



Strategic Planning

HOW TOResources for Clubs & Societies



Why create a Strategic Plan?

*'Don't judge each day
by the harvest
you reap,
but by the seeds
that you plant'*

Robert Louis Stephenson

Students stand in elections for committees or simply join club and society for a variety of reasons. Some candidates will have a clear idea of what they wish to achieve, others may be less clear, having been persuaded to stand by friends. Whatever the case, it is important that from the earliest opportunity after the election you sit down and set some goals and targets for the year. This leaflet takes you through the process of setting goals and putting a strategic plan in place for your club/society. A Strategic Plan is a working document that states your vision for the future, your aims and objectives and how your club/society will achieve them over a period of time.

A Strategic Plan will provide your club/society with a framework for development and also performs a number of other key functions, including:

- ☑ Communicate to the Club Life Committee (CLC), your members and sponsors the future plans of the club/society
- ☑ Identify and prioritise goals, targets and areas for development
- ☑ Acts as a guide to planning activities including priority setting, resource allocation, performance monitoring processes
- ☑ Provides direction for new committees and ensures that the club/society continues to grow and the hard work of previous committees is maintained
- ☑ Aids the professionalism image of the club

Remember the strategic plan should be a working document and should be re-visited at the beginning and end of each semester to monitor progress! Be prepared for the unexpected and be ready to make adjustments. Don't lose sight of what you want to do-Keep the Big Picture in mind!



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.dcu.ie/sportsdevelopment



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STRENGTHS

OPPORTUNITIES

WEAKNESSES

THREATS

Getting Started!

Here are some guidelines to help your club/society create a strategic plan. Get a small working group to create the strategic plan. Use the expertise of your members, the CLC, the Sports Development Service, Club Coaches and your NGB.

STEP 1 – Where are we now?

In order to plan for the future you need to firstly identify where your club/society is now. The most effective method of doing this is to conduct a SWOT analysis as below:

- ❖ **Strengths** - e.g. experienced student committee
- ❖ **Weaknesses** - e.g. no participation initiatives to retain new members
- ❖ **Opportunities** - e.g. potential links with a local sports clubs
- ❖ **Threats** - e.g. reduction in membership numbers the last 2 years





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'It is better to take small steps in the right direction than to make a great leap forward only to stumble backwards'

Chinese Proverb



Strategic Planning Cycle



STEP 2 – Where do we want to go?

The next step is to clearly identify your Vision and Mission for the future!

The Vision

The ultimate purpose of a strategic plan is to deliver a desirable future. It is essential to decide, right at the outset, what that desirable future will be. This is the vision of a successful club or society. An example of a vision for a Rugby Club is:

The vision of our club is to develop rugby with an emphasis on fitness and skill development, while promoting personal health and the growth and awareness of our great sport.

The Mission

An organisation's mission statement sets out its fundamental purpose for existing - what it will do in order to deliver the vision it has set. An example of a mission for a Rugby Club is:

The Phoenix Rugby Club is dedicated to providing the highest quality rugby experience for our members, families, and sponsors both on the pitch and in our community

STEP 3 – How do we get there

The next step is to evaluate objectives and actions. Objectives are what your club/society wants to achieve, while aims are how they can be achieved. What matters is that everything in your aims & objectives are SMART:

- ❖ **Specific** – the statement should state exactly what is to be achieved
- ❖ **Measurable** – because “what gets measured, gets done” and so you know whether a target has been achieved
- ❖ **Attainable**- by everyone involved in implementation
- ❖ **Relevant**– and achievable with the resources and within the time available
- ❖ **Time-bound**– because setting a timescale and deadlines lead to action



Suggested Objectives areas to develop action plans for DCU Sports Clubs are:

Administration & Finance	Developing Leaders & Volunteers	Marketing
Coaching	Performance & Competitions	Participation
Recruitment & Retention	Communications	

STEP 4 – How will we monitor & measure results

The most important part of the strategic plan is to regularly monitor progress against the targets set. The strategic plan should be revisited at the beginning and end of every semester and should be passed on to incoming committees as part of the handover process. Don't forget to review internal and external changes identified in the SWOT, which may require changes to the strategy or affect your clubs/societies ability to achieve the objectives.

For sample Strategic Planning templates visit
www.dcu.ie/sportsdevelopment

