

Executive Report

Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association
2009 Strategic Planning Session

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The Center for Public Issues Education
IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Executive Report

Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association

Logistics

The Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association held its three year strategic planning event on November 2-3, 2009 at the Rosen Hotel in Orlando, Florida. The attendees included board members and FNGLA staff members. The session was facilitated by Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources' with the lead facilitator being Dr. Nicole Stedman and co-facilitator, Dr. Tracy Irani.

Review of 2005-2009 Strategic Plan

Mission and Vision Statements

When reviewing the 2005-2009 version of FNGLA's strategic plan, attendees proposed to modify the organization's mission and vision statement. From 2005-2009, FNGLA's mission read:

The mission of the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association is to enhance its members' business success through political leadership, education, marketing, research, certification, and services.

In the strategic planning session, attendees adapted the previous version of the mission statement in order to be more succinct. The new mission statement reads:

The mission of the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association is to promote and protect the success and professionalism of our members.

Similarly, the vision statement was revised by attendees at the strategic planning session. The 2005-2009 version of FNGLA's vision statement read:

Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association is the leader of Florida's environmental horticulture industry and the trusted resource for leadership, knowledge, and business services.

In the strategic planning session, attendees proposed to revise the vision statement. Attendees agreed upon two versions of the vision statement to be used when contextually appropriate and both versions are listed below.

1. Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association is and will be the recognized leader and trusted resource for Florida's green industry.

2. The vision of FNGLA is to continue as the recognized leader and trusted resource for Florida's green industry.

Values

When reviewing the values statement for the organization, attendees at the planning session felt that the 2005-2009 strategic plan's values still accurately portrayed FNGLA. These values include:

- Organizational Excellence
- Member-focus
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Leadership Agriculture
- Continuous Improvement
- Environmental Stewardship

Industry Trends Review and Prioritization

Once the mission, vision and values statements were revisited, board members and staff examined current trends occurring within each of the strategic priority areas. The strategic priority areas included: political leadership; education and certification; marketing; membership benefits and services; and finance and administration.

Within the **political leadership priority area**, the following trends were identified:

- Regulations and Ordinances
- Changing Political Leadership
- Political Advocacy
- Reduced Resources
- Water

Within the **education and certification priority area**, the following trends were identified:

- Green
- Obtaining Certification
- Education to Younger Generation

Within the **marketing priority area**, the following trends were identified:

- Marketing outside Florida
- Refocus Customer Base – refocusing on the next generation
- Trade Shows
- Recognition of Certification
- Reclaim the Green Title
- Branding

- Attracting next generation

Within the **membership benefits and services priority area**, the following trends were identified:

- Networking Opportunities
- B to B contacts
- Face-to-Face vs. Technology
- Market Membership
- Provide more Tangible Benefits

Within the **finance and administration priority area**, the following trends were identified:

- Evaluate/Adapt/Adjust Programs in real time
- Economic Survival
- Tradeshows
- Staying abreast with technology

Based on Stedman and Irani's analysis of the FNGLA division reports, the ranking of the priority areas by those involved is as follows:

1. Political Leadership
2. Communication and Marketing
3. Member Benefits and Services
4. Education and Certification
5. Finance and Administration

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Attendees at the strategic planning session were also asked to participate in creating a SWOT Analysis. A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in putting together a successful business venture. Strengths and weaknesses refer to internal components of the organization while opportunities and threats examine external components.

The chart on the following page depicts the SWOT analysis created by attendees of the FNGLA strategic planning committee.

Strengths

Political Activity and Impact
Well Postioned
Relationships with other agencies
Diversification of Programs
Certification Recognition
Volunteers/
members/ staff/ "family"
Tradeshows
Financially Fit

Weaknesses

Membership Retention
Marketing Value of Membership
Dependence on Tradeshow Revenue
Chapter Recruiting and Relations
Spread thin/ Time Commitments
Certification Recognition
Budget (program-based)
Internal Communication

SWOT Analysis

Opportunities

Coalitions with related industry
groups
Potential Members to be recruited
More people "green" aware
Communication with new
technologies
Branding
Grants

Threats

Political Regulations/ Legislation
Not adequately prepared for disaster
Economy
Competing Associations
Pests

Moving Forward

The next piece of the strategic planning session focused on examining FNGLA’s strategic priority areas and determining if they are still important and relevant in relation to advancing the overall goals of the organization. The attendees were divided up into groups and each given a strategic priority area to examine. Within each priority area, attendees were charged to create a strategic goal that supported the priority area as well as identify key steps that must occur in order for the strategic goal to be successful.

Political Leadership Priority Area

Within the **political leadership priority area**, the following strategic goals and key steps were identified:

| Strategic Goal | Key Steps Needed | Measures of Success |
|--|---|--|
| Strengthen the FNGLA-Political Action Committee | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase PAC’s communications, visibility and importance with members 2. Increase member contributions to FNGLA-PAC | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frequency of communications highlighting FNGLA-PAC 2. Financial contributions received from members and disbursed to candidates |
| Advocate Industry’s Legislative & Regulatory Positions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuously update policy and political statements 2. Work to achieve recognition of FNGLA certification programs by municipal, and county governments as well as state agencies | |
| Communicate the Importance of FNGLA Legislative Role and Successes | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase frequency of information as to FNGLA’s involvement in legislative and regulatory successes to members and industry-at-large. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frequency of communication 2. Regular updates in <i>Greenline</i> 3. Successes blasted to members and potential members |
| Expand Grass Roots Capacity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate and train Chapter leaders on political action skills (e.g. give awards) 2. Hire field representative to support membership political | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designate and maintain Chapter contacts for grassroots action network. 2. Contacts trained in political action skills |

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| | <p>action development</p> <p>3. Share information among Chapters on local issues that may impact others</p> | |
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Education and Certification Priority Area

The following strategic goals and key steps were identified:

| Strategic Goal | Key Steps Needed | Measures of Success |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Position FNGLA Certifications as Recognized Premier/Gold Standards | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase public awareness via a consumer Web site 2. Expand business planning component as part of landscape certification 3. Target high school/college career fairs to connect students/grads to the industry | |
| Increase Awareness of Green Industry to Next Generation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Showcase industry professions as attractive entrepreneurial careers | |
| Make Research Results More Readily Available | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase promotion of NFF research studies and results 2. Increase promotion of <i>Greenline</i> 3. Increase promotion of FNGLA Endowment Fund within UF Foundation | |
| Re-evaluate Delivery of Educational Programming | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate all educational programs for “return on investment (ROI)” and utilize program-based budgeting 2. Identify education priorities 3. Coordinate with Agri-tech CEI educational program 4. Integrate more business topics into education offerings (e.g. finance, bidding) 5. Explore merits of establishing a peer-to-peer mentor program 6. Incorporate “green technology” topics into short course programs | |

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| Explore New Vehicles to Deliver Quality Education | 1. Incorporate technologies to deliver current programs online (e.g. webinars) | |
| Promote Certification to Local Governments to Require Certified Professionals | 1. Develop plan to educate and encourage local governments to require FNGLA certifications as part of their bidding, codes and ordinances 2. Use Orlando Utilities Commission program as model for entry | |

Communications and Marketing Priority Area

The following strategic goals and key steps were identified:

| Strategic Goal | Key Steps Needed |
|---|--|
| Expand and Enhance FNGLA <i>Locator</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train staff on system updates 2. Educate members as to how to maximize their use of the <i>Locator</i> 3. Make the <i>Locator</i> more simple and mobile-friendly to use |
| Strengthen External Communications | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen and coordinate use of communications with Chapters, <i>Greenline</i>, Alerts and Updates |
| Promote Florida Plants, Products and Services | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build the Florida Garden Select program <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Trademark “Florida Grown, Nationally Known (FGNK)” b. Establish a taskforce on logistics c. Assess best tradeshow to showcase FL Garden Select d. Explore partnership with container/tag producers to promote FGNK royalty revenue stream 2. Showcase in consumer website 3. Utilize FNGLA <i>Locator</i>’s printed maps 4. Work with Garden Clubs, Master Gardeners to expand message reach 5. Develop signage to promote FL Garden Select at plant sales, etc. |
| Showcase Industry as Conscientious Environmental Stewards | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey membership re: green knowledge, current practices to develop data supporting industry’s position as environmental stewards |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify focused opportunities to tap into green marketing Secure Leeds points for indoor foliage and exterior landscapes |
| Strengthen Internal Communications | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen and coordinate use of communications with Chapters, <i>Greenline</i>, Alerts and Updates |
| Promote FNGLA Professional Certifications | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop tools so certified professionals can promote their earned designations |

Membership Benefits and Services Priority Area

The following strategic goals and key steps were identified:

| Strategic Goal | Key Steps Needed |
|---|---|
| Produce Tangible Benefits and Identify “Golden Handcuffs” | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explore feasibility of i-Phone applications Develop easily accessible, tangible recruitment packets Build insurance programs (health, workers’ compensation, crop) Explore opportunities for credit card processing, etc. Identify expert resources to be made available to members Identify business benefits that also produce a new revenue stream to FNGLA |
| Develop Targeted Marketing to Recruit and Retain Members | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Chapters to commit one monthly meeting each year to focus on member recruitment Utilize vendors and tradeshow lists to target members Assess benefits of “town hall meetings” open to industry-at-large to highlight FNGLA and promote membership and Chapters Hire a commission-based, full-time staff person to sell memberships, sponsorships, ads, etc. |
| Improve Networking | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assess advantages of face-to-face vs. technology opportunities |

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| Opportunities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Develop Chapter tools encouraging interaction among members 3 Explore online forums 4 Offer a template for Chapter newsletters 5 Strengthen Chapter section of FNGLA website 6 Enhance B2B contacts via tools such as <i>Locator</i> enhancements, website resources 7 Present strong reports communicating important industry/Chapter events |
| Leadership Training | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stage an annual event for FNGLA, Division and Chapter leaders 2. Incorporate media training into leadership |

Finance and Administration Priority Area

The following strategic goals and key steps were identified:

| Strategic Goal | Key Steps Needed | Measures of Success |
|--|---|--|
| Strengthen Communications & Information Flow with Chapters | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a handbook outlining Chapter “nuts and bolts” (e.g., Chapter operations manual, Chapter finance/administration manual) 2. Delineate distinct roles for Chapters 3. Develop and provide Chapter with tools (e.g., canned video presentations, accessible online finances, insurance forms, tax filling information) 4. Hire a staff person whose primary role is to be the liaison | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Increased Chapter meeting participation and Chapter board feedback 2 Leadership training feedback |

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| | to the Chapters | |
| | 5. Collect and organize online Chapter information (e.g., bylaws) | |
| Move to Program-Based Budget Beginning with 2010-2011 Budget | | |
| Reforecast Annual Budget on a Quarterly Basis | 1. Present Board with quarterly budget updates | |
| Review and Fund Programs on a Continual Basis | 1. Evaluate programs based on participant feedback and financial ROI | |
| Develop Sponsorship Package | 1 Create sponsorship levels and year-long packages 2 Hire a commission-based staff person to solicit sponsorships, advertising, etc | |
| Develop Staff Policy and Procedure Manual | | |
| Develop IT Strategic Plan with Budget | 1. Tie IT strategic plan to technology goals | |
| Evaluate Programming Efficiencies | 1. Evaluate current programs to assess the extent to which the programs are accomplishing their goals | |

Summary

In summary, the FNGLA strategic planning session made great progress in finalizing the organization's upcoming three year strategic plan. The highlights of the strategic planning session included revising the organization's mission and vision statements, addressing industry trends occurring in each of the organization's priority areas, analyzing the organization through a SWOT analysis matrix and identifying new strategic goals, action steps and measures of success for the upcoming strategic plan. The next step includes ranking the priority areas and strategic goals to ensure the majority of the organization's effort is spent on its most important priorities