



American Veterinary Medical Association 3-Year Strategic Operating Plan

Executive Summary 2017-2019

This document is confidential and for internal use only. It is intended to summarize the AVMA 2017 - 2019 Strategic Operating Plan by offering a high-level summary of the priorities, timing of specific deliverables and identified key performance indicators. As a “living document” change is expected and the most current version will be made available in alignment with the Board of Directors meeting calendar.

2017-2019 Strategic Operating Plan

Executive Summary

In 2016 we began implementing the Strategic Management Process (SMP) and entered a period of transformation. We are now more focused on results and becoming more evidence driven in our decision making through the development of new processes, a high level of communication with staff and volunteers, and strong support from the Board of Director's to follow the plan. We have started down a path of continuous improvement and are using the data we collect to help make more evidence-based decisions.

During the initial phases of defining the strategy management process, which began in 2014, extensive internal and external scanning was done. This included a traditional SWOT analysis, member and employee engagement surveys, satisfaction surveys, and some competitive analysis. Sharing this information with the strategic committees of the Board of Director's throughout the year helped shape their understanding of our strengths and weaknesses. By gaining insight, they have a clearer picture of the areas of risk and opportunity for the association. Ultimately, this helps them make better, more informed decisions about our strategic direction.

After a careful assessment of the association's capacity, capabilities, and infrastructure, it is clear that workload continues to exceed capacity. We have made significant progress implementing the strategy and addressing internal process. We are not quite doing business as we used to, and we are not quite transitioned to our ideal state.

Through the course of the SMP in 2016, significant analysis was done to inventory resource allocation to get a true sense of where time is spent. The final findings showed that small cutbacks were not a feasible option to make an impact on either the budget or to improve capacity. One of the most complex challenges we face is how to focus and reduce workload. We are not comfortable cutting back without evidence that suggests what should be cut.

Instead, we are moving forward with purpose. We are consciously choosing our focus and forging ahead with what we know. We will be looking to the outcomes of the Performance and AAU Studies to help direct us further. Our top priorities will be Advocacy & Public Policy, Accreditation & Certification, and Economics. In addition we will focus on Membership as a whole; we will look at how we serve them with the right products and services; how we market to and communicate with them; and how to make it easy for them to do business with us.

By addressing these things, we can break the cycle of "doing the same things the same way." Additionally, we recognize that we will have to seek consultative services to further the plan laid out here. By adding a deliverable to Initiative I: Establish an Efficient and Effective Operational Model we will make every effort to enforce the RFP process as well as institute a simple vendor management system.

We also have to take into consideration the competitive landscape is changing. While AVMA is the umbrella association for veterinarians, we recognize the need to be specific and prescriptive with our messaging to our members. We are competing for “mind share,” and demonstrating value is more important than ever to win membership loyalty.

By adhering to new processes we can standardize the way we do business, which can positively reflect member value and return on our investments. As the umbrella organization for veterinarians, we want to be sure the work we do impacts the greatest number of members. Using the data we have, we can align our resources to address the things that offer the broadest impact across the profession.

The main processes impacted by the SMP in 2016 were: resource allocation, budgeting, and project planning. Resource allocation and project planning are new disciplines for the association overall. While these activities were happening in the past, they took place within the divisions and not from a big picture perspective. Budgeting has been the cornerstone of annual planning, and now there is increased attention to budget analysis. This has helped show where we need to more accurately estimate budget requirements or reduce our commitments. The historical trends have been to over plan and underspend; this validates the concerns regarding an excessive workload.

Project planning is the newest discipline for us. We are implementing a Project Portfolio Management System (PPMS) to help us create and maintain programs that offer the most value to members and also address organizational capacity. The PPMS is a process used to select, evaluate, prioritize, track and measure projects based on criteria, capacity and alignment to our strategic objectives. It is important because we need a productive way to assess all the work we do with a common process. It also introduces the concept of tracking program performance. The current focus is on the evaluation of new projects and programs. In the 2017, new and existing activities will be evaluated and assessed by their potential and ongoing performance. The objective is that the PPMS will help us choose the right projects, and project management helps us do those projects right.

The PPMS aligns directly with the Strategy Management Calendar, which allows us to build a cadence with the Board of Director's. The Board's meeting calendar established for 2017 coordinates with the strategic calendar that lays out the key activities and decision points. This allows the board to become more proactive and less reactive. Integrating these key processes ensures alignment to the strategic plan and exposes areas of risk. Repeatable processes can improve predictability and help manage expectations. Setting realistic expectations is also important; staff continues to communicate workload issues while many new projects are being added and very few are sunset.

Advocacy & Public Policy

One of the top objectives for the 2016 Performance Survey and other member priority assessment activities and tools is to better understand how our members define “Advocacy” and what it is they expect from us to improve member satisfaction. Advocacy is at the heart of what AVMA does. We recognize its value and benefit to the profession, for AVMA members and veterinarians who are not, and we do this better than any other veterinary association.

We want to maintain a leadership position and continue to pursue excellence in how we advocate for the profession and navigate government protocol and business markets to ensure our voice is heard. We recognize that while we are known for the thoughtful, science-based, and pragmatic policy we have established and the actions we have taken as a result of that policy, the strength of our advocacy efforts is affected by the way we conduct business internally. Through a consistent vetting process we are able to better prioritize and work more effectively and efficiently through issues. The breadth of our membership gives us access to an extensive knowledge base and we are the best in the profession at handling complex issues.

We also recognize that to continue to do this well, we need to establish an Advocacy and Public Policy agenda that lays the groundwork for clear prioritization and communication of those issues and related advocacy efforts that are front and center for us. As we have always done, we will actively pursue policies that support the profession, including advocating for scientific, regulatory, and business environments that facilitate the accessibility and delivery of quality veterinary services; continue to promote and demonstrate the multidisciplinary value of the profession by taking advantage of current interest and opportunities related to One Health; help to advance veterinary medicine through support of research and professional education that prepares veterinarians to capitalize on emerging science, technologies, and service opportunities; and encourage emerging leaders by offering opportunities for growth and career development.

In addition to working at the national level, we will support and collaborate with state veterinary medical associations, with particular attention to issues having broad national implications, and will look to improve our efficacy in international engagement.

Accreditation & Certification

In Accreditation & Certification we will coordinate our efforts to enhance the quality of veterinary technical education and training. We are utilizing the accreditation and certification survey analysis to drive continuous improvement and increase member value. By applying what we learn from the surveys we can validate our success through member satisfaction.

The AVMA Council on Education continues to be recognized by the US Department of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation as the accrediting body for colleges of veterinary medicine in the US. By working with COE, Marcom, and consultants to refine and

continue implementation of the COE communication plan we can increase stakeholder understanding; monitor effectiveness.

It is a priority for AVMA to ensure quality and continuous improvement of foreign veterinary graduate certification and to enhance our partnership with the veterinary specialty organization. AVMA holds a distinguished place in the international network of veterinarians. Part of advancing the profession is accepting the responsibility for protecting and advancing the standards of veterinary education for the benefit of our members and society.

Products & Services

Each division of Products & Services contributes in unique ways to address and solve member needs. The biggest challenge for this business unit is that the plate of work (or opportunities) extends beyond our capacity, capability and infrastructure. We need carefully consider how these programs are advanced, so that they have the best potential for success-not necessarily speed to market.

By leveraging the Economics Division, we can better understand what is happening within the profession and develop a plan to influence it. Economics also has the members' attention as they work to address the student debt problem, practice profitability and practice management issues. Through the production of economics reports and tools, AVMA builds credibility with members as well as other medical professionals.

Through outreach programs, AVMA is in a favorable position to support the profession with tools and information on how to use them. Programs being developed through Membership & Field Services and Economics Divisions are already having an impact on how we communicate with students and early career veterinarians. Through collaboration with other divisions, we can have a high impact on member engagement.

Also engaging with our members every day, Membership and Field Services is looking for ways to help make it easy for our members to do business with us. Researching payment options, building a full-service Veterinary Career Center, and increasing our relevance to early career veterinarians and practice owners are high on the list of priorities. Identifying the best methods for smooth implementation and high impact are critical to attracting demand for these objectives.

Each one of these areas of focus requires infrastructure, capacity, and potentially capability to successfully implement. We are changing the way members do business with us. Each one of these things also has an impact on the way we do business, so we need to be deliberate in our decision making and set clear expectations of timing and delivery.

With the benefit of KPIs, we will know if we are missing the mark or if an activity has good traction. An area in need of further assessment is Convention & Meeting Planning. Ripe for improvement and looking for ways to positively impact the bottom line, this team will be

spending much of 2017 identifying and identifying various improvements and new opportunities for future conventions. They will also look for ways to make convention more attractive and beneficial to early career veterinarians in an effort to build brand loyalty and help transition recent graduates into highly productive veterinarians. VLC will be assessed for strategic alignment and future state. One of the challenges of convention and meeting planning is that the cycle is long and our investment is high. Growth and improvement in this area could have a dramatic impact on non-dues revenue and member engagement.

Continuing Education (CE) is an area that also calls for further review. CE is currently embedded within the Convention and Meeting Planning Division, but there are CE efforts across the association. Based on what we know about CE, the association meets member standards, but it lacks organization and needs to be centralized within AVMA. Now is a good time to assess what we have and make a decision on how we are going to move forward to support continuing education curriculum, identify venues, and develop consistency and standards for CE provided by AVMA.

An area where member engagement and satisfaction is typically strong is with our Publications Division. In 2017, Publications will continue its efforts to be lean and efficient and begin research and planning the introduction of a digital version of the journals. As we recognize the need to appeal to a broader and younger professional audience, we also need to evaluate the best way to deliver our content online. We see the value in the expertise and perspectives offered with JAVMA and want to protect and enhance that credibility.

Five Key Initiatives

The Five Key Initiatives aim to improve the association's internal operations. One of the objectives of this work is to make us more agile so that we can better support the strategy and business plans. This affects how members do business with us as well as how volunteers and staff work together. The work done in this area cannot be at the expense of member-facing activities; however, this work establishes the infrastructure needed to achieve our objective.

At the core of this transition is bringing along many who need to do business differently. This is not an overnight change and requires close management to ensure successful implementation. Employee engagement teams and activities coordinated through HR will help us address and support some of these issues.

After the end of the 2016 cycle, feedback will be collected through the strategic committees of the Board to ensure adjustments are made for 2017. The "adjust as we go" process helps us collaboratively achieve the ideal state. 2017 will test our ability to follow through and demonstrate accountability. As we apply a system of measuring performance more objectively, the tools will be set to better manage a member-centric strategy and the association's workload. The first initiative to *Establish an Efficient and Effective Operational Model* supports these efforts and ensures the SMP stays on track.

The second initiative *Develop and implement an Integrated Marketing and Communications Plan* tackles two meaningful issues: resource allocation and capacity. Without a process in place to manage the volume of work, the association has taken on far more than it can reasonably deliver, and deliver well. There is evidence to support that our members do not have the capacity to know about all we do, and the messages change frequently.

Marketing & Communications offers a unique perspective in how we engage and communicate with members. Through a realistic marketing and communications plan, we can calibrate our capacity. For AVMA to become agile, shared service needs to be able to plan with capacity in mind. The only way to do that is to acknowledge the current limitations on resources, prioritize infrastructure, then assess capability. Using the SMP allows us to better understand our limitations, particularly:

- Capacity
- Capability
- Infrastructure

This isn't limited to Marketing & Communications. It also affects Digital Services & Solutions, and to a lesser extent Finance & Business Services and Strategy Management. These areas are typically required to work collaboratively to support the business units' activities. We have to recognize and capitalize on what we're good at, while we build competencies that satisfy our vision.

As we learn from this process we are working together with our Board of Directors to *Optimize the Efficiency and Effectiveness of AVMA's governance model*, the third initiative, that meets the needs of the profession. By doing so, we will become more efficient and impactful in the work we do together, building stronger relationships, and better serving members. With the mission and vision in mind, the strategic committees of the board, particularly the Governance Committee, can have a positive impact on helping the board provide clear direction to its entities to Improve Board Governance Structure in 2017.

As the association continues to maintain its position as the umbrella organization to the veterinary profession, we recognize the need to *Implement Standardized Training and Development for Volunteers & Staff*. We want to attract and retain the best talent for both volunteer and general staff roles. HR has taken steps to begin to roll out new onboarding in 2016; this will continue to be a focus for ongoing advancement of this fourth initiative.

The fifth initiative, *Identify and Implement Data Governance Standards*, ties the SMP to the work that we do. Having an effective Data Governance Plan will enhance the quality, availability, integrity, and security of AVMA's data by fostering cross-organizational collaboration and structured policy-making. By developing clear business rules around our data, standardizing how we collect data, and identifying who owns/manages the data we can confidently serve up data as an asset and use it as a guide for our strategic planning.

Conclusion

As AVMA continues to implement strategy, we strive to position ourselves to demonstrate member value and focus our efforts. Our top strategic goals are to improve member retention and satisfaction. In order to accomplish these goals we are aligning strategic activities and desired outcomes with our budget. We will do this by building a strong foundation, ensuring core systems are up-to-date, and operationalizing continuous improvement. In 2017 this means an association-wide focus on:

- Five Key Initiatives
- Data Governance

While we recognize the need for infrastructure, we also acknowledge that we cannot focus on one area at the expense of another. So, we will have four focus areas embedded within our business units that we have determined best demonstrate and deliver member value. These areas serve as the radial point from which we will build a member-centric business plan.

1. Advocacy & Public Policy

- a. Development of an Advocacy & Public Policy Agenda

2. Accreditation & Certification

- a. Implementation of e-Accreditation

3. Economics

- a. Ensuring the profession is fulfilling financially and professionally
- b. Implementing world-class data governance standards
- c. Developing an Economic Outreach Program

4. Delivering Membership Value

- a. Recruit and Retain Membership
- b. Develop strategies for Students and Early Career/Recent Grads
- c. Investigate and develop a plan to partner on Wellness/Wellbeing efforts

In order to maintain our strong position as the umbrella association, the volunteer and staff leadership teams need to come together under one unified voice, the voice of the association. Through the implementation of the SMP and the plan that follows, we can track and measure our performance. Support for that plan and adherence to process will make us stronger and more agile. We've planned the work. Now, it's time to work the plan. Staying true to the plan will provide the evidence we need to determine success so we can adjust as we go.