

## Strategic Plan guides STMA's future

**THE STMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS** met for an extra day and a half during its summer 2011 board meeting to formulate their vision for the future. That vision is captured in the association's 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, which is outlined below. The 2007-2011 plan is complete, and its accomplishments were outstanding (see "President's Message" on page 7). Some elements of the new plan build on concepts that were introduced in the previous 5-year plan; other elements clearly are new for STMA. The goal of this plan, as it has been for its previous plans, is to take STMA to the next level in advancing the association, its members, and the industry.

Consultant Joe O'Brien, CAE, facilitated the development of this plan, as he did the creation of the just completed 5-year plan, and a shorter 2-year plan that helped guide STMA for 2005 and 2006. O'Brien says he is amazed at the progress

of STMA. "When I helped to facilitate the plan for 2005 and 2006, the items that were identified in that plan are very different from those in this plan. STMA attacked those issues, accomplished those goals, and set higher and higher expectations," says O'Brien. "I am impressed how far the STMA has come in such a relatively short amount of time."

The STMA Board is vigilant in reviewing its strategic plan's progress during each board meeting. During these reviews, the Board also discusses how the industry and other factors may be impacting the plan, and makes adjustments accordingly.

The plan guides Board's discussions on partnerships and collaboration efforts. Any organization that STMA is considering an alliance with is examined relative to a fit with the Strategic Plan. Any new program or service idea that is brought

to Board is vetted against how it fits into the plan and whether its adoption will help STMA achieve its goals. The plan also serves as the basis for performance evaluation for CEO Kim Heck and her staff. Because the plan sets very specific milestones, the achievement of the plan can be quantitatively measured.

As the Board discussed the association's future, it determined that a 3-year plan is more nimble and realistic in this economy and for the rapid pace-of-change the industry is experiencing. The new plan is organized into four platforms that set the overall direction and focus for the association. Within each platform are goals and objectives. Within each objective there is an action plan with timing (short, mid, or long-term) and committee/committees assigned to help achieve the plan. Noted below are the platforms, goals, and objectives.

### STMA Strategic Plan 2012-2014

#### STRATEGIC PLATFORM I: Attract and Retain a Vibrant and Engaged Membership

**Goal:** Grow and sustain a membership at 3,800 by the conclusion of 2014

**Objective 1:** Recruit non-members who fit into STMA's current membership categories.

**Objective 2:** Use our membership growth initiative to help chapters grow.

**Objective 3:** Tap into markets that are involved on the periphery of sports field management.

**Objective 4:** Increase the membership retention rate from 71 percent to 80 percent.

#### PLATFORM II: Be Recognized as the Leader in Industry Education

**Goal:** Provide educational resources that are vital to the success of members and advance the profession

**Objective 1:** Develop education that is relevant, affordable and accessible.

**Objective 2:** Develop significant learning opportunities at the national and regional conferences.

**Objective 3:** Develop an educational platform around safety.

#### PLATFORM III: Gain Recognition and Respect for Members and the Profession from External Audiences

**Goal:** To increase awareness of the profession and visibility of members with employer groups, the media, sports organizations, athletes, and international organizations.

**Objective 1:** Create an association-wide marketing and public relations plan.

**Objective 2:** Use the environmental stewardship of members to raise awareness of the profession and enhance the image of STMA members.

**Objective 3:** Protect and advance the work of members through government relations outreach.

**Objective 4:** Develop relationships internationally that will raise the awareness of STMA.

**Objective 5:** Leverage the CSFM program to enhance recognition and status of certified members.

#### PLATFORM IV: Create Excellent Value for Commercial Partners

**Goal:** To validate the importance of commercial members to STMA

**Objective 1:** Provide a conference and exhibition that meets exhibitor expectations relative to timing, floor traffic, and the cost/value proposition.

**Objective 2:** Provide sponsorship opportunities that achieve commercial partners' goals.

**Objective 3:** Provide information to commercial partners about STMA members that helps them grow their businesses.

## Ten Common Reasons Strategic Plans Fail

By Leo J. Bottary

**WHILE THE DATA** on strategic plan failure rates is all over the map, suffice it to say it's HIGH! Below you'll find ten common reasons strategic plans fail. It's likely that the last strategic initiative to fall short in your organization could be attributed to one (or some combination) of these 10 causes.

**1. History** - You have to be mindful of your history when it comes to launching strategic initiatives. If you're the kind of organization which, just a year ago, launched a new initiative with great fanfare only for it to have died an unceremonious death, then your employees are not likely to be fooled again. They're smarter than Charlie Brown, who as you recall was repeatedly foiled by Lucy every time he was asked to kick the football. If your announcement is met with rolling eyes and a collective groan, then you stand little chance of real success no matter how brilliant the plan.

**2. People/Culture** - Knowing what to do in the abstract is usually the easy part. Knowing what YOU can do based on the unique skills and mindset of your team is an entirely different matter. Understanding your people, the culture and sub-cultures within your organization, and shared vision/values are essential to developing a plan that stands a chance of success. Failure to do so is a recipe for disaster. Dave Logan's research on "tribes" in his book *Tribal Leadership* offers a practical framework for understanding and working with your culture to achieve what Peter Senge describes as the difference between apathy/compliance and commitment/enrollment.

**3. Leadership** - How committed is your lead-

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