

Project Introduction

WFHB is a unique community resource in Bloomington and for south central Indiana. Although it now has an award-winning history of providing news and music programming in a multimedia context, it has never created a formal, community-based, strategic plan.

Strategic Development Group, Inc. (SDG) is now assisting the WFHB board, staff, and volunteers in creating its first strategic plan. In order to reduce project costs, a *core team* of volunteers and staff are conducting a large portion of the research under the guidance of SDG. Although this is not a common practice for SDG, it has certain advantages particularly when there are highly skilled individuals comprising the team, which is true in this case. We have designed a planning process to minimize the liabilities of this approach and to maximize its advantages.

Because WFHB has a committed and skilled constituency of volunteers and members in addition to its professional staff, we have designed a planning process in which taskforces will play a prominent role. The steering committee will operate at a strategic level ensuring that our research has covered the critical areas of consideration; that our objectives are appropriate; that they address the station's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and that they are achievable within the constraints of organizational capacity. Please find attached a file describing the project activities and timeline for a more detailed description of the process. We will review the activities and timeline at our first steering committee meeting.

It is important for the steering committee to note that the *core team* has already conducted best practices research in order to lay a foundation for the planning process. The research consists of a web-based review of literature and of interviews with sister stations in community radio and media. Summaries of the best practices research include the following topics:

- Governance
- Management structure
- Programming
- Media models and journalism
- Fundraising
- Volunteer management
- Strategic planning in community media
- Sister station interviews
- Steering committee interviews and initial SWOT responses (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)

Please feel free to review the research summaries attached in separate files in the email or to access the full reports at the following link: <https://www.wfhb.org/blogs/strategic-planning>.

As members of the *core team* conducted their research, they were also asked to focus on the following two key issues - the use of technology and collaborations. The authors in each given area of research will subsequently serve as the information resources for taskforces that will be authorized by the steering committee. The taskforces will be responsible for the development of objectives into action plans with steps to completion, performance measures, and budgets. At the present time we are projecting the creation of six taskforces:

- Governance and management structure to include roles of board, staff, volunteers and the general membership.
- Programming – music.
- Programming – media models, journalism, and community collaborations.
- Technology and space needs
 - ❖ Identifying cost-effective solutions to improve efficiencies and reduce cost and time for staff and volunteers through existing and/or new technology.
 - ❖ Determining timelines and funding needs for maintaining, replacing and/or purchasing equipment.
- Fundraising.
- Volunteer management.

This initial list is certainly subject to revision as the planning process moves forward.

For your convenience, key findings from the best practices research include the following:

- Reviewing and possibly revising policies and bylaws to become consistent with best practices in community radio and not-for-profit governance.
- Reviewing roles and responsibilities of full time staff including GM and considering: the creation of a development director and volunteer coordinator, a periodic review of employee evaluation and grievance procedures to ensure that formal protocols and forms remain consistent with best practices.
- Developing handbooks which address the full range of WFHB roles and responsibilities.
- Developing in conjunction with the handbooks formal orientation and training procedures for professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers.
- Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers.
- Resolving volunteer management issues around programing and non-programming tasks and responsibilities.
- Developing a clear mission which differentiates the organization from other not-for-profit media organizations in south central Indiana and creating an effective “brand” within the listening area.

- Making WFHB customer and listener driven through an updated marketing plan based on sound demographic data and primary research including qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- Fully utilizing fundraising software which can track contributions and allow for targeted marketing based on contributor segmentation.
- Creating a full range of giving opportunities both through the station and the endowment.
- Developing the capacity to take online pledges with the full range of giving opportunities.
- Embracing a multimedia approach to programming which is digitally driven and which has the capacity for digital program submission as well as digital distribution.
- Aggressively pursuing collaborations with other agencies which mutually advance the stated missions, goals, and objectives of each agency – these collaborations may entail program and event production or shared infrastructure and administration services.

These key findings are very consistent with the observations made by the steering committee members within their interviews.

The agenda for our steering committee meeting will consist of the following items:

Steering Committee Meeting #1 (2 hours) – Agenda

- Discuss role of steering committee and WFHB staff in completing assigned tasks in scope of services.
- Review and discuss best practices report.
- Review steering committee SWOT responses, provide additional input, and create initial profile.
- Discuss formats and questions for survey, focus group, and public forum.
- Create executive committee.

Because the summaries and reports of the best practices research are available, we will not spend much time reviewing these materials. We will primarily focus on having a larger discussion of WFHB's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities which will supplement our initial interviews and include input from the core team. This discussion will consider key questions regarding management, decision-making processes, and organizational cultural generally in regard to areas listed above.

As the manager for this project, I am looking forward to our first steering committee meeting. Please feel free to contact me with your questions now or anytime as the project moves forward.

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