

Panel 65

Notes of a meeting 02.21.16 of an Ad Hoc Committee convened to support the delegate re: the Feasibility Study

Present: Russ A, Teddy B, Raymundo L, Ken M, Greg M, Kris W



General comment: Consider an interim plan that addresses anticipated shortfall, and which focuses on a limited number of revenue increasing/cost cutting initiatives. Communications and Structure questions, while important and not the priority and might be considered within a broader strategic planning exercise, together with other financial matters.

1. Improving internal and external communications

General

- Improvements may trigger costs in short term. Should that be the priority?
- If we try and solve everything upfront, nothing will get done. We trust our trusted servants to get these things off the ground and then fine-tune later.

Internal

- Improve getting into out and available to fellowship of what services the contribution \$ is providing.
- If fellowship doesn't want what's being provided, then we will reduce services.
- Communications with members is the responsibility of the areas, districts, groups and sponsors. GSB makes tools available to support that effort.
- Simple letter to groups and group /district and area treasurers re: 7th Tradition challenge.
- Fix disconnect between the fellowship and general service. Groups see General Service as A.A. politicians: "We v. They."
- Consider wallet card (same size as a standard credit card) with Serenity Prayer on the front, and bullet point of services provided and url to online contribution page on the back.

External

- Abandon ultra-conservative approach to PI (example: restricting full face PSAs). Look to what other GSBs, e.g., Australia, are doing.
- Where are people of color going for recovery?
- Increase the channels: add text/email/interactive elements at aa.org.
- For CPC: create a desktop icon that is one-click to bullet point list of services.
- Website - aa.org – is too complex. Consider redesign so that information for new visitors is quick, obvious and emotive.

2. Increasing Revenues

- Increase awareness of the birthday plan – encourage members participate on their birthday AND on A.A.'s birthday and/or birthdays of co-founders.
- Send letter to groups that do not send 7th tradition contributions to GSB, but with love and emphasize the spiritual component/connection not in s way that could be interpreted as "shaming."
- Campaign for individual contributions – stress what it means to be a member of A.A.
- Don't need more publications – that would only result in a short-term spike in new revenue.
- Rescind all conference advisory actions relating to GV/LV and give GV/LV staff the freedom to come up with a plan for sustainability within 3 years.
- Immediately increase cost of Big Book to \$10.
- Increase all literature prices by 3% each year.

- Increase awareness of monthly recurring contributions on-line.
- Tell the truth – we need increased voluntary contributions.
- Emphasize that voluntary contributions are sent to the General Service Board, not GSO.
- In 80 years we've been fully self-supporting once – maybe that's the way it should be.
- Literature sales are the only thing that will sustain us.
- Fee for on-line services?
- Solution is not to attempt increasing revenue, but to better communicate what services are being provided and trust that the members will respond.
- Consider "Founders' Month" in June - like Gratitude Month in November, when many fellowships pass the basket a second time for Intergroup – so that groups can pass the basket a second time purely for contributions to GSB.
- Consider hosting the A.A. International Convention every 3 years and budget a \$1M surplus from each. Consider official commemoratives and merchandise in connection with convention.
- Books at cost = ridiculous. If an indigent newcomer can't get a free big book it's time for a group inventory.
- GV/LV should be kept up and running – keep subscription revenue but allow contributions

3. Reducing Expenses

- How much more fat at GSO is left to trim?
- Combining AAWS/GV operations – staff are best situated to know what economies can be made.
- General Service Conference – take out of Manhattan. Consider a three-year rotation between East Coast, West Coast, Mid-West, between the same three cities to optimize venue concessions.
- Regional Forums: People attending would gladly pay a reasonable registration fee.
- Reduce the amount of trustee travel?
- \$675K per year for archives seems high – How can Archives material be monetized? Subject to permissions, look to publish material?
- Require advisory actions increasing services/expense to be accompanied by plans for revenue generation to fund new ideas.
- Loners & Internationalists: \$600K – seems a lot.
- All service material and pamphlets below a certain distribution total to be online and accessible for free download only. Do not print.
- Audit GSO operations. A lot of stuff that could be automated is still done "old school" e.g. group contributions (6 employees). What about on-line contributions and EFTs.
- Many staff could telecommute – save on square footage needed for office premises.
- Publish Service Manual every 3 years.
- Do not fear online solutions – analogous to early fears about online meetings.
- Move GSO out of New York City.
- Require areas to pay delegate fee according to Area budget size + encourage areas with bigger budgets to make contributions to scholarship fund.

4. Structure

- GSO should investigate and report back with options.
- Look to what fellowships like N.A. have done and the results
- Corporate poverty and singleness of purpose have kept us safe
- GV needs a restructure. More people on board than on staff. Maybe a board of 3?
- GV has shown a net reduction in circulation (hard copy and digital combined) of approx. 30% over the past 10 years – more than can be explained by shift from print to digital. At what point does GV decline threaten the sustainability of A.A. as a whole?