



American Camp
Association
National Office
2006-08

Business Plan Summary

1. Executive Summary

Focused on the Ends, energized by the vision, driven by the mission, lifted by the orientation toward human development and leveraged from the input of staff and volunteer leaders from across the country, ACA National Office 2006-08 Business Plan sets forth the priority goals, objectives and accountabilities for the national office for the next three years. The national office business plan is not an isolated initiative. It is rather part of an ongoing process that begins with the Master Plan and extends through the Business Plan to the Work Plans being crafted by national staff. Finally, the business plan is not a static document. It is rather, a living document that will be refreshed annually with input from across the broad cross sections of ACA.

The path charted by this business plan is aggressive and the first steps on this journey are still emerging. Over the next several months national staff will continue to work with staff and

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volunteer leadership to refine the plan by developing work plans to prioritize objectives, determine resources required, and craft initiatives that will most efficiently achieve the intended accomplishments. Over the next three years new issues will surface and new opportunities will develop.

The driving force behind the plan will continue to be a rich cross section of input from staff and volunteer leadership. Participation drives cooperation. The work to achieve plan goals and objectives is the work of ACA national, but will require the support of the entire association. Cooperation drives success. The detail and discipline of the plan is

intentional. Success depends on our ability to equip people and teams, constructively monitor progress and remain responsive to customer and member needs.

The plan goals (intended accomplishments over a three year period) are focused on five broad areas of work consisting of (1) member and customer services, (2) public awareness, (3) marketing, (4) communications, administration and infrastructure and (5) funds development / financial management. Each goal is pursued through a set of specific measurable objectives (intended accomplishments over a one year period). Specific initiatives and strategies will be developed to organize and manage the work going forward. Movement toward the stated goals will be measured at the objective level.

The plan is not without risk. Noteworthy internal risks include our ability to move quickly into a more diversified non-dues customer revenue mix, and our ability to build a practical consensus around the work at hand, as well as our ability to compete effectively for contributions. We also stand at risk for certain global issues such as the state of the economy and the direction and pace of public policy that impact the camp community.

Ultimately the plan will drive us to a new more flexible and more modern fiscal model where success is defined by the value of products and services we provide to customers.

Together we have an extraordinary opportunity to influence the future of the American Camp Association. It is the intent of this plan to serve as a step forward in the ongoing work to advance the association by maximizing the visibility, credibility and viability of the camp community. In the end our success will be driven by our will to work together, our courage to take appropriate risks, our sustained discipline to monitor progress, and our ability to understand and honor customer needs.

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2. Goals and Objectives

1. Member and Customer Services. Develop and administer a well coordinated value adding member and customer services delivery system.

Attributes:

- **strategic** in focus (e.g., supports the strategic interest in human / youth development)
- **flexible** in structure and content (e.g., accommodates high tech and low tech constituents)
- **cost effective** in delivery (e.g., presents market-leading value to targeted markets)
- **coordinated** (e.g., recognizes and leverages both Local Office and National strengths, insight, and expertise)

Priority objectives under this goal include the following:

- A. Develop and implement a collaborative three year educational strategy with Sections that is aligned with organizational strategy, customized for priority / target audiences and flexible in approach.
- B. Develop a specific portfolio of services for camps and the camp community helping them deal effectively with risk management through standards, accreditation and other services.
- C. Develop and provide business management services for camps to help them thrive in the face of today's challenges and achieve a strong and sustainable financial position.
- D. Provide services and service delivery forums to members designed to provide cost effective and efficient networking opportunities and to further develop a sense of community.
- E. Develop and provide services to the broader public market to help them better understand and derive greater value from the camp experience (e.g., complaints resolution program, information for job seekers, camp locator service).
- F. Develop and provide training in cultural competency and capacity building in camps and across the association.

2. Public Awareness. Design, coordinate and manage an intentional national public awareness and advocacy campaign.

Attributes:

- **focused** (e.g., on strategic human and youth development issues)
- **customized** (e.g., for potential partners, constituents and staff)
- **flexible** (e.g., is opportunistic in seizing the moment when ACA message is most readily accepted)
- **coordinated** (e.g., with issues and needs across ACA such as the development of key ACA partners)

Priority objectives under this goal include the following:

- A. Develop a coordinated, comprehensive and collaborative internal and external PR campaign that uses all appropriate channels.
 - B. Develop, implement and monitor the impact of a Web site exploring age-appropriate site content and application.
 - C. Identify and take full advantage of specific effective ways to communicate with parents and other targeted markets about the human development opportunities within the camp experience.
 - D. Develop and publish position and topical papers based on research specifically geared toward member needs and new audiences.
 - E. Monitor state and federal legislative initiatives regarding issues that impact camps and seize appropriate opportunities to promote the value of camp relative to these issues with identifiable communities of interest.
3. Marketing. Develop, coordinate and manage an intentional marketing system.

Attributes:

- **flexible** (e.g., adapts to new issues and opportunities)
- **comprehensive** (e.g., directed to all relevant audiences for ACA,
- **strategic** (e.g., emphasis on human / youth development)

- **predictive** (e.g., understands current and anticipated market needs).

Priority objectives under this goal include the following:

- A. Increase the number of members by designing and implementing a new membership system and clearly communicating benefits.
 - B. Increase the number of camps by developing and implementing new types of ACA camp categories (e.g., accredited, affiliated, etc.).
 - C. Grow the number of and deepen the relationship with businesses supporting ACA and ACA camps by educating them about the value of an affiliation with ACA, informing them about our vision, mission and needs, and exploring opportunities to partner.
 - D. Grow the number of customers purchasing ACA resources and attending conferences.
 - E. Develop and promote ACA as a vital resource center for individuals and families.
 - F. Identify organizations that have been effective at developing and taking full advantage of diversity and learn from them.
 - G. Assess, prioritize and act on those existing and emerging communications that would be helpful if translated into a targeted alternative language.
 - H. Perform a focused audit / survey of appropriate and high potential ways to reach prioritized minority markets.
4. Communication, Administration and Infrastructure. Develop, coordinate, promote and improve core organizational capabilities.

Attributes:

- **focused** (e.g., on serving priority member service goals and objectives)
- **cost effective** (e.g., provides sustainable value)
- **integrated** (e.g., helps ACA work collaboratively)
- **people-centered** (e.g., develops human resources)

Priority objectives under this goal include the following:

- A. Develop, promote and manage a comprehensive communication system utilizing a variety of methods appropriate for volunteer leadership, staff, members and others.
 - B. Inventory national and section-specific capabilities in key infrastructure areas (e.g., technology) and develop a coordinated action plan to maximize efficiency and effectiveness by addressing priority needs.
 - C. Identify and promote knowledge management forums across ACA and execute at least three specific initiatives within these forums to clarify, promote and advance the concept of ACA as a learning organization.
 - D. Develop and implement a coordinated volunteer management and leadership-training program designed with an emphasis on identifying and engaging young people and advancing diversity across the whole of ACA.
 - E. Design and implement a sustainable performance management system for the national office coordinated with the business plan cycle and focused on measurement of objectives.
 - F. Develop a nation-wide methodology to monitor progress toward diversity.
5. Funds Development / Financial Management. Design and employ a funds development and fiscal capital management capability.

Attributes:

- **meets the *immediate* operational needs** of ACA
- **provides *sustainable* diversity in funding** strategies and sources
- ***anticipates* and facilitates the development of funds** for future needs
- **focused** on core fiscal model issues (e.g., growth of non-dues revenue)
- **fair** in how it provides for the sharing of funds across the association to help ensure the broader ACA public mission is achieved

Priority objectives under this goal include the following:

- A. Develop an organization-wide long-term business model to help evaluate revenue and expense alternatives and support the goals.
- B. Develop and reach organizational consensus on a comprehensive funds development system (including strategies such as planned & deferred giving, annual fund, major gifts, grants, revenue sharing, sponsorship, celebrity endorsements, royalties, and other non-dues revenue streams).
- C. Develop and deliver fund development and financial strategies training to camps and sections with associated support templates and communications plans.
- D. Define and evaluate alternative dues and fees structures in light of potential new ways to think about membership and camp affiliation.

3. The Financials

In January of 2004 the ACA Fiscal Audit report was released. Among its findings and recommendations were the following broad projections:

Grow and restructure revenue. ACA income overall should be targeted to increase 10% cumulatively over the next five years. Even with this increase however, the change in net assets from operations could continue to be negative for the first two years of a five year transition period reflecting new revenue ramp time, strategy start-up costs, increased research expenditure, etc. As a percent of total revenue, accreditation related fees could decrease from 60% of revenue to a 50% share of revenue, knowledge-based related revenues could increase from 30% to a 40% share of revenue and royalties and license agreement related revenues could increase from 9% to a 15% share over the next three to five years.

Focus expenses on strategic imperatives. Final financial projections must be developed in light of priority plan objectives and related initiatives. It is reasonable to assume that distributions to local offices (currently 25% of expenses) should increase to 30% in three to five years reflecting a more purposeful participation and cooperation in the broader ACA vision and strategy. Also, given the intentional knowledge centric strategy of the organization, the costs of educational related products and services that currently make up 35% of

expenses could increase to 50% in three to five years reflecting in part significant investments in primary research and product development initiatives.

Overheads. Throughout the multi-year transition underway, administrative and governance costs should be held to the current level of 10%.

Over the next several months the national staff will be working to define the initiatives that will breathe life into this business plan. Only as those initiatives are established will financial projections be possible. The new fiscal model will prompt a change in the mix of expenses as well. As the business plan goals and objectives are prioritized the detail of this shift will be determined. The national staff will, over the next several months, develop the FY 06 budget, which will dovetail with priorities articulated in the work plans.