

CLUB

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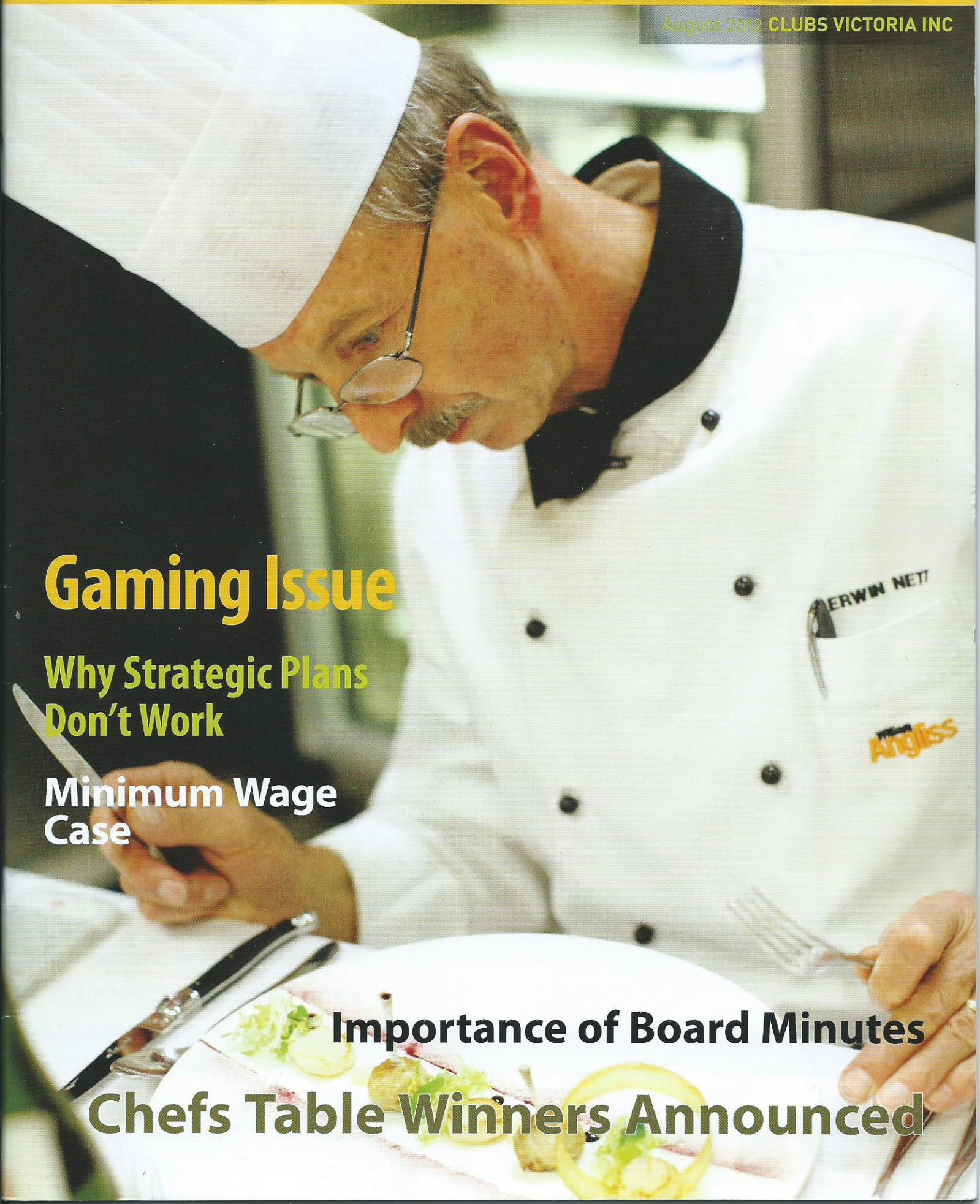
August 2012 CLUBS VICTORIA INC

Gaming Issue

Why Strategic Plans
Don't Work

Minimum Wage
Case

Importance of Board Minutes
Chefs Table Winners Announced



Why Strategic Plans don't work- and what to do about it?

Let's look at each of these elements:

The top 5 or 6 things ...

There are usually five or six key "objectives/strategies/directions" that a club identifies as part of its strategic planning. There may be only two or three, or as many as seven or eight, but usually there are five or six "things", which we call strategies.

...that the Board has agreed.....

The strategic plan is the Board's key accountability mechanism, and it belongs to the Board.

Only the Board can approve the plan, and only the Board can agree to changes in timelines, taking out or putting in new elements, and formally reviewing the plan annually.

...the organization has to get right.....

These five or six "things" have been identified as critical to the future of the club and its ability to deliver against its vision and mission. One of the Boards' key accountability requirements is that it rigorously review the achievements or otherwise of the relevant actions under the strategic plan, and be willing to change any element of the plan if circumstances change, and there are new things that it "has to get right".

...in the next two or three years.

The time frames around strategic plans seem to be around 2 or 3 years. There are very few 5 or 10 year plans being developed, as assumptions and the environment changes so rapidly that the time frame has shrunk to 2 or 3 years.

There is also a growing trend for strategic plans to be formally annually reviewed, and the notion of "continuous" strategic planning is becoming more common. Gone are the days (or they should be) where a club waits 3 years to see if the plan has worked or not.

Strategic Plans consistently fail because of three key issues:

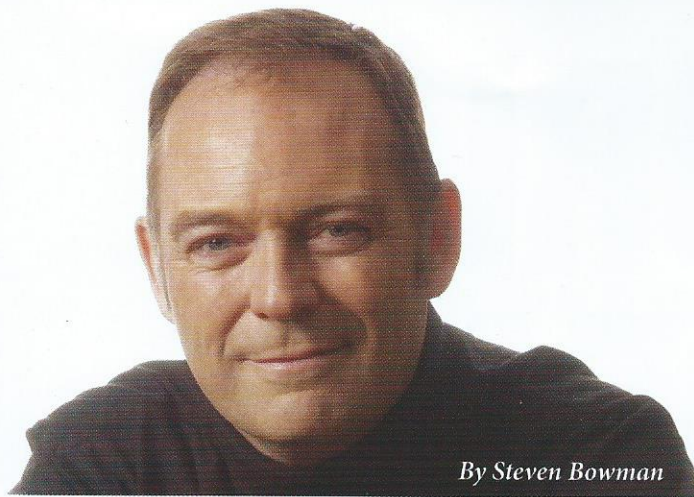
1. The lack of implementation ... Great plan, shame we didn't do anything with it.
2. Poor implementation ... We were so busy we got side-tracked, and anyway, we couldn't see what difference it would make.
3. Poor inputs during construction ... Well, it was really only the manager's pet projects, so let him do the plan!

Strategic planning with strategic awareness is not rigid or fixed; but, they are rather continual, generative, informative, exciting and vision driven. We have mentioned before, and will mention again, that there is only one thing worse than not having a strategic plan ... and that is having one that never changes.

What if strategic planning was the opposite of everything that most people think it is? What if strategic planning was quick, enjoyable, truly strategic, and provided a focus for all the club, from the Board to staff to stakeholders?

What would it take for this to occur in your club?

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By Steven Bowman

Strategic Planning has never been more important for clubs than now, in an environment where world economies are under strain, resources are being critically re-examined, and the future of many non-profits is being questioned. So why does strategic planning have such a bad reputation out in clubs? Why do so many clubs shudder when the strategic plan cycle comes around again. Why do so many never complete or follow their strategic plan? Why do so many not have a strategic plan?

Here are some of the more common reasons and justifications we come across, and we are sure you will be able to add to them.

- Strategic planning is a waste of time, too complex and with limited outcomes.
- Day to day predicaments require a lot of time and attention, leaving little time available for planning.
- The strategic plan process is a commercial business technique which is not appropriate or suitable for our club.
- Thinking about the future is difficult and very uncertain in turbulent times, and is particularly difficult for me as an action-oriented individual who derives satisfaction from immediate results, not an intellectual process.

This is a chance for you to reflect where your club is with strategic planning. Ask yourself:

- Is my plan truly strategic? How do I know if it is truly strategic?
- Do we have an outward looking, strategic awareness emphasis, or is it operationally focused?
- Is the plan really clear about the required actions, the start and finish dates for these actions, the success measures, allocation of responsibility for all the required actions. Could anyone pick it up and know what was required, by whom, when, and how we measure whether we have done a great job?
- Is our plan clearly mapped against the vision of our organization, so that anyone can see how our strategies are creating the vision?
- Is our planning process simple, quick, and on-going, or is it convoluted, complex and chews up resources?
- Do we involve stakeholders other than staff, and do we seek other perspectives about what possible futures might look like?

These are great questions to ask, and will provide you with immediate insight into how you can improve your strategic planning process.

So, What is a Strategic Plan?

The definition of a strategic plan we have developed that we find works best with a club is:

"A Strategic Plan is the top five or six things the Board has agreed the club has to get right in the next two or three years".