respect for the sector/profession will improve.
- ◆ There will be an increased demand for new competencies for fundraising professionals.
- ◆ An increased focus on board governance will continue.
- ◆ Disconnect among leadership, volunteers, and professional staff will begin to dissipate.
- ◆ Nonprofits will be held to higher standards than for-profits, with an increased emphasis on ethics.
- ◆ Ethics and accountability will continue to be paramount.
- ◆ Definition of competencies for the fundraising professional will be broadened.
- ◆ Fundraising will be understood and appreciated by those organizations that require fundraising, and additional internal development resources will be allocated.

MEGA ISSUES

- Mega Issues are broad challenges that the organization needs to face in a 5- to 10-year timeframe.
- Mega Issues grow out of the strategic planning process.
- Mega Issues cannot be answered with a “yes” or a “no”— they begin with phrases such as “how can...” and “what should...”
- The current Mega Issues are set forth on the mega issue attachment.
- The following items represent significant issues that the Strategic Planning Committee believes the AFP Board may need to address or intensify its attention to during the plan period, as part of the Strategic Governance process:

Domestic/North American Chapter/International Headquarters Issues

- How do we stabilize our economics when we rely on dues for 50% of our revenue and chapters do not yet generate over 50% of the new members?*
- How do we leverage the best practices of our high performance chapters?*
- How do we communicate and involve the membership so that they understand and appreciate the resources available through AFP?*
- How does the culture of AFP as an individual member organization have to change in*

order to accommodate the envisioned future?

- How do we stay ahead of the curve re: professionalization needs/trends such as academic opportunities?*
- With increasing NPOs in North America, what will AFP do to increase penetration of membership?*
- How can we create an expanded focus on servicing the chapters as a way to better serve our members?*

Chapter/International Headquarters Issues with Global Aspects

- How will AFP maximize member and chapter benefits to sustain continued growth?*
- How will we prepare ourselves for a global fundraising effort?*
- How can we get the Chapters and IHQ to operate in a more integrated manner? (How can AFP bridge the gap between the divergent needs of local chapters and the international association?)*

Public Perception of the Fundraising Profession and AFP

- How do we raise the profile of the profession in the eyes of the media and the public?*
- How can we ensure that AFP will serve as the voice of philanthropy and the profession?*

Technology and its Impact

- How does the technology infrastructure of AFP have to change to accommodate the envisioned future?*
- How will we prepare ourselves to be on the cutting edge of technology for use in education and fundraising?*

Government Relations

- How can AFP direct the outcome of state/national licensure discussions?*
- How do we work to influence federal governments and the move toward a less philanthropic climate?*
- How can we better/more effectively influence national and state/provincial legislative agendas?*
- How do we convince federal legislators to develop a tax structure that promotes giving to philanthropy?*

Other

- How do we educate the leadership (CEO's) regarding the importance of their active involvement in the fundraising process?*
- How do staff competencies have to change in order to accommodate the envisioned future?*
- How will we accommodate diverse populations?*
- How can we be more inclusive with our vendors?*
- How do we recruit a diverse population into the profession?*
- How do we develop alternative revenue streaming to fund new programs?*

3-5 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

OUTCOME-ORIENTED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS

1) Knowledge

Goal: The body of knowledge will drive the evolution of the profession, provides the basis for continuing education and underpins curriculum development.

2) Strengthening the Profession

Goal: Effective, ethical, accountable fundraising will be recognized as both a profession and as an essential component of support for philanthropy.

3) Advocacy and Public Policy

Goal: Public policy affecting the fundraising profession will be based upon principles important to AFP and the fundraising profession.

4) Chapter Partnerships

Goal: Through renewed and strengthened partnerships with chapters, AFP will deliver optimal value to members.

5) Connecting Communities

Goal: AFP will be a leader in connecting diverse communities, individuals and organizations that share the value of ethical and effective fundraising.

6) Organizational Effectiveness

Goal: AFP will be an effectively governed, efficiently managed, appropriately structured international organization that enjoys a sound and diverse revenue base.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives defined by the Strategic Planning Committee for each goal are listed below

1) Knowledge: The body of knowledge will drive the evolution of the profession, provides the basis for continuing education and underpins curriculum development.

Definition: The Body of Knowledge is the theoretical and experiential basis for the practice of ethical and effective fundraising.

It includes proven and traditional practices that are widely applied, as well as innovative and advanced practices that may be more limited in their application. It encompasses ethical and professional standards, research, technical concepts and techniques, core skills and critical issues that affect the fundraising profession.

The Body of Knowledge resides within the various products and services of AFP and within the professional fundraisers who apply and advance it. It guides the advancement of philanthropy and its contributions to society through the professional development and credentialing of professional fundraisers.

Objectives:

- 1) Increase awareness and utilization of the Body of Knowledge in career planning, career management, curriculum design and development for fundraising professionals.
- 2) Expand the use of that curriculum by practicing faculty.
- 3) Increase the relevance of the Body of Knowledge for use in other countries and settings where fundraising principles and practices are applied.

2) Strengthening the Profession: Ethical, effective, accountable fundraising will be recognized as both a profession and as an essential component of philanthropy.

Definition: Implicit in the word “philanthropy” is the belief that ethical and effective fundraising are among the cornerstones that strengthen the world.

Objectives:

- 1) Build support for formal programs of preparation of the profession and help establish formal teaching programs that prepare individuals for work in the profession.
- 2) Achieve recognition and understanding of the positive economic impact of the profession and the nonprofit sector/non-governmental organizations.
- 3) Increase the public trust in fundraising and the profession.

3) Advocacy and Public Policy: Public policy affecting the fundraising profession will be based upon principles important to AFP and the fundraising profession.

Objectives

- 1) Increase awareness of legislative and regulatory issues that will have an impact on the fundraising profession.
- 2) Increase AFP's ability to influence legislative and regulatory processes in order to help shape public policy.
- 3) Increase awareness and build support for AFP's position on licensure.
- 4) Build strategic alliances around AFP's legislative agenda.

4) Chapter Partnerships: Through renewed and strengthened partnerships with chapters, AFP will deliver optimal value to members.

Objectives

- 1) Increase effectiveness of chapter service delivery systems to reflect the divergent needs of chapters.
- 2) Increase effectiveness of models/systems that will identify and meet individual member needs.
- 3) Improve individual member and chapter understanding of the comprehensive benefits provided by AFP membership.

5) Connecting Communities: AFP will be a leader in connecting diverse communities, individuals and organizations that share the value of ethical and effective fundraising.

Objectives

- 1) In collaboration with chapters, increase the resources and provide assistance, to directly identify, involve and serve diverse populations.
- 2) Increase the knowledge about the environments and populations of diverse communities where AFP has the opportunity to serve and be more effective.
- 3) Increase awareness of the benefits to AFP members of belonging to an international community of fundraising professionals.

6) Organizational Effectiveness: AFP will be an effectively governed, efficiently managed, appropriately structured international organization that enjoys a sound and diverse revenue base.

Objectives

- 1) The governance and management structures of AFP are congruent with the current and projected service environment.

- 2) The organizational structure of AFP is sufficiently flexible to adapt, modify or terminate existing programs if conditions require and to capitalize on market changes and immediate opportunities as they arise.
- 3) The revenue base of AFP is sufficiently diverse to allow survival in the event the sector or service area experiences a downturn.
- 4) The right people, with the right skills, are provided the opportunity to occupy leadership positions to deliver on AFP's value propositions to members, chapters and the sector.
- 5) AFP is engaged in a process of continual learning and improvement.
- 6) AFP has a technology infrastructure in place and the resources to support that infrastructure, sufficient to execute the strategic plan.
- 7) The corporate culture of AFP and its staff is congruent with the core purpose and core values of the organization.
- 8) The connection between AFP and the AFP Foundation is strengthened in order to accomplish their shared vision.