

## ACPWH strategic plan 2010–2011

### Background

The essence of a strategy is that it gives you a sense of direction, a belief that you are in control of what you are doing and not simply responding to events. Strategy is concerned with trying to predict the future and planning for it now. A strategy is about delivering value to members in the longer term.

Hardware, software and communication processes are all changing so rapidly it is impossible to write a strategy without considering the best and most appropriate use of technology.

A business plan is an essential accessory to a strategy. A business plan describes where you are now and your immediate short-term aims, and is usually a more substantial and detailed document. A strategy is much shorter and describes who you are, what you do and where you expect to be in 3 years. It examines your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), and seeks to define your unique blue-sky vision: what you would do in a perfect world with no restrictions on costs, technology or capability.

This strategy describes the longer-term objectives of the Association, the benefits that will accrue, and what needs to be done to make it work and the tactics required. It allocates responsibilities to everyone involved in making it work (Fig. 1). A strategic plan provides a framework for making decisions and for detailed planning, as well as explaining what we are about to others in the Association. It also assists

the process of benchmarking and performance monitoring, as well as stimulating change.

In 2009, the ACPWH carried out a SWOT analysis to determine our key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

### SWOT analysis

#### Strengths

The key strengths of the Association were identified as:

- physiotherapy expertise specific to women's health;
- recognition as a clinical interest group (CIG) of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP);
- education and advice provided to members, and the series of training programmes that are run for members and non-members; and
- the educational content of the *Journal*.

#### Weaknesses

The key weaknesses, which are identified in no particular order, include the following:

- the underutilization and lack of development of the ACPWH website;
- an infrastructure that, as an unincorporated association, may not meet the demands of an organization that is moving forward;
- a poor organizational memory, mainly as a result of the lack of recognized processes for conducting all areas of the Association's business activity, leading to a lack of transparency for members regarding Executive Committee management activity, i.e. no standard operating procedures;
- a poor communication policy (almost 10% of members do not have an e-mail address);
- a lack of marketing expertise;
- a conference organizing committee that changes yearly, resulting in an annual re-invention of the wheel and no expert knowledge being maintained by the successor group; and
- poor administrative practices, as exemplified by the current method of collecting membership subscriptions, which involves duplication

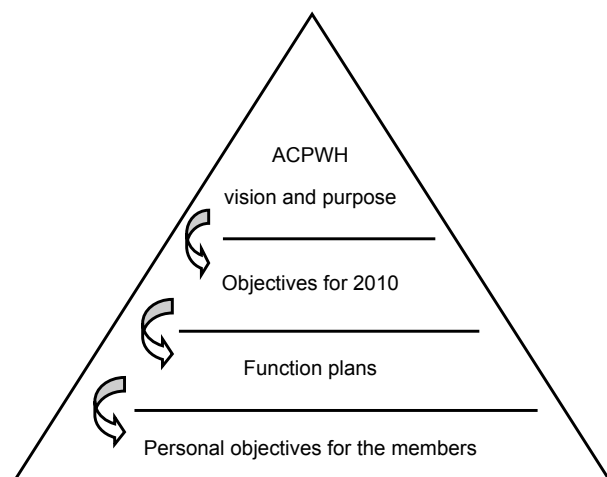


Figure 1. ACPWH 2010–2011.

in the processing of individual membership payments.

### *Opportunities*

Key opportunities that could readily be addressed with a standard detailed business plan include the following:

- the development of a recruitment and retention policy on membership that would reverse the trend of declining membership numbers with incentive schemes, advertorials in appropriate external publications and the utilization of corporate support mechanisms;
- the development of the website to make it more user-friendly, more interactive and easier to navigate, and encouraging more use of it as a networking forum and an informative newsletter substitute with up-to-the-minute news;
- raising the profile of the Association to both existing and potential members with a better communication policy;
- the promotion of award schemes with funded courses;
- the possibility of poster sponsorship;
- encouragement of research projects with funding;
- the development of opportunities for collaborative working with similar organizations or charities with joint study days or similar cooperative ventures;
- promotion of the *Journal* by having it more widely indexed;
- continuing the development of leaflets and ensuring that copyright is retained by the Association; and
- seeking to work more closely and effectively with the CSP by recognizing the Society's corporate plan.

### *Threats*

Key threats include:

- healthcare professionals allied to other groups/associations taking over elements of the physiotherapy role;
- maintenance of the financial viability of the Association;
- changes in the state of the National Health Service (NHS);
- the lack of ACPWH political influence;
- the lack of a public relations policy;
- the current legal status as an unincorporated association;
- the impact of *Physiotherapy*, the CSP journal, on the ACPWH *Journal*;

- the present structure through which the CIGs feed into the CSP, which is limited and far from satisfactory, and is under review by the CSP in consultation with both the CIGs and individual CSP members; and
- the lack of ACPWH representation on the CSP Council.

### *Analysis of the current position*

It is recognized that the position of ACPWH is affected to some extent by the state of the NHS and the national economy. However, the Association does have the opportunity to make a quantum leap forward by more-effective use of new technology, by the improvements that can be gained through a coordinated communication policy and by the use of external expertise that may not exist within the Association.

Because ACPWH works largely within the public sector as part of a government organization, it must operate within a regulatory and legal framework. As an unincorporated association, it lacks legal status, which means that liability for all its actions is shared equally by all subscribing members. The Association does not enjoy charitable status and longer-term consideration should be given to incorporating (i.e. becoming a limited company) with a view to ACPWH having its own legal identity.

While there is a significant reservoir of skill within the Association, there is difficulty tapping into this. It will be a key future function of the Executive Committee to identify and develop members to take on roles that will meet the future needs of managing the Association by providing encouragement, training and motivation to interested members.

The primary purpose is to provide ongoing education to members. The key emphasis must be to develop a number of platforms for delivering education on a longer-term basis. The ACPWH education programme must offer advantages over those of competitive providers within clearly defined boundaries.

## **ACPWH 2010–2011**

### *Vision*

In this context, vision means sagacity in planning.

The Association provides its members with:

- a platform from which to develop a career in all areas of women's health;
- a CIG that always seeks to promote and disseminate evidence-based practice to ensure

that members can achieve and maintain high standards of expertise;

- a forum for encouraging research and inter-professional collaborations for the mutual benefit of all parties; and
- a recognized and respected professional body that is synonymous with furthering education, progressive clinical practice and monitoring changes in women's health physiotherapy.

### **Purpose**

Purpose is synonymous with an object to be attained, resolution and determination.

The Association aims to:

- provide dynamic leadership aimed at taking forward improved patient care and specialist therapeutic skills by developing a learning structure that can be accessed by those working in any area of women's health;
- advance the professional interests of the members internally and externally, and seek cooperative working relationships with the CSP and other relevant affiliated organizations; and
- raise the profile of 'ACPWH member' within the healthcare provision agenda such that this becomes a gold standard for physiotherapists working in women's health, and thus, helps to protect jobs where cuts threaten.

### **Core services**

The core services provided by the Association are:

- the provision of postgraduate education through study days, university training courses, workshops, educational updates and an annual conference;
- a website that maintains communication channels and networking opportunities;
- a peer-reviewed journal;
- a range of educational leaflets for the non-professional reader;
- a range of bursaries and awards;
- professional support and mentoring, including research support;
- operating a 'Find a Physiotherapist' service;
- representation at national and international events; and
- a secretariat office open 5 days a week.

### **Objectives by priority**

This plan aims to address the issues highlighted by the SWOT analysis, and following

examination of this information, to identify and prioritize the changes needed to make strategic decisions that will help achieve the overall aim of the strategic plan. The strategic plan must integrate well with the business plan, which is about short-term operational, planning aimed at meeting day-to-day objectives and overcoming immediate problems.

The objectives of the strategic plan have been identified by priority, along with the activities required to achieve these aims, and are as follows:

- (1) *Increase the present membership level of 589 by 10% over a 3-year period commencing in April 2010:*
  - (a) Use regional representatives to recruit.
  - (b) Review and revise the membership benefits.
  - (c) Review membership categories.
  - (d) Identify incentive schemes to encourage new members, such as:
    - (i) offering the first 6 months of membership for free;
    - (ii) joining at Conference (6 months of free membership out of 12);
    - (iii) using workshop study days as a membership incentive, developing a poster pack offering 6 months of free membership out of 12 and looking at junior membership; and
    - (iv) seeking more corporate members.
  - (e) Map the membership to find areas of poor representation.
  - (f) Place advertorials in appropriate publications.
  - (g) Attend other exhibitions to sell membership.
  - (h) Run study days for non-members and the independent sector.
  - (i) Target universities for student membership.
  - (j) Install online joining on the website.
  - (k) Encourage company representative membership.
  - (l) Prepare a PowerPoint presentation for promoting membership at training courses, study days, workshops and other events.
  - (m) Develop the website to make it easier to navigate, more readable and more graphically orientated.
- (2) *Increase the effectiveness of the website by improving the functionality:*
  - (a) Join the CSP website as a microsite.

- (3) *Put measures in place to improve the profile of ACPWH internally and externally:*
  - (a) Develop advertorials for promoting the work of the Association in suitable newsletters, journals and training information produced by academic establishments.
  - (b) Establish *regular* contact with interested commercial companies.
  - (c) Provide a quarterly or bimonthly e-bulletin containing, for example, newsy material, and profiles of Executive Committee members and forthcoming Conference speakers.
  - (d) Promote the ongoing work of the Executive Committee on the website.
  - (e) Write a communication policy document.
- (4) *Review conference organization:*
  - (a) Organize meetings with representatives from the organizing committees of the past 3 years.
  - (b) Change the infrastructure to accommodate a 3-year term of office for all members of this committee.
- (c) Committee members should leave on a rotational basis.
- (d) Introduce a staggered start to membership of this group – the most-experienced person(s) should stand down after one year.
- (e) Give the first committee the responsibility of arranging venues for 3 years, and thereafter, the incumbents should organize one new venue each year.
- (f) Maintain a local member on the committee to tap into local knowledge and maintain a regional feel.
- (g) Develop terms of reference for the group.
- (5) *Seek endorsement of ACPWH-approved workshops:*
  - (a) Apply for CSP endorsement of ACPWH-approved workshops.

**Association of Chartered Physiotherapists  
in Women's Health**  
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