



Barbara H. Lange

Progress in the SMPTE Three-Year Strategic Plan

In a few short weeks, it is hard to believe that we will be ending yet another year. This is the first year of our new three-year strategic plan, which was approved by the Board of Governors in October 2018 after two years of discussion and planning effort. As I wrote in my column from earlier this year, this plan is designed to focus the Society on a sustainable future.

So, with one year under our belts, how did it go? My first, short answer is that it went fairly well. We've learned a lot. The staff embraced the plan with vigor and worked closely together to rethink the way we operate and the tools that we use. We adopted a new way of thinking of SMPTE as a business that has customers and products promoted to targeted markets. As an association, it's sometimes common to believe that we're not a real business, and that all our programs are meant to be "nonprofit." The fact is that SMPTE is a business like any other. The distinction as a nonprofit is simply that any surplus we generate is invested back into the association, and not returned to

shareholders. So, like any business, we must establish a strategic plan.

This adjustment in thought was the main gamechanger for the staff and Board as we embarked on this strategic plan. We had to look closely at our plans to ensure that we focused on the objectives of increasing brand awareness and engagement among the next generation of SMPTE members while staying financially sound.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the plan was to work through changes in how we operate. Having identified ambitious targets for all our areas of business, we had to introduce tools to enable us to reach those targets. We implemented a new marketing automation system that brings SMPTE into the 21st century. With a new digital marketing expert on staff, this system modernizes our ability to reach new targets through social media and other techniques. By the end of year, we will also have a new membership database system built on the power of Salesforce. We are excited by the notion of all the capabilities that both of these systems will provide.

Another new area for SMPTE is a business development function. With a proactive sales function in

place, we are beginning to reach new targets for corporate memberships, sponsorships, and advertising. Over the past year, more than a dozen new corporate members have included SMPTE in their plans due to proactive outreach.

While we've seen significant change and improvement, there have been challenges in executing the plan. It was hard to predict how the plan would play out, and we had many questions. Would we reach our ambitious revenue targets as we invested in new tools and staff? Would we still see the outcomes of this year's investment? The truth is that planning is very much an art. We cannot understand how all the pieces will fit together, or how the market environment will accept our new approach. But, overall, it has been a great experience for both staff and Board and sets the Society up for a secure future. In February 2020, the Board will meet once again to review its strategy. We can now base our plans on a solid footing with a year of good work behind us. I look forward to reporting on the continuation of this plan at this time next year and with the results of increased participation of the next generation of SMPTE members.

SMPTE

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