



American Camp
Association
National Office
2006-08
Business Plan

[Adopted February 2005]

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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

Success in this endeavor will be determined by our will to work together, our courage to take appropriate risks, our discipline to monitor progress and our ability to understand and honor customer needs.

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.

2. Background / Context

This national office business plan sets forth the strategic goals and objectives for the American Camp Association (ACA) national office for the 2006 fiscal year. The primary purpose of the national plan and the associated planning process is as follows:

- *Context and Priorities.* Create a clear context and a compelling set of priorities to help the association move forward with a shared direction and pace.
- *Collaboration and Communication.* Enable and enhance the collaborative development and communication of strategic goals, objectives and roles across ACA.
- *Accountability and Coordination.* Advance roles and accountabilities within the national office and help local office staff and volunteers across the country participate in these efforts.
- *Integration and Sustainability.* Establish a planning platform and prototype a process that can be sustained and expanded through the future with the clear potential to help further integrate section plans and planning initiatives.

For a complete understanding of the national plan it is important to also consider what the plan does not do. To this end, the national plan does NOT intend to summarize all the work that will go

The national plan assumes there are opportunities to improve the coordination of national and section-specific plans.

on within the national office. As such, the plan does not speak to the variety of “back office” efforts required to operate the national office (e.g., keeping the books, processing payroll, running the bookstore, etc.). Likewise, there are a number of vital operational initiatives being pursued within the national staff that will continue along side the efforts outlined in this plan. The plan does however specify those goals and objectives that the national staff, local office staff and volunteers have called out as being worthy of special attention over the next few years.

Also, the plan does NOT assume roles for or assign responsibilities to the sections. The plan recognizes that many of the sections have long standing planning processes and plans in place. The national office plan exists in accord with section-specific plans. The national plan comes from a collaborative effort and represents a practical consensus of ACA national priorities. As such it is assumed that the national and section-specific plan will work in harmony with one

another. Furthermore, the national plan development process assumes there are opportunities to improve the coordination of national and section-specific plans. Working in concert, national and local office planning initiatives can go a long way toward sustaining the vitality of the organization.

In many ways, the planning process is as important as the plan itself. Focused ultimately on the Ends as established by the Board and approved by the Council of Delegates (COD) and carefully considered within the context of the Charter, the national plan is a reflection of significant defining input from the National Board, Local Office Staff, ACA volunteers from across the country and, of course, the National Staff. The development process was intentionally designed and carefully implemented to hear from all relevant voices within the community. Over 90 staff and volunteers from around the nation representing most local offices gathered in Indianapolis in October 2004 for a Leadership Summit to provide formative input to the plan. Specifically they worked to:

- prioritize and interpret the broad trends in society that impact our mission,
- consider the resources available and needed to achieve our ends and
- articulate the strategic principles that define how we approach our work.

In many ways, the planning process is as important as the plan itself.

Input from the Leadership Summit was the driving force behind the first draft of plan goals and objectives. Draft goals and objectives were reviewed with national staff in November 2004. National staff input helped to clarify the goals and further develop and expand potential objectives. The goals and objectives were then further refined in early December when over 50 national and local office staff gathered again to continue the planning process. The goals and objectives set forth in the plan represent the heartbeat of the plan. They are the direct result of a great representation of voices across ACA community. The time and effort dedicated to this work is greatly appreciated.

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 and maximize the visibility, credibility and viability of the camp community.

3. The Organization

The American Camp Association is an organization with a rich heritage, a compelling vision, complex challenges and tremendous up-side potential. As represented in the Master Plan (provided below) the work of ACA is:

- Focused on the Ends established by the board and approved by the COD
- Energized by the Vision of enriching lives and changing the world
- Driven by the Mission to enrich lives of children and adults through the camp experience
- Guided through the Charter

It is further...

- Grounded in values of People, the World and personal Contributions
- Propelled by a core strategy of Knowledge Transformation
- Lifted by the orientation toward Human Development
- Attentive to Accountability, Credibility, Visibility, Viability

The Ends:

- *There will be a greater understanding of support for the value of the camp experience.*
- *An increasing number of children, youth and adults of all social, cultural & economic groups, will have a camp experience.*
- *The camp experience will be of high quality.*

It is important that those who seek to comprehend and work within this national staff business plan have a deep and shared understanding of these fundamental vital elements of the American Camp Association. Taken as a whole, they are the foundation upon which we stand.

As an overview, it is estimated that more than 10 million people annually benefit from camp at more than 12,000 camps nationwide. There are an estimated 5,000 day camps within the United States. To support this work, 1.2M people (ranging from students to counselors and teachers to doctors and nurses) are employed across the camp community. Camp is big business that makes a significant cultural impact currently. Moreover, camp is at the threshold of great potential in the field of human development.

ACA continues to stand at the forefront of this great venture. As a profile, camps affiliated with the American Camp Association currently serve 3 million young campers in the United States annually. Further, ACA represents over 2,600 camps (21%) of the estimated 12,000 camps in the country. Of ACA camps, 76% are run by nonprofit organizations and 13% offer specialized programs to serve campers with physical or mental challenges. Family camps are also on the rise, with one of every four ACA camps offering these programs. ACA bookstore sales top \$500 thousand annually and carries hundreds of titles. The Web site gets over 100,000 visits per month and the national staff handles hundreds of media contacts through the year.

The market share and impact is substantial; the market potential is extensive. Existing market statistics aside, a final and vital point to be made is that the ACA's orientation toward human development continues to open whole new areas of growth for the association.

As one should expect, upside potential such as this comes in tandem with significant and complex challenges. Some of the challenges are internal. Some of the challenges are external. The national office business plan is designed to help address these challenges and maximize the association's impact on the camp community and the lives enriched by the camp experience.



Overall, the ACA community is focused on campers and those interested in the camp experience. Central to the development and delivery of these services are the twenty-four ACA Local Offices. Roles and expectations are articulated through the charter, a guiding document. Beyond the charter, however, rests the camp work force that serves the camp community through critical work

with ACA. It is at this personal and professional level that ACA will thrive. As noted elsewhere in the report, the national office business plan calls for even greater cooperation through an expanding effort to work cooperatively as we develop and share the human, intellectual and fiscal capital that encompasses ACA.

Through its recent history, the association has been guided by a two page Master Plan crafted by the Board. This Master Plan (see the chart that follows) provides an overview of the defining elements of the association – from the values, vision and mission through the core knowledge transformation strategy to the intended Ends. It outlines competitive advantages as well as core systems, functions and services. The Master Plan then concludes with key challenges and opportunities.

The business plan was developed within the framework created by the existing Master Plan. For example, as identified in the Master Plan, competitive advantages are as follows:

- Publishing / Education
- Standards / Best Practice
- Research
- Web / Technology

The business plan goals and objectives are designed, in part, to recognize and leverage these advantages. However, the business plan does not assume these advantages are the property of ACA without effort. The business plan seeks to both leverage and ensure these advantages are strengthened throughout the planning period.

ACA MASTER PLAN: a knowledge center

Values:
People, the World, Contributions

Vision:
Enriching Lives, Changing the World

Mission:
The American Camping Association is a community of camp professionals & is dedicated to enriching lives of children & adults through the camp experience.

Purpose: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Core Strategy
Knowledge Transformation

Niche: Primary: Promotion of positive youth development
Secondary: Community
Tertiary: Experiential Education

The Vehicle: The Camp Community
The Means: The Camp Experience

Board Ends

For what benefit, for whom, at what cost?

There will be greater understanding of support for the value of the camp experience.

An increasing number of children, youth & adults of all social, cultural, & economic groups, will have a camp experience.

The camp experience will be of high quality.

Mega End: Enriching lives through the camp experience

Core Areas

(Competitive Advantages)

Publishing/Education

Standards/Best Practice

Research

Web/Technology

Core Outcomes and Systems

Accountability

Creating knowledge from data & information to develop content

Intelligence

ACA supports a research environment by collecting, assimilating, & analyzing industry, demographic, & market knowledge.

Credibility

Transferring knowledge to educational value

Knowledgee

ACA serves as the camp industry leader in knowledge offering comprehensive, quality content resources that are timely, relevant, meaningful, and dynamic.

Visibility

Converting knowledge to enhance awareness

Relationships

ACA is receptive, responsive, & serves as a productive knowledge broker encouraging a collaborative environment committed to securing positive solutions.

Viability

Maximizing knowledge to revenue

Fiscal

ACA is diversified, supporting an association-wide financial management strategy in order to be responsive to change and easy to manage, ensuring accountability.

Core Teams

Data administration, Inter & intranet Legal, Research; Market trends, Demographics, Standards, Best Practice.	Professional development, Education, and Training, Publishing, Marketing and Communication	Public Policy, Public Awareness, Ethics Membership, Field Service, Insurance,	Finance, Investment, Fundraising, Business Partners, Non-Dues Revenue.
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Core Products

- Accreditation
- Camping Magazine
- Campline
- Books
- Education
- CAMP a parent resource

Challenges & Opportunities

- *Reduce industry risks
- *Maximize leverage
- *Revolutionary opportunities
- *Faster communication & knowledge acquisition

- *Mobilize, promote, & contribute to best practice
- *Cost containment & build risk equity
- *Uniform image & public stage
- *Fluid, nimble, & dynamic

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4. The Market

The plan goals and objectives that follow are designed in part to leverage market strengths and address competitive threats. The purpose of this section is to set the stage for the goals and objectives by highlighting various market segments.

As outlined above the current ACA market presence is impressive while at the same time, the upside potential is undeniable. Selected key benchmark measures would include the following:

	<u>ACA</u>	
Camps (Total)	2,637	22%
Accredited	2,412	20%
Affiliated	225	2%
Youth campers	3,000,000	27%
Professional Members	5,034	n.a.
Conference attendees	1,324	n.a.
Customers (1)	4,193	n.a.
Paid subscribers (2)	699	n.a.
Business Affiliates	227	n.a.

Figures are as of January 15, 2005

(1) Customers represent those who purchase ACA resources and material who are NOT members of the association.

(2) Paid subscribers are those who subscribe to ACA publications who are not in the Professional or gratis category.

This chart is simply a representation of the market upside for prospective members and customers. Consider the following:

- Nearly 80% of camps (9,400 out of 12,000) are not accredited or affiliated with ACA. To be successful in this venture, membership categories and dues, and camp fees structures must be attractive to the basic camp market with entry other than through accreditation.

This represents a significant opportunity to grow the number of ACA camps and to eventually increase the number of camps that value and seek accreditation.

- While the number of camp professionals in the nation is difficult to estimate, the majority are not currently members, affiliates or customers of ACA. To be successful with this cost conscious segment ACA must have well targeted high quality products (e.g., books) and services (e.g., training) delivered through a highly effective marketing program. There is a significant opportunity to grow the membership in this category alone.

Still other new markets exist that represent potential growth in the areas of human development professionals, parents, and educators. To successfully identify, pursue and profitably serve these new markets, ACA will need to develop a robust marketing, sales and delivery capability.

As a fundamental backdrop to the markets we serve and the competition we face, rests the broader trends that impact society at large and the economy in which we participate. At the Leadership Summit held in Indianapolis on October 17-19, 2004, a cross section of ACA leaders from around the country (over 90 participants) addressed this larger issue and identified trends that would be important as we consider our strategic directions and business planning priorities for the next three years. The trends identified included:

- The broad influence from such realities as land availability and land use policy, school calendars, and competition from the myriad of youth activities and programs availability
- Growing recognition and a sense of urgency about the number of children and adults who are overweight, don't exercise, and have poor diets
- A sustained and growing focus on life long learning
- An increased openness to technology creating new ways to communicate and associate, with the corollary issue of the technology "haves" versus the "have-nots"
- Governments and constituencies being more interested in security and surveillance born out of a growing concern about safety
- Continued growing competition for human and fiscal resources

In light of the markets we serve and the trends we must recognize, price, and the corollary notion of perceived value, is a serious issue in the markets served by ACA. According to information gathered from the Leadership Summit, the perception exists that ACA is too expensive for many camp professionals and other interested persons. This suggests that membership groups and dues as well as camp affiliation and fees structures need to be evaluated. There is also a related perception that ACA membership has little value unless the camp professionals desire

accreditation. This points not only to the need for examining the ways camps are able to affiliate with ACA, but to a focused effort on promoting the value and benefits associated with ACA services.

A number of specific market segments were identified in the planning process. In terms of potentially new members and customers, ACA leadership identified the following market segments as having strong potential based on perceived need, existing or potential affiliation with ACA and available alternatives.

- Parks and Recreation (day camps)
- National AfterSchool Association (after school programs)
- Local school systems
- Parent/Teacher Organizations
- YMCA camps
- Military families / youth

Other segments of the camp market potential include independent day schools and charter schools, sports camps, religious affiliated camps, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, environmental educational centers, science and children's museums, zoological centers, and juvenile correctional facilities.

In considering alternatives for products and services available to camps and camp professionals, a number of competing organizations and camp affiliations were also identified during the planning summit. When asked the question, "Where do non-ACA camps and camp professionals go for resources, education, conferences?" ACA leadership identified the following:

- YMCA – conferences, professional certifications
- CCI – conferences, primary focus on Christian camps
- Association for Experiential Education – accreditation, adventure programming
- Association Independent Camps – 501(c)(6) – business services for camps, advocacy
- Western Association of Independent Camps – business services for camps
- NRPA – accreditation for parks & community centers

It should be noted that most all associations and organizations have their own training and education programs including conferences and information resources. It should also be noted that although many of these associations and organizations are seen as competition in the

marketplace, they also may have potential for partnerships in working together for the good of the camp industry. There are of course other types of competition such as magazines that compete for ad and sponsorship dollars and staff recruitment firms.

Another question that is important to answer is “what are the unique strengths and opportunities for ACA that would provide a competitive advantage in the marketplace?” When asked this question, Leadership Summit participants identified strengths and weaknesses of ACA. The following are examples cited:

Identified Strengths of ACA

- Camps that are doing great work
- Volunteers committed to the mission
- Section and national staff that are experienced and of high quality
- Leadership opportunities
- Use of technology and website
- History and reputation are perceived as the best in the field
- Publishing resources
- Accreditation
- Research

Identified Weaknesses of ACA

- Lack of understanding about potential member/customer markets
- Lack of knowing what consumers want in a camp product
- Need for greater collaboration between Local Offices and National
- Need to partner with colleges and universities
- Lack of diversity across all of ACA
- Lack of an ACA development effort to leverage new and greater financial resources

As it relates to competing effectively and growing market share, a primary goal is to succeed in achieving greater awareness of and support for the value of ACA in the marketplace which includes camp professionals, parents, educators, human development professionals, and companies providing products/services to camps.

5. The Plan Goals

The national office business plan goals are:

- Founded in ACA values, mission, vision, and ends
- Focused on known and anticipated customer and member needs
- Formed by significant input from across ACA
- Flexible for the challenges of today's fast-paced world

The plan goals set forth the intended accomplishments of the national staff over a 3 year period. As discussed above, the plan goals do not address all the work that will be pursued by national office over the ensuing months. They do however represent a clear, collaborative and compelling sense of the strategic direction of the association and hence those issues that are appropriate for a concentrated intentional effort by ACA.

At this point in the evolution of the business plan, the goals all hold the same broad priority. No attempt has been made to prioritize the objectives. They are also highly interrelated. Many of the goals build on one another. As a result, prioritization will occur within the next several months as the next level of planning and the initial implementation efforts get underway. It is important to understand that success is in large measure dependent on our ability to craft highly integrated work plans that will breathe life into the work of this plan.

Plan Goal: a long term (3 year) intended accomplishment in line with the mission, vision and ends.

For example:

- Some priorities will stem from natural synergy that exists between objectives (i.e., since A and C share common elements it is more efficient to pursue them both at the same time).
- Some priorities will stem from a logical sequencing of the work at hand (i.e., I need to do B before I can do A).
- Some priorities will stem from customer and member demands (i.e., my customer and/or member needs me to work on B before A).
- Some priorities will stem from our technical and human capacity realities (i.e., I will not be ready to do A for six months but I can do B right now).

The goals assume that key infrastructure will be developed. For example, there is not a technology goal per se. Rather, the required information technology capabilities will be pursued in the context of all the goals and objectives requiring improvements in technology and technology management. The information technology infrastructure available to and used by the association is critically important to the success of this plan. For this reason we have provided an appendix to the plan to outline the key information technology issues and to highlight the work that is underway to address these issues and opportunities (See Appendix A).

The plan goals 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. A sixth area, inclusion, was identified through the planning sessions and is incorporated into each of the five other goals.

The goal statements consist of the goal itself followed by important attributes of the goal. The attributes are then illustrated by examples. That is, the bullet point lists in the goal statements are simply illustrations of the attribute, not a comprehensive inventory of how the attribute might be evidenced.

Camp is one of the few developmentally-supportive communities some young people ever get a chance to enjoy.

The five goals are broadly and intentionally associated with the core outcomes and systems outlined in the Master Plan (i.e., intellectual management, relationship management, and fiscal management)

1. Member and Customer Services. [Relationship Management] Develop and administer a well coordinated value adding member and customer services (including education) delivery system.

The services and delivery systems will be:

- **strategic** (e.g., supports the strategic interest in human / youth development)
- **flexible** in structure and content (e.g., accommodates high 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)

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

The awareness and advocacy campaign will be:

- **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 the ACA message is most readily accepted)
- **coordinated** (e.g., with issues and needs across ACA such as the development of key ACA partners)

3. Marketing. [Intellectual Management] Develop, coordinate and manage an intentional marketing system (including a related research capability).

The marketing system will be:

- **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)

4. Communication, Administration and Infrastructure. [Intellectual Management] Develop, coordinate, promote and improve core organizational capabilities.

The organizational capabilities will be:

- **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)

5. Funds Development / Financial Management. [Fiscal Management] Design and employ a funds development / fiscal capital management capability.

The fiscal capability will:

- **meet the immediate operational needs** of ACA
- **provide sustainable diversity** in funding strategies and sources
- **anticipate and facilitate the development of funds** for future needs (investments)

- **focus** on core fiscal model issues (e.g., growth of non-dues revenue)
- **fairly** provide for the sharing of funds across ACA to help achieve the public mission

During both the planning sessions inclusion was cited as an important goal for ACA. Specifically the volunteer and staff leadership cited the need to implement new and promote existing vehicles to intentionally equip and advance cultural, socio-economic, and special needs diversity across the camp community. Participants at the planning sessions further noted that ACA inclusion initiatives needed to be focused on priority communities, and effectively communicate the value of the camp experience for these communities of interest. In crafting the business plan the key inclusion objectives identified in the planning sessions were integrated into the five goals. At the same time, the broader issue of pursuing and achieving inclusion across ACA is elevated to stand with the National Board of Directors diversity policy.

Diversity is important
because it is right.

Those organizations that do not purposefully pursue diversity are doing a great disservice to their members, their mission and those they serve. Further, inclusion is important because it is right. It is imperative that the voices of a wide variety of people are allowed to speak into the work we do and the way we do it. The outcomes we seek are in great need in the many minority markets. Finally, diversity is not measured by the people we serve but by the level of engagement we achieve in who we serve, who we work with, and who we select as leaders. Hence, this business plan seeks to spread the benefits of the camp experience to a broader audience.

6. The Plan Objectives

As outlined above, the plan goals set forth the intentioned accomplishments over the next three years. Within each goal the plan further sets out a set of objectives. These objectives are the priority strategic accomplishments to be pursued in the 2006 fiscal year.

As highlighted in the sections that follow, the plan objectives are the centerpiece to the associated ACA national staff performance management routine. Two critical components to the performance management routine are the assignment of accountabilities and the measurement of progress. Risk assessment also plays a significant role in the consideration and pursuit of plan objectives and is addressed in the sections that follow.

Plan Objective: more specific / shorter term (1 year) intended accomplishment in line with goal.

As with plan goals, the plan objectives are highly interrelated within and in some cases, across goals. As an important next step in the planning process, specific work plans will be developed for each of the objectives. Strategies are a brief outline or summary statement of how objectives will be pursued and accomplished. They are the next layer in the planning process and will be crafted by the national staff teams responsible for the objective at hand.

The National Board has deemed member and Local Office involvement as critical to the achievement of the Ends of the organization. Board Policy (EL-9, Treatment of Members and Volunteers) requires staff to engage members and Local Offices in pursuing the Ends. Local Office staff and volunteers will be encouraged to identify objectives of interest by getting in touch with the person identified as the contact for the objective. In many cases, the contact person will identify key stakeholders and will seek out people across the association to recruit for consultation and potentially work teams.

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.

Accreditation: marketing advantage through an industry benchmark.

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.

4. 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.

7. Performance Management

The American Camp Association has a long and rich heritage of quality dependable performance motivated by great empathy for the camp communities they serve. The national office business plan is designed to help advance this heritage as it defines clear priorities for national staff, better integrates the commitments we make with the overall planning discipline, and more purposefully engages volunteer and local office leadership in planning and addressing the work at hand.

As highlighted in the document above, the plan objectives are the centerpiece to the associated ACA national office performance management routine. That is, plan performance is measured at the objective level. Two critical components to the performance management routine are the assignment of accountabilities and the measurement of progress. Risk assessment also plays a significant role in the consideration and pursuit of plan objectives and is addressed in the sections that follow.

The goal-specific charts that follow will align objectives with national staff teams that will be engaged in the work. For each objective a primary contact will be identified to encourage dialogue and action across ACA community. In the first half of 2005, national staff will be working to define specific work plans for each prioritized objective, identify who in the association is important to the work, and determine appropriate measures of progress.

Another important piece of work underway within the national staff is to coordinate the national staff budget and financial plan with the priorities called out in this business plan. This is scheduled to be accomplished in the April / May time frame well in anticipation of the new fiscal year, which begins July 05.

National Staff Performance Management Matrix

1	Goal	Objective	Teams	Contact	Work Plans		
					Strategies Drafted	Stakeholders Identified	Measures Created
	Member / Customer Services						
		A Collaborative three year educational strategy					
		B Risk management services for camps					
		C Business management services for camps					
		D Networking forums for members and others					
		E Services to the broader public market					
		F Develop and provide training in cultural competency					

2	Goal	Objective		Teams	Contact	Work Plans		
						Strategies Drafted	Stakeholders Identified	Measures Created
		A	Develop a coordinated, comprehensive PR campaign					
		B	Develop, implement and monitor Web site for children					
		C	Communicate on human / youth development					
		D	Develop and publish position and topical papers					
		E	Monitor state and federal legislative initiatives					

3	Marketing	Goal	Objective	Teams	Contact	Work Plans		
						Strategies Drafted	Stakeholders Identified	Measures Created
			A Grow number of members thru new categories					
			B Grow the number of camps thru new categories					
			C Grow the number of business partners					
			D Grow the number of customers purchasing from ACA					
			E Promote ACA as a resource for individuals and families					
			F Identify and learn from other organizations					
			G Assess, prioritize and translate key communications					
			H Perform audit of ways to reach targeted markets					

4	Goal	Objective		Teams	Contact	Work Plans		
						Strategies Drafted	Stakeholders Identified	Measures Created
	Communications, Administration & Infrastructure							
		A	Develop a comprehensive communication capability					
		B	Inventory and maximize infrastructure capabilities					
		C	Promote priority knowledge management forums					
		D	Implement volunteer mgmt and leadership-training					
		E	Implement national staff performance mgmt system					
		F	Develop a process to monitor progress toward diversity					

5	Goal	Objective	Teams	Contact	Work Plans		
					Strategies Drafted	Stakeholders Identified	Measures Created
	Funds Development / Financial Management						
		A Develop long-term business model					
		B Develop a comprehensive funds development capability					
		C Develop fund development strategies training					
		D Define / evaluate alternative dues structures					

8. Risk Assessment

No worthy venture is without risk and this is clearly the case with the ACA business plan. Given this reality, it is important that risks are identified and considered. As a key part of the comprehensive business plan, this section seeks to identify and address those factors that may have a negative influence on the ACA's ability to accomplish the goals and objectives outlined in the plan. Some of these risk factors may fall within the control of ACA leadership and membership, while other factors may be outside the control of the ACA. The following represent the key areas of risk for ACA in achieving the goals and objectives in the plan:

- Failure to move quickly to an expanded membership and a more diversified non-dues customer revenue mix.
 - Result: Lack of financial resources needed for new program initiatives, competing entity captures market share, etc.
 - Implications: The most significant implication to this risk is a delay in achieving plan outcomes resulting directly in a delay in fulfilling our mission and having the desired impact in the field.

- Inability of all of ACA to work together to build consensus around a shared vision, distribute resources across the sections and grow the Association.
 - Result: Inhibited participation and a resulting lackluster performance or open conflict, gridlock and missed opportunities.
 - Implications: The implications are obvious and frankly there is no contingency plan for this risk. We either find ways to work together or we never reach our potential. Facilitation past this would include increased training and strengthened staff recruitment routines.

- Inability of ACA to compete effectively for contributions from individuals and companies due to a lack of qualified staff for fund raising and development, developing corporate sponsorship and cause-related marketing programs.
 - Result: A shortfall in funding.
 - Implications: Staff assignment and development will be closely monitored as will the effectiveness of our corporate sponsorships and our cause-related marketing / public awareness programs. Flexibility will be the key in this area as well as deliberate staff recruitment.

- Broad economic conditions in the U.S. economy including but not limited to an economic downturn in the U.S. having a negative impact on camps, donors, and corporate sponsors. Informal internal estimates suggest that the nonprofit sector lags the general economy by as much as 18 months. People tend to react conservatively to a positive growth in the economy.
 - Result: Low camper attendance for financial reasons. Likewise we will face limited budgets for contributions and sponsorship funds through FY08 if the U.S. economy does not experience a sustained improvement in the first quarter of FY06.
 - Implications: Any significant downturn in the economy and any significant U.S. security breach will be immediately assessed for impact on the camp community. A key contingency plan is to build up the association's financial reserves as soon as strategically possible to enable the association to weather what ever storms may come. Also, developing and expanding alternative sources of income should be afforded a high priority.

- Public policy that negatively influence the financial health and operation of camps and ACA (e.g. Human resources requirements like background checks, wage & hour, taxation on charitable organization investments).
 - Result: Higher operating costs for camps, diminished profit margins and a shrinking pool of talent willing to work their way through the employment qualifying routines.
 - Implications: State and federal legislation and regulatory agency initiative will be closely monitored. Where appropriate and available ACA will look for ways to partner on such requirements thereby affording economies of scope.

- Dynamics of the current association headquarters location that may inhibit our ability to attract and retain well-qualified entrepreneurial individuals. Being off the beaten path is quaint and in many respects 'appropriate' for a camp association headquarters but it does not lend itself to attracting new aggressive talent.
 - Result: Ongoing difficulty to achieve plan objectives on the required pace.
 - Implications: Co-location with partners and satellites will be considered as required.

9. 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 19% 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 4 months, develop the FY 06 budget, which will dovetail with priorities articulated in the work plans.

10. Looking Forward

The national staff business plan is the next step in a process that was begun some time ago and that will continue to evolve in the future. This process includes the development of the Master Plan created by the Board and approved by the COD. Going forward, the process will include the development of work plans by national staff to breathe life into the plan. The process will also include the sustained discipline to monitor progress on the plan and to craft course corrections when and where appropriate. Each year the process may well include the gathering of staff and volunteer leadership to help national refresh objectives. Looking forward it is also assumed that the ACA planning process will mature over the coming months to provide for a more purposeful linkage with local office plans.

Critical next steps include:

- Development of work plans by national staff
- Development of final FY06 budgets (July-June cycle)
- Development of staff contacts for each objective
- Development of performance measures

It is also anticipated that staff and volunteer leadership from across the organization will have the opportunity to gather again in the fall of 2005 to provide focused counsel relative to next year's objectives as well as to the emerging planning process overall.

Appendix A – Information Technology

As noted in the text of the national staff business plan, there are a number of key enablers or critical success factors to the success of the plan. Without a doubt one of those factors, if not the most important enabling force across the entire association, is our collective information technology capacity. As used in this context, capacity means the following:

1. Our political will to share and to use common information...reflected in our willingness to participate in the process.
2. Our personal skill to participate effectively in the information processes...reflected in our willingness to personally invest in our training.
3. Our technical capabilities as represented in the systems we operate...reflected in our ability and willingness to invest in prioritized technology opportunities.

Tackling one dimension of this issue without the others is a fool's errand. It is a long held view (and rightfully so) that significant investment in technology is wasted money if the

Three dimensions to the information technology issues: the will, the skill and the technical capabilities...

business processes and internal motivations are not in place to make good use of those technologies. Likewise, all the greatest of intentions and funding is rather academic if, in the end, we as individuals in the organization are not able and willing to learn how to use the technologies we have at our disposal.

With that as background, please know that the purpose of this appendix is NOT to address all three dimensions to this issue. Rather, the purpose of this appendix is to highlight some of the initiatives underway with respect to the technical capabilities represented in the systems we operate. Suffice it to say (in this writing) that the association leadership and those who manage technology matters on our behalf need to fully understand the three facets to this issue and they need to continue to design and manage solutions within this context.

In May of 2004 the national office took a significant step forward in considering the overall information technology issues and opportunities at hand with the commissioning of an independent review and analysis of the association's information technology / association management systems (AMS). (Note: the vendor selected to complete the analysis is (a)

experienced in association management environment and (b) not related to the current ACA AMS vendor or to any other systems or technology vendor for that matter.) Clearly this first initiative was launched before the business plan goals and objectives had been identified and this is well understood by all involved in this review. As this information technology assessment moves forward, association leadership is being especially sensitive to the needs and priorities driven by the plan goals and objectives.

The initiative launched in May focused on determining and assessing the functional and technical needs for an AMS. It also documents work flows and data delivery processes, assesses business needs and system functionality of section offices and assess current systems in light of defined needs. Research is conducted as needed and two key reports are generated (i.e., Impact Report and a Findings & Recommendations Report).

As of this writing, the reports have been issued and are being socialized with relevant internal and external players (e.g., national IT staff and the current ACA AMS vendor). Next steps in the process include the detailed consideration of the findings and recommendations with an emphasis on how the issues identified will support or interact with the achievement of business plan goals and objectives. This more detailed and business-plan-specific analysis will take place in the January – March time frame.

The priority issues and opportunities were cited during the initial analysis were as follows:

1. Contact Management – the need for a more robust, comprehensive and sharable contact management capability across the association
2. Remote Access – the need for enhanced sharing of data on a section to national, national to section and section to section basis
3. E-Commerce – the need for a more comprehensive mechanized e-commerce solution
4. Third Party Product Integration – the need to more effectively and efficiently integrate separate / multiple vendor systems and modules into the data flows
5. Additional Constituent Records – the need to augment ‘standard’ information needs with special camp related needs and the ability to provide flexibility to the sections to this end.
6. Reports – more efficient standard and ad-hoc report generation

Additional / second tier issues and opportunities cited include the following.

7. Conference / Events – fundamental conference and event support
8. Education – fundamental monitoring of education participation
9. Invoicing (Membership Dues and Camp Fees) – more flexible invoicing
10. Subscription Management – fundamental subscription management
11. Online / Real-time Record Updates – more efficient and ubiquitous ability to manage records (at national and section level)

As this initiative moves forward, all efforts will be made to engage the entire ACA in this work. Like so many other issues, the information technology issues we face must be addressed on an association-wide / cooperative basis. Questions on these issues should be addressed to ACA national staff information technology team.