

AAIA's Strategic Planning Initiative

Creating Clarity, Focus & Direction

strat·e·gy (străt'ə-jē) n., pl. -gies.

A plan, method or series of maneuvers for obtaining a specific goal or result.

The strategies outlined in the AAIA Strategic Plan provides clarity, focus and direction for the association.

In Dallas in December 2006, members of the AAIA board of directors and selected senior staff engaged in an aggressive strategic planning initiative facilitated by a well-known expert in the area of strategic planning for associations.

The goal was to create clarity and focus on the future direction of the association and how AAIA should invest its valuable resources to meet the needs of its members.

Phase one was to envision our industry 10 to 15 years into the future, identifying

- AAIA core purpose and core values;
- The overall goal;
- Assumptions about the future of the industry and the professional that work within it; and
- Mega issues facing the industry.

The leadership then debated and agreed on five goal areas that identify where AAIA will direct its energy in the next five years. Next, a set of objectives were established for each goal area, setting a measurable direction in which the association is to head. And finally, a set of strategies was created that identify the actions AAIA will undertake in the next one to three years to achieve each goal area.

AAIA's core ideology is its core purpose and its core organizational values.

The core purpose is to advance, serve and protect the collective interests of its members in the motor vehicle aftermarket.

The board of directors identified three core organizational values.

Leadership: Our organization provides visionary leadership respecting all industry segments. We conduct business with the highest degree of integrity, a commitment to excellence and a focus on serving our members.

Community: Ours is an inclusive organization that values its diverse membership and supports a unified motor vehicle aftermarket recognizing the strength of the whole over its individual parts.

Public Good: Our organization supports the consumer's right to choose motor vehicle aftermarket products and services and is committed to meeting the consumer's needs while keeping vehicles on the road.

THE OVERALL GOAL

To be recognized globally as the pre-eminent trade association possessing the strength, leadership, resources, influence and structure to represent the motor vehicle aftermarket.

An association, just like a business, must constantly anticipate factors likely to effect its ability to succeed and to assess their implications. The goals of the strategic plan are based on foresight... by making assumptions about the future of our industry.

Each year the leadership will review these assumptions to ensure the ongoing relevance of the strategic plan. There are dozens of assumptions for each of five areas including global and economic factors, social values and demographics, legislative and regulatory environment, science and technology and competition and structure.

A critically important step in the five to 10-year planning horizon is identifying mega issues. These represent choices AAIA will need to make in defining the ultimate direction of its long-range plan. These mega issues can be used by the Board of Directors to create regular opportunities for strategic dialogue about the issues facing the industry.

AMONG THE MANY MEGA ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE LEADERSHIP WERE:

- How can AAIA unify the aftermarket industry?
- How should AAIA address the association's financial reliance on AAPDEX?
- How can AAIA address the shortage of technicians and other positions?
- How should AAIA position itself globally?
- What criteria should AAIA use to decide which organizations fit under the association's umbrella?

FIVE GOAL AREAS WERE AGREED UPON TO FOCUS ON FOR THE NEXT THREE TO FIVE YEARS.

Government Affairs:

To be the most visible and influential government affairs and political action infrastructure at the federal, state and local levels in the vehicle aftermarket.

Organizational Viability:

To have sufficient financial and organizational resources to achieve the association's strategic direction.

Professional Development and Training:

To advance the interests of AAIA members by being a source for high-quality professional development and training and a repository for information within the motor vehicle aftermarket.

Public Awareness:

To develop and create public awareness programs that results in member sales growth.

Technology Standards:

To advance the adoption of AAIA industry technology standards by the entire supply chain.

It is then the professional staff's responsibility to develop tactics and timelines to meet the objectives.

The fourth planning horizon is already underway and requires continuous review and adjustment.

Setting priorities, planning the programs, budgeting funds, developing tactics and a timeline is already underway by professional staff and allocating personnel.

"AAIA's leadership views strategic planning as an ongoing process. This is not a project that is completed... not by a long shot," said AAIA Immediate Past Chairman Richard H. Morgan, Aftermarket Auto Parts Alliance, Inc. "Progress toward achieving the plan's objectives will be assessed annually. And the plan will be updated based on achievement and changes in the needs of the members served."

For more information, contact AAIA at 301-654-6644.