

Source: NSW Dept. of Sport and Rec. & Bowls Australia

Successful clubs plan – it is the most effective way to sustain, improve and develop your club or association and map out a better future.

## Where to start?

- Talk to your regional, state or national body - get a copy of their plan and align to it
- Talk to your members – informally or via a survey. Learn what they think – this should shape your planning

## Basics of bowls club planning

A strategic business plan is the summary and evaluation of the planning process and outlines where your club or association wants to go and the necessary steps to get there.

### Benefits:

1. Prioritises goals and objectives
2. Establishes performance and evaluation criteria
3. Assesses progress
4. Ensures a professional approach
5. Secures funding and win sponsorship deals
6. Identifies promotion and marketing strategies
7. Allocates resources more efficiently
8. Shows what your club or association can offer potential new players/members
9. Helps volunteers and staff better understand the business of running a club or association
10. Involves members in decision-making therefore improve team morale

## Seven essentials of a good plan

- **Vision** – give your club or association focus
- **Commitment** – be committed to the vision, otherwise your club or association is unlikely to succeed
- **Timelines** – create timelines showing when particular targets or milestones will be achieved
- **Objectives** – avoid a long list of objectives as it will make it difficult for you to achieve

- **Reporting** – focus on performance and trends that help determine change e.g. membership numbers, volunteer commitment
- **Contingencies** – account for the risks your club or association might face
- **Change** – detail any major changes affecting your club or association

## Step by step guide to planning

Strategic business planning can be a simple, uncomplicated process if you take it step by step.

### 1. Set up planning structure

- Form a planning committee
- Schedule meetings separate to board meetings
- Identify key people who should be involved in your planning process – board directors, management, sponsors. If possible appoint an experienced external facilitator

### 2. Establish current status and broad strategy

- Consult with your state or national body for your sports broader plans
- Review club or association's past outcomes and present position, including mission, vision and values
- Find out trends within the sport industry, as well as your club or association.
- Do a SWOT analysis – strengths and weaknesses (internal), opportunities and threats (external)
- Establish realistic and timely performance indicators
- Draft action plans, assign responsibilities to key people
- Analyse current financial status including forecast balance sheet, cash flow and profit and loss statement

### 3. Write the plan

- If you don't have a format to follow from your state or national body, download Bowls Australia's Business Plan Template

## 4. Implement, monitor and review

To make the whole planning process a valuable and worthwhile activity for your club, you need to:

- Assign responsibilities for implementation of strategies
- Create realistic timelines for implementation of action plans
- Evaluate and update entire plan at least annually, ideally before budget planning
- Regularly evaluate your plan: Targets should be evaluated quarterly
- Financial plans should be evaluated monthly
- Action plans should be evaluated monthly and weekly

### Useful terms

- **Goal** – The overall club or associational aspirations which the club or association strives to achieve. While usually difficult to measure and quantify, goals set the direction of the club or association and support the mission statement
- **Objective** – A set of clear statements of obtainable results or ends within a defined term. They are expressed as SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound, and are consistent with the club or association's goals. A good objective will have its own performance indicators
- **Strategies** – Activities that are implemented towards the achievement of stated measurable objectives. They describe the actions to be taken by the club or association in order to achieve each objective
- **Outcomes** – In the context of the business plan, each strategy has an outcome(s) by which the consequence of the club or association's goals, objectives and strategies can be measured. The outcomes must be measurable to indicate the success of implementing the plan
- **Mission statement and corporate goals** – A statement of your club or association's purpose and what it wants to achieve in the larger environment. These are normally specified in the constitution
- **Key performance areas** – The specific areas of operation which the club or association wishes to categorise its desired achievements. Focus areas are those specific operational sub areas