

A background image of a clear blue sky with several paragliders. One glider is green and yellow at the top left, a large white one is in the upper center, a yellow and purple one is on the left, a blue and white one is at the bottom right, and a small blue one is on the right. The text is overlaid on this image.

USHGA Strategic Plan

October 2005

USHGA 2006-2011 Strategic Plan

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UNITED STATES HANG GLIDING ASSOCIATION PLANNING SESSION

Executive Summary by Charles Kennison

Purpose and Scope of this Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide the Strategic Planning Committee with the significant actions and decisions taken by the Board of Directors during the March 11 & 12, 2005 planning session.

Methods

CRK Consulting Services, Inc. assisted the Executive Committee and Board of Directors as they met in a two-day planning session. Prerequisite work by the consultant included interviewing the Executive Committee and a cross section of the Board of Directors.

The primary purpose of the planning session was to identify critical issues that must be addressed to ensure the future success of USHGA. Other desired outcomes of the meeting, were to review the mission of USHGA, and identify a core group of people who would be responsible for completing a strategic plan.

Results

The mission of USHGA was reaffirmed, and **growth** was identified as the primary strategy and vision to guide a committee as they develop a strategic plan. The committee is responsible for distilling the vision of **growth**, into strategic goals with objectives. The Board of Directors defined **growth**, as “recruiting new members and retaining existing membership.” The “retention of flying sites” is also to be part of the **growth** strategy.

The Strategic Planning Committee, Executive Committee, and the Executive Director will confer and agree on the established goals and objectives. The Executive Director and Staff will develop the operational plans from the established goals and objectives. The Executive Committee will monitor the implementation of the plan.

Lisa Tate will select the members of the Strategic Planning Committee and lead them through the process of developing the plan.

Justification and Recommendations

The current average age of USHGA members is forty-seven to forty-eight. The average age of the USHGA membership will continue to climb. This trend threatens the sustainability of the organization for the long term, and can only be reversed by implementing a successful plan of growth for the organization. A strategy targeting younger generations of the population should be an integral part of the growth strategy.

Timeline for Completion of the Strategic Plan

All components of the strategic plan, with the exception of the Operational Plan, are targeted for completion by the 2005 Fall Board Meeting.

Planning Committee Chair's Report

Strategic planning is a management tool used to help an organization do a better job. Strategic planning can help us focus our vision and priorities in response to a changing environment and to ensure that members of the organization are working toward the same goals. While the strategic planning process can be complex, challenging, and cumbersome at times, it will sharpen organizational focus, so that all of USHGA's resources are optimally utilized in service of our mission.

Several key concepts in this definition reinforce the meaning and success of strategic planning:

The process is strategic because it involves choosing how best to respond to the circumstances of a dynamic environment. USHGA has many choices in the face of changing member needs, funding availability, etc. Being strategic requires recognizing these choices and committing to one set of responses instead of another. Strategic planning is systematic in that it calls for following a process that is both focused and productive. The process guides planners in continually looking at how programs and strategies fit with the vision of the organization. Strategic planning involves choosing specific priorities; making decisions about long and short term results.

Consensus on priorities must be reached at many levels, from the philosophical to the operational. While a strategic plan will not get into the details of an annual operating plan, it must articulate the major goals and priority methods the organization selects. Long-term goals have implications for short-term action: the two must be congruent for the plan to be valid and useful.

Often strategic planning and long-range planning are confused. Long-range planning generally assumes that current knowledge about future conditions is reliable enough to ensure the plan's reliability over the duration of its implementation. Strategic planning, however, assumes that an organization must be responsive to an environment which is dynamic and hard to predict. Strategic planning stresses the importance of making decisions which position an organization to successfully respond to changes in the environment. The emphasis is on overall direction rather than predicting specific, year-by-year, concrete objectives. The focus of strategic planning is on strategic management, that is, the application of strategic thinking to the job of leading an organization to achieving its purpose. Most strategic plans discuss priority goals no farther than five years out, with operational objectives identified for only the first year or so.

The primary strategic planning tool used by the USHGA Strategic Planning Committee was a group facilitation approach that involves various stages and exercises including reviewing the past of the organization and networked systems and to seek patterns for understanding. Trends that impact the organization are identified as well as what is currently being done or not done in relation to these trends. By using various creative thinking / brainstorming techniques, ideal future visions for the organization are developed and synthesized into a common future vision and related key success factors for achieving this vision. From here action plans, based on today's reality, are developed for each key success factor for attaining the common future vision including time lines and individual responsibility sign on.

The strategic planning committee met weekly or twice weekly during the course of the strategic planning process, including an intense two day face to face meeting in Seattle, WA in July. The committee was comprised of new and older USHGA Directors, as well as an equal number of members within the sports. All participants made the extra effort to ensure everyone was given the opportunity to speak and be heard during the process.

Planning Committee member Martin Beresford compiled an exhaustive amount of information with the assistance of Jayne DePanfilis and Steve Roti. Martin presented his analysis of the major issues facing our sport in “Closing the Growth Gap” during our Seattle Meeting. “Closing the Growth Gap” is included in the Appendix of this report.

Appendix 2 of Martin’s Draft identifies suggested action priorities for USHGA which are included in the key success factors in this strategic plan.

All of our long term goals are tied together and they rely on each other for their individual success, and therefore the success of the strategic plan. When discussing our initiatives in Seattle, we started with a problem based approach.

This involves the following for each problem:

- Problem Statement- Describes the individual problem and the CAUSES of the problem
- Outcome Objectives- States how the problem will change- establishes the benefits in measurable terms
- Methods- Activities to be employed to get the desired results.
- Evaluation- Plan for determining if the objectives were achieved and if the approach worked the way it was supposed to.
- Budget- Resources needed

The Problem Statement needed to:

- Relate to the long term goals
- Be within our capacity to change
- Describe current condition that is causing concern and required action
- Be supported by factual evidence
- Included investigation and discussion on the causes of the problem
- Include long term implications if the problem was not addressed

Outcome Objectives needed to:

- Relate directly to the identified problem
- Be able to be accomplished within a set time frame
- Be specific
- Be measurable

Outcome Objectives Defined:

- What or who will change
- What behavior or condition will change
- In what direction will the change be
- How much change will there be
- Within what time frame

Methods needed to include:

- Major Components: Most programs involve several implementation steps. Define and describe how each step will be implemented.
- Timeline: Provides the time frame for each step and shows who is responsible for carrying it out.

Staffing Plan: Describes staff and volunteer involvement.

Facilities and Equipment: What facilities will be required? What sort of equipment?

We were careful not to substitute methods for objectives. If indicating how much something will change in a specific time it is an objective. If indicating what we will do it is a method.

Evaluation needed to:

Clearly state measures of success

Describe what data will be gathered and how

Describe what data will be analyzed and how

Describe evaluation instruments to be used

Have a plan for modifying methods if necessary

Cost Projections (These are rough estimates only and subject to change pending budget development):

Direct expenses

-Personnel expenses including wages, fringe benefits, value of volunteer time

-Non Personnel expenses including consultants, contractors, consumables, travel, phone, etc.

-Equipment

Funding and Action Plan Priorities:

The committee tried to remain aware that there is more than one source for possible funding. We recognize USHGA cannot absorb all expenses, but we did not throw out an important program because we didn't think we could afford it. If necessary, we need to explore other funding sources. These can typically include earned income, such as fees paid for a service; business ventures; cost supported by program partners or other organizations; grants from outside funders (including USHGF); liquidation or leveraging of assets (office building); Ultimately, the implementation recommendations will lie with the ED who will make budget recommendations to the BOD where the ultimate approval lies.

The ED will work with the EC and Planning Committee to establish action plan priorities based on staff support and funding, to be completed by December 31, 2005 (action item, organizational governance)

The preliminary cost estimates for the next 3 years of the current plan are:

2006: \$31,406, of which \$41,200 has already been budgeted

2007: \$7,000 plus \$29,100 in ongoing costs

2008 \$21,200 plus \$29,100 in ongoing costs and \$8,000 in kind donations for national conference

Despite the best efforts of the strategic planning committee, a strategic plan is only as good as it's implementation. The Board must agree to focus our finances, time and other resources on the implementation of this plan in it's entirety. The USHGA Strategic Plan depends on formal approval by the USHGA Board of Directors. For this to be a truly successful strategic plan that results in enthusiastic implementation, the Board must take this approval action without dissecting the plan or lobbying for personal agendas.

USHGA's Strategic Planning Team

Urs Kellenberger

Urs Kellenberger currently serves as director of region 2. He is the Publications Chair for the USHGA and also serves on the Planning Committee. He holds an equivalent BA degree in Printing from Switzerland. He has worked in all areas of the graphic arts industry including "W" magazine in New York City. He has owned his own printing business since 1999. First purchased a day flying lesson in 1985 from Kitty Hawk Kites, and continued taking lessons in 1988 in Ellenville, NY. Urs tries to fly at least twice a week when able to break away from wife, two boys and a business. He currently lives in San Carlos, CA.

Riss Estes

Riss Estes is a 40-year-old paraglider pilot and aspiring hang glider pilot. Among his other pilot qualifications Riss is a P4, Basic Instructor and Tandem Instructor. Riss lives in Austin, Texas, but his passion for flying has him traveling extensively, keeping him in touch with a broad spectrum of the pilot community, especially the West coast. Outside of flying, Riss is a successful entrepreneur and founder of ClearCommerce Corporation, an electronic commerce provider of transaction processing and fraud protection technologies. Today, ClearCommerce is leader in its markets and provides software and services to hundreds of thousands of online businesses in 17 countries. Riss' experience in building ClearCommerce from the ground up into a multi-million dollar company give him keen and diverse insight into operational, financial, marketing and strategic aspects of growing organizations like USHGA.

Martin Beresford

Martin Beresford is a former Director of KMV Corporation, a San Francisco financial technology firm, where he was head of KMV Asia in Tokyo. Earlier, he worked in the technology and financial sectors, as Managing Partner of Nichibei America, a San Francisco firm specializing in US-Japan trade and investment; as a Vice President with Morgan Stanley in Tokyo; as a General Manager with S.G.Warburg in Tokyo; and as a management consultant with McKinsey & Company in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Amsterdam and London.

Before entering the financial services sector, he worked in senior management with Levi Strauss in the US, Europe and Japan; as a General Manager in the Inchcape Group in Japan; as a Marketing Manager with Cadbury-Schweppes; as a Brand Manager in Procter & Gamble; and as a statistician with Attwood Statistics, in London.

Earlier, he was a Lieutenant in the Parachute Regiment (British Army) where he served as a platoon commander; and he was formerly a professional boxer. He speaks and reads Japanese, and has published articles on Japanese business, international investment and economic development in The Economist and The Wall Street Journal. He holds an MA in philosophy and economics from Oxford University, and studied finance at Stanford University. He served as a committee chairman in the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, as a Director of the Japan Society of Northern California, as a member of the Bay Area Development Council, and as a Director of the Marin County Hang Gliding Association. He is a sponsor of the Cato Institute, and a member of the Institute of Noetic Sciences and of the Society for Psychological Research. His hobbies include skiing, sailing, running, music, poetry and hang gliding.

Jennifer Beach

Jennifer has served for the last three years as president of her local USHGA chapter during which time the membership more than doubled - to include more than a quarter of the pg and hg pilots in the state. Two years and running she has served as a USHGA Honorary Director. Jenn has more than ten years in project, program, and organizational management, including experience with teams from five direct to two-hundred indirect members. Corporate project budgets have ranged from \$10,000 to \$22,000,000. Successful management of resources in not-for-profit as well as corporate settings. Jennifer is energetic and dedicated to seeing tasks through while exceeding expectations. She holds a Masters of Science in Technology Management, an Advanced Certificate in Project-based Management, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Management.

Lisa Tate

Lisa Tate currently serves as Region 5 Director, USHGA Vice President, and Planning Committee Chair. She was an active BOD participant from 1982 to 1992, chairing the Public Relations Committee and serving on the Competition Committee and Membership and Development Committee. Lisa has worked in the non profit sector for over 20 years and as the Ethics Director of the Dobson Foundation for 9 years. She has assisted with strategic planning for several non profit organizations including : Des Arab, International Human Rights Action League, AZA Taxon Advisory Groups, Idaho Non Profit Development Center, Torture Victims Interpretive Services, Glass Arts Society, Arabian Horse Trust, and the American Ornithologists Union. She is a Nationally Certified Fund Raising Specialist and grant writer.

Lisa currently serves as North American Population Management Plan Manager for the Black Crowned Crane and is an elected member to the Andean Condor Species Survival Plan Steering Committee. Lisa is an advanced rated pilot and has been flying hang gliders since the late 1970's. She has been the organizer and meet director of the King Mountain Hang Gliding Championships for the last 10 years.

Warren Schirtzinger

Warren Schirtzinger is a 20-year veteran of corporate strategy, marketing and communications. He is the owner of High Tech Strategies, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in mission/vision development, strategic planning and marketing for emerging organizations.

During his career Warren has held key executive positions in Fortune 500, midsize and startup companies. He was formerly Vice President of Marketing for Ansyr Technology, Director of Strategic Programs for Advanced Marine Technology, and Global Marketing Manager for the Measurex division of Honeywell. He was also a senior consultant at Regis McKenna Inc., a world-famous PR consulting firm. Warren began his professional career in 1979 as a cost analyst for the Ohio State Bar Association.

Warren's formal education includes a BA in Chemistry from The College of Wooster (Wooster, OH), an MBA in Marketing from The Ohio State University (Columbus, OH) and an associate degree in German language from The Goethe Institute (Murnau, Germany). Warren has been a hang glider pilot since 1994.

Jayne DePanfilis

Jayne DePanfilis has served as the executive director of the USHGA and the USHGF since 2001. Prior to joining the staff, she served as Director of Marketing at Kitty Hawk Kites and Director of Operations at Lookout Mountain Flight Park. As Director of Marketing at Kitty Hawk Kites, Jayne was a member of the strategic planning team and participated in the strategic planning process for nearly five years. In addition to being an active participant in the strategic planning process, she developed, implemented and managed that organization's annual marketing plan and budget and managed sales for all recreational activities, including hang gliding. She also served as a marketing and public relations liaison to the Outer Banks and NC State Department of Travel and Tourism. As Director of Operations at Lookout Mountain Flight Park, she developed, implemented and managed that organizations annual marketing plan and budget and managed the sales of hang gliding discovery flights and lesson packages.

Prior to entering the hang gliding industry, she worked in the publishing industry as Managing Editor, Manager of Advertising Sales, and Features and Production Editor for Outer Banks Magazine. She authored several guide books to the Outer Banks and worked as a freelance writer for numerous local and regional publications. She has an extensive background in small business management and real estate having served as the Manager of Marketing at Outer Banks Marketing where she prepared market studies and feasibility analyses for land development. She served as General Manager of Outer Banks Equities, a real estate investment and development firm, where she assisted the developers with real estate purchases, development and sales. Prior to that, she served as the Manager of Marketing and Manager of Mortgages for Great Atlantic Savings Bank. Jayne graduated from Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA in 1987 with an MBA in International Business and Studies.

Dick Heckman

Dick Heckman is a retired NASA engineer and former aquanaut. He was the NASA backup crewman for the Ben Franklin research submarine and Habitat Engineer for Mission 8-50 of the TEKTITE II underwater habitat, a 30 day scientific study of marine ecology. He was responsible for Zero Gravity Simulations for Skylab and a developer of the water immersion technique of simulation. He served as the US representative for Crew Systems to the European Space Agency for the Spacelab Program and after retirement from NASA, was a consultant to ESA and the German Space Agency. He came to hang gliding from general aviation and sailplanes. He is a former CFI and holds Multiengine, Instrument and Glider ratings. He was skiing at Snowmass in the winter of 74/75 and saw John Totman flying a Seagull 5. He got an H4 in 77. He is a former President of USHGA and served as CIVL representative for 11 years. He has been a steward at both HG and PG World Championships, and as an administrator of early ICPs. He is a long time PSIA certified ski instructor. Prior to becoming involved in HG, he was active in and held elective and appointed positions with the Sports Car Club of America and the United States Ski Assn.

Felipe Amunategui

Felipe Amunátegui completed his basic Hang Gliding instruction in Chile in 1979. He relocated to Cleveland, Ohio where he continued developing his flying skills and learning about design and construction by volunteering at the CGS shop in Cleveland. During the 80's Felipe traveled the US visiting all major active sites from Ellenville to Torrey Pines. Toward the late 80's he became involved with different forms of towing. The initial aero tows proved unsatisfactory due to the high speeds and low climb rates associated with early trikes. Along with Mark Nicolett, he spent a better part of the early 90's improving on winch and platform towing system. Then in the mid 90's he and other NE Ohio pilots formed a towing coop that still operates today. He holds an Advanced HG rating, and ATP rating, and appointments as an Administrator and as an Observer, and he has served as Regional Director for Region 9 since 2000. On 2004 he was elected Treasurer of the USHGA.

Steve Kroop

Jim Zieset

Vision Development

Introduction

USHGA is in more desperate need of a guiding vision than most organizations. Membership in USHGA is voluntary and members are geographically dispersed. So we naturally have a difficult time keeping everyone informed, united and working toward a common goal. To create a vision that will help us overcome these built-in disadvantages, we must use the most professional, hardened, industrial-strength vision development model we can find.

The planning committee decided to follow the process used by many of the worlds most enduring and successful organizations to develop a compelling organizational vision. This process is also used by thousands of organizations, big and small, including associations, churches and non-profits.

Definition

Vision is one of the least understood - and most overused - terms in the language of management. Vision is simply a combination of three basic elements:

- (1) an organization's timeless unchanging core values,
- (2) its fundamental reason for existence,
- (3) huge and audacious - but ultimately achievable - aspirations for its own future.

How Does It Work?

Every organization—whether for-profit or not—has to wrestle with a difficult question: What should change and what should never change? The great thing about a properly developed vision is it clearly answers this question.

A well-conceived vision defines the things that should never change, and also the things that must change. It defines “what we stand for and why we exist” that does not change (called the core values and purpose) and sets forth “what we aspire to become, to achieve, to create” that will require significant change and progress to attain (known as the 25-year goal).

This two-sided dynamic (preserve the core/stimulate progress) is what makes a well-conceived vision so incredibly effective. It builds a foundation that keeps us together, plus also defines our common goals and future direction.

Put another way, the most enduring and successful organizations distinguish their timeless core values and enduring core purpose (which should never change) from their operating practices and business strategies (which should be changing constantly in response to a changing world).

What's the Difference between Vision and Strategy?

People confuse terms like “mission,” “vision,” “strategy,” “purpose” and so forth into a hopelessly muddled stew of vague and fuzzy concepts. To eliminate this confusion, consider the following analogy (climbing a mountain) to demystify vision, strategy, and tactics:

Vision

Core Values: Enduring beliefs—guiding principles—to adhere to no matter what mountain you climb. These never change.

Core Purpose: The underlying “why” you climb mountains at all.

25-Year Goal: The specific mountain you are currently trying to climb.

Strategy: The route you intend to take and the general methods you intend to use to reach the top of that specific mountain.

Intermediate Goals: Intermediate objectives to the top of the mountain. If you have a 25-year goal, these would be three- to five-year intermediate goals on the way up the mountain.

Tactics: Specific methods for climbing the sections of rock and ice that confront you right now. These would be analogous to detailed annual plans for getting things done this year on the

Vision

Core Purpose

To fulfill the dream of soaring effortlessly through the sky.

25 Year Goal

Transform USHGA into an organization capable of changing the public's perception of our sport, and tripling our membership in 25 years

Core Values

Live with passion. Do it responsibly.

Know your limits. Trust yourself.

Dare to see the world from a different perspective

Vivid Description

Our reason for being is to guard the dream of free flight. We awaken in people the passion for soaring like a bird.

Twenty-five years from now, the public will see foot-launched aviation as more popular than rock climbing and safer than scuba diving.

We will receive unsolicited phone calls and letters from new pilots that say "thank you for helping me realize my life-long dream...to fly free like a bird. I am so happy to find there are people who aren't satisfied with seeing life from the ground."

We will make USHGA an invincible, cohesive organization with a unified and involved membership. We will have the precision and swiftness of The Access Fund with the maturity and accountability of the AOPA.

Long Term Goals (25 years)

Increase Membership

Growth is indicated by an increase in active hang glider and paraglider pilot participants and membership

An active pilot is defined as someone who learns and remains in the sport

-The goal is to double the membership every 10 years

Improve Public Perception

Erase the old paradigm of that the sport is for daredevils

Promote the cool factor of the sport

Increase public awareness of the personal aspects of the sport

-The goal is for 9 out of 10 people in the general public to think it's as safe and acceptable as scuba diving

Professionalize the Organization

Defined as how we get things done at an organizational level

Includes board development (accountability and education)

Includes office process development

-The goal is to be as proactive as The Access Fund and as accountable as the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)

Support Site Acquisition and Preservation

A site is defined as an actively used flying area

Active is defined as used by at least one pilot at least once a year

Acquisition is defined as opening or re-opening of a site

Preservation is defined as keeping a site open

-The goal is to ensure flying sites are in proportion with the pilot population

Assure Quality Training and Mentoring for Pilots

The product of quality training and mentoring is a pilot who demonstrates knowledge of flying, assumes an attitude of safety, and remains in the sport to at least an intermediate level.

-The acceptable measure of Quality Training is an 80% retention of graduated students (P2/H2)

Promote Safety (Equipment and Best Practices)

For our sports, safety is demonstrated by a conscious state of conservative risk management

based on pilot skills, experience, equipment, and conditions

-The goal is to reduce by half every 5 years the accident and fatality rates

Key Success Factors

Key Success Factors (KSFs) are the fairly short list of high-level milestones which we must reach if we are to achieve the vision we've been outlining. By definition, if we achieve all of our KSFs we will almost unavoidably realize our vision, and if we fail to achieve any one KSF, we will almost assuredly fail. KSFs address the key major challenges and obstacles that stand between where we currently are and achieving our vision.

- ◆ **DEVELOP AND EXECUTE STRONG INTERNAL MARKETING
(internal, within USHGA)**
- ◆ **IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY**
- ◆ **DEVELOP AND EXECUTE STRONG EXTERNAL MARKETING
TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE SPORTS**
- ◆ **SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF
INSTRUCTION**
- ◆ **CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR
SAFETY AND REDUCE ACCIDENTS**
- ◆ **PRESERVE AND INCREASE FLIGHT OPPORTUNITIES TO
MORE STRONGLY ENGAGE THE MEMBERSHIP**

A photograph of several paragliders flying in a clear blue sky. The paragliders have various colored canopies: a teal one at the top left, a large white one in the upper center, a yellow and purple one on the left, a blue one on the right, and a blue and white striped one at the bottom right. Two hang gliders are also visible, one in the bottom left and another in the top left. The text "Action Plans" is overlaid in the center in a large, bold, black serif font.

Action Plans

KSF: DEVELOP AND EXECUTE STRONG INTERNAL MARKETING

Introduction:

For USHGA to be successful in growing our sports, we must work harder to retain members. At the Spring 2005 BOD Meeting in Colorado Springs, the BOD agreed that USHGA should first concentrate on our core activities (representation, regulation, information, education, etc.) Due to a variety of events there is a disconnect between members and the Association. Many USHGA members belong to USHGA because they “need the insurance”, they do not believe they are getting much other real value for their membership. USHGA needs to become a valuable resource to its members of all skill levels. We need to continually evaluate our programs and practices to assure we are complying with member needs. The planning committee has identified areas which are in need of improvement within our existing population. These include an insufficient sense of community, and conflicts within our community (hang glider pilots vs paraglider pilots). We believe these issues contribute to lack of retention in both sports.

Causes identified by the committee for the insufficient sense of community include lack of mentoring, insufficient number of clubs / chapters, short sighted approach by some commercial interests which are detrimental to the overall good of the sports, and fewer flying related events. Identifying causes for conflicts within our community include tribal mentality, cultural differences and the manner in which paragliding was incorporated into the USHGA.

Insufficient Sense of Community

A constant factor in the 2004 Membership and Development Committee Survey of pilots exiting the sport (to date, hang gliding only) showed a direct correlation between social interaction and new pilot retention. New pilots (hang 1 and 2) frequently left the sport after their lessons were over. In most cases, they no longer had a structured curriculum and had to rely on the existing pilot population for continuing advice and mentoring. In many cases, these new pilots had enjoyed the sport, purchased equipment, etc., but left the sport when they felt they were “out there on their own”.

When addressing this issue, the committee identified outcomes which include:

- Establishing mentoring programs and emphasize the value of mentoring to the membership
- Encourage and assist pilots to establish clubs and chapters in deficient areas
- Work with schools and to promote USHGA membership at the beginning of lessons
- Promote fly-ins and competitions

Conflicts Within Our Community

The committee agrees that we will need to utilize all of our resources to accomplish the goal set forth by the BOD to grow our sports. Sealing the rift between the hang gliding and paragliding communities is a high priority and must be addressed and resolved.

Implementation:

Overall Sense of Community

Mentoring

USHGA to develop and implement a national mentoring program with basic criteria for mentors. Members will be solicited to be listed as mentors to assist new pilots in their areas. Examine Sonoma Wings Mentoring Program as example of a highly successful mentoring program. The program will be promoted at the national level through *Hang Gliding / Paragliding Magazine* and at the local level through Regional Directors, Clubs, and Chapters.

Action: Membership and Development Committee to work with Safety and Training Committee and office to develop criteria, implement and advertise program.

Timeline: Program to be in place and fully operational by May, 2006

Chapters

Establishing new Chapters was identified as a powerful way to promote USHGA programs at the grass roots level. This will require substantial work from Regional Directors to identify areas in their Regions which are chapter deficient, and to encourage and assist pilots in establishing new USHGA Chapters. One resource which is not currently being utilized by chapters is access to the Chapter News section provided in *Hang Gliding / Paragliding Magazine*. Regional Director participation will be required to enlist key volunteers to write about Chapters each month in the Magazine.

Action: ALL Regional Directors to explore and promote new Chapter possibilities in their Regions. Where feasible, assist in the formation of at least one new chapter in each Region per year, until there is an active chapter in every pilot community.

Timeline: Regional Directors to provide written report directly to the President of the Association by August 1, 2006

Action: Regional Directors to solicit articles by enlisting volunteer authors to write a section for each months Chapter News section of HG/PG Magazine. Regional Directors will be responsible for ensuring articles are written and submitted to Editor by deadline (Two months prior to publication).

Timeline: Starting November, 2005 each Region shall be assigned a month starting with Region 1 (Example: Region 1- January, Region 2- February, etc.)

Schools

When examining root causes, the planning committee was careful to address problems we felt USHGA had some control over. Because the Association does not have control over how an individual chooses to conduct their business the committee questioned how much we can do within our organization to influence schools promoting the community to new pilots. Some schools believe that by introducing new pilots to USHGA and the Magazine, they are introducing those customers to their competition, and therefore try to “shield” them from the rest of the flying community.

Rather than try to force mandatory compliance on USHGA Certified schools, the committee recommends working to educate schools on the benefits of having new pilots sign up for membership (insurance, etc.). Also, by working with schools to develop materials that will address their competition concerns, such as a newsletter for new pilots without advertising, etc.

Action: Office to work with Safety and Training Committee to develop educational program for schools, along with collateral materials, regarding the benefits of USHGA Membership.

Timeline: Status Report to EC by Spring 2006 BOD Meeting. Program to be in place and fully operational by Fall 2006.

Flying Events

Fly-Ins and competitions provide USHGA many opportunities for all aspects of the strategic plan. For internal marketing, flying events are a significant factor in promoting an overall sense of community and should not be understated.

More competitions at the local and regional level need to be fostered and encouraged. This will require examination of USHGA's current competition structure with evaluation and modification to focus on growth of the sports.

Fly-ins also need to be fostered and encouraged at the local level. Utilizing promotion in *Hang Gliding / Paragliding Magazine* is recommended, although according to Magazine surveys, pilots list reading about competitions as a low priority. The survey did not break down various levels of competitions or differentiate between fly-ins and competitions. This posed a question by the committee of whether pilots would like, for example, to read about a local fly-in but not the World Meet. Promoting fly-ins and competitions is a very valuable tool, but we obviously do not want to force the members to read articles in areas of low interest. Therefore, to promote and encourage participation in flying events, we recommend encouraging more pre-event articles in the magazine and more post-event photos.

Action: Competition Committee to work with Membership and Development Committee to develop programs to increase the number of fly-ins and unsanctioned “fun” competitions.

Timeline: Recommendations reported to EC by April, 2006

Action: *Competition Committee to develop program to increase the number of Sanctioned competitions, focusing on Regional and National Level. This includes a comprehensive review of the USHGA Competition System and how it can be revised to support the long term goals of the Association.*

Timeline: *Status Report to EC by August 2006 Conference Call. Competition Committee to have action plan developed for presentation at Spring 2007 BOD Meeting. Finalized version of plan to be presented at Fall BOD Meeting with implementation starting January 1, 2008.*

Inclusion

Revitalize the USHGA store to foster a feeling of belonging among members.

Action: *ED to investigate the possibility of reestablishing the USHGA store to sell wearables (t-shirts, hats, etc.)*

Timeline: *Report to EC on implementation of USHGA store front by March, 2006*

Implementation:

Conflicts Between Hang Gliders and Paragliders

Biwingual Equality

The Planning Committee has recognized that “Biwingual Equality” must be broadcast from the top down, starting with the Executive Committee to Regional Directors to the local level. We must all work to seal the rift that has developed, and is continuing to grow, within our community. Key USHGA officers must work personally with loud antagonists on both sides to find a middle ground. A unity message must be developed and spread to the membership.

Action: *ALL Regional Directors to proactively promote biwingual equality. Directors to open lines of communication with respected community members in their Regions who take a middle ground to vocalize their stand.*

Timeline: *Regional Directors to provide written report to the EC by Feb. 1, 2006*

Action: *Executive Committee members to personally contact key antagonists on both sides to work on finding a common middle ground.*

Timeline: *EC to take immediate action stating with November Conference Call*

Action: *Planning Committee and Marketing Committee to work on development of a unity message for hang gliding and paragliding.*

Timeline: *Unity Message developed and approved by BOD / EC by February, 2006*

Biwingual Education

One source of contention identified by the committee is the lack of understanding between the hang gliding and paragliding communities regarding flight requirements of the other's aircraft. Education on both sides will help alleviate this.

Action: Cross-over articles in HG/PG Magazine to educate membership

Timeline: Editor to take immediate action and solicit cross-over educational articles for every other issue of the Magazine for the period of two years.

Conflict Resolution

Recent evidence suggests there is a lack of unity and cooperation between hang glider and paraglider pilots in many regions of the U.S. Accusations of bias and reverse bias have been made, and some characterize this situation as an ongoing rift or conflict within USHGA.

Obviously, if USHGA wants to be successful in fulfilling its mission, steps must be taken to eliminate conflict that exists between members.

Causes

The underlying causes of this apparent rift between the hang gliding and paragliding communities include the following:

- § the manner in which paragliding was incorporated into USHGA
- § differences in behaviors, beliefs, customs and traditions between the two groups
- § strong loyalty on each side to a specific type of pilot or aircraft (hang gliding or paragliding)

IMPLEMENTATION:

The most effective way to eliminate deep-rooted conflict (such as the one that exists within USHGA) is to use the ACVLOMP model of conflict resolution. ACVLOMP can be "scaled" to resolve conflicts between two people, or two groups of people, and the process begins with the following steps:

- first get all selected participants together to explain, and reach agreement on, the overall purpose of the process
- agree that the ability to address the conflict is in the room, and that the participants have control over how this turns out
- agree on the seriousness of the issue and the need for rapid action
- obtain agreement that everyone will remain engaged until the core issues are identified and resolved to the highest possible level of satisfaction for everyone
- describe the ACVLOMP method or process so everyone understands how it will work
- meet individually with each person or group to help them prepare to meet with the other side

- identify the key issues, discover and acknowledge their role in causing and keeping the conflict alive
- gain insight into the other side's point of view
- determine what the other side really wants/doesn't want
- decide how to present your side's desires in a way the others are most likely able to hear
- decide how you want to set and maintain a tone when you meet with the other side

Stage Two

- meet with the entire group to identify and address core issues in the conflict
- agree on a template to take to USHGA members to help them address these core issues within their regions or locations throughout the country
- decide how to keep alive the agreements reached
- use the ACVLOMP model as a general road map for dialogue

The ACVLOMP Model

A - Acknowledge

The first step is to acknowledge that you're in a conflict. If some participants attempt to avoid conflict at all costs, overcoming the denial is a big step.

C - Commit

This is a commitment by both sides to change the relationship without yet knowing how. It is an agreement to stay engaged in conversation until you work through the conflict.

V - Ventilate

Emotional intensity is a barrier to resolving conflict. The purpose of venting is to "get it out," to reduce the emotional pressure so both sides can move on to resolution. Venting has no other meaning or purpose besides the release of emotional intensity. In this model, have no expectation that anything other than venting will occur at this stage. One representative talks, the others listen. Don't try to move to resolution without doing this first.

There's no "right way" to vent. But because each side wants to be heard, you may have to agree on NOT using specific behaviors such as swearing, shouting, touching, coming too close, or any others that would make it difficult or impossible for the other side to listen.

There are many ways to ventilate. You might agree that each person has 2 minutes; you might decide to do it in installments; you might simply ventilate until everyone is finished. You may return to this step more than once.

L - Listen Actively

The proper response at this step is to let the other side know you understand what they have said. Listen. Then describe what you heard. Don't try to defend or explain. Just make sure each person

understands. This may be tough to do since some might not like what they're hearing. You may discover at this point that one or both sides are not finished venting, and it may be necessary to return to the previous step.

O - Own

Conflicts, like relationships, are co-created. Each side plays a part — no one is innocent. Search for and acknowledge each side's part in creating the conflict. People are powerless if they choose to see themselves as the helpless victims. Own your part in what has happened. If you find that blaming re-starts ("you" statements), it may be that you're not done ventilating.

M - Moccasins (Empathize)

Try walking in the other person's shoes. Imagine what it would be like to be on the other side in this situation. Try describing what your experience might have been. Check with the other side to see if you understand their experience.

P - Plan, Problem Solve, Make Peace

If all the previous steps are completed it's likely when you reach this point that:

- the energy behind the conflict has dissipated,
- both sides understand each other's point of view,
- each side owns their part in the conflict and has grasped some understanding of the other side's point of view or experience.

This step is for resolution and closure. How are both sides going to resolve the situation? What are you both going to do if (when) it happens again? This step is important since no one's perfect and familiar patterns are difficult to break. In spite of your best intentions and the satisfying resolution you've achieved this time, this issue may come up again.

Action: The first conflict resolution session will be held in conjunction with the Board meeting in spring 2006. An extra day will be allocated to this activity. Directors plus key antagonists from both sides (hang gliding and paragliding) will participate in this first session.

The executive committee will work with the planning committee to coordinate and implement the first session. A template for follow-on sessions will be developed. Regional directors will be responsible for taking this process back to the chapters or clubs in their region and facilitating its delivery.

Timeline: Board meeting in spring 2006. Subsequent sessions to be scheduled at that time

Annual Convention

The Planning Committee discussed the advantage of hosting an annual convention to focus on educational meetings, seminars, equipment demos, socializing, etc. This type of event typically takes five years to gain momentum, as well as considerable volunteer efforts and coordination. Despite the challenges, the committee recommends the USHGA make a five year commitment to hosting this annual event.

Action: *President to establish an Annual Convention Committee to investigate and plan Annual Convention starting in 2008. Lisa Tate to investigate grant funding for event.*

Timeline: *First Annual Convention scheduled for 2008*

Preliminary Cost Projections:

Mentoring Program

Cost: \$0 cash + 40 hours of volunteer time

Chapters

Cost: \$2200 cash (Chapter processing and materials for 12 new chapters per year)+ 180 hours of volunteer time

Schools

Cost: \$3400 cash (Support material development and printing)+ 70 hours of volunteer time

Flying Events

Cost: \$1700 cash (printing costs, new competition information)+ 150 hours of volunteer time

Biwingual Equality

Cost: \$0 cash + 90 hours of volunteer time

Biwingual Education

Cost: \$0 cash + 36 hours of volunteer time

Conflict resolution

Cost: \$6,000 cash + 360 hours of volunteer time

Annual Convention

Cost: \$14,000 cash + \$8,000 in kind donations + 800 hours of volunteer time

ESTIMATED TOTALS:

Cash	\$27,300
In Kind	\$ 8,000
Volunteer Hours	1726

KSF: IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Introduction:

The success of this strategic plan relies heavily on an active and fully functioning Board of Directors. The Planning Committee has recognized there is an opportunity to improve USHGA's governance by its Board of Directors. USHGA must become a highly dedicated, openly managed and accountable organization. Consisting of a small professional staff directed by an elected board, we must focus single-mindedly on managing our limited resources to provide strong leadership, representation and support to members – thus achieving our stated Mission in the most cost-efficient way, while recognizing (1) the largely decentralized nature of our very small “niche” sport and (2) the resulting limitations of centralized spending programs. The Board must focus on mission relevant activities with our finances, time and other resources if we are to be successful.

One of the visionary goals of the organization is to be as nimble as the Access Fund and as accountable as the AOPA. The organization services approximately 10,000 members made up of both hang glider and paraglider pilots and fills a need not even attempted by any other organization in the US. However, changing business conditions have demonstrated a requirement for expediency and flexibility in board governance.

The Board of Directors is comprised of dedicated members who donate considerable time and financial resources to the Association. After a recent organizational assessment, using the Social Venture Partners Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool, they have come to realize that while our Board is active and involved, it is not operating at its fullest capacity.

Areas that have been identified for improvement in Board governance include clarification of roles and responsibilities of the Board and ED, ongoing Board training, new Director orientation, evaluation of Board structure, and improved communication between the Board and the Membership.

Effective governance requires strong leadership by both the Executive Director and the Board—leadership that knows and adheres to the mission, leadership that evaluates the challenges and opportunities facing the Association's programs and adapts strategies to meet them, makes the most of resources to support the Association's mission and leverages the intellectual capital and reputation of an independent board. That leadership must also recognize the special status of tax-exempt organizations and take appropriate action to fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities.

Implementation:

Clarify and review roles and governance of Board

Execute a basic planning and control system to clearly define roles and responsibilities of the executive Director, President, Executive Committee, Directors, and Committees.

The Planning committee feels one of the most important actions USHGA needs to take is to strengthen our effectiveness in management and overall organizational governance. We are suggesting a planning and control cycle with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and authorities.

An annual planning cycle consists of:

1. Long Range Business Plan including the mission statement and a summary of long term goals and strategies to achieve those goals, along with a summary of the projected revenues, expenses and capital needed to implement the LRP.

2. Annual Business Plan containing specific annual goals and the budgets necessary to implement them, keeping within the guidelines defined in the long range business plan. Once the annual business plan is agreed to by the BOD, implementation will lie with the ED, who will be accountable for achieving the annual goals defined in the ABP, within the agreed budgets. Any exceptions or variance in the ABP will be specifically approved as needed by the BOD. The ED will be responsible for developing and managing the implementation of clearly defined Annual Business plans and budgets, once they have been approved by the BOD. The ED would also be responsible for the results. The implementation of such plans and budgets would reflect the inputs and directions of the BOD and the guidance of the committees. All plans and budgets would be subject to the formal approval of the BOD, including proposed variances and exceptions from agreed plans and budgets in response to changing needs as they arise.

The ED is responsible to the BOD. The President's role is to act as leader of the BOD, which has review / approve responsibility. The BOD has final decision making responsibility and accountability to the membership. The role of the committees is to monitor, advise, and support the BOD.

Action: BOD to adopt and adhere to recommended planning and control system as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Timeline: BOD approval at October 2005 Meeting with implementation by December 31, 2005

Action: ED to work with the EC and Planning Committee to establish action plan priorities based on staff support and funding.

Timeline: Priorities established by December 31, 2005

planning and control system

Increase Opportunities for Board Development

Lack of ongoing training of Board members is not exclusive to USHGA. This is an issue all non profits face, and there are extensive resources available for ongoing Board development . Many Board members don't realize the extent of their responsibilities, the potential liabilities they assume, or to whom they are accountable. The holy grail for governance is not an organization that dots the i's and crosses the t's. It is accomplishing the organizational mission. A well-governed association is worthy of respect, loyalty and support from members, the government, the public and other stakeholders. This is a task that depends on the quality and performance of the Board. The Planning Committee recommends implementing a once yearly training session for the full Board at the Fall Meeting. This will be a one day training session to take place the day before the scheduled meeting.

Action: *EC, Planning Committee, and Organization and By Laws Committee to work together to identify training opportunities and develop curriculum for once a year Board training.*

Timeline: *Training curriculum developed by June, 2006. First training to start at Fall 2006 BOD meeting.*

New Board Orientation

Governing Boards have certain legally required duties, including duties of care, loyalty and obedience. Due to the nature of our election procedures, as well as other factors, most elected Directors come to USHGA with little or no non profit board experience. Most are also unfamiliar with the operational aspects of our organization.

A comprehensive New Director Orientation Package needs to be developed and explained to all newly elected Directors. The planning committee further recommends implementing a once yearly training session for all new Directors at the Spring Meeting. This will a half day orientation session to take place the day before the Spring BOD meeting. The Orientation will be conducted by members of the EC, Executive Director, Chair of the Organization and Bylaws Committee, and others as the President sees fit.

Action: *EC, Planning Committee, and Organization and By Laws Committee to work together to create a New Director Orientation Package.*

Timeline: *New Director Orientation Package to be completed by February, 2007*

Evaluation of Board Structure

Recent illegal activities, particularly in large, for-profit corporations, have brought much attention to the roles and responsibilities of Boards, especially to their degree of effective oversight ("oversight" as in ensuring strong, effective organizations), ethical operations and approach to compensating senior executives. Recently, the Senate Finance Committee released a draft discussing possible legislation, and Independent Sector convened a national panel to consider recommendations to improve the governance and accountability of nonprofits. The Nonprofit Integrity Act will require all non profits having

annual gross revenues of \$500,000 or more to comply with the new law. If enacted, provisions of the new law will require USHGA to restructure its Board by requiring a certain level of expertise among Directors.

Action: *Organization and By Laws Committee to draft minimum experience and commitment levels for Directors to include expectations of accountability and defined duties of the office.*

Timeline: *O&B to create minimum qualifications and job descriptions for Directors by March, 2007.*

Action: *Organization and By Laws Committee to work with Elections and Allocations Committee to evaluate Board structure and composition for effectiveness and to insure optimal governance and compliance with possible future governmental legislation if necessary.*

Timeline: *O&B to present board structure recommendations at Spring 2007 Meeting.*

Improved Communication Between the Board and the Membership

The USHGA needs to improve open-ness, strategic clarity, and communication between the Board and members. Lack of communication has unfortunately contributed to the cause of much unnecessary dissension between the Association and the membership. The Regional Directors are our closest link to the membership and they must be engaged to communicate more effectively with their constituents. The Planning Committee also feels the use of HG/PG Magazine has been under utilized to communicate major issues and decisions to our membership. Members need to be informed, especially regarding major BOD Decisions.

Action: *Strengthen the role of Directors by reviewing roles and accountability. This should be included in the O&B evaluation of Board structure. Director communication and responsiveness to members shall be a priority.*

Timeline: *To be included in minimum qualifications and job descriptions for Directors due by March, 2006.*

Action: *Increase coverage in HG/PG Magazine to include ALL major issues and Board decisions. Secretary to work with ED to write or solicit written articles for Magazine. President to initiate process with article regarding building purchase and foundation donation.*

Timeline: *Immediate*

Preliminary Cost Projections:

Increase opportunities for Board training

Cost: \$3450 cash + 25 hours of volunteer time

New Board Orientation

Cost: \$1650 cash +45 hours of volunteer time- \$500 cash per year after first year.

Evaluation of Board Structure

Cost: \$0 cash + 80 hours of volunteer time

Improved Communication Between the Board and the Membership

Cost: \$0 cash+25 hours of volunteer time

ESTIMATED TOTALS:

Cash \$5100

Volunteer Time 175 hours

KSF: DEVELOP AND EXECUTE STRONG EXTERNAL MARKETING TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE SPORTS

Introduction:

In order for USHGA to achieve its stated goal of increasing the number of active prospective pilots two things must happen. One, efforts aimed at attracting new pilots into the sports need to be enacted, and two, efforts aimed at retaining existing pilots and the new ones generated need to be enacted. Both of these are critically important, however retention is a function of internal marketing and community-building. This section of USHGA's strategic plan deals with external marketing which are marketing efforts directed at attracting new pilots to the sport.

For a prospect to become attracted to the sports of hang gliding and paragliding, three steps have to happen, in order.

(1) Prospects must become aware that the sports actually exist. Further, this initial awareness must be extended to the point where the prospect is actually paying attention above background noise

(2) Prospects must have some nominal information about the sports such that they are provoked into pursuing further information about the sports. Subsequently, further information must be available to the prospect so that a motivation to become a pilot may form. There is an assumption here that due to the nature of the sport it is not possible to make someone want to become a pilot. Rather, one can only expose prospects to the sport and awaken those willing to be awakened. However, we can target USHGA's external marketing resources into geographic and psychographic segments where a higher conversion rate from prospect to pilot is expected.

(3) There must be opportunities both for training and subsequently for flying without barriers that exceed the individuals' motivation to pursue the sport. This third step is a function of available flying sites and instruction. As with internal marketing and community-building for pilot retention, these critical components of growth must be fostered, but they are not a function of external marketing and not covered in this section.

Derived from the above, the focus of USHGA's external marketing effort should be, broadly speaking, principally a marketing communications effort directed at attaining awareness and mindshare and at providing accurate and persuasive information most likely to evoke in prospects their own latent motivation to become pilots.

Implementation:

Marketing communications can take many forms ranging from mass- and targeted-advertising in either print or broadcast media, to direct mail, to personal selling, to trade shows, etc. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Choosing the optimum approach is critical as USHGA's resources are fairly limited.

The characteristics of USHGA's free flight market are:

Small number of prospects relative to the total population size

Geographically dispersed prospects

Demographically dispersed prospects

High risk decision (i.e. to become a pilot), which is a function of

Perceived safety

High entry cost (thousands of dollars vs. a bottle of detergent)

Complex concept (flying an aircraft vs. using a hammer)

Limited budget

The small number of prospects relative to the total population size requires USHGA to reach out to a large number of people in order to make contact with a sufficient number of actual prospects. Geographic and demographic dispersion have the same effect. The high risk nature of the purchase decision and the complexity of the concept both require the use of information-rich methods of communication (i.e. a 30-second advertisement cannot convey much information, for example). The marketing communication method that best couples broad reach with information intensiveness at a relatively low cost is public relations. Public relations is the technique of feeding content to targeted media and persuading them to utilize it. The downside of utilizing public relations is reduced control – it is difficult to direct what gets published or broadcast and nearly impossible to direct whether anything gets produced at all. But on balance public relations is a highly efficient technique for achieving USHGA's goals.

Resources must be garnered for the external marketing be pursued. The Planning Committee recommends the reactivation of the Marketing Committee. The Marketing Committee will need to recruit volunteers from the board and domain expertise from the membership to develop a complete marketing plan, of which external marketing will be a large component. Within the external marketing component of the marketing plan, the above public relations process needs to be pursued by those involved with the Marketing Committee (survey the membership, identify optimum communication channels, develop the messaging, and produce the supporting materials and services). In addition, the most effective techniques other than public relations need to be identified and prioritized.

Action: Reactivation of Marketing Committee by President

Timeline: Fall 2005 Board Meeting

The process of developing a public relations initiative can be described as having four steps.

(1) The targets of public relations effort need to be identified. This means determining who is most likely to become a pilot. Research must be conducted among existing pilots to determine where rich veins of potential pilots might be found. It may be the case that people who rock climb or fly general aviation aircraft have a propensity to take up free flying. Some surveying of the membership has already taken place and continues, however the questions being asked to date are not sufficient for USHGA's external marketing needs.

Action: Marketing Committee to develop and conduct External Marketing Survey

Timeline: To be completed by March, 2006

(2) The best communication channels to reach the target must be determined (e.g. Rock Climber magazine or Aviation Week).

Action: Marketing Committee to identify optimal communication channels

Timeline: Report to Board at Spring 2006 Meeting

(3) Messaging must be developed for each target group designed to evoke interest.

Action: Marketing Committee to develop strategic external messaging

Timeline: Present for EC approval at May 2006 Conference Call

(4) Supporting materials and services must be developed. This includes the creation of a media kit (typically a folder of information for members of the press to read as background), developing a process to handle media inquiries at the national level and support initiatives at the local level, provisioning local pilot contacts who are pre-coached on how to deal with the media, a media “How-to” guide for local chapters, the development of generic brochures, the development of USHGA advertisements for use in trading ads with other publications, etc.

Action: Marketing Committee to work with Publications Committee and Office to develop Media Kit, A Public Relations Guide, Brochures, Advertisements, and other collateral materials.

Timeline: April, 2007

It should be expected that while public relations through the media may be the focus of USHGA's marketing communications effort, it is probable that there will be other marketing tactics that USHGA will need to utilize if it is to be effective. For example, a co-marketing effort with Red Bull may be pursued whereby USHGA or local pilot representatives set up a booth at various Red Bull events, and advertising swaps with complimentary magazines may be arranged. Generation and prioritization of this list of additional tactics needs to be pursued alongside the public relations effort.

Action: Marketing Committee to assist ED in developing and prioritizing additional tactics, other than public relations

Timeline: December, 2007

Dedicated marketing resources would make USHGA's marketing effort much more effective due to the increased focus as compared to an all-volunteer approach. Dedicated marketing resources could take the form of hiring an outside public relations agency and/or an internal marketing person (who could focus on internal marketing as well as external marketing). The increased resource naturally comes at a cost. An outside public relations agency could be hired for \$3,000/month, and a full-time, internal marketing hire would cost approximately twice that. The planning committee recommends that USHGA walk before it runs and start out with the lower budget approach of using volunteers at first and then hiring additional marketing resources as we begin to get traction.

Action: Marketing Committee, Finance Committee to assist ED to analyze cost and feasibility of hiring a marketing professional. Identify possible funding sources.

Timeline: Report recommendations to EC at August, 2006 conference call.

Preliminary Cost Projections:

Membership Survey

Cost: \$5,000 (already budgeted) + 95 hours volunteer time

Communication Channel Identification

Cost: \$0 cash + 100 hours of volunteer time

Messaging Development

Cost: \$0 cash + 30 hours of volunteer time

Supporting Materials and Services

Cost: \$5,000 cash + 200 hours of volunteer time

Develop and Prioritize Additional Tactics Other Than Public Relations

Cost: \$1,000 cash + 60 hours of volunteer time

Investigation of Marketing Professional

Cost: \$0 cash + 30 hours of volunteer time

ESTIMATED TOTALS:

Cash	\$11,000
Volunteer Time	515 hours

KSF: SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF INSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The USHGA BOD has called for growth of our sports. If we are to develop new pilots, we have to have the qualified instructors to teach them. At the present time we have 383 hang gliding instructors and 491 paragliding instructors for a total of 874. This means that there is an instructor for about every 12.5 members. Based on FAA numbers as of June 2005, there is a CFI for every 7.4 certificated pilots in the regulated aviation community. It is more than twice as easy to find a CFI to fly with you than find a hang gliding instructor. As of June, from 2000 to 2004, we have lost an average of 75 instructors each year. This is significantly higher than in the previous 8 years. At the present time the Membership and Development Committee is conducting interviews with expired instructors to determine why they quit. It is clear however, that we need to keep our good instructors, bring new ones along to replace those no longer active, and develop more in the under served areas of the country.

For a person to want to become an instructor and then stay active in teaching, the environment must be supportive. While not compromising our certification standards, the Planning Committee has identified a number of areas that we feel can be improved, including Certification process improvements, recertification accessibility, instructor insurance, and instructor support.

Implementation

New Instructors and Certification Requirements

Currently, information necessary for an aspiring instructor is scattered and not easily accessible. It is difficult for many to find an ICP that they can attend without significant hardship, and the apprentice requirements are very difficult to meet in many cases. Some established instructors oppose apprenticing anyone for fear of creating competition. Other instructors perceive apprentices as an extra training burden but do not know if they are expected to pay the apprentice for helping, allow the apprentice to assist for free or charge the apprentice for the opportunity for apprenticing, since there are no guide lines. Many aspiring instructors have no one to apprentice with. Apprenticeship is probably the biggest road block for these potential instructors.

USHGA currently offers little or no guidance in the area of Instructor ethic, honesty, business practices or professional standards. We need to address professional ethics standards as part of our growth strategy.

Action: Executive Director, Safety and Training Committee, and Membership and Development Committee will identify all instructor certification requirements, develop ethics standards for instructors, and determine the best method of making this information available to our membership and implement this approach.

Timeline: Action to be completed by Fall, 2006

Action: Safety and Training Committee in coordination with Membership and Development will establish a procedure to ensure an equitable number and distribution of ICPs and the dissemination of their location, date, and Administrator in a timely manner.

Timeline: Program to be completed and ready for implementation by Spring 2006

Action: *Safety and Training to review the apprenticeship requirements and determine under what conditions they may be waived or made advisory.*

Timeline: *Completed by Spring 2006*

Recertification of Current Instructors

Established instructors experience difficulties with the present recertification requirements to those in areas not well served by ICP Administrators. Most flight parks have an Administrator on staff, but for individual instructors it is too often a long expensive jaunt. Individual instructors account for around half of our new members. When you add time off work, travel, lodging and clinic costs, it is a hurdle.

Action: *Safety and Training to evaluate the recertification process and implement an online recertification capability similar to the FAAs.*

Timeline: *Spring 2007*

Instructor Liability Insurance

In our society today, the threat of lawsuit is high but many instructors are teaching without liability insurance. This becomes an issue as instructors become older and have a family to consider and assets that may be lost.

Action: *Executive Director and Insurance Committee to produce a proposal for affordable instructor liability insurance, sponsored by USHGA, so that it is economically feasible for instructors to teach.*

Timeline: *Fall 2005*

Instructor Support

In the last few years, the Safety and Training Committee has seen an increase in their workload associated with safety issues and concerns of enforcement of our requirements and procedures. This has lead to little time for instructor support. Additional support in this area is required.

Finally, very few instructors are living on what they make teaching. They're like family farmers. You've got to love the work and have another job to pay the bills. We are not unique however. This is true in general in aviation, skiing, diving and other activities. We feel that there are ways for USHGA to provide low cost support to both individual instructors and flight parks.

Action: *Executive Director to establish a contact within the office staff to provide support to Safety and Training for instructor certification and general instructor support.*

Timeline: *Spring, 2006*

Action: *Publications Committee to work with Marketing Committee to produce downloadable ads and a brochure with strategic messaging for both HG and PG.*

Timeline: Ads to be developed, designed, and made available via the USHGA web page by Spring 2006

Action: Publications Committee to investigate cost and feasibility of special issue of the Magazine, focused on external marketing, that can be individualized for instructors and schools.

Timeline: Research completed and recommendation made by Spring 2006

Preliminary Cost Projections

Certification Requirements Availability

Cost: \$0 cash + 100 hours of volunteer time

Distribution and Visibility of ICPs

Cost: \$108 Cash + 40 volunteer hours

Apprenticeship Requirements

Cost: \$348 cash + 40 hrs volunteer time

Revise Recertification

Cost: \$1000 cash +400 hrs volunteer time

Instructor Liability Insurance Investigation

Cost: \$0 cash + 25 hours volunteer time

Instructor Support

Cost: \$9200 cash + 160 hrs volunteer time

Downloadable Ads

Cost: \$500 cash + 85 hrs volunteer time

Special Magazine Issue Investigation

Cost: \$0 cash + 20 hrs volunteer time

ESTIMATED TOTALS:

Cash \$11,156

Volunteer Time 870 hours

KSF: CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR SAFETY AND REDUCE ACCIDENTS

Introduction:

Safety is an obvious and critical component to increasing the number of participants in our sports. Public perception has historically been negative. There are also conflicts within our own organization regarding a culture of safety and attempting to impose too tight of regulations on our members. The committee has noted that many pilots do not realize how drastically unsafe practices hurt the sport and poor reporting of accidents continues to be a problem.

The committee discussed the possibility of self perpetuation with glorification of unsafe practices. Our Magazine, for example, features photos which may promote or glorify unsafe practices.

Our sports offer little in the way of ongoing safety and training clinics or seminars. Planning Committee members feel this is, in part, due to liability concerns. Lack of financial motivation is also a factor.

Poor reporting of accidents continues to be a problem for the Association. Without accurate reporting, we are unable to extrapolate usable data for analysis.

Tandem accidents require special attention for several obvious reasons. Recent tandem towing accidents have resulted in insurance and FAA inquiries. Tandem flights play an important role in many aspects of the Strategic Plan and therefore tandem safety must be addressed in this plan. The growth of HG/PG will involve increased tandem towing due to urban sprawl and the greater accessibility offered by towing. In order to insure safety in this growth sector we must be vigilant to maintain and increase safety through thorough accident investigation and by constantly improving the training and continuing education of our tandem pilots.

Implementation:

Unsafe Practices and Public Perception

In an effort to increase awareness among the pilot population of how their individual actions affect the entire sport, the Planning Committee recommends education of the membership. As with all aspects of the Strategic Plan, this is tied to all other areas. By strategic messaging with internal and external marketing, we need to foster a culture of safe practices and awareness.

Action: Awards Committee to work with Marketing Committee to improve Safe Pilot Awards Program and tie to PR Program

Timeline: Revised program developed and presented to EC for approval by March, 2006.

Action: Safety and Training Committee, Marketing Committee, Publications Committee, and Editor to work together to develop recommended guidelines for Hang Gliding / Paragliding Magazine content regarding safety considerations.

Timeline: Guidelines in place by July, 2006

Action: *Marketing Committee and Editor to work with top competition and other highly respected pilots to develop articles for the Magazine that foster a culture of safety.*

Timeline: *Articles to be published on a monthly basis starting July, 2006*

Action: *Create a requirement for all USHGA Chapters to have an assigned Safety Officer.*

Timeline: *Starting with all 2006 Chapter Renewals*

Safety and Training Clinics / Seminars

Ongoing safety and training clinics are popular and key components in skill development in many other organizations. Historically, ongoing training in hang gliding and paragliding has relied on independent companies or individuals to provide seminars and clinics. USHGA has discussed ways of increasing our involvement in this area but has come to few feasible conclusions. The Planning Committee recommends the utilization of a National Convention as outlined in the internal marketing portion of this Strategic Plan to provide the venue.

Accident Reporting

The Planning Committee discussed several ways to encourage more reporting of accidents including providing a financial incentive for providing accident reports. Since accident reporting takes place at the local level, Regional Directors need to become active and involved. All Directors should be keenly aware of flight activities in their Regions, and need to aggressively investigate accidents in their areas. It was also suggested USHGA create an accident reporting database, similar to the one used in Canada (which is recognized by many organizations as the most effective accident reporting system in our sports).

Action: *Regional Directors required to solicit and provide accident reports for all accidents in their Regions within one week of any accident requiring medical attention or causing more than \$200 damage to the glider*

Timeline: *Immediate*

Action: *Safety and Training Committee to work with USHGA IT to create a national accident reporting database. Investigate Canadian method for feasibility.*

Timeline: *To be completed by August, 2007*

Tandem Safety

Comprehensive investigation and analysis by USHGA into tandem accidents needs to be immediate and ongoing, Resulting in corrective methods and policies

Action: *President to authorize a joint investigation committee on tandem safety, with immediate focus on aerotowing safety. Committee to be comprised of Safety and Training Committee, Towing, Accident, and Tandem Committees.*

Timeline: *Immediate*

Action: David Glover to survey all HG Tandem Instructors to gather initial data.

Timeline: Immediate

Preliminary Cost Projections

Tie Safe Pilot Awards to PR Program

Cost: \$0 cash+ 27 hrs volunteer time

Safety Guidelines For Magazine

Cost: \$0 cash+ 22 hrs volunteer time

Fostering a Culture of Safety

Cost: \$0 cash + 130 hrs volunteer time

Chapter Safety Officers

Cost: \$600 cash + 20 hrs volunteer time

Safety and Training Clinics / Seminars

Cost: Absorbed in Internal Marketing

Accident Reporting

Cost: \$0 cash + 264 hrs volunteer time

Tandem Safety

Cost: \$2500 cash + 150 hrs volunteer time

ESTIMATED TOTALS:

Cash \$3100

NOTE: Costs for Clinics / Seminars is absorbed in Internal Marketing Cost Projections

Volunteer Time 613 hours

KSF: PRESERVE AND INCREASE FLIGHT OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE MORE STRONGLY THE MEMBERSHIP

Introduction:

Loss and lack of flying sites has become a major issue facing our sports. The committee recognizes the USHG Foundation as playing a leading role in site preservation and acquisition. We have also identified areas where USHGA can provide valuable assistance to our members in this area. When examining root causes for lack and loss of sites we identified insufficient assistance from the office, liability issues, local pilot apathy, and lack of local resources (including skill to open sites and keep sites open). USHGA must provide the necessary resources and assistance to help open sites and to keep sites open. USHGA has made significant donations to USHGF in recent years for site preservation. USHGA and USHGF should explore cooperative programs and opportunities.

Implementation:

Assistance from National Headquarters

The Office has extensive resources available to pilots which are rarely utilized. HQ has not advertised these types of services in the past due to an already heavy work load. This is a critical issue and needs to be made a priority.

USHGA has had an official "USHGA Site Procurement Manual" in the past which has fallen grossly out of date. The Association needs to update this into a comprehensive, up to date, easy to use tool for the membership.

Action: Executive Director to make site preservation assistance a priority. Publications Committee to create recurring information box for HG/PG Magazine to continually let members know assistance is available.

Timeline: Immediate

Action: Site Management Committee and Publications Committee to work with ED to develop a comprehensive, easy to use Site Procurement Manual.

Timeline: Site Procurement Manual to be finished and available to members by June, 2007, updated on an annual basis by site management committee and office.

Liability Issues

The Executive Director has identified several frequently asked questions on liability issues and site management. USHGA shall produce a FAQ brochure to be available online and in the Magazine.

Action: Insurance Committee to work with ED to develop an online FAQ brochure for site liability issues.

Timeline: FAQ online brochure available to membership by February 2006

Local Apathy

Shrinking pilot populations have caused some sites to be lost due to lack of use. In some instances local pilots have become apathetic to site loss. The committee recognizes that once a site is lost, it is

very difficult to get back. Pilots need to be inspired to make every effort to save ALL of their sites, and not to take sites for granted.

Action: *Site Management Committee to work with Editor to solicit case history articles in HG/PG Magazine, focusing on site preservation education and inspiration for others*

Timeline: *Immediate*

Action: *Site Management Committee to work with Editor and Office to remind pilots not to take their sites for granted. Letter to be generated and sent out with insurance renewals to remind pilots.*

Timeline: *Letter to be send out starting with 2006 renewals*

Action: *Editor to post reminder in November and December issues of HG/PG Magazine for pilots to remember land owners at Christmas*

Timeline: *Immediate and ongoing*

Preliminary Cost Projections:

Site Procurement Manual

Cost: \$5000 cash + 75 hours of volunteer time

FAQ Online Brochure

Cost: \$0 cash +13 hours of volunteer time

Case History Articles

Cost: \$0 cash +30 hours of volunteer time

Reminder Letter with Insurance Renewals

Cost: \$600 cash + 5 hours of volunteer time

ESTIMATED TOTALS:

Cash \$5600

Volunteer Time 123 hours

A photograph of several paragliders flying in a clear blue sky. The paragliders have various colored canopies: a teal one at the top left, a large white one in the upper center, a yellow and purple one on the left, a blue and white one at the bottom right, and a small blue one on the right. The word "Appendix" is overlaid in a large, dark serif font in the center of the image.

Appendix

USHGA SPRING BOARD of DIRECTORS' PLANNING SESSION

MARCH 10 – 12, 2005

CRK Consulting Services, Inc. was employed by the United States Hang Gliding Association for the purpose of:

Providing a professional, external sounding board for the Executive Committee.

Facilitating a discussion that clarifies roles and boundaries in association leadership.

Increasing the cooperation and collaboration among the top leaders to ensure alignment at the top of the organization.

Beginning the preliminary stages of developing a strategic plan by reviewing and revising (if necessary) the mission of the USHGA.

Identifying any critical issues that need to be addressed to ensure the future success of the USHGA.

Identifying a core group of people who will be responsible for completing a strategic plan.

To facilitate achieving the desired outcomes, CRK Consulting Services, Inc. conducted a planning session with the Executive Committee on March 10. During this meeting, a high-level agenda was developed for the Board of Directors' planning sessions that were held on March 11 & 12.

As a prerequisite to the planning sessions held in Colorado Springs, CRK Consulting Services, Inc. interviewed a cross-section of the Board, and two previous Board Members who requested they be included in the interview process. The purpose for the interviews was to gather data that would be helpful in preparing for the planning sessions.

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW DATA – Results, Mission, Vision & Changes Needed

USHGA Results

Results for the Association had been viewed as mostly positive, for the last three years. Interviewees provided the following examples of results achieved by USHGA:

We service members well on established issues, less well on nebulous issues, such as long term airspace issues

Solvency, combination of magazines, membership cards turned around in 48 hours, Staff is proficient, poised to do great things

The bills are paid, there's money in the bank, magazine is published every month, rating cards get sent out, and insurance remains in force.

Improving the control over the instructors & improving the SOP's so office can do their work without close oversight

Good relationship with FAA, dialog with the National Forest Services & Bureau of Land Mgmt, representation at the international level governing World Championships, acceptance of the new Aero Tow Flight Park concept & the HG & PG State Park concept

We have a tandem exemption granted by the FAA—we did not get included into the sport pilot initiative.

Self-regulation, fiscal efficiency and self-sufficiency, visibly & positively influencing Federal policymaking, development of a teaching infrastructure, supporting the development of flight clubs & preserving sights

The Foundation is a new good thing

We are helpful to the sport but limping along

Simple rule and administration fixes

Better financial footing & streamlined operations

Sites are being maintained and opened, USHGA is represented on national boards & in international groups, legislation is watched closely, insurance is maintained, ratings and rating officials are maintained

Re-staffing & formalizing job responsibilities, formal protocols of operations & physical location

The Mission of USHGA

USHGA rating system, insurance & magazine: Support the sport of HG

Promote the sport of HG, it's understood & adequate for us to build on

Limited scope—support research, development, etc. of foot launched HGs—is written more like goals & objectives—nothing dynamic or compelling

Provide services to members: insurance, rating/training programs & the magazine

tl should be changed to allow motorized harnesses to launch craft high enough to soar

Providing member benefits & it is not adequate

The promotion of free flight, specifically using PG & HG, as well as PG & HG powered by engines, but still foot launched

Not sure—seems to be a member controlled sport org dedicated to the exploration & promo of all facets of un-powered ultra-light flight—if this is it, its woefully inadequate-if it is not it, unacceptably unclear.

Provide insurance, site acquisition & preservation assistance, magazine, rep us to FAA, provide training/safety programs, etc., member services—we are on the right track

Our current mission statement is vague and does not provide guidance for the issues that will face this assoc (our sport) in the near future

Growing/enhancing the sport—it was adequate

To support activities of HG & PG in the U.S.

To fight closures of current sites and safety—it is not enough

Serving membership with knowledge, rating system, insurance, magazine, will defer to others
Is it within the mission to market the sport?

The Vision for USHGA

Provide specific member services and grow the sport

To have an organization where a significant majority of the members belong because they want to not because they have to

If there is one it has not been communicated to me

Not to get sued & not to become extinct or morphed into an unrecognizable amalgamation of participants that hurl themselves into the sky outside of FAA regulations

No vision exist and no visionary

Stick to promoting foot-launched flight and helping to preserve the sites where it takes place

Support the sport & instructing, site preservation & to keep the sport safe!

Free flight on un-powered wings

We are presently trying to achieve our vision by muddling through directed by those with the most clout or most strident

Keep doing what we are doing

Focus is narrow, short-sighted, limited to supporting foot launch HG/PG non-powered flight—not adequate—where is the road going (not up) Anyone worried?

Option 1: continue to follow the same old road until the sport and org die a slow death Option 2: the org should have an enlightened, long-term vision, rather than continue its present short-sighted, narrow focus—USHGA should plan for a logical evolution based upon present & future available HG, PG and ultra-light soaring technologies, participant demographics, FAA regs (sport pilot)—raise dues, facilitate insurance for non-commercial (club) and commercial instructors—perhaps join with SSA

Good question—I'm not sure—everyone seems to have their own ideas—hopefully it will start with the Spring planning meeting

It should be: marketing/growth issues, FAA issues & urban sprawl issues—no plan, that's why Jayne & BOD asked for your help

There is no consensus on vision—we have been a fire-fighting organization

USHGA will continue to represent and support the changing faces of ultra-light, foot launched, soaring flight

Current vision is to keep the sport alive through programs—no plan for vision

Long-term joining forces with other sport aviation community, primarily sail planning while maintaining our autonomy

Perceptions of Changes Needed for USHGA

A recognition that we are part of a larger aviation community and start making better connections with the rest of the flying community

Better outreach programs to chapters

Establish a culture of tolerance and cross-discipline sharing of info, and reduce the attitude of apathy that prevails among members

More aggressive protection of our flying sites

Have a strategic plan congruent with our mission & vision that guides our activity and is periodically evaluated for its relevance

Evolve, look to the future. Make it an ultra-light soaring association, and re-engineering the training and standards system to model that of the SSA and FAA, so that there is more consistency of training, and consistency of operations among sites. Perhaps the Sport Pilot glider regs can be used as a model or may be applied more directly. This is all a new niche market, logical and available for USHGA to embrace at this time. If USHGA does not, it will be end up being a lost opportunity, and a significant mistake in the long term. Top end hang gliders are evolving into ultra-light sailplanes right now, with similar costs. With the prevalence of towing, foot-launchability is moot (and often dangerous). Many great hang glider pilots (and many of our old friends) understand these issues, and have already left hang gliding for sailplanes.

Establish a BOD who functions with the overall good of the sport in mind at all times

Develop a marketing/growth plan

Be more of a business operation than a club

If we plan to be here in the future we should buy a building and not be renting

PPG must be included for the future viability of USHGA, the number of pilots is decreasing, the number of PG pilots is growing, and the number of PPG pilots is growing even faster, PPG is PG, PG is HG,

We need the PPG folks in the fold.

Fewer directors and no directors that are honorary or at large

Make alliances with others in the flying community to leverage our resources while maintaining our autonomy.

INTERVIEW THEMES

During the interviews, several people remarked that solid plans had been developed in the past, however they were seldom implemented. Some believed the plans were “falling through the cracks” at the Executive Committee/Executive Director level. Others pointed to “lack of continuity of leadership” as the reason for plans not being realized. Others simply did not know why previous developed plans had not been carried through to fruition.

There was a general consensus by the interviewees, that the organization needed to go into an introspective mode and examine how it does business, and for what reasons. There were some members who thought things were going well, however a sense of frustration was expressed by most of the members interviewed. The frustration was often described as:

We lack a plan with clear goals and priorities

We either have no priorities or everything is a priority

We are all going in different directions (because of political factions)

We all need to be working together for the overall good of the sport or for USHGA

A sub-theme was the felt need for improved communications and follow-through on tasks, between Board Meetings. This was expressed by a number of members as “lack of accountability.” Some members remarked that communication, and work fell short of commitments made. Several members commented that a major break in the communication link was between the Regional Directors’ and their constituency. Others cited the communication gap being greatest at the Board Member/Executive Committee & Executive Director boundaries.

The above themes were a major consideration in developing the meeting process for the USHGA Board of Directors.

Although enthusiasm and passion were evident in the people that were interviewed, there did not seem to be a strong sense of confidence that any significant changes would occur because of the scheduled planning session. There were, however some exceptions. A few people cited the concrete example of the planning, implementing, and completing of financial goals for USHGA. They viewed this financial goal attainment as a model to replicate, to achieve other desired goals.

March 11 & 12 Planning Session

The meeting opened with participants identifying their desired meeting outcomes (**see attachment 1**) and behaviors that would support the achievement of the outcomes (**see attachment 2**).

The meeting outcomes developed, were consistent with data gathered by the consultant during interviews.

Following a brief discussion of the desired behaviors, fifteen volunteers developed an historical timeline of USHGA. The purpose of this exercise was to create a shared understanding of the milestones, accomplishments, trends, and challenges to the organization over its thirty year existence.

The planning group added information to the timeline as a debriefing and discussion ensued. Several members commented on the number of hang glider pilots killed during the mid seventies. It was stated that these disasters were the catalyst for the subsequent improvement in hang glider mechanical integrity, safety and training. Some members commented that the dare devil image that this era spawned, is a myth that is still prevalent today.

USHGA Perceived Strengths , Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)

The consultant shared the **strengths** of the organization, as perceived by the interviewees (**see attachment 3**). For the most part, planning participants were in agreement with the strengths that had been identified by interviewees. Although participants were given the chance to add to the list of strengths, no one chose to.

During the first planning day, participants listed what they saw as **weaknesses** within the organization (**see attachment 3**). It should be emphasized, that the lists of weaknesses developed by the participants were not discussed for clarification or understanding by the whole group, during the two day planning session. This was not by design, but dictated by what participants thought needed to be addressed, and the time boundary of the session.

The **opportunities** and **threats** gathered during the interviews (see attachment 3), were intended to be revealed and discussed during the planning session. Again, this did not occur because of time constraints and priorities.

The SWOT data is intended for the use of the Strategic Planning Team, to help them in the preparation and development of the strategic plan. The sharing of this information outside of its intended purpose may result in the data being taken out of context. Ideally, all interview themes would be discussed for clarification/understanding, and be validated or disputed by the participants taking part in the March 11 & 12 planning session. However this did not occur.

Revising/Reaffirming the USHGA Mission

The consultant asked the group if the present mission was adequate for USHGA? Following a lengthy discussion that centered on the topic of Hang Gliding and Paragliding, the existing mission was reaffirmed.

Metaphor Exercise

Working in table groups, participants were asked to fill in the blanks of these sentences: The USHGA runs like a _____.

The following answers were offered by the groups:

Extremely fit racehorse, standing in the same place

Ostrich

Pelican

Push-me-pull-you

Turkey

The USHGA organization should run like a _____.

Energizer bunny with a GPS

Bees (community that works together & knows where they are going)

Nest-building bird

Centaur

Dragon (as per McCaffery)

Dolphin

Red-tail hawk (efficient, focused & great vision, adaptable to all climates, no predators, high numbers)

Geese

Eagle

Buzzard (black vulture)

Cheetah

Bear

Person (endurance, thoughtful, keeps going)

Elephant (not white or pink)

The metaphor exercise helped to end the first planning day on a light note. It also allowed participants to explore literally, their disappointments, hopes, and vision for the organization. The group expressed their confidence in the strength, health, and capabilities of the organization. They also wondered aloud how they could unleash all of the positives to accomplish long term goals.

Planning Session – Day 2

The final planning day opened with a review of the previous day. The previous day's meeting feedback reports were generally positive. Several people expressed they were "guardedly optimistic" concerning the outcome of the planning meeting. The concerns of participants centered around nailing down something concrete to accomplish, such as goals and priorities.

One of the participants (who was the originator of the horse metaphor, was kind and talented enough to draw a picture of a horse sitting facing down the side of a mountain. A wind sock indicated a strong prevailing wind blowing in the same direction the horse was attempting to fly.

The consultant challenged the planning participants by asking them if they were to develop clear goals and priorities, how would they be implemented and achieved? What would be any different with goals established today, and goals that had been developed in previous years? How could they remove the restraining forces that were keeping the racehorse in the same place?

These questions, along with participant answers, resulted in a lengthy dialog. The discussion culminated with the USHGA Board of Directors agreeing that roles and responsibilities for implementing a strategic planning process be as follows:

The Board will establish a conceptual vision with priorities (completed during workshop).

The Strategic Planning Committee will distill the vision into strategic goals with objectives.

The Strategic Planning Committee, Executive Director, and Executive Committee will agree on the established goals and objectives

The Executive Director and Staff will develop the operational plan from the goals and objectives. The operational plan includes Action Steps (measurable), Target Date (completion), Budget Implications (measurable), and Staffing (support needed).

The Executive Committee will monitor the implementation of the plan.

Evaluation/updating of the plan will be ongoing.

Following agreement on the strategic planning process, the Board promptly established **GROWTH** as the strategy and conceptual vision for USHGA.

The planning participants defined GROWTH as:

Make flying more visible

The privilege to fly

Instructor insurance

Increase revenue

Retention of members/sites

New members

The following goals were also set by participants in their respective table groups:

Continuing to do what we are doing to allow our members to fly –cards, insurance, etc.

Make sure new pilots get what they need

Increase number& retain pilot members

Close & influential relationship with FAA

Insurance affordable & available – Instructors (liability and third party) Member (keep it affordable), third party liability, site third party & participant liability

Increase revenue

Increase visibility of sport (may be a tactic instead of an end state, but wanted to get visibility of this sport

Reward ED/Staff for accomplishing goals

Make USHGA cool (growth) – awareness that membership supports right to fly & sites

Improve public image/awareness

Tell potential members: “Can’t join USHGA” (reverse psychology)

Member services - insurance, magazine & ratings

Right to fly legal airspace

Growth in number of active pilots, USHGA members, retention of membership

Instructor & commercial insurance

Improved safety & training (including commercial insurance)

Site preservation/development

Public relations communication

Summary of Major Decisions Made

The USHGA Mission Statement was reaffirmed.

A strategic planning process with responsibilities for implementation was approved.

Lisa Tate will head the Strategic Planning Committee

An SOP will need to be written to reflect changes

The Board meeting format will change to evaluate the progress of the strategic plan (to facilitate this, work will need to be completed ahead of the Board meetings)

Consultant's Comments

It is often difficult to move beyond incremental change during strategic planning processes, without bringing in people from outside the organization. In the case of USHGA, these may include site owners, close neighbors of flying sites, the FAA, manufacturers that support flying, and people in the demographic group USHGA is targeting its growth toward.

Knowing that conducting strategic planning is often a political balancing act, I still strongly caution organizations not to stack their planning teams with traditional thinkers. It often proves to be counter-productive to intentions.

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ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1 – Desired Meeting Outcomes

Grow the organization

Direction & how to get there

Become less reactive and more proactive

Develop new priorities and how we implement

Create a doable vision

Decide how we can follow through on implementation

Become a cohesive unit

Create faith in our Board from our membership

Clarify priorities

Become a more efficient as a Board

Define marketing

Better distribution of the magazine

Better alignment overall of USHGA

Develop a 30 year vision

Resolve the conflict between the ED and EC

Develop a better relationship across the organization

Develop a plan with measurable goals

Give the ED more direction

ATTACHMENT 2 – Behaviors that Support Achieving the Meeting Outcomes

Multi-level communication

Respect/open-mindedness

Following through

Accountability

Pay attention-don't interrupt

Be concise

Avoid fancy calligraphy

Speak no evil

Listen 80% speak 20%

Commitment

Avoid dominating the conversation

Don't make it personal

Cooperation

Communication

Honesty

Flexibility

ATTACHMENT 3 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

STRENGTHS

Dedicated passionate committed people

The camaraderie of the pilot community

A large, talented and diverse pool of active members with the common goal: hurling ourselves through the air in FAA unregulated contraptions. The appeal of having answered one of humanities most primeval desires: un-powered flight. A board driven largely by altruism and members who think nothing of giving of their talent and work to advance it. Our current executive director is a demonstrated asset.

Good fiscal management

Interfacing with the pilots and the magazine

The passion towards the sport felt by the members—this passion allows people to come together to solve identified problems

Technical knowledge of pilot community

Pilot's interests are well represented on the Board

Good people on the Board, in both elected and affiliated roles. Some active volunteers that contribute a lot of time and effort. An energetic Executive Director with a sharp eye on the bottom line. Excellent working relationship with FAA and other agencies. Strong history promoting the sport. Size and structure sufficient to

acquire liability insurance, without which many locations would not be open to flying.

We have conducted ourselves well enough over 30 years that we have a good reputation with FAA & Flying community

We have self-regulated ourselves well

We are the model the FAA wants to use for similar orgs

Fierce independence of the general membership and the BOD (EGO), and loyalty to free flight

We have passion

Good track record

Ability to obtain insurance

Existence of training standards & materials, rating system, but they need revision.

Strong, loyal membership

The group overall, is very passionate about flying (safety, fun, competition, advancement, etc.) here are a handful of really motivated well meaning people that get some good work done.

Good people

Good financial position

Dedicated members & reps with some long-term vision

An organization that speaks as one voice with the FAA

WEAKNESSES

Lack of focus – no direction (by EC?) no goal setting

Lack of follow through – lots of good ideas –no implementation – stuff “gets lost”

Volunteer resource is limited in time & ability & accountability

Poor communication with the membership & with ourselves

Leadership turnover high – contributing cause to this is BOD membership, EC, & committee members

Interpretation of what issues mean

No follow thru on strategic initiatives

No system to set priorities

No system to remind ourselves of tasks/priorities between meetings

Turnover within committees.

Lack of concrete goals

Lack of marketing

Bad at measurable goal-setting

Personal agendas through micro-management of office by EC/BOD

Conflicts between EC & ED

Organization is not performance based

Self-promotion

Too many volunteers, too little follow through

Setting goals but no follow through (lack of ownership & accountability)

Instructor insurance

Not willing to embrace true business model

Fear of applying word “professional” to instructors
Fear & difficulty with change
Reactive not proactive
Communication
Lack of unified vision
Hidden agendas
Unwillingness by some people to change/act
Too much dependence/reliance on volunteers
Lack of vision for the future
Problems with the way action items are handled
Friction between PG & HG
Communication with membership (getting better)
Size of the Board
Honorary directors
Instructing to make money (structuring so instructors can make money)
Solve to market or not to market riddle
Commercial interests on the Board
Lack of nurturing Newbies

OPPORTUNITIES

Partnering with other sport aviation communities

With our financial strength we can do some great things to increase services to the membership

Sport pilot may bring us the chance to legitimately aerotow (a questionable practice up to now). This may increase the ability to generate revenue for small operations. However, this will have an initial cost that may close some small operations during the transition. Also, looking at the challenges and the evolution of sail planes and their now almost entirely club-based operations can provide guidelines and ideas about how to face new challenges.

PPG and a presence at contests & fly-ins

There are opportunities all over the place for this organization to make positive changes. Therein lies some of the problems. We need better identification of the areas of opportunity with some sort of prioritizing in order to move forward is less than a haphazard method (our normal approach).

The Association could focus on supporting the members at the individual & Chapter level

Aero-towing offers easy access to the air, but is concentrated at flight parks near urban areas. Powered launch assist systems (powered harnesses) offer some potential for growth in flatland areas where hang gliding/paragliding has been sparse due to lack of mountain launch sites. This is very contentious though, as a vocal minority are philosophically opposed to motors. A recent membership vote endorsed the support of powered harnesses, but the opponents are threatening lawsuits. More voting and angst is to come before this finally gets sorted out.

We need to accept responsibility for foot launched & motorized HG's & PG's

Take responsibility for Fed. Aviation Reg. 103

The recent \$100,000 donation to the Foundation is opening doors to site preservation. However, almost as many sites are lost to the lack of continual flight activities as are lost to urban and suburban expansion claiming the launch and landing sites.

The future: ultralight/microlight/sport pilot soaring

Many positive outcomes if we work together

Our sport is one of the best kept secrets

PG is replacing HG—HG was the king, the king is dead—long live the king. PG & PPG will dominate the future of USHGA & this may keep HG alive.

If marketed correctly, we could start to add participants gain

THREATS

Loss of land-use & airspace

Its ability to change—much of the mentality of the HG pilots is locked in the 70's—if we don't evolve we will become extinct

Aging of the current membership, cost of the equipment and difficulties accessing convenient, affordable and quality instruction may conspire to take us down the path to extinction. Affiliating with groups such as sail planes, powered paramotors, kite boarders may result in a loss of core identity. With that we will lose our ability to self-organize and self-produce. Federal encroachment into our ability to self-regulate or to access the airspace legitimately.

Mid-air with an airliner

Most of the threats are internal. Our attitudes run the gamut and slow down positive action—You should have run into some of this already.

Instructors are teaching HG & PG w/o insurance

Lawsuits because of catastrophic accidents

Attrition——10,500 membership is steady

HG over time is decreasing

PG over time is stabilizing

Diminishing access to airspace

Loss of flying sites, loss of our insurance coverage, lawsuits against the Association related to instructor training or Board decisions. Loss of members to sailplanes or powered aircraft as they become physically incapable of foot launching due to age. Lack of incoming members due to inadequate instructor numbers or lack of visibility to the general public.

Decreasing pilot population (both crafts)

The perception that we are going to be sued out of existence

FAA and Homeland Security. Hostility between the “purists” (mostly old hang glider pilots) and to BOD (trying to move the sports (hg and pg) on to new and novel areas to extend the availability of free flight. The purists don’t want to include paragliding or motor-assisted launch capabilities.

Government intervention, loss of insurance, loss of participation, loss of sites, liability

Dwindling numbers & flying sites due to being locked into an old paradigm, & lack of liability protection & reasonable insurance rates for club instructors

Personal gain at the expense of the membership (business interests on the BOD)

Increased control by FAA

Urban sprawl

Decline of membership/new members

Lack of insurance for instructors & schools

Old, non-flexible HG pilots

Lawyers, government restrictions from public land & growth of population into our flying areas