



Strategic Plan

2010

1.0 Introduction

In recent months, the Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce Executive discussed the need to revitalize the local Chamber of Commerce, raise its profile in the community and improve on the community's current perceptions of their Chamber. Having recognized the need to re-address some of the Chambers' fundamental actions, the Executive chose to conduct a visioning and planning meeting.

The Chamber of Commerce is driven solely by its membership, consisting of various local businesses and proprietors. The Red Lake Chamber of Commerce membership has remained fairly static and the Executive recognizes they must dedicate much of their efforts towards maintaining and increasing their membership. This effort is clearly reflected in their strategic directions; the Executive has focused on developing innovative ways to provide benefits exclusively to their membership, while at the same time benefiting the local business community.

The Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce has been a leader in the community for several decades and the Chamber Executive is dedicated towards creating continued success for the Chamber and its membership.

2.0 Purpose

This planning meeting was intended to assist the Red Lake Chamber of Commerce in formulating a vision for the Chamber; updating the mission statement; identifying strategic direction; and creating concrete action plans to carry the Chamber forward. The Executive spent significant time discussing how they hope to proceed as an organization, with a clear focus on how best to benefit the local business community and their membership.

3.0 Current Status

The Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce currently promotes the following benefits to its membership:

1. The Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce Trade Show;
2. 'Chamber Bucks' (valid only at Chamber Members businesses) to encourage the community to shop local and support local business;
3. Advertising campaigns, throughout the year, reminding the community to shop local;
4. Family Night at the annual Norseman Festival;
5. \$500 bursary to a Red Lake District High School graduate registered in a post secondary program.
6. All Candidates Night at the Legion for the Municipal Elections;
7. Organization of the Santa Claus Parade;
8. Support for the Red Lake Touring Region and the Red Lake District Publicity Board in their efforts to market the Red Lake area as a tourism destination;
9. Respond to inquiries from within the area and from out of town for visitors and prospective residents;
10. Offer Chamber Members access to The Chamber of Commerce Group Insurance Plan;

11. Member of NOACC (Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce) co-operatively addressing common issues with regional, provincial and national organizations to advance the goals of the membership through the formulation of public policy;
12. Quarterly Meetings, encouraging the Membership to participate with local decision-making and to hear speakers on local issues;
13. And, as always, listen to concerns and suggestions.

4.0 Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning process included four separate elements: the vision, the mission statement, the strategic directions, and the action plans. The Chamber Executive addressed each of these elements by answering the following questions:

- VISION:
 - What is the recognizable condition you hope to have in place for the Chamber of Commerce or for the community it serves in five years?
 - What vision do you have for your organization?
 - What do you want to see your organization achieve?
- MISSION STATEMENT:
 - What do you hope to accomplish as a result of your efforts?
 - How do you plan to accomplish these goals?
 - For whose benefit does the Chamber exist?
- STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:
 - What can the Chamber of Commerce do to realize their newly created vision?
- ACTION PLANS:
 - What are the desired outcomes?
 - What results do you anticipate?
 - What steps must be taken to realize your desired outcomes?
 - How will you measure success?

5.0 Vision

Visioning is the first step in the strategic planning process. The vision statement tends to be an umbrella statement or broad goal, which expresses an idealized state for the organization. The vision is the big picture of what the Chamber Executive wants for the future of the organization and will be the foundation for the Chamber's mission, goals, and objectives.

Each individual member of the Executive considered the following questions: (1) what vision do you have for the Chamber; and (2) what would you like to see the Chamber achieve. The most common phrases and themes were identified, and those included: *recognized; vibrant business community; involved in the community; Red Lake is open for business; go-to organization; to lead; resource; and membership.*

After much consideration and discussion, the members of the Executive agreed on the following Vision Statement:

The Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce is the recognized voice of business in the community. The Red Lake Chamber of Commerce will strive to foster a sustainable local economic environment.

6.0 Mission

Recreating the Mission Statement is the second step in the planning process. This is where the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the vision are expressed and where the ‘who, what and why’ of the Chamber’s existence is clearly defined. The Red Lake Chamber of Commerce’s current Mission Statement needed to be revived. So, without the current Mission Statement for reference, the Executive formulated a new Mission Statement by considering the following questions: (1) what do you hope to accomplish as a result of your efforts; (2) how do you plan to accomplish these goals; and (3) for whose benefit does the Chamber exist.

Although the responses to these questions were, in fact, varied, the Executive was able to acknowledge every response and, in turn, develop the following Mission Statement:

The Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce will encourage sustainable business growth to improve the quality of life for the community by establishing effective representation and achieving targeted initiatives for the benefit of the membership.

7.0 Strategic Directions

The third step in the planning process is the development of strategic directions. The strategic directions are meant to be larger goals that will help to focus the efforts of the Executive and drive the Red Lake Chamber of Commerce towards its vision. Everyone present was asked to write on individual cards what the Chamber of Commerce could do to realize their vision. All of the proposed strategies were reviewed and grouped according to common themes and similar direction.

After the analyzing the groupings and discussing the commonalities, the Chamber Executive was able to create four clear strategic directions:

- 1. Will be an advocate for its membership and be a strong unified voice in the community;**
- 2. Increase visibility and awareness of the Chamber;**
- 3. Develop Partnerships and collaborate with other community organizations for mutual benefits; and**
- 4. Develop realistic targets.**

The Chamber also spent some time discussing what, if anything, the Chamber will not become involved in. It was agreed that, because of the variety of tasks and issues presented to the Chamber, the Executive will commit to considering everything on a case by case basis.

8.0 Action Plans

The fourth and final step in the strategic planning process is to develop clear action items for each strategic direction. This is where a plan is developed to tackle each strategy and a clear outline is created, identifying desired outcomes, necessary actions, and measures of success. These Action Plans will be used to guide project development and should be reviewed often in order to stay on task, track progress and ensure successful outcomes. The actions plans, as created by the Chamber Executive are as follows:

Strategy #1: Will be an advocate for its membership and be a strong unified voice in the community.

Desired Outcome #1: Membership will hold confidence in the Chamber to act on their behalf.

- Anticipated Results:
 - Increased membership
 - More active membership
- Necessary Actions:
 - Improve communication with existing membership:
 - Membership surveys (feedback);
 - Lobby on their behalf;
 - Report to members (ie. Newsletter or emails), emphasize benefits to members, newspaper report or press release.
 - Build a better relationship with local stakeholders
 - Identify other stakeholders;
 - Bring local stakeholders together (regular meetings, meet & greet);
 - Create a focus on small business.
- Measure of Success:
 - Every year, more members come to the Chamber with their issues.

Desired Outcome #2: Better two-way communication between the Chamber and its Membership, as well as increased participation from the Membership.

- Anticipated Results:
 - Increase email database;
 - Archive of activities and accomplishments.
- Necessary Actions:
 - Use of electronic medium (email and website);
 - Organize meet and greets to foster networking and communication;
 - Provision of appropriate seminars and information sessions.
- Measure of Success:
 - Good attendance, increased membership and member participation.

Strategy #2: Increase visibility and awareness of the Chamber

Desired Outcome #1: Improve the visibility and awareness of the Chamber and the benefits the Chamber provides.

- Anticipated Results:
 - Stronger voice – more effective advocacy;
 - Increased revenue through increased membership.
- Necessary Actions:
 - Spend money on public promotions:
 - Promoting the business community, donations, and benefactors;
 - Create the excitement around the Chamber.
 - Mount a membership drive:
 - Identify target businesses;
 - Create incentives (charitable donations, public recognition, chamber bucks, raffles, business-to-business connections);
 - Try to always improve;
 - Create sub-Committee;
 - New business package/welcome bag;
 - Information pamphlet or package;
 - Chamber stickers to identify members/recognition plaques.
- Measure of Success:
 - Membership growth – 10 new members within 2 years;
 - More visibility of the Chamber within the community.

Desired Outcome #2: Expand current membership and increase the benefits provided to the Membership.

- Anticipated Results:
 - Membership will begin to grow;
 - Members have knowledge of Chamber benefits.
- Necessary Actions:
 - Create information surrounding benefits – welcome letter, thank you letter to new members, chamber bucks, tell member benefits, etc.;
 - Create a membership “team” – a few people to take on the task of keeping on our membership all year long.
- Measures of Success
 - To improve our membership by 10% in 2010.

Strategy #3: Develop Partnerships and collaborate with other community organizations for mutual benefits.

Desired Outcome #1: Build a better relationship with the non-business community

- Anticipated Results:
 - Bridging the gap between business and non-business
 - Improving efficiency
- Necessary Actions:
 - Identify community organizations that have similar goals;
 - Have a representative on community committees;
 - Chamber to contact organizations to offer their assistance;
 - Reform welcome bag committee and proceed
- Measures of Success
 - Organizations with emerging issues will be contacting the Chamber to request participation.

Desired Outcome #2: Build partnerships with those organizations working towards similar goals

- Anticipated Results:
 - Improving efficiency;
 - Maintaining relationships within the community.
- Necessary Actions:
 - Identify community organizations that have similar goals;
 - Identify those goals that overlap;
 - Identify projects that can be developed in a cooperative manner.
- Measures of Success
 - Will work closely with other community organizations to prevent a duplication of efforts and ensure efficient use of resources.

Strategy #4: Develop realistic targets.

- Anticipated Results:
 - To take a realistic approach to projected targets and action plans.
- Necessary Actions:
 - Allocation of appropriate resources;
 - Establish commitment;
 - Develop sub-committees where appropriate;
 - Use roles and responsibilities template
 - Operational plan to be reviewed on quarterly basis.
- Measure of Success:
 - Achieve two to three goals set out by the strategic plan.

The implementation of these action plans will come as a result of the Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce reviewing the strategic plan, prioritizing and revising actions items, as necessary and monitoring progress. The Executive meets once monthly to review the action plan and monitor developments. It is important for the Executive to monitor progress and outcomes to ensure the projects are on target. For strategic plans to be successful and useful the action plans must be implemented, commitments met and results measured.

The Chamber Executive plans to implement a 'Roles and Responsibilities Worksheet' (see template attached) which will track the tasks related to each strategy or project, ensuring all tasks are completed in a timely manner. The Chamber Executive consists of volunteers and has access to limited clerical support; therefore, this is a very useful and important tool.

11.0 Conclusion

The Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce recognized the need to revitalize the Chamber and set the Executive on a path towards achieving a clear vision. The Chamber is a membership driven organization; therefore, the Executive saw the importance of better defining how they plan to act on their members' behalf. This Strategic Plan helps to give the Executive focus, to define their role and to help them move forward on a very deliberate path, for the benefit of their membership and the local business community.

The Chamber of Commerce Executive underwent an intense strategic planning process, which involved stages of visioning, creating a mission statement, developing strategies and creating specific action plans. The Committee, through this process, was able to identify six specific strategies, which after being reviewed were condensed into four strategies that are meant to guide their initial actions: (1) Will be an advocate for its membership and be a strong unified voice in the community; (2) Increase visibility and awareness of the Chamber; (3) Develop partnerships and collaborate with other community organizations for mutual benefits; and (4) Develop realistic targets. The Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan is designed to be a working document that will be revised as necessary.

Through the pursuit of these specific directions, the Chamber Executive hopes to increase its membership, improve benefits to its existing membership, partner with other community organizations, and create benefits for the local business community.

Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce

Roles and Responsibilities Worksheet

Roles and Responsibilities Worksheet

Directions: For each project being developed by the Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce, this worksheet will record roles and responsibilities as assigned.

Project Description: _____

Task:	Assigned to:	To be completed by:	Signature:

Project Completed on: _____ **Signature:** _____