

SIRE
Strategic Planning
Summary and Outcomes Report

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I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

SIRE retained The Dini Partners, Inc. in May 2007 to facilitate a strategic planning process that would shape SIRE's future. The assignment included conducting working sessions with an *ad hoc* planning group, a leadership survey, a focus group, a Board retreat, and documenting the outcomes of the process in a written strategic plan.

The Dini Partners facilitated the strategic planning process over a period of four months. Members of the *ad hoc* planning committee developed a vision, a set of organizational beliefs and core values, and strategic goals. These were vetted among SIRE's full Board and Advisory Board in a survey. Key planning concepts were also discussed at a focus group with individuals who represented SIRE's key constituents.

Members of the Strategic Planning Committee included:

Mike Dillingham	Cindy Ruiz
MaryKate Flanagan	Christy Shell
Randall Grace	Molly Sweeney
Guy Hunter	Richard White
Karen McPhail	Jimm Williams
Pat Roddy	

The following participated in the focus group conducted on July 11, 2007:

Karen Abbott	Joelle Devlin
Hunter Adkins	Harla Kaplan
Glenn Aker	Lorraine Ostrowski
Luis Cardenas	Lee Ruonavaara
Angela Dampeer	Peggy Wagner

The outcomes of the strategic planning process were used as platform for discussions at the Board retreat held in August 2007. Attending that session were:

Alexia Gannon	Cindy Ruiz
Trey Henderson	Molly Sweeney
Guy Hunter	Jennifer Webb
Mark Raisbeck	Richard White
Pat Roddy	Jimm Williams

The summary and outcomes of the strategic planning process are outlined in this report.

II. SUMMARY AND OUTCOMES

In three working sessions, members of the Strategic Planning Committee discussed the future direction of SIRE. As they considered what SIRE should become over the coming ten years, participants consistently articulated their desire for SIRE to maintain the quality of its services as it expands to allow greater access. These two issues—quality and growth—remained at the center of strategic planning discussions.

Beliefs and Core Values

With a long history of providing high quality services to their clients, the leaders and staff of SIRE believe the organization should approach expansion with careful attention to maintaining quality and the caring nature of the organization. To ensure this, the Strategic Planning Committee articulated the organization’s beliefs and core values that will serve to guide its decision-making and operations.

Beliefs:

- We believe that therapeutic horseback riding and related activities improve the quality of life of our clients, their families, our volunteers, and our staff.
- We believe the role the horse plays in therapeutic horseback riding and related activities is fundamental to success.
- We believe in the lasting benefits of therapeutic horseback riding and related activities.
- We believe that having fun increases the effectiveness of the therapeutic horseback riding and related activities.

Core Values:

SIRE Cares!
Safety, Integrity, Respect and Excellence

Safety

- We continuously monitor and maintain a safe environment.

Integrity

- We are committed to our client's privacy.
- We manage growth prudently and are fiscally responsible in all our operations.
- We make decisions that reflect our commitment to our core values.

Respect

- We work as a team with clients, their families, our volunteers, and our horses, respecting each member of the team for the value they add to the whole.
- We create an environment for our clients to succeed.
- We appreciate the immediate and lasting benefits our clients are experiencing.
- We seek to serve clients regardless of ability to pay.
- We share information appropriately within SIRE and mentor other organizations.

Excellence

- We place the highest priority on the quality of services we deliver and will increase the number of clients served only to the extent quality can be maintained.
- We consistently adhere to and exceed national and international standards set in our industry.

Vision

SIRE's therapeutic equestrian centers provide the highest quality therapeutic horseback riding and related activities to all those who can benefit.

The vision statement above, developed by the Strategic Planning Committee, was confirmed in a survey of the Board and Advisory Board, and at the Board retreat. It articulates what SIRE intends to become over the coming ten years. It reflects again the organization's dedication to quality by aspiring to provide the "highest quality" of services. Growth is addressed by SIRE's desire to serve all those who can benefit.

Mission

An organization's mission is the touchstone for all strategic planning conversations. In discussing SIRE's future, the Strategic Planning Committee recognized that a clear understanding of the purpose of SIRE is important to all that it does currently and plans to do in the future.

To help clarify its mission, the Strategic Planning Committee recommended the consistent use of "therapeutic horseback riding and related activities" in the mission statement and in all references that describe what SIRE does.

Current:

The mission of SIRE is to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities through horseback riding and therapeutic activities.

Proposed and Approved:

The mission of SIRE is to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities through therapeutic horseback riding and related activities.

Strategic Goals

To achieve the vision, participants in the strategic planning process developed and prioritized the following strategic goals. These prioritized goals describe what SIRE will do over the coming two to five years to move the organization closer to achieving the vision.

Organizational Readiness

1. Develop and provide instructor certification training programs, and offer management and volunteer training and mentoring for SIRE and other therapeutic equestrian centers.
2. Develop, implement, and monitor systems that measure, track, and document service quality and client progress. Determine those disabilities we are having the greatest impact on.

Facilities and Programs

3. Improve access to client services by expanding current locations and adding new sites.
4. Annually consider expanding programs to incorporate a wider spectrum of disabilities for SIRE to serve.

Leadership

5. Provide leadership for and participate in medical research to establish the medical efficacy of therapeutic horseback riding and related activities.
6. Establish and follow best practices in the industry for management and services.

III. ACTION PLANS

Working in teams, participants at the Board retreat developed the following action plans for each of the strategic goals.

1. Develop and provide instructor certification training programs, and offer management and volunteer training and mentoring for SIRE and other therapeutic equestrian centers.

Planning Team: Whitey, Alexia, Jimm

Next Steps:

1. Identify other centers that currently offer instructor certification training (1-3 years) and (3-5 years) and develop our own training program.
2. Search for current qualified instructors through ads/publications, etc.
3. Certification process is offered by NAHRA. One year process if not an “in class” process. Six weeks certification at a “third party” center.

Information/Data:

- Identify program costs, time requirements (6 weeks) – recruitment classified ads in local, regional trade journals.
- Conduct a market compensation analysis. Salary, benefits, growth opportunities to make it a “career.”

Costs:

- Determine the total cost to send someone to instructor training at another site.
- Salary and expenses while training - ?
- Compensation analysis cost - ?

Target Dates:

- 1-3 years outside or external program. Transition into 3-5 year internally developed program.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Board’s role: Approval for funding external – internal program and for external – internal training. Identify potential candidates. Staff role: Develop program for internal use.

Measures:

- Measure recruitment success vs. recruitment goals for year.

ACTION PLANS (CONTINUED)

Implementation:

- Create subcommittee of board, staff, and/or volunteers to identify needs and implement a plan.

2. Develop, implement, and monitor systems that measure, track, and document service quality and client progress. Determine those disabilities we are having the greatest impact on.

Planning Team: Pat, Cindy, Guy, Jennifer

Next Steps:

1. Gather and analyze existing client goal data. (EOY 2007)
2. Establish follow-up evaluations which include surveying parents with baseline. (EOY 2008)
3. Annually do exit surveys for clients who no longer ride.
4. Explore possibility of outside medical professional to verify progress. (2008)
5. Better client survey form – someone onsite at time of interview. (May 2008)
6. Establish initial baseline concepts.

Information/Data:

- Gather and analyze existing client goal data. (EOY 2007)
- Establish follow-up evaluations that include surveying parents with baseline. (EOY 2008)
- Annually do exit surveys for clients who no longer ride.
- Explore possibility of outside medical professional to verify progress. (2008)
- Better client survey form – someone onsite at time of interview. (May 2008)
- Establish initial baseline concepts.

Costs:

- Currently not known as to dollar amount.
- Data mining and analysis by consultant, graduate student.
- Therapist to perform follow-up evaluation.
- Dedicated resource to perform client survey.

Target Dates:

- Data mine and initiate analysis by end of 2007.
- Develop client survey by May 2008.
- Implement follow-up evaluation and client survey by end of 2008.

ACTION PLANS (CONTINUED)

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Board to set direction and use the information gained for decision-making. Staff to conduct or manage data collection and analysis.

Measures:

- Presentation of data by January 2008 Board meeting, then integrate into standard reports.

Implementation:

- Form committee of staff, Board, and volunteers to refine planning, secure resources and oversee data collection and analysis.

3. Improve access to client services by expanding current locations and adding new sites.

Planning Team: Molly, Trey, Mark

Next Steps:

1. Examine the current sites to ensure that they are maximized.
2. Compile a list of maintenance/expansion goals at current sites.
3. Develop criteria for new site (part of the criteria should be that we have one-year's operating expenses for the site in reserve.)
4. Conduct a site location study.
5. Plan to include maintenance endowment in both the expansion and new site fundraising plans.

Information/Data:

- What are our maintenance needs at current sites?
- What expansion would we like to do at these sites?
- What are the criteria for a new site?

Costs:

- Secure bids on maintenance, expansion at current sites, and future sites. These costs should include legal, realtors, market surveys, and access.

Target Dates:

- Maintenance – October budget
- Expansion plan – one year
- New site – two years

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Appoint a Facilities Committee of the Board.
- Staff and committee to work on recommendations for Board action.

ACTION PLANS (CONTINUED)

Measures:

- Meet target dates.

Implementation:

- Facilities Committee (Board and staff) to develop maintenance, current, and future site expansion plan.
- Fundraising Committee to plan fundraising initiative.

4. Annually consider expanding programs to incorporate a wider spectrum of disabilities for SIRE to serve.

Planning Team: Whitey, Alexia, Jimm

Next Steps:

1. Assess current capabilities. (Full range of who we are serving)
2. Compare “our” stats against NAHRA and/or “best practice” centers – see how we measure up.

Information/Data:

- Assess current capabilities and compare “our” stats against NAHRA and/or “best practice” centers – see how we measure up.

Costs:

- Undeterminable at this time.

Target Dates:

- Immediate.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Board to approve funding the committee recommendations to achieve this goal. Staff to make recommendations for Board action.

Measures:

- Review annually. 12/15 hours per week for each instructor in the arena.

Implementation:

- ?

ACTION PLANS (CONTINUED)

5. Provide leadership for and participate in medical research to establish the medical efficacy of therapeutic horseback riding and related activities.

Planning Team: Molly, Trey, Mark

Two different approaches we could take:

1. Recruit a researcher to set up program.
2. Contribute to organizations that fund research, such as HHRF. (Horse and Human Research Foundation)

Information/Data:

- Decision by Board.
- If we set up our own research program, we would need to decide the type of research and determine the best candidates to conduct the research.

Cost:

- If we decide to fund on-going research, or something through the HHFR, the costs would be the amount we would want to raise and contribute.
- Costs for developing a research program based at our sites would have to be determined.

Target Dates:

- Year-end budget decision or recruit – one year to find someone.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Board - Decide which way to go. Staff - Data input for research.

Measure:

- Time tables: Amount of donation, completion, and published research.

Implementation:

- Form a Task Force (Board and staff) to recommend Board action.

ACTION PLANS (CONTINUED)

6. Establish and follow best practices in the industry for management and services.

Planning Team: Pat, Cindy, Guy, Jennifer

Next Steps:

1. Define categories/areas. NARHA standards, audit HR manual, financial.

Information/Data:

- Need to know what the international standards are. Research relevant standards by surveys, interviews, and research.

Costs:

- Unknown. Significant staff commitment or hire consultant.

Target Dates:

- June 2008 – report plan to Board.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Board to provide guidance and expertise. Staff to help develop and implement.

Measures:

- Documentation.

Implementation:

- ?

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Recognizing that clear roles and responsibilities ensure successful implementation, the participants in the Board retreat recommended the following actions to ensure effective communication of the strategic plan and involvement in its implementation.

1. A subset of Board/Strategic Planning Committee will meet with staff to:
 - a) Clarify the strategic goals and the strategic planning process;
 - b) Discuss next steps and the staff's role in implementation;
 - c) Review timelines; and
 - d) Answer "what's in it for me" for the staff.
2. The Strategic Planning Committee will remain in place, with sub-committees working on each strategic goal. Additional BOD members and staff will be nominated to serve on sub-committees.
3. We will consider third party involvement to facilitate planning work or discussions.
4. Communication with the Board and staff must be consistent and show progress.