FUTURE. ENVISIONED.
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As a team, they identified nine Guiding Principles to serve as the pillars on which to build our foundation:

- Emphasize consistent, high-quality programs
- Enable overall cultural adaptability
- Anticipate market needs with agility
- Practice data-driven decision-making
- Invest in technology to meet member needs today and in the future
- Recognize the responsibility to invest in the future
- Effectively manage change
- Optimize operational efficiencies
- Review and adjust strategic objectives and processes continually

Through a detailed analysis of our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), paired with an environmental scan, four areas of focus emerged:

1. Growth and Retention
2. Education Programs
3. Revenue
4. Global Impact
Within the four areas of focus, specific goals, strategies and tactics were included to provide guidance and direction. In the five years since the 2010 Strategic Plan was launched, much has been accomplished, and even more has been learned.

Progress has been made in all areas:

• Membership and club growth exceeded expectations, and reached its highest levels on record.
• The Toastmasters brand was refreshed globally in 2011 to reinvigorate awareness and growth in developed and developing markets, and better meet the needs of our evolving global audience.
• Through the new Research and Analysis team, the organization has better data about our members as well as the environments in which we conduct business.
• Initial work was conducted to understand the nuances of, and support needed for, the youth and university markets.
• The club and district recognition programs were better aligned to encourage achievement at all levels.
• Significant strides have been made to improve club meeting quality and consistency through enhanced training, sharing of best practices and communication of club-level expectations.
• The revitalized education program addresses the need to modernize the communication program, renew the organization’s focus on leadership, create real-world applicability and better leverage technology to give members flexible delivery and greater access.
• Preliminary work has been conducted to identify additional sources of revenue.
• To ensure a more consistent experience regardless of borders, the organization embarked on several initiatives to create a global connectedness, including mobile applications, increased availability of digital materials, a redesigned website and greater access to translated content.

The 2010 Strategic Plan was also unique in the specificity of each goal. Indeed, many of the organization’s successes over the past five years are directly attributable to that level of detail. However, that granularity also proved to be limiting to the organization’s ability to nimbly react to market trends or unexpected member needs.

In developing the 2015 Strategic Plan, the Strategic Planning Committee chose to evaluate the development process to reignite that flexibility by refocusing on the organization’s core ideology, which is timeless, and the future we envision. In addition, fewer tactics and tasks will be included in the new plan to ensure that budgets, resources, expectations and results are better aligned.
Toastmasters’ mission statements and values are representations of our organization's core ideology. Our core ideology transcends potential enhancements related to environmental trends. The statements are essential and enduring principles that guide the organization.
A brand positioning statement is used to describe a brand’s unique place in the market and drive the brand positioning. Since 2011, Toastmasters communicated this brand positioning statement through news releases, elevator pitches, marketing materials and more:

“For more than 90 years, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million men and women of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their competence in communication so they can gain the confidence to lead others.”
ENVISIONED FUTURE

TO BE THE FIRST-CHOICE PROVIDER OF DYNAMIC, HIGH-VALUE, EXPERIENTIAL COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Toastmasters' envisioned future conveys a vision of an unrealized future for the organization. Some consider it to be synonymous with a vision statement or Collins and Porras' big audacious goal. It is a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort.
VIVID DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVISIONED FUTURE

Toastmasters International is recognized by its members as relevant and invaluable for their personal and professional success. Employers recognize Toastmasters International as an essential component of their employees’ professional development. Through its clubs, Toastmasters International provides a vibrant, growing, and successful communication and leadership development program. Club members receive a high-quality, customized experience in a supportive environment that responds to individual and community-specific needs. A clear path to success is known. Members take risks and experiment knowing that they are supported and encouraged by others to maximize their potential in reaching personal and professional goals. Toastmasters International uses technology effectively to save time, communicate and deliver services. Toastmasters International is globally recognized as a progressive, responsive and experiential program that changes individuals and the world for the better.
BUILDING THE PLAN

Using our assumptions and aspirations about the future, the Strategic Planning Committee and Board of Directors began the creative and deliberative process necessary to develop the 2015 Strategic Plan in August 2014. Each group conducted a SWOT analysis and reviewed an environmental scan prepared by World Headquarters.

In November 2014, the Strategic Planning Committee synthesized and prioritized the results from both groups.

Three areas of focus emerged:

1. CLUB EXCELLENCE
2. MEMBER ACHIEVEMENT
3. AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

An effective and workable strategic plan is typically limited to three to four goals with three to five objectives for each to ensure that the organization maintains focus. The Board confirmed that the three areas of focus, Club Excellence, Member Achievement and Awareness, Engagement and Participation, were indeed the areas that most immediately impact the success of our members and the organization.

In February 2015, the Board of Directors continued the development process by identifying the internal and external critical factors that impact the organization globally, socially, technologically, legally and competitively. See Critical Factors on the next page.

Additionally, the Board developed a list of potential initiatives. These initiatives, when executed, will support the achievement of the goals and objectives.

In June 2015, the Board reviewed and prioritized the initiatives and determined which of them are to be undertaken during the next fiscal year. Those are included in this plan.
CRITICAL FACTORS

GLOBAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC FACTORS
- We are a global society and Toastmasters must act with a global mindset.
- Political unrest occurs in countries where Toastmasters clubs exist.
- Economic fluctuations cause changes in resources and impact our members through reduced volunteerism and funds.
- Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) continue to grow.
- Mobile accessibility continues to expand. Speed and 24-hour, seven-days-a-week accessibility remain a challenge.
- Global market offers less-expensive areas for organizations to operate.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION
- Each country has unique laws and tax structures; where necessary, compliance must be established.
- Some legal systems have no accommodation for not-for-profits. The creation of for-profit entities in other countries can jeopardize Toastmasters International's non-profit status in the United States.
- Threats to our non-profit status outside the U.S. must be identified and reduced or eliminated.
- Trademark and copyright protection is our responsibility; a formal licensing program will increase brand compliance and adoption.
- Each new market has inherent risk; enhanced analysis and tracking will mitigate risk and better protect the organization.

SOCIAL VALUES AND DEMOGRAPHICS
- Communication and leadership skills are needed more than ever in all demographics.
- The needs of younger generations are different; we must understand and satisfy the needs of all generations we serve.
- Youth is a continuing opportunity. Our youth programs can potentially be expanded.
- Do individuals find value in time spent improving their communication skills?
- We want our children to have a better life; strong communication and leadership skills are essential to their well-being and success.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETITION AND STRUCTURE
- ‘Where Leaders Are Made’ is now four years old; does it resonate with today’s prospective member?
- Younger members are attracted to virtual leadership; it is no longer a requirement to lead in person.
- English is the language of business; the opportunity to practice English is important to non-English-speaking and English as a Second Language (ESL) members.
- Competition comes from a variety of sources; we must better understand the competitive landscape.

TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE
- In the near future face-to-face online will potentially be perceived as having the same value as face-to-face in person.
- The use of printed content is declining as digital content increases.
- E-learning tools are affordable and accessible. Prices will continue to drop as accessibility expands.
- Technology advances continually; what does the future hold?
- Can technology be a valuable tool beyond the club?
- Science-based, enhanced learning allows people to learn anytime, anywhere.
This 2015 Strategic Plan is characterized by these elements:

GOALS are outcome-oriented statements that guide and measure the organization’s future success. The achievement of each goal will move the organization toward the realization of the Envisioned Future.

OBJECTIVES further clarify direction and are statements that describe what the organization needs to accomplish in order to reach the goals.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES focus on achieving specific objectives or closing the gap between a measure’s performance and its target. A limited number of strategic initiatives appear in this plan. More will be approved during the annual budget cycle, a process that will better ensure that the organization has the financial resources, organizational capacity and will to accomplish them.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (3 - 5 YEARS)

CLUB EXCELLENCE
Goal: Ensure that clubs consistently deliver on the brand promise

Objectives:
• Enhance selection, development and support of leaders at all levels
• Expand and improve the use of technology
• Increase global adaptability of programs and processes
• Increase global understanding of the brand promise

Strategic Initiatives:
1. Brand Promise: Clearly define and monitor execution of the brand promise
2. Operational Support: Enhance club leader training/ensure consistent club leader training
3. District Support of Clubs: Enhance mission-focused district leader training
4. District Support of Clubs: Evolve the district recognition program to better support the DCP
5. Operational Support: Appropriately implement distance learning and training for leaders

MEMBER ACHIEVEMENT
Goal: All clubs deliver a consistent, high-quality member experience regardless of location

Objectives:
• Increase member understanding of available opportunities
• Enable personalization of the experience
• Enable member engagement
• Ensure member satisfaction
• Foster accomplishment of members’ personal goals

Strategic Initiatives:
1. Individual Member Experience: Implement mentoring for all members
2. Individual Member Experience: Create awareness of the personalized educational opportunities available
AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Goal: Heightened awareness in external target markets resulting in prospective member engagement and participation

Objectives:

- Identify and prioritize target markets and understand current perceptions in these markets
- Improve relevance and clarity of messaging for each target market
- Expand targeted messages and effective use of communication channels
- Develop systems to measure messaging consistency and effectiveness

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Marketing Strategy: Create a comprehensive marketing strategy based on the brand promise
2. Marketing Strategy: Enhance a facilitation of successful marketing at the club and district levels
3. Marketing Strategy: Engage advertising experts and media buyers
CONCLUSION

Envisioning and developing a strategic plan can be challenging. Toastmasters, like most organizations, has more opportunities and needs than can be simultaneously addressed. The primary objectives and immediate priorities of the 2015 Strategic Plan are outlined and recorded in this document. Additional initiatives that are less urgent yet still critical to Club Excellence, Member Achievement and Awareness, Engagement and Participation have been identified through the development of the plan.

What is often the more challenging part of the strategic process comes next: execution. Execution encompasses balancing and potentially adjusting priorities, project analysis and planning, resource acquisition and management, change and risk management, development of success metrics and, finally, measuring milestones and outcomes.

Each year the Toastmasters International Board of Directors will evaluate the execution of the plan to determine progress, set new milestones and begin new initiatives that support the accomplishment of the goals.

1. Club Excellence
2. Member Achievement
3. Awareness, Engagement and Participation