

Strategic Plan 2013

A Collaborative Vision for Nebraska State Soccer

ABOUT THE NEBRASKA STATE SOCCER ASSOCIATION

The Nebraska State Soccer Association has provided opportunities through the game of soccer with a commitment to service membership, provide educational opportunities, promotion, and administration of all levels, ages and venues of soccer in Nebraska for over 30 years. It represents over 24,000 youth and adult soccer players, 3,000 coaches, 650 referees and 500 administrators throughout the state, consisting of various clubs which register players (boys and girls) from ages four (4) through nineteen (19) on the youth side and any age on the adult side. Nebraska State Soccer is one of a few state associations that handle both the youth and adult programs through a single office. This brings members of all ages working together statewide.

Strategic Plan Commitment

The Board of Director's felt it was time to create a 5-year Strategic Plan to steer the board's direction, focus and vision. On April 23, 2012, the board approved to sending out RFP's to hire a vendor to facilitate the strategic plan. The board noted that board members, staff, clubs and leagues would be offered opportunities to participate.

On November 13, 2012, the Strategic Plan Committee entered into contract with Jenesis Creative Marketing to furnish Nebraska State Soccer with its best advice, knowledge and judgment with respect to the facilitation of a formal strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan Committee and Jenesis Creative Marketing immediately implemented the planning process to facilitate the plan.

Strategic Planning Process

Several organizations and individuals participated in the organization's strategic planning process. Meetings were held at various dates and locations with:

- Nebraska State Soccer Association Board of Directors
- Nebraska State Soccer Association Staff
- Large clubs from the state
- Clubs in the Southeast part of the state
- All other clubs from the Eastern part of the state

In addition, an online survey was created and data collected from clubs in Western Nebraska.

The members of the Board of Directors then participated in a one day planning session evaluating the results of the prior meetings. At the conclusion of this session, consensus was reached on the strategies contained in this plan.

The initial work on this strategic plan involved meeting with groups from around the state. These groups were divided into subgroups within the sessions, with attention paid to splitting up members of

clubs among these subgroups to facilitate feedback. **Specific questions were asked using worksheets, and the subgroups discussed each of them to determine consensus within their own working body.**

Responses were accumulated from all the initial sessions and are presented in the sections below. These responses are sorted by the number of times each was mentioned, from the highest number to the lowest number. It is expressed as a percentage in the reports.

The first section concentrated on acknowledging the mission of the Nebraska State Soccer Association.

The remaining four sections addressed the analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges of the Association.

Acknowledging/Understanding the Mission

What is it we really do?

Education resource	39%
Provide structure (rules and regs)	21%
Serve Membership	16%
Promote Soccer	13%
Develop Soccer Players	10%

How are we unique in what we do?

One state office with staff	45%
Unique skill set for players	19%
US Youth Soccer affiliation	16%
Youth and Adult membership	13%
Soccer in a football state	6%

For whom do we do it?

Member players	51%
Member clubs	30%
Nebraska Communities	11%
Potential members	8%

What is our ultimate goal in doing what we do?

Provide soccer opportunities for all levels	36%
Education based growth in membership	22%
Create good citizens	17%
Promote soccer	16%
Improve competitive teams	5%
Expand playing locations	2%
Keep soccer affordable	2%

Where do we do it?

Across the state	38%
On and off the field	25%
At the state office	9%
In our clubs	9%
At regional and national events	9%
At Nebraska Soccer Tournaments	6%
Through communication	3%

Analyzed Organization Strengths

What does the organization do well?

Responsive to Membership	22%
Communication with Membership	21%
Education – Coaches, Referees, Admin	17%
Administer Rules and Regs	14%
Maintain Leagues for Players	12%
Events-tournaments	5%
Provide insurance	5%
Provide Kidsafe Program	2%

What do others see as our strengths?

One State Organization	71%
Opportunity to Play Soccer	18%
Legacy Coaches/Parents	6%
Volunteer Driven	6%

What is the advantage of membership?

Education	27%
Ties to US Youth Soccer	24%
Insurance	18%
One State Organization	15%
League Play	12%
Kidsafe Program	3%

What can we do that our competitors cannot do?

One State Organization	41%
Affordable Membership	22%
Access to Education	11%
ODP	7%

Analyzed Organization Weaknesses

Within this organization, what could be improved?

Nebraska Soccer is out of touch with members	22%
Communication	17%
Too Many Rules	14%
Education Delivery	13%
Marketing for Growth	13%
Staff and Office Effectiveness	11%
Personal Agendas on Board of Directors	9%
More Sponsorship	2%

What are others likely to see as our weakness?

Board Effectiveness and Direction	33%
Rules and Regulations	21%
Funding	13%
Marketing	13%
Fields	8%
Personal Agendas on Board	5%
Communication	5%
Competitiveness of Nebraska Teams	3%

Where do we have fewer resources?

Education	16%
Outside Omaha	16%
Financial	16%
Administration	13%
Referees	9%
Ethnic Groups	9%
Fields	6%
Registration	6%
Rules	6%

What should we avoid getting into?

Micromanagement of Assoc.	64%
Being a Stagnant Assoc.	18%
Becoming Non-Transparent	18%

Analyzed Opportunities for the Organization

What good opportunities are open to us?

Grow Membership	19%
Educate Membership	14%
Improve Communication	14%
Market Nebraska State Soccer	14%
Establish Effective Board of Directors	9%
Establish Effective Staff	8%
Strategic Planning	6%
Create Game Opportunities	6%
Fewer Rules	4%
Outreach to Rural Areas	4%

How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?

Marketing Soccer for Growth	35%
Outreach to Grow Soccer	30%
Effectively use the Board of Directors	25%
Better use of Leagues	10%

Critical choices to make within 5 years?

Changes we should make in programming	21%
How to retain and grow members	21%
How to finance Nebraska Soccer Programming	19%
Create a plan and follow the plan	18%
Is staffing correct for our needs	13%
Availability of fields	7%

What interesting trends could we take advantage of?

Social Media	22%	Form a state super club	6%
More Small-Sided Games	17%	Outreach to rural areas	6%
Getting kids playing in college	11%	Focus on female players	3%
Soccer in underserved communities	11%	Legacy parents	3%
Collaboration of all clubs	11%	Sponsorship opportunities	3%
Embrace Professional Soccer	8%		

Analyzed Challenges for the Organization

What are the challenges we face?

Correct focus on marketing	36%
Parent education	18%
More referee education	9%
More coaching education	9%
Metro vs Rural	9%
Lack of staffing for needs	9%
Financing the Programming	9%

What could harm our organization?

Funding	50%
Club Conflicts	25%
Stagnancy	13%
Loss of membership	13%

What is our competition doing?

Making it easy to belong	50%
Fewer regulations and rules	50%

What threats do our weaknesses expose us to?

Ineffective Leadership	50%
Not reactive to the market	30%
Losing membership	10%
Financial concerns	10%

Membership Perspectives

Using the data presented in the prior pages, the groups were then able to look at what the organization does and, in their opinion, where it is now. From that perspective, they went to work setting goals for Nebraska State Soccer. Participants were asked the question, “**If money and time were not factors, what would you want to see in Nebraska State Soccer over the next 3 to 5 years?**” The responses were categorized, and then sorted by priority as given by each session held.

In order of priority

1. Staffing

- a. Staff needs consistent direction from the board – what roles do the board want to assign to the staff (i.e. marketing, development, registration, etc.)
- b. Staff needs to be focused on outreach to the clubs in all corners of the state

2. Education

- a. Primarily to coaches, then to referees and lastly to parents
- b. Train the Trainer for each district

3. Increase number of fields available

- a. Includes indoor
- b. Includes a large complex of 25 or more fields

4. State Leagues

- a. Accessible to every organization
- b. Tiered leagues

5. Marketing Soccer

- a. Build awareness of soccer
- b. Help member clubs with marketing internally

6. Rules Review

- a. Need fewer rules for play
- b. Need to make it easier to play the game

7. Bring Major Event to Nebraska

- a. Region II Championships
- b. PDL/W League

8. Build financial reserves and establish an endowment

9. Establish measureable outcomes for programming

Organization Goals

The Board of Directors met for a second session and analyzed the priorities set by the work groups. The members of the board reached consensus on the priorities the Association needed to address as part of their mid-range and long-range planning.

Priorities:

- Staffing
- Leagues
- Fields
- Education
- Marketing

Goals:

The board members looked at each priority and worked to reframe each priority as a positive goal for the organization.

- Structure staff to effectively implement the strategic plan
- Develop a state league that offers play to all levels and locations
- Maximize field utilization statewide
- Develop an education system that is accessible and affordable statewide
- Create and execute a marketing plan using all modes of communication mediums.

Expected Results

Board members then assigned key results they expected to see from each goal.

- Structure staff to effectively implement the strategic plan.
 - Executive Director facilitates the state association staff
- Develop a state league that offers play to all levels and locations
 - This must be a true statewide program for all levels of play
 - Tools must be available to organize a local league
- Maximize field utilization statewide
 - Determine the appropriate number of fields
 - Study to find the best location for fields
 - Create sustainable fields, both physically and financially
 - Work to find the best design for field facilities
 - Establish a method of coordination for the usage of fields, including fee structure

- Develop an education system that is accessible and affordable statewide
 - Accessible and easy to use for everyone
 - Establish a curriculum for each participant group
 - Players
 - Coaches
 - Parents
 - Referees
 - Club administrators
 - Measure Outcomes
 - Usage of the programs
 - Retention of coaches and referees
- Create and execute a marketing plan using all modes of communication mediums
 - Target areas
 - Retention of existing members
 - Growth of membership
 - Community support and sponsorship

Steps to Achieve Goals

STAFFING

- Executive Director facilitates staff
 - Hire accounting/registrar/clerical person
 - Hire League Director***(
 - Identify marketing/communications person
 - Identify Technical Director
 - Identify Events person (done by above directors)

* Board postponed hiring a League Director until position can be determined and budget adjusted. Current staff will be responsible for the goals under State Leagues .

STATE LEAGUES

- Identify a league director
- Establish committee
- Identify the needs of new/potential leagues all over the state
- Identify/Fix the needs of outlying programs
- Establish the league
- Start play for leagues

FIELDS

- Identify field commissioner-volunteer
- Establish a committee
- Conduct study on fields used/needed and financial requirements to maintain fields
- Final report on fields used/needed
- Create procedure for field use coordination

EDUCATION

- Identify Technical Director
- Identify and determine components of curriculum
- Establish education committee
- Set expectations and reporting mechanism

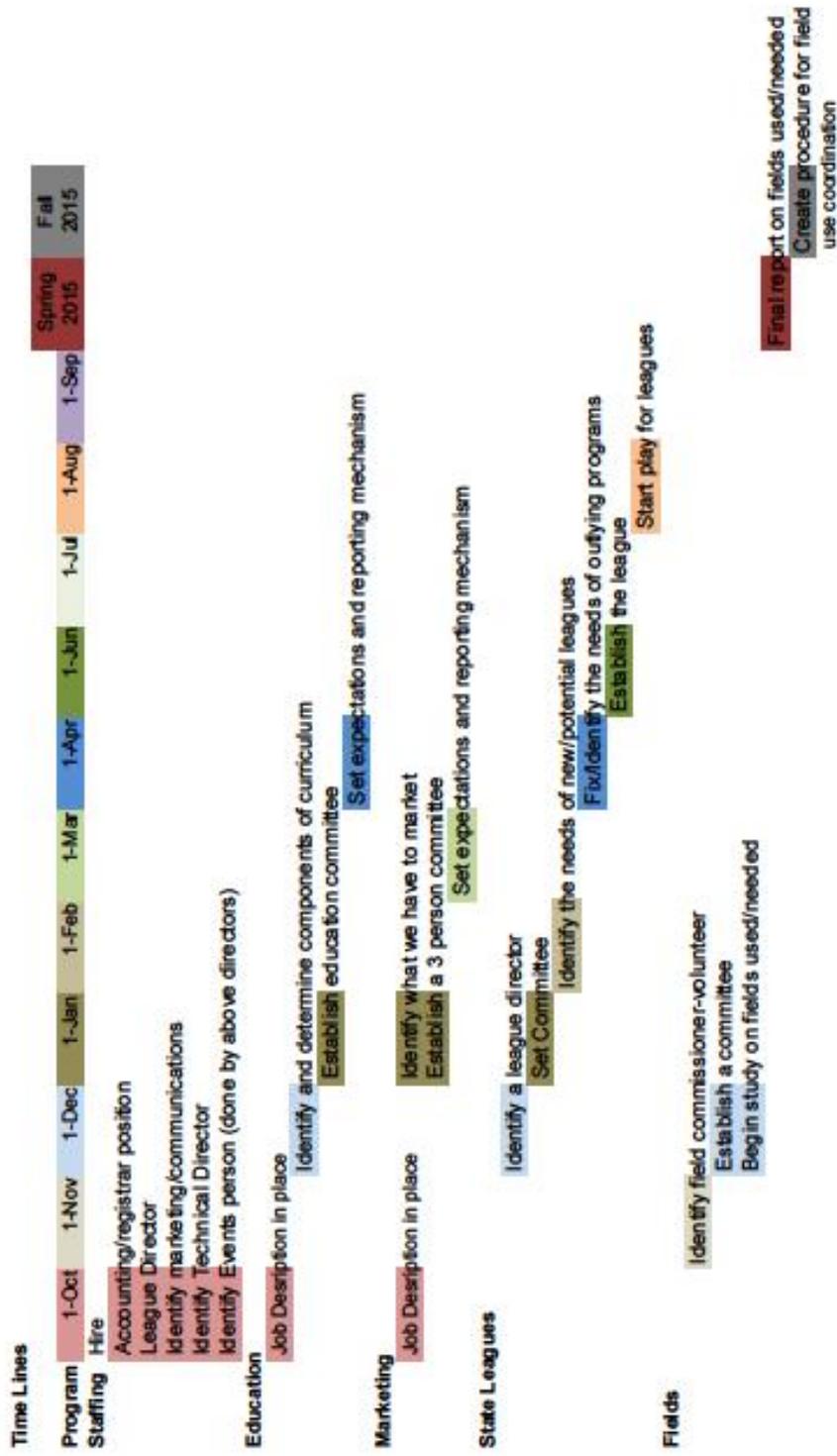
MARKETING

- Specify a person on staff dedicated to marketing
- Identify what we have to market
- Establish a marketing committee (minimum of 3 people)
- Set expectations and reporting mechanism for marketing staff person

Timeline for Strategic Plan

The Board of Directors approved a timeline for the plan. The Timeline Overlay is on the following page. At the time of approval the timeline included the hiring of a League Director. As mentioned above, the board postponed hiring a League Director. The timeline will be adjusted at the January Board Meeting. The timeline is a guide or tool, and will be fluid throughout the life of the plan.

Time Lines



Strategic Plan

Summary of Strategies

Throughout the reporting and collecting of information, common themes surfaced. The summary of the goals and objectives is to highlight those themes, and is not intended to be a substitute for the goals and objectives.

Conclusions

The Nebraska State Soccer Association is challenged by its membership to:

- Establish knowledge that the customer of the Association is the member clubs, but the players and volunteer/paid staff of each club are the end consumer. Focus needs to be set on the club and channeled through the club to their members.
- Communicate better with the member clubs
- Bring soccer to its members, rather than having a service available request
- Make it easier to play soccer
- Use existing fields better. The question to ask: Is there a lack of fields or is there a lack of coordination for the optimal use of fields?
- Board of Directors sets goals and holds responsible parties accountable in achieving those goals
- Be accountable for the execution of the strategic plan
- View the state soccer association as a whole organization and not a splintered organization based on size of club, location, resources, etc.

This strategic plan and its objectives will require ongoing monitoring and consultation with Nebraska State Soccer Association members to ensure success in the implementation and execution of these identified priorities. The intent of producing this strategic plan is to enhance existing programs and introduce new opportunities to its members, contributing to the betterment of soccer in Nebraska.

The Association will continually review the goals and objectives of this plan, and make adjustments as necessary to develop a stronger organization and deliver an enhanced experience for all players, parents, volunteers, staff and others involved in Nebraska State Soccer.

The Association needs to recognize that no such plan can succeed without the buy-in of those it will impact. The players, families and volunteers deserve the very best experience Nebraska State Soccer can provide for them. This strategic plan is a demonstration of our commitment to carry out these ambitious goals.

Keys to Successful Implementation

- There are parts of this plan that will require specific skills. Make sure the right people are in place. This includes staff, committees, volunteers and board members. The entire governing group must be on board
- It is important to have the funding and the resources available to support this implementation. Time is perhaps the biggest obstacle. It may be necessary to adjust timelines rather than try to accomplish everything as rapidly as possible
- Set lines of authority and have clear, open lines of communication with those assigned to the plan tasks. Make sure that people are held accountable for the execution of their part of the plan
- Set milestones in the progress of your plan. Meetings to review the progress of the strategic plan should be scheduled on a regular basis, depending on the time frames of the plan
- Celebrate success! Keep your focus on your strategy and vision, but take note of when the organization has achieved one of the goals

Approval and Progress

On June 17, 2013, the board directed the Executive Director to restructure staff based on the Strategic Plan and budget. The restructure does not include a League Director as mentioned above or the hiring of any additional staff. Duties of the current staff will be restructured.

On September 23, 2013, the board approved the Strategic Plan and Timeline.

A progress report will be given at the AGM on Sunday, November 17, 2013.