

Ohio State Beekeepers Association
Strategic Plan

December 15, 2018

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On December 15, 2018, the Board of the Ohio State Beekeepers Association (OSBA) met to revisit and refresh the strategic plan they developed in January, 2017. During the session, members identified the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to OSBA. The SWOT Analysis is a way of summarizing the current state of OSBA and can help to devise a plan for the future that employs the existing strengths, redresses existing weaknesses, exploits opportunities and defends against threats.

This report will delineate those, identify the projects to which OSBA is currently committed, as well as provide some specific recommendations.

Strengths

1. Knowledge
2. Experience handling problems quickly
3. Strong fiscal base
4. Good/strong programming for the beekeeping community
5. Dedicated people
6. Diversity
7. Passion
8. Scale and resources
9. Technical skills
10. Adaptability
11. Communication
12. Common interest

Weaknesses

1. Getting information out
2. Perceptions of the organization by both members and non-members
3. Lack of communication
4. Resistance to change
5. Too few volunteers
6. Personal biases
7. Geographic diversity makes it difficult to get together
8. Consideration of others
9. Too little participation
10. Trust and respect (real and perceived)
11. Lack of transparency
12. Lack of team playing skills
13. Trying to be all things to all people
14. Lack of resources
15. Personal agendas
16. Have to rely only on volunteers

(it should be noted that many more strengths and weaknesses were identified by the members in this session than were developed via a survey methodology prior to the January 2017 planning session.)

Opportunities

1. New beekeepers lead to new ideas and people
2. Membership feedback
3. New legislation at the State level
4. Available funding
5. Beekeeping is the “new” thing and interesting to the public
6. Desire for sustainable beekeeping
7. Cracking the beekeeper “ignorance code”
8. Working with other like-minded groups
9. Know there is a way to better bees

Threats

1. Lack of local bees
2. Climate change
3. Lack of forage
4. Chemicals
5. Uneducated beekeepers
6. Social media misinformation
7. Poor bee genetics
8. Bears/wildlife
9. Restrictive zoning
10. Public opinion
11. Lack of support from the Ohio Department of Agriculture
12. Lack of new miticides
13. Land use and new development
14. Beekeepers (lack of required education, inspections and enforcement)
15. Lack of sufficient associations
16. Lack of OSU Extension services for beekeepers
17. Outdated information
18. There is only one state apiarist

Project	Time Frame	Person(s) Responsible
Traveling Speakers	Every year (ongoing)	<i>President</i> (chair), evaluation panel, speakers
4-H sponsorship	Annually	<i>Secretary</i> (chair), review panel, mentors
4-H State Fair judges	Annually	<i>President</i> (coordinator) judges
Affiliate Program	Every year (ongoing)	<i>Treasurer, Secretary, webmaster</i>
New Beekeeper Outreach	Every year (ongoing)	<i>President</i>

State Fair	Annually (first week in (Aug.))	Fair committee, Fair coordinator
Newsletter	Every year (quarterly)	Newsletter editor (<i>President</i>)
Master Beekeeper Program	Every year	Chair, instructor(s)
Hive Digest	Every year (monthly)	Jamie Walters
Fall Conference	Annually	<i>OSBA leadership (President, Treasurer, Secretary), conference committee</i>
Specially Classes (honey judging, Build a Better Bee Club, etc.)	Every year (as time allows)	Ad hoc committees, others as interested
Research grant funding	Annually	<i>Treasurer, ad hoc committee</i>
Library grant	Throughout the year	<i>Treasurer, ad hoc committee</i>
New Club assistance	As needed	<i>Officers (as needed) board members</i>
Apiary Diagnostic Kit	Through 2019	Project Coordinator, <i>Treasurer</i> , board members
National and regional representation on three organizations	Annual meetings	TBD (see next item)
Position descriptions for representatives to HAS, EAS, and ABF	End of 1 st quarter 2019	Past representatives to organizations to be part of a committee (suggestions include: Duane Hathaway, Margaret Carmen Conrad, Dwight Wells, Margaret Reid, Joe Kovaleski, Dwight Wilson, Peggy Garnes)
Constitution/Bylaws	Committee to meet in January; complete by April for Board; complete by May for Member input; and by September send to members	<i>Secretary</i> (chair), Marishka W., Rod P., Nina B., and open invitation to members

Examining the specific weaknesses identified, it is interesting and somewhat worrying to note that of the 16 identified, fully half reference internal (i.e. Board) difficulties. (These include items #2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 15.) I believe that the two speakers before you began the planning session may have addressed the issue(s), but I suggest that the OSBA Board continue to address how to move the organization to a mutually respected and respectful place. All of the planning and plans in the world will not overcome internal strife (which can be much more harmful than external pressure).

While OSBA may not currently be in a position to assume new responsibilities, it is clear from the identified threats that advocacy at the local, State and Federal level are required to maintain the health of OSBA. It may be that the three organizations you will be joining are engaged in advocacy and lobbying efforts and, with the additional voices provided by OSBA, their efforts will be made stronger. Other threats also suggest potential projects or project enhancement for the organization that address poor and/or misinformation regarding aspects of beekeeping.

Of the 18 programs, projects or activities of OSBA, it appears that most are ongoing. The ADK project will end in 2019 (when all of the kits are distributed), the position descriptions for the three organizations in which OSBA voted involvement and representations is new and time limited, and revision of the Constitution and Bylaws is also time limited. The remaining appear to be enduring aspects of the organization. A concern that has been raised by OSBA officers is the heavy reliance on them for the day-to-day work of the organization. All but six of the projects rely on the President, Secretary, and/or Treasurer. (These are noted in italics in the above chart.) While an important role of the chair (in this case, President) of a non-profit board is to keep track of the work of each board committee, it appears that she expected to play a very active role in at least five of the ongoing activities/programs/projects. The Secretary and Treasurer appear equally burdened as they are responsible for multiple committees and projects in addition to their role-specific responsibilities to the organization.

As one of the identified weaknesses is **too few volunteers** and another is **too little participation**, I suggest the organization spend some time over the coming year to identify additional individuals who can assume some of the chair responsibilities for those projects/programs that do not specifically require the expertise the role of President, Secretary, or Treasurer bring to any organization.

In reviewing the previous strategic plan, I noted some issues that, if they haven't been addressed, be carried over to 2019. These include the following:

1. OSBA developed a new mission statement in January, 2017.

The Ohio State Beekeepers Association promotes sustainable beekeeping by providing education and training, resources and outreach to beekeepers, local beekeepers assn., and the general public.

However, it appears that the previous statement (a listing of activities) is still listed on the website under the **History and Mission** tab.

2. At the previous strategic planning session Board members agreed to study the vision statements of other organizations and, using "OSBA will be a quality, respected, effected State Beekeeping organization", develop such a statement. While the Board may have done so, that is not reflected on your website. Vision statements should be concise, clear, have a time horizon, be future oriented, stable, challenging, abstract, and inspiring. You can find many examples of vision statements, but perhaps one of the most stirring is Oxfam's, "A world without poverty". Having a vision statement is not a requirement, but if you think it can help drive the organization, by all means, work on developing one.
3. The Ohio State Beekeepers Association identified two objectives on which to focus in the upcoming year (2018). Both of these further your mission. In addition to refining your vision, I suggested you identify current programs or projects and for each determine if it is one that should be ended or improved.

Had we had more time Saturday, I would have asked you to consider possible improvements, if any, to the programs in which you engage in an ongoing fashion. I suggest that the committees or ad hoc groups working on each of the listed projects spend some time at their initial meeting of 2019 identifying possible improvements or enhancements to the program for which they are responsible.

Additionally, when Terry Lieberman-Smith presented 'Traveling Speakers' as the first project for the project chart, she did so by indicating upon which strength or strength the project draws, which weakness is addressed, which opportunity the project takes advantage of and which threat is potentially neutralized. I suggest that you spend some time at your next meeting doing the same for the remaining items. Every strength, weakness, opportunity and threat need not be addressed by your various activities, but no activity should fail to address at least one item identified. The SWOT Analysis should be used to drive your organization.

Finally, I have three suggestions regarding your Board operations drawn from years of board experience.

1. Develop and use an agenda format that includes the following:

Call to Order

Approval of the Previous Minutes

Treasurer's Report

Committee Reports

President's Report

New Business

Unfinished Business

Other/Announcements

Adjourn

There may be other items that need to be included, but these basics should be covered at every meeting. Reports can be written with just the highlights or something unusual noted by the presenter. A meeting that consists of one report after another without involvement of the board members or the need for them to discuss and vote on issues is unlikely to hold their attention.

If your meetings include both board and non-board members, I suggest that Board members sit at the front of the room and non-members at the back. This will make it easier for the President to call on Board members (first) and to be able to identify who can vote on any item. It may be helpful for the Secretary to conduct a roll call of board members at the start of the meeting and have non-members sign in to help differentiate the two groups.

2. Consider using a template for your minutes. I have found the one below very useful, especially since the last column indicates who is responsible to do what. It's also easy to follow, doesn't contain extraneous information, is easy to find a particular item, and each person knows what they need to do (and by when).

Minutes

Ohio State Beekeepers Association

Date

Present:

Item	Discussion	Action/Person Responsible
This is your agenda item	Can be brief. Who made the report and the gist of it.	Was there a motion? By whom? Who seconded it? Who will do what as a result of the motion or if follow-up to the report is needed

It is clear from your strengths and opportunities that OSBA is well-positioned to continue to be a clear, knowledgeable voice for Ohio beekeepers and their bees. There are some weaknesses and threats that need to be addressed, and doing so will only strengthen your organization.

3. If you haven't checked out some of the virtual meeting opportunities (I'm most familiar with Zoom, although there are others, it might be worth doing so. Being able to see those with whom you are meeting, especially when there is a large number of meeting participants is most helpful. It will require participants to be at least somewhat tech savvy, but using the available technology may be of benefit to you.