



STRATEGIC PLANNING, PART II

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Last month I described the process by which the 2011-2013 AFSA Governing Board identified five priority strategic areas, and discussed the first, strengthening AFSA governance. This time I'd like to highlight the other four priority



areas: enhancing image, outreach and communications; strengthening professionalism and effectiveness (of the Foreign Service and AFSA); expanding core advocacy; and growing membership and development.

Enhancing Image, Outreach and Communications. Vision: increased member participation and feedback, higher voter turnout, more targeted AFSA communications, greater use of the *FSJ* and AFSA's *Inside a U.S. Embassy* to promote the Foreign Service and AFSA, increased retiree membership, and a more active role for post representatives in raising AFSA's profile within the Foreign Service.

Main potential obstacles: institutional resistance to change, apathy, information overload and competing demands on time. Specific goals: a 30-percent increase in voter turnout, one or more GB candidates with outreach experience, development and launch of three new outreach modalities (webinar, trifold brochure, teleconference/DVC) and creation of an AFSA Home-town Diplomat program.

Strengthening Professionalism and Effectiveness. Vision: an AFSA

consultative role with the Foreign Service Institute, management commitment to the use of retired FS personnel over contractors, a revitalized AFSA dissent program, the removal of pay caps for FS retirees

hired back to federal government agencies, recognition of the importance of continuing professional education and training, a sustained and adequate training float, reinstatement of the senior seminar, formal encouragement of publication of articles on professional issues by FS authors, and an AFSA mentor system to strengthen tradecraft skills.

Obstacles: unwillingness of management to collaborate, image issues, lack of time and money. Specific goals: an AFSA "body shop" to serve members as well as government and private organizations seeking Foreign Service experience, a long-term outreach strategy to Congress and political parties, and creation of an AFSA member professional development fund.

Expanding Core Advocacy. Vision: the career Foreign Service acknowledged and respected as a unique profession, a well-trained, well-funded and well-compensated Service, diplomacy broadly viewed as a first resort, AFSA as an equal partner with management and as an expert resource on diplomacy and development.

Obstacles: no significant domestic constituency, small size of FS and AFSA

membership, misinformation and disinformation, limited time and resources, political misperceptions, management reluctance. Specific goals: international affairs budget maintained at current levels, no mid-level hiring or further Foreign Service Limited (USAID) hiring not negotiated with AFSA, no pay cuts (loss of Washington locality pay) for FS personnel when assigned abroad, central funding for specialist training, additional AFSA staff member for Labor Management and for retirees, management agreement to allocate personnel drawdowns in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan to the training float.

Growing Membership and Development. Vision: expanded membership with more differentiated tiers or categories, greater awareness of membership benefits, an inclusive association of career professionals. Obstacles: inadequate contact information, resource constraints, retiree disinterest, preoccupation with individual career, increased use of excepted hires.

Specific goals: feasibility study on retiree consulting, multitier membership/dues policy, survey of non-members on reasons for not joining.

Your input on these five priorities will help AFSA staff and the Governing Board to develop an action plan to implement them over the coming months. This will strengthen AFSA, both as a professional association and a union.

As always, you can contact me at Johnson@afsa.org. ■