

WORKING THE PLAN

Goal Focused, Strategically Minded



By Rob Dingman

As one member of the AMA Board of Directors likes to point out, “Hope is not a strategic plan.”

An organization’s strategic plan is only as good as its ability to follow it. Fortunately, the AMA is guided by a robust plan that we have followed closely

for several years.

In a recent presentation to the AMA Board of Directors, I explained how the strategic plan has helped us accomplish our goals. Every good strategic plan starts with a vision and a mission. The vision of the AMA is to be the premier advocate of the motorcycle lifestyle. Our mission is to promote the motorcycle lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling.

Our plan also identifies the following simple-but-significant goals.

1. Grow a sustainable membership base by better connecting with member needs.

In 2008, we brought back our popular logo in a modern style and completely revitalized *American Motorcyclist* magazine to focus on our members. We added *AMA Racer* in 2010 and beginning this month, custom content is targeted to both street and off-road riders.

Our AMA websites were integrated with one another for ease of use and we introduced affinity programs for KTM and Kawasaki owners and women riders. A military affinity card and others are in the works.

Member outreach was improved through enhancements to our call center. Our new association management system (AMS) allows us to target member communications and better monitor our programs. A new direct marketing agency is helping us more effectively appeal to prospective AMA members and improve current member retention.

The quality of member benefits has increased, including the addition of an industry-leading roadside assistance program. We also added smart phone applications for AMA Supercross and an AMA Motorcycle Value Guide developed by Black Book.

The “plain vanilla” member kit you received every year has been replaced with an appealing fulfillment kit that is packed with useful information. (It also costs less to mail.) The membership renewal mail

and email series have been completely overhauled as well.

A new Affiliate Program (with 140 organizations) was launched to better engage website affiliates and promoters and incentivize them to sign up more members.

Electronic voting for AMA Board Members and Congress Delegates was implemented. Terms for board members were increased from two to three years and term limits were imposed. A board member nominating process and nominating committee were created and there are now more individual member seats than business member seats (8 to 4), which more accurately reflects our membership.

The AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame was expanded and relocated to the main exhibit hall, and the annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony was significantly elevated and enhanced. We also created a \$1 million endowment to support the mission of the Hall of Fame.

2. Change the emphasis of the AMA’s infrastructure to support member advocacy.

When a 2007 forensic audit revealed a troubling lack of fiscal control throughout the organization, appropriate controls were implemented, along with a modern financial accounting system. External offices were consolidated and AMA staff was reduced by 30 percent while improving overall efficiency. The result: nearly \$2 million in permanent savings to the Association. Additionally, an investment policy was created and implemented to manage the ample reserves of AMA.

The AMA transitioned from an outdated computer system to our modern day AMS, which better enables us to determine and serve the needs of our members.

A state chapter program designed to better engage non-competition riders and strengthen grassroots advocacy is now being piloted in three states and will expand soon.

Also of significance, the AMA and Hall of Fame brands are being aggressively protected.

3. Strengthen the efficacy of the government relations function.

The number of our Washington, D.C.-based government relations staff doubled, and some Ohio-based government relations positions have been moved to the Washington, D.C., office. Former U.S. Sen. Wayne Allard now heads up the AMA Government Relations Department.

The Association’s issue alert and notification capability was significantly improved. Communications efforts have been greatly enhanced along with greater mainstream media exposure.

The AMA Vote Like a Motorcyclist Program and AMA Voter Guide were implemented to provide a valuable resource at election time.

Our efforts bore fruit with the victory over the “lead law” in 2011, and we were recognized by the Public Affairs Council (Grassroots Innovation Award for Social Media Innovation), MotorcycleUSA.com (Industry Leader, Best of 2011 Awards) and PowerSportsBusiness.com (Powersports Executive of the Year).

We created a \$1 million endowment to support government relations activities, underscoring our ongoing commitment to be the premier advocate for the motorcycle lifestyle.

4. Improve the image of the AMA’s brand by redefining the role of professional racing.

The assets of Paradama, the unprofitable subsidiary that managed AMA professional racing, were sold in 2008. We continue to work with the Daytona Motorsports Group, dba AMA Pro Racing, because of its impact on the AMA brand. The AMA continues to manage and sanction AMA Supercross.

In addition to my role as AMA president and CEO, I also currently serve as president of FIM North America and sits on the FIM Board of Directors.

The Association’s focus has shifted to improving all aspects of amateur competition. A new insurance broker and carrier was announced for 2013, along with a new improved rate structure for amateur racing organizers.

A limited One-Event Race Pass is being pilot tested with select promoters and a Family Membership is under development that will tie AMA members in the same household to a master membership. Also, a Youth Membership is being piloted later this year. Finally, a Racing License complete with a racing credential is being developed.

Efforts to encourage non-AMA events and promoters to sanction with the AMA are ongoing. For example, the well-known Mammoth Mountain and the Road to Mammoth events will, for the first time, be AMA sanctioned.

A \$1 million endowment was created to support amateur racing activities.

In summary, the AMA’s strategic plan provides a framework to advance the Association’s mission and goals. We are well on our way, but the forces that seek to restrain our motorcycling freedoms never rest. As we move forward together, your support is greatly appreciated—now more than ever.

Rob Dingman is the AMA president and CEO.