

GOLF AUSTRALIA



Sound Strategic Planning & Governance is the basis for a club's long term viability. A strategic plan provides a focus on the more important long term direction of the club and effective governance ensures that the board and management understand how to work together under a set of rules and agreed behaviours to achieve the strategic plan. It is critical that all clubs give time and attention to these areas and put structures in place to stay the course.

Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning is beneficial to golf clubs of all sizes. It enables a club to:

- exert more control over its destiny - deciding where it wants to be in the future
- become proactive rather than reactive - to clarify club purposes and direction
- initiate and influence outcomes in favour of the club
- adopt a more systematic approach to change and reduce resistance to change
- improve financial performance and use resources effectively
- increase awareness of its operating environment e.g. industry trends, benchmark performance and competitors
- improve organisational control and coordination of activities
- improve governance performance and employee performance.

Without adequate planning, a club can frequently deal only with immediate problems and fail to consider future needs. Consequently the club:

- tends to function on a random ad hoc basis
- will never seem to have time to anticipate challenges
- does not create conditions to deal effectively with the future.

Therefore, to overcome these limitations, a plan is necessary.

But if your club has a strategic plan, is it any good? Many are little more than a shopping list of desired or intended management (operational) actions.

In writing the plans, boards can often forget that the club exists solely for the purpose of delivering a benefit or a desired outcome for the people it serves.

A good strategic plan identifies that ends (or outcomes) are different from means (inputs).

Ends must be determined before any alternative means or courses of action can be decided to action. What are the ends your club is seeking to deliver and to whom?

A good strategic plan recognises that there can be many creative ways of achieving the desired outcomes of a club. So, the plan focusses on the ends and doesn't attempt to identify the means.

Analogy in a battle: Strategy (ends) is deciding which mountain to take. Operations (means) is deciding how to take the mountain.

Those charged with the responsibility of implementing the board's "ends" should be supported by policy that helps guide decision making.

Q. When is it time to update a strategic plan?

A. When it's no longer providing the direction your club needs.

Based on current data from Golf Management Australia's benchmark tool, the proportion of Australian not-for-profit golf clubs having, or not having, a long-term strategic plan is approximately 50/50.

Recently, both Golf Queensland and Golf Management Australia have developed excellent resources to assist golf clubs in developing a strategic plan.

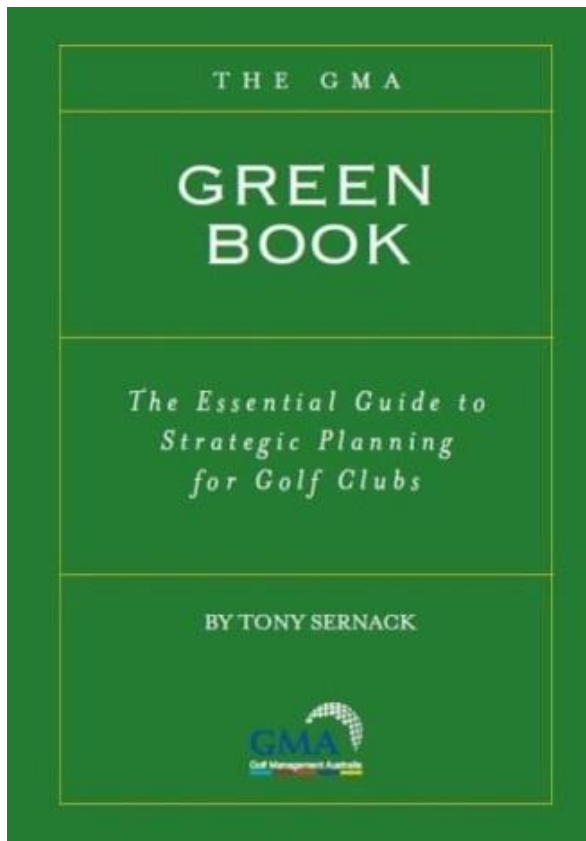


'Planning to Win' is a comprehensive publication to guide your club with the development of a strategic plan. Golf Queensland engaged Peter Phair, a Brisbane-based management consultant who specialises in strategic planning to produce the document.

Topics covered include:

- What is Strategic Planning?
 - What is the best Strategic Plan?
 - How does a 'Strategic Plan' differ from a 'Business Plan'?
 - How Do We Get Started?
 - What is the Role of the Board/Management Committee?
 - The Planning Process
 - The benefits in developing a professional plan
 - FAQs
- Strategic Plan Template – Woodford Golf Club

(The above document is reproduced in the PDF: **2. Planning to Win - Golf QLD.**)



'The Green Book - The essential guide to strategic planning for golf clubs' was produced by GMA with corporate specialist Tony Sernack. Copies of can be obtained for \$29.95 each (or \$250.00 for a pack of 10). To order copies, email the GMA Executive Officer eo@gma.org.au.

Food for thought

Dr. Alister Mackenzie, the famous golf course architect, may have best summarized the pitfalls of short term committees in his book, The Spirit of St. Andrews, when he wrote: 'The history of most golf clubs is that a committee is appointed, they make mistakes, and just as they are beginning to learn by these mistakes, they resign office and are replaced by others who make still greater mistakes, and so it goes on.'