American Veterinary Medical Association

2015-2017

Adopted: January 9, 2015
Introduction

Excellence is a continuous process and doesn’t come by accident. For more than 150 years, the American Veterinary Medical Association has helped to ensure excellence in all aspects of the veterinary profession, from veterinary medical education to how veterinarians work to protect both animal and human health, and animal welfare.

While this is truer today than ever, times have changed and the needs of the veterinary professional have changed too. Like our members, we notice these changes. And in order to address these challenges and to better meet our members’ needs now and into the future, we need to change with the times. We need to transform in order to maintain – and continuously achieve – excellence.

To do this, we are setting a new course; and ensuring we get there through the AVMA Strategy Management Process, which has guided us along the way as we prepared and adopted this 2015-2017 STRATEGIC PLAN.

What is our ultimate goal? To grow and improve member value in the AVMA. As the national association advocating for and advancing the interests of all veterinary professionals, it is critical that the AVMA evolve to ensure we are providing the greatest value to our members.

“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.”

- VINCE LOMBARDI
AVMA Strategic Plan

Setting a New Course

In January 2014, the AVMA Board of Directors and senior leadership team began an intensive listening and learning process aimed at better understanding what its members expect from their association and how the AVMA was performing in relationship to those expectations.

The association also contracted with a strategy consulting group to facilitate a yearlong strategic planning and management process: a process aimed at aligning AVMA products, services, resources and structure to better understand and meet member needs. This process involved a comprehensive evaluation and planning effort resulting in a clearly stated strategic direction, strategic plan, a pending three-year operating plan and an ongoing strategic management process.

It’s critically important to understand and remember that our plan is an ongoing process; it will continue to adapt, change and evolve as our environment, our members’ needs and our opportunities change and grow. This strategic process has been a far more complex, far more in-depth and a far better process than others we’ve followed in the past. This is a framework that will help the association better focus on where we need to build capacity and processes, and develop an ability to evaluate programs, projects and initiatives in terms of what our members say they value, want and need. We’re building a process that implements strategies and measures their success and effectiveness through an ongoing effort to monitor our performance and modify our course along the way.

Our strategic plan is built on the results of an unprecedented approach to information gathering. We listened to and learned from our members to determine what they want and expect from the AVMA. We sent a carefully designed survey to 16,000 AVMA members, all AVMA volunteers and 5,000 veterinary students. The survey was designed to compare member expectations with their perception of how well the association was actually performing in meeting those expectations. The survey responses allowed us to identify the areas where opportunities to improve were the greatest. These critical, foundational findings informed and guided development of this strategic plan. We also conducted environmental scans with both internal and external stakeholders in an effort to gain clarity about the trends and factors impacting the association, as well as to determine the AVMA’s primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

What did we learn from these comprehensive surveys and scans? We learned that our members highly value the AVMA’s role in many activities, most notably in the areas of advocacy, accreditation, veterinary economics, member services and providing leadership for the veterinary community. We also learned that we can do a better job of meeting our members’ needs in each of these areas.
Ensuring We Get There

All the information we gathered helped us build the foundation for this strategic plan and will be the basis for our three-year strategic operating plan. The first step was to create our STRATEGIC DIRECTION. Through valuable input from varied members and volunteer groups, extensive discussion and several revisions, we developed a new VISION STATEMENT, a new MISSION STATEMENT, a new set of CORE VALUES and a new association GOAL, all of which will guide us on our journey to become more relevant and valuable for our members, the animal health industry and the public, and to advance shared interests for the collective benefit.

Our VISION STATEMENT reads: “The American Veterinary Medical Association’s vision is to be the trusted leader in protecting, promoting and advancing a strong, unified profession that meets the needs of society.”

Our MISSION STATEMENT reads: “The American Veterinary Medical Association’s mission is to lead the profession by advocating for our members and advancing the science and practice of veterinary medicine to improve animal and human health.”

Our CORE VALUES are focused on the AVMA being:

• Ethical: We act with integrity, honesty and respect.

• Inclusive: We represent and support a diverse community of veterinarians with unique perspectives.

• Science-based: We lead with science, providing trusted and evidence-based information, and promote research to improve the health and well-being of animals and humans.

• Animal-focused: We support veterinarians in their stewardship of animal health and welfare and their role in promoting public health.

• Member-centric: We are accountable to the needs of our members.

• Supportive: We invest in the development of our staff and volunteer leaders.
• Fiscally responsible: We practice prudent financial decision-making and accountability.

• Efficient: We continuously assess and improve our delivery of products and services.

• Innovative: We promote creativity and embrace change.

Our association GOAL is focused squarely on our efforts to GROW MEMBER VALUE by increasing member satisfaction and market share across all segments of the profession.

**Focusing on Growing Member Value**

What will drive us toward our goal of GROWING MEMBER VALUE is our core promise of advancing the shared interests of the entire veterinary profession through the strength and diverse perspectives of our more than 86,500 members. Our depth of member representation, strong base of resources, financial strength, and infrastructure in terms of staff and volunteers put us in a unique position to be an effective advocate for our profession.

To accomplish our goal of GROWING AVMA MEMBER VALUE, the association identified KEY RESULT AREAS and primary drivers of success to help guide us along the way. Each primary driver of success was derived from the member performance survey and the environmental assessments we conducted.

“To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science.”

- ALBERT EINSTEIN
External Key Result Areas

The primary objectives of our EXTERNAL MEMBER-FOCUSED KEY RESULT AREAS are to:

- Protect and enhance the lifelong value of the veterinary medical degree.
- Provide valuable member products and services.
- Enhance the public image and reputation of veterinarians and the veterinary profession.

The EXTERNAL KEY RESULT AREAS, primary drivers of their success and some of the strategies associated with each are:

1. ADVOCACY AND POLICY

- Raise awareness of the AVMA’s advocacy efforts by:
  - Promoting advocacy efforts to AVMA members in an easily digestible and frequent manner.
  - Positioning the AVMA as the place where key strategic issues are identified, analyzed and acted upon.
  - Strengthening relationships with state and allied veterinary medical associations, and being an early alert system and on-call resource for these groups.
  - Provide leadership in developing and disseminating professional standards.

2. PRODUCT AND SERVICE MIX

- Develop and deliver products and services that meet the needs of members and other stakeholders by:
  - Developing an ongoing process to solicit feedback from members and stakeholders to better define their needs.
  - Developing and delivering advocacy, academic accreditation and leadership programs that position the AVMA as the industry leader in these areas.
  - Developing and delivering economic analyses, financial services, insurance products, member services, continuing education opportunities and consumer education programs that allow the AVMA to obtain a competitive advantage in these areas.
o Refining processes related to the AVMA convention and professional journals to ensure that they maintain and enhance their current reputation and positioning in the marketplace.

o Identifying unmet member needs and evaluating whether the AVMA should develop or deliver products or services to meet those needs.

o Capitalizing on the AVMA’s reputation as a trusted convener and evidence-based policy maker to resolve industry conflicts and address issues that could potentially fragment the profession.

Internal Key Result Areas

The primary objectives of our INTERNAL KEY RESULT AREAS are to:

• Improve understanding of member needs, wants and expectations through marketing and research.

• Provide the right information to the right person at the right time through marketing, communications and branding.

• Improve the allocation and management of resources.

• Establish and maintain efficient decision-making and effective operational processes.

• Improve the skills of volunteer leaders and staff.

• Build an innovative and collaborative culture across the association.

• Recruit and retain a diverse, representative set of leaders and members.

The INTERNAL KEY RESULT AREAS, primary drivers of their success and some of the strategies associated with each are:

1. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

• Better define and understand member and stakeholder segments and their associated individual profiles.

• Establish and maintain integrated marketing and communications capabilities and processes at the strategic and operational levels by:

  o Developing a system to collect and summarize business intelligence information and continually evaluating member needs.
• Build the brand value of AVMA membership by demonstrating relevance of the AVMA and connections to AVMA members.

• Consistently communicate what we do, what we are planning to do and why we do what we do, by member and stakeholder segment.

2. DIVERSITY AND RETENTION

• Partner with allied groups to encourage members of under-represented groups to enter the profession.

• Identify groups under-represented in leadership positions in the profession and recruit individuals from these groups into leadership positions.

• Increase AVMA relevance and member satisfaction across all segments of the profession through well-defined objectives and focused operational strategies.

“There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.”

- JOHN F. KENNEDY

3. VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

• Develop an efficient and effective volunteer entity structure to grow member volunteer opportunities.

• Clarify roles, responsibilities and decision-making authority of AVMA volunteers.

• Better manage volunteer leaders’ expectations and commitment by functioning electronically by:

  o Leveraging technology (e.g., electronic communication) to reduce volunteer time commitment.

  o Communicating what is expected of volunteer leaders from a time-commitment perspective.
4. LEADER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Provide leadership development and training opportunities for the profession and volunteer leaders.

- Develop the business management and leadership skills (e.g., business intelligence, marketing, customer service, technology, and project, financial and performance management skills) of AVMA staff based on the changing needs of the profession and the marketplace.

5. CREATE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Create a shared understanding of the AVMA’s vision, mission, core values, goals and strategic priorities.

  - Align the structure and work of the organization with the strategies by:
    - Clarifying executive, divisional and staff roles and responsibilities.

- Build an efficient and effective operating model to improve organizational processes.

- Build a cross-functional, inclusive and collaborative working environment and culture.

- Efficiently allocate resources to the most important priorities.

- Build a culture to foster business transformation, operational agility and innovation to better meet member needs and expectations.
A New Staff Structure

To best meet all of the objectives in both our external and internal Key Result Areas, the AVMA staff structure is now organized into three STRATEGIC BUSINESS UNITS. They are:

1. PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

2. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

3. ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION

These three cross-functional areas will be complemented and served by a shared services component that will assist in areas of technology and staff support. This new structure allows us to create targeted programs to deliver an enhanced member experience. It also provides the association opportunities to better focus and budget our resources, deliver greater support to our members and provide advocacy and accreditation to ensure the health of the profession in the future.

Looking Ahead

So what’s next? This Strategic Plan is really just the beginning. As we implement the plan by focusing our resources on what matters most to our members, we will continue to measure and evaluate our success while refining our ability to listen and learn and adapt – the cornerstones upon which this plan is built.

We will remain flexible by adjusting the plan according to changing needs, but we will remain committed to our vision, our mission, our core values and our goal.

We will stay on course to maintain – and continuously achieve – excellence.