

Forest Products Society  
ISSUE BRIEF - UPDATE  
March 14, 2010

**Title:**

Process for Strategic Planning in 2010

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**Issue:**

Embarking on a comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process in 2010 is essential to position the Forest Products Society for successful and sustainable growth in the future.

**Background:**

The Forest Products Society is in a transition period. External forces tied to the economy, structure of the industry, and societal values have altered the environment in which the Society operates. In addition, technological innovations have transformed the way people access information and the pace with which they communicate. At the same time, there is a high level of global awareness about environmental issues such as climate change, carbon sequestration, and other goods and services linked with forests, as well as emerging markets for green-certified buildings and bio-products such as bioenergy, composites, and other wood-based materials. While these external forces present challenges to the Society, they also create opportunities to refocus our business model around emerging issues, trends, and technologies that will carry us forward as leaders in the forest products community.

In order to be successful in this transition, the Forest Products Society needs to clarify its mission, vision, and objectives through convening a comprehensive strategic planning process. The process must involve a realistic assessment of our strengths and weaknesses, as well as an analysis of our current business model and membership structure. Critical to our success will be to engage a broad range of perspectives throughout the process. Outcomes of strategic planning should include short- and long-term action plans to align the Society with emerging opportunities and enhanced relationships with new and existing strategic partners.

With the new leadership at Headquarters, the support of the current Executive Board and a unique chance to engage stakeholders at the International Convention, this year is an opportune time to embark on an effective strategic planning process. Since the 64<sup>th</sup> International Convention is shaping up to be well attended by both FPS members and non-members, and with the several other wood-oriented organizations meeting in Madison that week, we should use the Convention as a kickoff of our 2010 strategic planning process.

**Proposed Process:**

The following is a rough strategic planning process for consideration and further refinement. The process requires the commitment of an expanded version of the Executive Board task group identified in November 2009, which consists of the Executive Officers, Tom McLain, and Paul Smith. The task group should be expanded to include up to 2 members beyond the Executive Board and up to 2 non-members from partnering organizations. Once established, this Strategic Planning Advisory Team will function as the inner planning committee, helping to clarify the objectives and refine the strategic planning process, fine tune the questions and issues to be addressed in the

process, secure resources to support the process, and build interest in the process and outcomes among a diverse set of stakeholders.

#### *March – April 2010*

The Advisory Team will clarify the objectives of engaging in strategic planning, refine the proposed process (including identify realistic expected outcomes for the June meeting), fine tune the questions and issues to be addressed throughout the process, and conduct a stakeholder assessment in which audiences to engage in the process will be identified. During this period, the Advisory Team will also assist in outlining options for securing the facilitation expertise needed to ensure a successful process.

#### *May 2010*

The Executive Board and Advisory Team will participate in a SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) self-assessment utilizing online survey tools. The analysis will provide an opportunity to get a snapshot of the Society and serve as the basis for kickoff discussions at the International Convention. If possible, a paid or volunteer facilitator will lead this work.

#### *June 2010*

During the 64<sup>th</sup> International Convention, a 3-4 hour structured listening session will be held following the Executive Board meeting on Saturday, June 20. Approximately 30-40 individuals will be invited to discuss the internal SWOT analysis and to provide suggestions for an idealized future. The meeting will be offered to individuals unable to attend in person through a webinar or other technology that has the capability to foster interaction remotely. The discussion will be structured and facilitated, perhaps bringing in a professional facilitator and assisted by volunteers.

On the morning of Sunday, June 21 a 2-hour informal (less structured) listening session will be convened in which the results of the Saturday session will be presented and discussed. The session will be open to all attendees of the Convention. Also that same day, during the Student Appreciation Luncheon the EVP will lead a discussion specifically among students about ideas for moving the Society forward.

It is expected that the strategic planning sessions at the International Convention will generate data to inform our post-Convention strategic planning activities and will help us identify who else would like to be engaged in the process.

#### *July – October 2010*

Activities during this period depend on the results of the strategic planning sessions at the International Convention. However, the expectation is that the Advisory Team will solicit input from stakeholders primarily through remote means, participate in an analysis of the ideas generated and the June meetings, and develop and implement online surveys or use other tools to clarify the results. Proposed goals, objectives, and associated action plans for the Society will be developed. A process to vet the resulting ideas publicly will also be developed and implemented.

#### *November 2010*

The Executive Board will review, provide feedback, and ratify the resulting strategic plan. Follow-up work such as action teams and proposals for new initiatives will be outlined. The strategic plan will inform 2011 work plans for the Executive Board, EVP, committees, and Headquarters staff.

#### *January 2011*

The resulting strategic plan and initiatives will be communicated to members and non-members.

*February – May 2011*

A review of the FPS Constitution and Bylaws will be conducted in relation to the new strategic plan, with recommended adjustments developed.

*June 2011*

Any changes to the FPS Constitution and Bylaws needed to implement the strategic plan will be presented to the membership at the Official Business Meeting held in conjunction with the 2011 International Convention.

**Implementation:**

If the decision is made to move forward with this strategic planning process in 2010, then the EVP will convene the expanded Advisory Team in March 2010, flesh out the proposed process in consultation with the Advisory Team and experienced individuals, and collect estimates from professional facilitators in the event we choose to retain those services.