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1.2 PLANNING STRATEGY



WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS CHAPTER?

Your Strategy is the Reflection of Your Basketball Dreams

Mission, vision, goals, objectives. These words are often used when discussing strategy. But let's take a step back and look at the fundamentals of what creates a good strategy.

Strategy is how you put your dream into words. Ask yourself these three questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? How do we get there?

The answer to this last question is your strategy. But to successfully answer this question you must first answer find out where you stand today.

When identifying where you want to be you should not be scared to be a little creative. What is your dream?

Think about it. A powerful and well communicated dream can have a tremendous motivational effect for all staff in your organization.

This dream, however, must be achievable and measurable. If your strategy is good enough, you will achieve it. When this dream is achieved you are ready to face your new challenge — a new dream.



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1. Introduction

The starting point for developing a plan is to define as precisely as possible where you are today, where you want to be tomorrow and how you want to get there. Add to that the values and principles that must be followed, and then determine practical solutions for the many questions that must be answered. A simple way to keep the stages of this process in mind is to remember the following simple graph:



The process of strategic planning is “turning wheel” that should constantly be in motion. Once you have determined where you want to go, building on where you are today, the way to get there (the strategy) should then be designed in the clearest possible way so it can be easily communicated to all. This process should be constantly reviewed (“are we getting there”) and modified if necessary. Once the strategy has been implemented, the initial questions should be asked again (“where are we now”), and a new strategic planning process should start.

The purpose of a strategic planning process is to undertake the following:

1. Produce a document or set of documents which will define the mission, goals and objectives, and the tactical means by which they will be achieved and evaluated.
2. Establish short-term (1-3 years) and long-term (3-5 years) operational plans based on the above.
3. Develop short and long range financial plans based on 1 and 2 above.

Strategic planning that also includes the planning of specific activities and measures, is an extremely complex work that requires comprehensive preparation and a multi-disciplinary approach to the problem. In brief, the basic preconditions for quality planning include a thorough analysis of the current situation defining the optimal objectives and terms/deadlines for their realization. Each particular country and, of course, the respective basketball federation, require a specific approach. Before preparing the strategic plan for the National Federation bear in mind that you need to take the following steps:



1. Set timelines for completion of the plan.
2. Undertake stakeholders analysis – i.e. consultation with anyone having a claim on resources/outputs, or affected by decisions/outputs (e.g. members; national sport organizations; governments, health, education and legal communities; critics; international agencies).
3. Draft mission statement (in light of above information).
4. Undertake external assessment:
 - Research data, present and future trends.
 - Undertake needs assessment of likely clientele, targets, collaborators, opponents (i.e. the demand).
 - Identify available resources (i.e. the supply).
 - Clarify roles and relationships of stakeholders, service providers (ie the market).
5. Undertake internal assessment of strengths and weaknesses.
6. Draft an organization profile based on steps 2-5, identifying strategic questions such as:
 - Who we are?
 - Where are we now?
 - What are we currently doing?
 - Why are we doing it?
 - Where do we want to be?
 - Why do we want to be there?
 - How do we get there, and by when?
 - What do we change; who does it?
 - What will it take? Next steps.
 - How will we measure success?
7. Establish a draft strategic plan (mission, goals, objectives) and proposed priorities for future action.
8. Undertake a second-round of consultation with stakeholders and obtain their input on priorities, resource allocation and criteria for evaluation.
9. Develop a 1-3 year operational plan, with a detailed financial plan for year 1 (general estimates for beyond year 1), and evaluation criteria.
10. Submit the strategic and operational plans to the board for approval.

We will now turn to an examination of some key elements which need to be covered by a basketball federation when preparing its strategic plan.

They are:

1. Country
2. Political and economical condition in the country
3. Status and organization of basketball
4. Structure and management of the National Federation



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2. Country

The number of inhabitants, area and the population density, are issues which affect the country's development plan. The population structure, urbanization, customs/tradition/religion, moral/ethical values, languages, education and genetic characteristics should also be considered when defining the basic objectives and identifying appropriate targets.

The number of inhabitants, male/female ratio, percentage of youth, population density and urbanization are the main parameters to be taken in consideration when creating a development plan for the National Federation. Developing basketball in the capital cities with a large population, must be the priority. All development plans have to be linked with the places where the biggest opportunities are.

It is extremely important is to know how the system of education functions; the number and location of primary and secondary schools. How the Ministry of Education structures schools in the country and the number and the condition of outdoor and indoor basketball facilities in schools is valuable information.

Basketball objectives must be related to the body type and physique of the population. In countries where the typical body type is not optimal for basketball, it is necessary to find ways in which to promote basketball as a favorable choice for children (enable as early as possible animation/attraction and inclusion of children). Unfavourable physique can be compensated, with good training and individual practice — for example, the lack of height can be compensated with better individual technique, shooting preciseness, speed etc. The game concept should be adjusted to the physical characteristics, skill and capabilities of players, in order to achieve the best possible results.

Local genetic disadvantages should be compensated for with the good quality of training and individual practice.

Climate is an important factor in planning especially with regards to the competition calendar and sports infrastructure. It is very important for the competition calendar, in regions featuring extreme climatic conditions and long bad weather periods (extremely low or extremely high temperatures, heavy rains...). The competition calendar should be scheduled so that the leagues (particularly the lower level competitions) take place during favorable weather conditions. Only if unavoidable, should the competition be continued during unfavorable weather periods. Under these circumstances, we recommend a tournament competition system in the cities that have adequate facilities and good lines of transportation.

The climatic conditions of the country also affect decisions related to the sports infrastructure. They are a determining factor when evaluating the viability of constructing open air facilities. They are decisive when it comes to selecting the type, technical characteristics and equipment of indoor facilities intended for basketball and other sports. In other words, the climatic conditions and the budget available for the construction of sports facilities are important factors influencing the development of basketball in any country.

In defining objectives, the NF should take into consideration the social function of basketball in the society. This is particularly important in multi-ethnic societies. In such situations the social role of basketball should be emphasized in order to provide additional funding of basketball activities. Through promotion, this aspect of basketball can strengthen the position and influence of our sport in the society.



Tradition and the preferences of ethnic groups affect the planning of realistic objectives and the direction of development activities. In communities where the influence of religion is particularly

In the countries with ethnic conflicts basketball should be used to reduce ethnic tensions and should enhance inter-ethnic understanding and cooperation.

strong, promotion should especially be adjusted to attitude of religion towards sport. In other words, the promotion of basketball should primarily be focused on basketball characteristics that represent the generally accepted values.

The rating and status of women's sport and its promotion must be harmonized with social principles and should be in accordance with positive objectives pursued by religion and society in general.

In countries with ethnic conflicts basketball should be used to minimize ethnic tensions and should enhance inter-ethnic understanding and cooperation. The NF should be aware that security of its members is an important aspect of the positive image of basketball. If necessary, security measures should be taken to prevent a possible increase in tensions and a risk of inter-ethnic conflict.

Accessibility and systems of transportation are another important factors in creating a development plan for the National Federation. The NF should determine its organizational and administrative structure, competition structure and educational program, after considering the number of vehicles, trains and airplanes, their frequency, availability and costs. The lines of transportation are also an important prerequisite when creating an optimal system of international competitions (club and national team) at the regional continental and intercontinental level. These factors influence the possibilities of long-term and intensive cooperation (games, tournaments, education, exchange of experts, etc.) with neighboring countries.

3. Political and Economical Situation of the Country

When creating a development plan, the NF should examine all political and economical aspects of the country. The political division of the country (regions, provinces, states) can determine the future organizational structure of the NF and this has to be carefully studied. The NF should take into consideration the structures used by other successful sport federations and the organizational structure commonly applied in other institutions within the country (various bodies and their number, hierarchy, etc.), but not necessary apply it. Knowledge of the electoral, telecommunication and schools divisions done by the respective and of governmental institutions, is important and could be useful when creating the organizational structure of the NF.

Membership in international treaties and associations is another factor which could be helpful in creating successful a development plan. Countries which are members of the Commonwealth, Francophone, Arab league etc have an opportunity to participate in sports/basketball competitions organized by those bodies. Some international institutions and non-governmental organizations support regional and inter-state cooperation and that should also be exploited whenever possible and wherever it contributes to the fulfillment of the objectives. Political partnerships facilitate communication and such cooperation may generate substantial support from the government. For small and poor federations this may be very important.



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The international political position of a country could influence friendly/exhibition matches and tournaments. Such events should be planned to take place in neighboring countries with which there is an inter-state cooperation as well as the tradition in cooperation in basketball. The basis of international cooperation and exchange should be the existing protocols and the tradition of mutual cooperation between countries. Each NF should establish relationships with advanced federations that could help them to improve the quality and organization of their work.

The economic situation and the stability of a country are important factors in providing a stable NF structure. The economic situation could have a direct impact on sport, either via infrastructure for sports (facilities, sports halls) or via direct Governmental subsidies/grants towards sport.

Every level of basketball from national teams through club competitions and even school leagues will be influenced by the "infrastructure" of the nation. In economically stable countries planning and resourcing the budget is much easier than in poorer countries. The budget, financial reserves and timing of income receipts, directly affects the scope, number and the quality of activities of the federations and national teams. The actions/activities of the NF and the selection of target groups could depend on the industries which traditionally support sports and generate the greatest profits/revenues. The marketing strategy of the NF could be created around companies which are a driving factor of the economy of the country.

The economic situation of the country has direct impact on the general means of communication. It is important to know the number of newspapers, radio and TV stations as well as the number of computers per household in order to create the media and marketing strategy of the NF.

4. Status and Organization of Basketball

Before creating its strategy, the National Federation must have a clear overview of the general sports structure in the country. It is important to have a good relationship with all governmental institutions, in particular with Ministry of Education/Sports. A good relationship with National Olympic Committee is a must. The NOC can be a strong ally of all NF in developing the sport of basketball. The status of basketball is best reflected in the relationship between great industrial systems and state institutions on the one side and the basketball organization and its initiatives and requests on the other side.

Ways should be found for basketball to become the first choice of children at schools.

In order to develop our sport and improve our organisation, we must have good relation with these other stakeholders.

The status of sport in general and basketball in particular, affects the planning and setting up of promotions, as well as the recruiting of new members and followers of basketball. In all instances, the positive effects of basketball should be promoted on a continuous basis and ways should be found for basketball to become the first choice of children at school. Government-supported programs (for example, sports against drugs, alcohol, violence and the like) that can be implemented in parallel with the basketball activities may be an important additional source of funding for the basketball organization and will be well received by the general public.



Political support is very important for development plans that require substantial financial resources and improved infrastructure. Human, organizational, material and financial resources are important factors that should be taken into consideration when defining the scope and structure of the development programs. The programs need to be rational and effective, as well as adapted to suit the needs of various target groups and different levels of membership.

Tradition is also an important factor that determines the capacity of basketball to attract and encourage new members and through them, increase the influence and position in the country. However, through detailed planning and patient and consistent activity, the situation can change considerably.

The establishment of a dedicated marketing service/department or engagement of a specialized agency is desirable.

The objectives must be realistically defined and projected according to the real potential for success. If this is not the case, if the targets are not realistic, the results achieved will be the opposite of those aimed for. Financial, material and

human resources available to sport, determine the short-term and long-term actions and development plans. The method, scope and form of development depends on the specific situation and current needs of the federation.

The use of positive values, intelligent use of organizational resources, and adequate promotion creates the necessary preconditions for a successful marketing campaign that should provide better working conditions and creates new opportunities. The establishment of a dedicated marketing service/department or the engagement of a specialized agency is desirable. Well thought-out and correctly directed PR activities are vital for the improvement of basketball and the creation of an environment suitable for the implementation of the planned activities.

When all general conditions are reviewed, the NF has to analyze its internal structure in order to have a comprehensive picture on how to move forward. In order to be successful, the first issue to be looked at is the regional structure of the NF. The regions should be in charge of all activities of federations in their territory, such as the recruiting of new members, education, follow-up, monitoring and improvement of quality, competition, administrative support/logistics and other similar issues. The size, population and interaction between the regions determines the parameters to be considered in the planning of all activities of the federations. The creation of basketball regions, depends on the total area/surface

The geographical region should be the framework for the basic level of competition as well as the base for all younger category competition.

the population density, the lines of transport and economic potential of the divisions within each country. When defining the regional borders, care should be taken regarding optimal distances and local transport (price and frequency). Competitions and other forms of cooperation at the regional level can become an integral part of the development pro-

grams of countries that lack financial resources.

In many countries the competition system is directly linked with the number and quality of the teams in a territory. The geographical region should be the framework for the basic level of competition as well as the base for all younger category competitions. The lowest level of competition is always related to a region, and the structure and size of the region determines the number of competition levels to be



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organized within it. The competition system should be in accordance with the principles applied in establishing regions, especially the competitions of younger categories and the base level competitions. At the same time, the mutual relations between the regions and their interaction, affect the structure of national level competition systems.

The young category competitions and all lower level competitions that include clubs of low financial potential should be organized at the regional level, whereas the competitions between the regions should be organized by applying the most rational/cost effective systems (for example tournaments). The competition system should be tailored to the existing conditions. What is best, depends very much on the basketball playing base territorial organization, financial situation, skill level, infrastructure, calendar and other factors.

The geographical region should be the framework for the basic level of competition as well as the base for all younger category competition.

The competition system should be designed according to the development strategy for basketball, taking into consideration the financial means of the clubs. The system of competition should be designed to meet the requirements of developing players, inclusion of as many active players as possible, as well as to meet the requirement of organizing the competition in compliance with the quality of basketball in the particular country. This will then generate the greatest marketing benefits for our sport.

The development of all stakeholders of basketball should also be done through the regional structure, with basic education, practical training, and advanced training. The testing of all members of the organization should be organized at the regional level. Education is one of the main pre-conditions for quality improvement. There are different approaches and ways in which education should be conducted. The optimum approach will depend, among other factors, will depend on the number of potentially interested members of the organization (players, coaches, referees, commissioners, administrative personnel, doctors and the like) in the territory.

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5. Structure and Management of the National Basketball Federation

In the next phase it is necessary to review the existing NF structure and the first on the “to do list” is the NF constitution, its rules and regulations. Regulations should be set in accordance with the FIBA regulations, making use of the experience and solutions applied in more developed and successful federations (not necessarily the basketball ones). Specific solutions should be adapted to suit the strategy of development, that is, the local particularities, taking into consideration the results achieved by actions in other similar, or more developed federations.

The system and frequency of elections, the electoral base and other elements should be in accordance with FIBA regulations and the normal procedure in the country. It is vital that the elected bodies are supported by the most influential clubs, and state institutions, in order for them to be able to enforce their decisions with authority. In the NF organizational structure it is necessary to include personnel from all basketball structures, as well as representatives of government and economic institutions that provide financial support and are able to improve the position of basketball.

Management and decision making systems in the NF have to be simple and clearly defined. The NF must provide quality programs, be competent and have authority over basketball in the country. Key positions should



be assigned to quality and highly competent people, who should be supported by professional sport administration personnel. The basketball administration staff should have appropriate qualifications and adequate experience in working with sports organizations. In addition to that, they should constantly improve their knowledge and skill, keeping pace with technological progress and trends in basketball development throughout the world. The selection of adequate personnel, establishing organizational structure, timely and quality information, as well as the timely and adequate decision-making, creates a foundation for effective performance. Expertise, application of advanced technologies, positive experience and tried and tested solutions, should enable a more rationale/cost effective and optimal usage of all resources available.

Budgets for all activities have to be realistic and designed to meet the strategic objectives. Government financial support and budgetary financing should secure the basic operations of the federation. In addition, the NF must secure its own resources through various activities.

Administrative staff should constantly improve their knowledge and skill, keeping pace with technological progress and trends in basketball development throughout the world.

The number of national selections/teams, the type and scope of preparation to be organized by the federation depend on the federation's available budget, whereas the priorities have to be determined on the basis of a long-term strategy.

The marketing strategy greatly depends on the federation's results, but other resources possessed by basketball should

also be used in order to make use of all funding available. Promotional and commercial activities, such as the organization of competitions, camps, merchandising program, as well as the inclusion in the government-financed projects, could bring additional resources and improve the position and influence of basketball. It is necessary to make use of all the possibilities available and ask for government support in organizing international competitions. These will contribute to the strengthening of the infrastructure, the organization, the financial base, as well as the promotion of basketball and achievement of better results.

The scope and concept of the marketing activities should be in accordance with the status and influence of basketball in the country. In the case of smaller federations, the situation assessment and planning should be carried out by a specialized agency. The marketing and promotional activities and expectations should reflect the actual economic situation, and be adapted to the status, advantages and quality of basketball in the country. The Federation must highlight in the development strategy/objectives, the long-term positive effects on the society as a whole.

The participation and presence of basketball in the media and TV directly depend on the status and influence of basketball, and this in turn directly affects its marketing potential. A synchronized marketing

The scope of the marketing activities should be in accordance to the status of basketball in the country.

campaign and planned media and TV campaign (perhaps paid for in beginning), along with an improvement in quality and attractiveness of basketball, will result in an increased interest in basketball and a gradual improvement of its status and role. In order to meet the strategic objectives the

media should be used for the promotion of values and objectives set by the Federation. Young talented players should be presented in the media and they should become publicly known personalities/celebrities or idols; the future promoters of the Federation's ideas and programs.



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When creating the strategic plan, each NF should be aware that in addition to the budget, there are also other limiting factors that affect the scope and quality of the national team programs, such as the actual quality of players, the coaching staff, infrastructure and the compatibility of calendars of various international competitions. Cooperation and ties with the countries with which there is a traditionally good relationship, as well as with the countries where basketball is at a higher level, should contribute to faster progress and an increase in the quality of operations and organization of the NF. Official competitions and planning of other international activities depend on the situation in the corresponding FIBA Zone and the plan of its activities.

The programs of national teams, especially the young team programs should be designed in accordance with, and aimed at the implementation of the strategic objectives of the federation (for instance, the creation of players for the senior team, or the achievement of results with young teams, as players become inferior to their counterparts in the senior team, or...). All these factors should be considered in preparing an optimal work program.



All federation activities, such as promotion, recruiting and working with young people, education and social function of basketball must serve the strategic objectives of the Federation (previously set in accordance with the existing conditions and resources available).

All activities undertaken by the Federation must serve the purpose of achieving its strategic objectives.

All those other activities must be in accordance with the general development strategy and adjusted to the financial resources available. The Federation should initially start any activity which could potentially represent new sources of financing and be tools for the promotion of basketball. Some activities such as camps, streetball, mini basketball etc have higher marketing potential and the ability to generate long-term revenue. These need to be more market-oriented.

6. Problem Solving

Be aware that sometimes things will not go in the right direction and you might face difficult situations. There is a saying that a problem or crisis is a dangerous opportunity - it is something that has its own tension, but it also has the possibility of a creative and helpful solution. Here is one approach to difficult situations:

There are six basic steps in problem-solving:

1. Recognizing and defining the problem
2. Analyzing and clarifying the problem
3. Reviewing alternative solutions



4. Choosing a solution
5. Implementing the solution
6. Evaluating the decision

The outline that follows provides an opportunity for you to analyze a basketball problem in your country. Keep in mind that a positive attitude, which sees problem-solving as an opportunity, goes a long way to ensuring a successful solution.

1. Recognizing and Defining the Problem

- What are the symptoms?
- When did they first appear?
- What happened before that time?
- What events or incidents illustrate the problem?
- What exactly is the problem? ie state it clearly in terms of specific data and responsibility
- How does this problem affect me or my association?
- How do I contribute to the continued presence of the problem?
- What haven't I done to help eliminate this problem?

2. Analyzing and Clarifying the Problem

- Who sees this as a problem?
- Why do they see this as a problem?
- Who is affected by the problem?
- How are they affected?
- Who else is involved with the problem and how?
- What other factors influence the problem? (eg budget, tradition, attitudes etc)
- How are you involved in the problem?
- What would you like to see changed?
- Who has the power to make these changes?
- What positive forces exist that will help you resolve the problem?
- What negative forces exist that may hamper you resolving the problem?

One technique known as the MECE principle can help you frame the problem while identifying the key issues that might be hidden, but are still part of it.

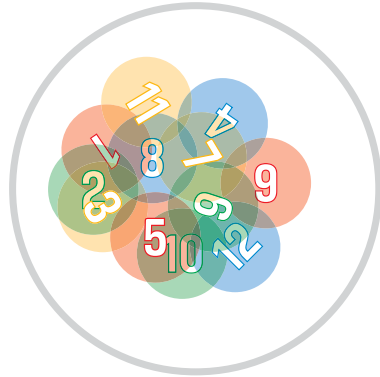
MECE stands for Mutually Exclusive but Collectively Exhaustive.

ME: Separate the problem into distinct, non-overlapping issues

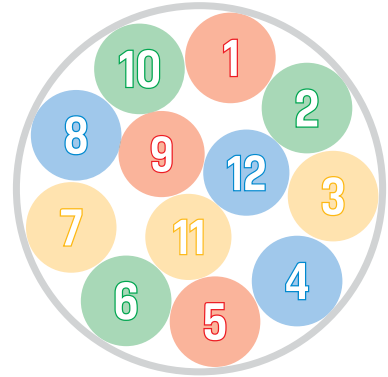
CE: Make sure that no issues have been overlooked.



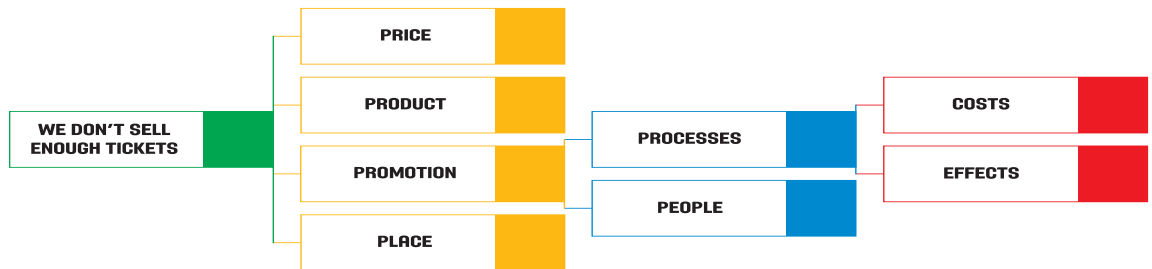
NON-FRAMED PROBLEM



FRAMED PROBLEM



Using the MECE method, you should not make sure to distinguish between cause and effect, between problems and symptoms. Use the logic tree, trying breaking down the issue to get to the real source of the problem. Here's an example of a logic tree:



3. Reviewing Alternative Solutions

Blue-Skying:

Imagine that it is one year from today. You are still enjoying the benefits of the positive changes you have made as a result of today's problem solving process. You are experiencing very few difficulties in the area of your previous "problem".

- List all the changes you have made as a result of your decision about this problem. Be imaginative and creative.
- Choose your top three priorities from this list i.e. the three most important areas for change with respect to this problem. Be specific.

Brainstorming:

A good way to generate ideas for solutions is simply to brainstorm or think "off the top of your head". Be as outlandish as you want in listing the first things that come to mind. Sometimes ideas which seem far-out can trigger other useful approaches.



Rules for brainstorming:

- List every idea that comes to mind
- Do not judge or evaluate the idea yet
- It's OK to repeat ideas - include them in your list
- Think of new solutions or ideas for 3 or 4 minutes
- Stop if you break any rules

When you have completed the brainstorming session spend a few minutes choosing your top three ideas from the list. Be specific.

4. Choosing a Solution:

- Identify as many reasonable alternative solutions to the problem.
- Identify the important criteria for evaluating each alternative.
- Test each alternative solution with the criteria. Determine if one alternative appears more reasonable than the others.
- If necessary, test your reasoning and preferred solution with other people.

5 Implementing a Solution

1. List the major action steps that you are going to take.
2. Describe these steps in the order you expect them to occur.

- What authority do you require to proceed with your solution?
- What key groups of individuals will you have to involve to provide resources and support?
- What are the major stumbling blocks or obstacles that need to be overcome?
- What are the first steps that need to be taken in the next few weeks?
- Who will initiate action?
- Who needs to be kept informed?

6. Evaluating a decision

- What changed?
- What ongoing feedback systems did you use?
- What quantifiable data can you measure to indicate change?
- What further areas for improvement do you see?



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7. Keep in Mind

Basketball leaders must gain the respect of those they lead. They should be guided by clearly stated values and ethical behavior. They must be perceived as being honest and trustworthy if they are to influence their organization's membership to invest their time in sport. Effective leaders must have a clear vision of where their organization and sport is going. Vision is necessary in the formulation of goals and strategies for the National Federation. Leadership must ensure the National Federation defines its vision and must provide the opportunities to fulfill it.

Basketball must develop a more open and democratic organizational culture. A top-down paternalistic style of leadership is probably outdated. Societies are more pluralistic today and will be more so in the future. Diversity in beliefs, values, interests and lifestyle choices is inevitable and legitimate. Diversity and constructive criticism should be considered strengths of an open organizational culture. Basketball must invest in human resource management. Human assets are more important than physical and financial assets. Basketball must attract the skilled and re-train those that require it. Basketball needs talented individuals that can raise funds, organize programs, communicate with the media, coach, educate and undertake many other tasks.