

AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION

STRATEGIC PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan was developed by the Board of Directors of the American Culinary Federation, Inc. (ACF) with input from ACF's national office and contains initiatives and action items to move the organization forward over the next five years, 2011-2016. The plan is ACF's compass for the future, and should not be so inflexible as to bind the organization to strategies that are ineffectual. Therefore, the Board of Directors will evaluate the plan and revise it, as needed.

ACF's Board of Directors, made up of nine members, began development of the plan in summer 2009. The board reflected on the mission, vision, current operating conditions and practices, finances and growth, as well as critical issues and major influences driving the business. It was at these meetings that the strategic plan was defined. The result, in fall 2009, was an enhanced plan and a footprint for each region and chapter to use to align its activities with the organization's direction. This document incorporates those results and will solidify the direction of ACF from 2011 to 2016.

Executive Summary



The Board of Directors identified key elements necessary for the organization to continue the success ACF has realized over the past 80 years. Four fundamental strategies were identified to be the focus of the organization during the upcoming years. These strategies and action statements are broken down into four main categories: alignment, growth, services and finance. These strategies will be the blueprint the organization follows in formulating and executing the respective plans.

Each strategy will contain a series of action statements deemed critical to the attainment of the targeted strategy. Members of the current Board of Directors have volunteered to sponsor the action statements through implementation with support from ACF's national office and participation from the regions and chapters.

The strategic plan, on adoption, will be effectively communicated and marketed to all stakeholders for implementation. Key communication components will be implemented to facilitate the process, and include dissemination through articles in ACF's print and digital publications, forums held at regional conferences, a presentation at the national convention, a post on ACF's website, and print and electronic distribution.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION

ACF, a professional organization for chefs and cooks, was founded in 1929 in New York by three chefs' organizations: the Société Culinaire Philanthropique, the Vatel Club and the Chefs de Cuisine Association of America. Since ACF's inception, little has changed in its principal goals. ACF is an organization based on promoting the professional image of American chefs worldwide through education of culinarians at all levels.

In 1976, ACF forever changed the culinary industry by elevating the position of executive chef from service status to the professional category in the U.S. Department of Labor's Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Since this change, the culinary industry and ACF have grown tremendously. ACF is the largest professional chefs organization in North America, with more than 20,000 members who belong to more than 210 chapters in four regions across the U.S.

Today, ACF is the culinary leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and programmatic accreditation designed to enhance professional growth for all current and future chefs and pastry chefs. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States. ACF is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions, and to the Chef & Child Foundation, founded in 1989 to promote proper nutrition in children and combat childhood obesity.

ACF'S VISION IS TO BE THE LEADER IN PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CULINARY COMMUNITY, WHILE PROMOTING CURRENT CULINARY TECHNIQUES AND PRESERVING THE HISTORY AND SKILLS OF THE CRAFT.





INTEGRITY

**HIGH
PERFORMANCE**

COMMUNITY

EXCELLENCE

ACF Values

The Board of Directors established a core set of values that reflect the history and fundamental principles embedded in ACF's more than 80-year history. These values have been the cornerstone and foundation of the organization, emphasizing the importance of what ACF does and how it is done.

Honor commitments, act with integrity, trust one another, promote character enrichment, value diversity in the workforce, exceed community environmental expectations and exhibit fairness in all business practices.

Perform to the best of ability, learn to live with ambiguity and uncertainty, welcome future changes in the culinary industry, learn to manage risk, use common sense, reward creativity and continuous improvement, and promote lifelong learning.

Satisfy customers, value employees, serve the membership, develop strong relationships and support the community.

Shape the future through quality and character in everything, set appropriate goals and be accountable, develop leadership, empower employees, promote teamwork, take pride in what is done, adopt a "can-do" attitude, enhance the image of the profession, excel in customer service and reward performance.



Mission

The American Culinary Federation provides accredited educational programs, certifications, competitions and networking designed to enhance professional growth for all current and future chefs and pastry chefs.

Vision

The vision statement creates an image of the mission and is the ultimate journey through the challenges ACF faces now and in the future. The membership must determine how its efforts impact success during that journey. The ACF Board of Directors recognized the value of moving the membership toward a shared vision—one that energizes and motivates the culinary profession to excel in service to customers.

Key Success Factors

The Board of Directors identified the following activities at which ACF must excel to continue to be successful.

- Align ACF for Long-Term Sustainability through the Strategic Plan
- Foster Membership and Program Growth
- Provide Quality Member Services
- Demonstrate Financial Stewardship

Objectives

The table, ACF Strategic Plan Objectives, Strategies and Measurable Outcomes, identifies the essential links between the strategic plan's objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes. The objectives identify the areas to monitor and measure to ensure comprehensive success of the organization and for the stakeholders. The strategies denote how the objectives will be accomplished, and are written in broad, general terms. The measurable outcomes evaluate performance. Specific annual targets

were developed to quantify results and track successes for the next five years. The key action plans associated with each strategy provide details of new initiatives, or "actions," that support attainment of the strategies. ACF will continually evaluate and monitor each of the strategies and action plans to ensure successful implementation.

The following pages of this Strategic Plan identify the objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes vital to ACF's success.

ACF Strategic Plan Objectives, Strategies and Measurable Outcomes

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES
Alignment	Create a path that provides continuity between bodies of leadership.	Empowerment of ACF National Office, Committees and Board of Governors Monitoring of Strategic Plan Continuation of Strategic Plan per Board of Directors Succession
Growth	Grow ACF.	Annual Memberships Professional Culinaricians Chapters Educational Programs
Services	Promote the value of ACF.	Regional Conferences and National Convention Certifications Accreditations Apprenticeships Publications
Finance	Maximize ACF's financial services through fiscal responsibility.	Return on Investment Reserve Fund Budgeting

ALIGNMENT

Empowerment of the ACF National Office, Committees and Board of Governors

ACF, to achieve its maximum potential, must transition from functioning reactively and tactically when dealing with members, external organizations, internal committees and finances to a strategic business model. This strategic plan outlines a leadership structure that will encourage successful implementation, transitioning and the continuation of the planning process through generations of leadership to come.

Expand the Board of Directors as outlined in ACF's bylaws by adding two at large members annually to serve a two-year term, not to exceed six members at any given time.

As work progresses toward a more businesslike approach to running the organization, ACF needs to be cognizant that the Board of Directors should be focused on strategy rather than tactics. Through the directives of the Board of Governors and the Board of Directors, it is then the job of the ACF national office and committees to handle the tactical aspects of running the organization. In turn, the responsibility for monitoring the progress of each strategic plan will be delegated to the ACF Internal Audit Committee, which will include as part of its annual report a description of progress made toward each stated goal of the plan.

EMPOWERMENT of ACF National Office

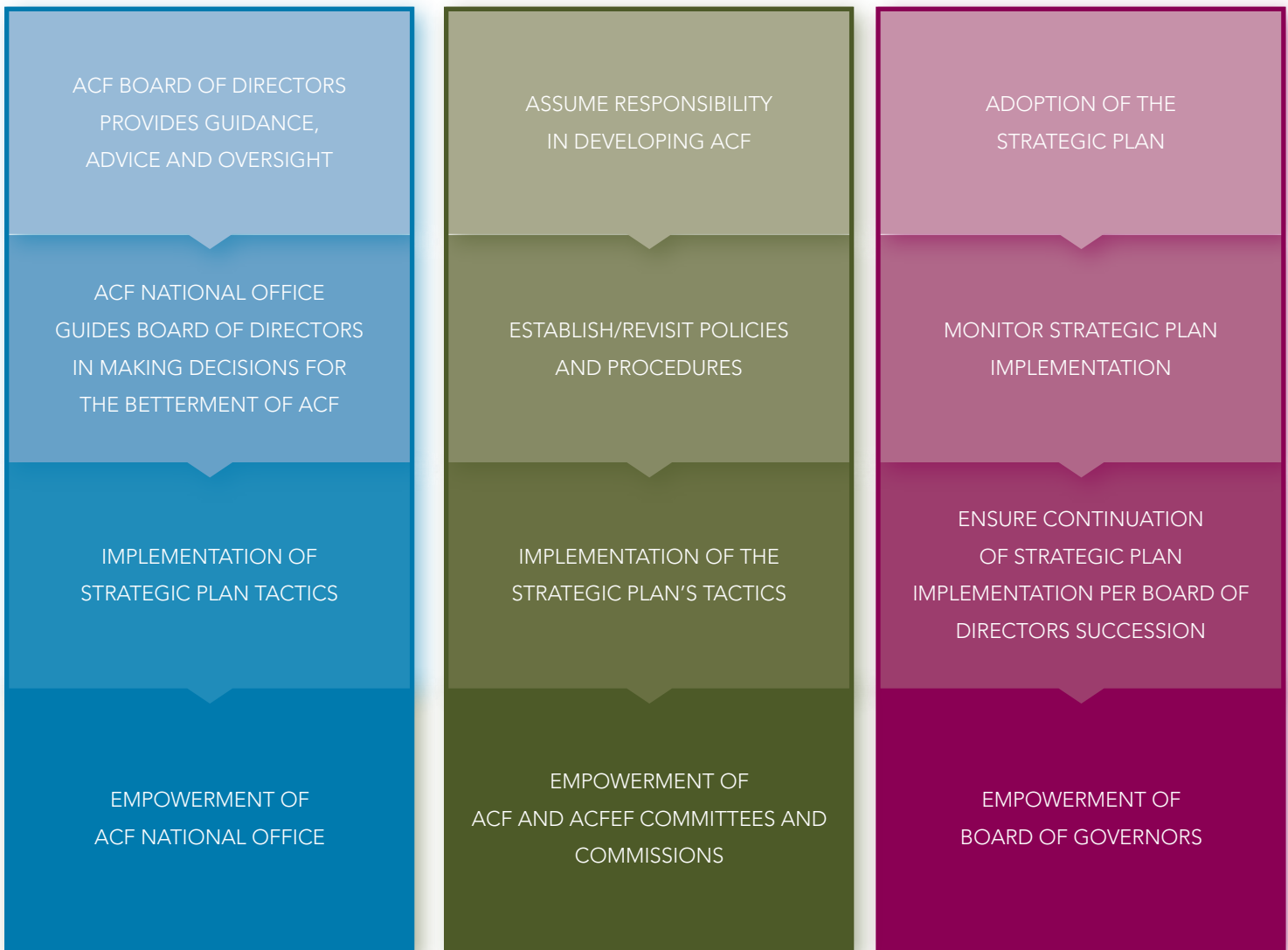
The ACF national office, in particular, the management, is experienced and knowledgeable in their applicable areas, and they are dedicated to the betterment of ACF and the implementation of the mission and vision. The Board of Directors will empower the ACF national office by listening to their needs, recommendations and ideas. The Board of Directors will provide guidance, advice and oversight, and trust that the national office will guide them to make educated decisions for the organization's benefit and financial stability.

EMPOWERMENT of Committees

ACF and American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF) committees and commissions need to assume more responsibility in developing the organization, per the strategic plan. The committees/commissions need to establish or revisit policies and procedures. The ACF Board of Directors would review and approve the committees' policies and procedures. By coupling the policies and procedures with the initiatives and mandates from the Board of Directors, the committees will become stronger and will assume more focused roles. As such, the strategic plan can be achieved.

EMPOWERMENT of Board of Governors

Once adopted by the ACF Board of Governors, this strategic plan will be the job description for the Board of Directors, ACF's leadership entity. Through the strategic plan, along with ACF bylaws and policies and procedures, the Board of Governors has the responsibility of holding ACF leadership accountable for the initiatives within the strategic plan. Even through board leadership transition via election and other matriculation, the course of ACF should be guided successively by the strategic plan.





Increase Professional Chef Membership

The professional chef is one of the most visible and popular icons today. Demographical information shows that this segment of ACF membership is not growing and may be decreasing. Public visibility, purchasing power and managerial knowledge make it an important target group for membership growth, especially as it pertains to soliciting sponsorships. ACF must increase this membership category substantially.



Increase
Professional Chef
Memberships

Investigate Best Practices for
Recruiting and Retaining
Professional Chefs

Identify Culinary Programs and
Services Most Important to Chefs

Evaluate Current ACF
Programs and Services

Promote Value and Benefits
of ACF to Chefs

Determine a Marketing Strategy
to Pursue Memberships

Promote to Organizations that Hire Chefs

One of the motivators for chefs to join ACF is whether it will increase their employment opportunities, either to gain employment or improve their current employment situation. Directly related to that is the dynamic of employers who see value in ACF and are willing to pay for their chef employees' membership. For these two reasons alone, promoting the

ACF brand to employers of chefs is beneficial, as it increases the likelihood of employers paying membership dues for currently employed chefs and/or hiring an ACF member or ACF-certified chef. The return on investment for ACF is increased membership due to employers advocating the value of ACF.

Ascertain Largest Culinary
Hiring Segments

Identify Culinary Programs
and Services Most Important
to Chefs and Employers

Evaluate Current ACF
Programs and Services

Promote ACF Brand to
Culinary Employers through
Marketing Tactics

Establish Partnerships
with Chef Organizations
and Chef Employers

Develop and Implement a Chapter Business Model

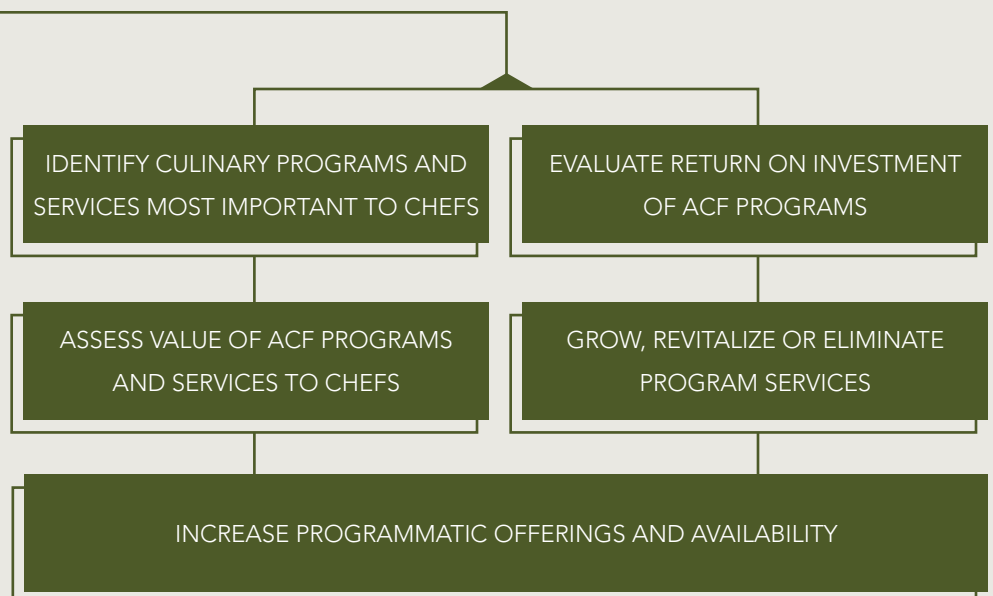
Historically, ACF chapters have been encouraged, almost by default, to mirror the business model of ACF national, which was developed when the national membership numbers were but a few hundred. This approach made sense at the time. Over the past several decades, that business model has evolved to what it is today, yet the approach to chartering chapters and assisting them in creating a relevant business model has not. While the current model may serve the small pockets of members in remote locations well, it is outdated for the greater concentrations of current and potential members residing in large metropolitan areas or markets.

The goal is to update and create an ACF nationally sponsored chapter business model that drives brand recognition outside ACF's immediate circle of influence; increases professionalism in the ranks through member development within better business models; and achieves annual increases in local memberships, retention and program sustainability through higher-quality educational and networking venues that highlight, use and promote local talent.



Build Growth through Quality Educational Programs

Much of the perceived value of ACF, externally and internally, is generated through educational programs, certification, accreditation and apprenticeship. A great deal of ACF's revenue is also generated by these programs. Therefore, sufficient administrative, budgetary and strategic priority needs to be allocated to ensure that these programs continue to thrive.





Create a Framework for Community Engagement Partnerships

ACF, nationally and locally, should work in harmony when pursuing any strategic partnerships to include: foodservice companies and agencies, charitable organizations, media, government entities, the military, etc. While many chapters operate autonomously, there needs to be an established road map as to how and with whom these relationships are formed. This will prevent segments of ACF from working against one another and should lessen duplication of efforts over the years.

Policies and procedures will be established to determine which types of partnerships and events, such as trade shows and culinary-industry conferences, are appropriate for ACF at the national, regional and local chapter levels. Considerations in establishing the guidelines will include return on investment, financial practicality, positive exposure for ACF, exchange of services, long-term strategic viability and benefits to members, among others. Special consideration will also be given when entering into partnerships with organizations that are structured in a way that the relationship can be cultivated on national, regional and local chapter levels.



Ascertain which Partnerships and Events are Appropriate for ACF Nationally, Regionally and Locally

Develop Policies and Procedures Applicable for Partnerships and Event Participation at All Levels

Review Applicable Organizations to Target for Relationship Building

Establish and Cultivate Long-Term Strategic Relationships with National, Regional and Local Organizations

Strengthen Partner Alliances

There are more than 1 million foodservice workers in the United States, and ACF should be the leader in food preparation and setting the standards in the industry. ACF has alienated certain sectors of the industry in the past, which has resulted in the formation and development of other organizations now in strong competition with the federation.

Barriers that were created many years ago could be broken by opening ACF up to establishing industry partnerships. The goal is to mutually bond and work together to promote the culinary profession, not to replace or change these other organizations. This will be accomplished by developing a list of like foodservice organizations with similar missions, establishing which of these organizations currently have relationships with ACF and analyzing the return on investment of the existing relationships. Then, ACF should decide whether to strengthen the relationship or discontinue it, and investigate the remaining organizations to determine which bear a potential for return on investment if an alliance is formed with ACF, as well as reaching out to those designated to seek partnership opportunities.

NOW IS THE TIME TO EMBRACE ACF BY BECOMING LEADERS IN THE ORGANIZATION AND STRENGTHENING ACF'S IMAGE ACROSS THE UNITED STATES. ACF SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS AN INDUSTRY LEADER.

Develop Target List of Like Organizations with a Similar Mission

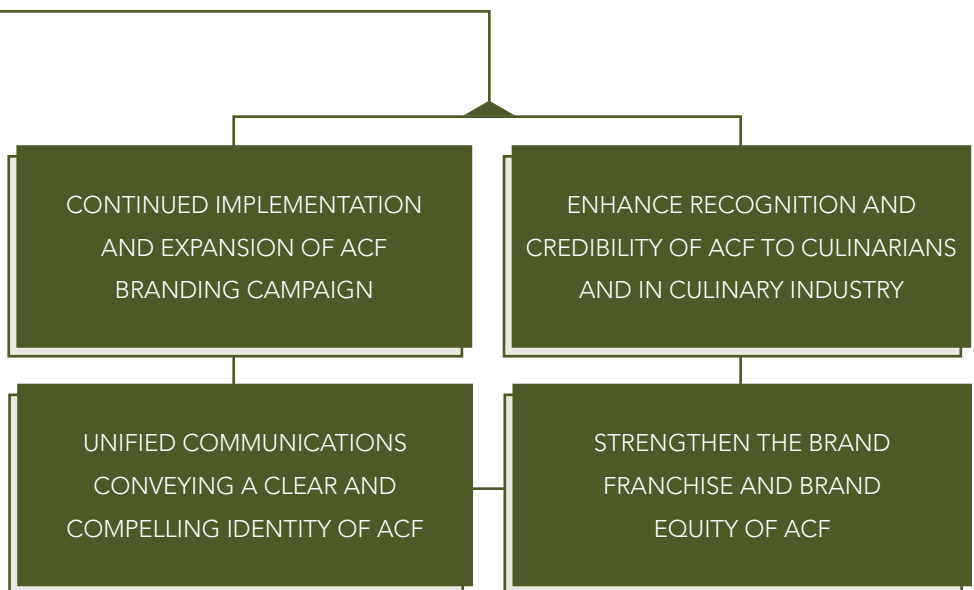
Evaluate Current Partnerships for Return on Investment

Investigate New Alliances for Return on Investment

Approach and Cultivate Mutually Beneficial Partner Alliances to Promote the Culinary Profession

Promote the Value of ACF

ACF has been successful at developing and implementing an extensive branding campaign that began in fall 2005. The campaign continues to define and communicate a clear, compelling identity of the organization, its subsidiaries, programs and services in an increasingly competitive culinary industry, thereby enhancing recognition and credibility with culinarians and the culinary industry. ACF is poised to continue to expand its base and exposure through sound, targeted marketing and communications by growing the ACF brand as a value to members, partners and nonmembers, thereby increasing the brand franchise and brand equity of ACF.



SERVICES

ACF has numerous programs and services in place designed to strengthen the return on investment and enhance the professional development of the member—a key element of the organization's core values and mission statement.

Regional Conferences and National Convention

ACF manages four regional conferences and one national convention annually. The purpose of these events is to provide educational and networking opportunities for attendees, while encouraging participation in competitions and philanthropic and social activities. While ACF's membership is diverse, the premise of "something for everyone" is vital in producing a successful event.

The ACF events management team has gathered valuable historical information to consider in the planning of future events. Possible impacts include economic forecast, transportation costs, relationships with hotels and local ACF chapters, and ACF's ability to continue to provide professionally executed events.

Implement Four Regional Conferences and One National Convention Annually

Foster Continuing Education by Providing Relevant and Timely Training and Programming

Increase Networking Opportunities

Establish the ACF National Convention as a world-class culinary event

Certification

The accreditation of the certification process by an outside accrediting body, the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), is on target to accredit one designation per year. The CEC® application was submitted in September 2010, and the CSC™ application is in progress. The job analysis and written and practice exams were completed with member involvement in the process. The CEPC® job analysis began in fall 2010. Overall, marketing the value of certification and how it can increase a chef's value in the workplace, as well as communicating

to the culinary community the value of employing a chef with certification, is ongoing.

The Chapter Leader Certification Toolbox is in development to better promote certification and support candidates through the process. It will include a PowerPoint presentation, a new practical-exam administration guide, a comprehensive CEC® candidate manual, a promotional video and an overview grid with estimated costs.

Obtain ICE Accreditation for Each Certification Designation

Establish ACF as the Premier Organization for Culinary Certification

Develop a Chapter Leader Certification Toolbox to Promote Certification and Support Candidates

Increase Availability and Accessibility of Certification Written and Practical Exams

Promote Value and Benefits of Certification to Chefs and Employers

Accreditation

The ACFEF programmatic accreditation continued expansion to include postsecondary and secondary initial and renewal grants and site visits. As the program moves toward its 25th year, the success and recognition of the program continues to grow as states require culinary programs to be accredited by an outside body. Increased marketing efforts include a graduation/capstone packet to include ACF membership and certification information.

CONTINUE GROWTH OF INITIAL AND RENEWAL OF PROGRAMMATIC POSTSECONDARY ACCREDITATIONS AND SECONDARY CERTIFICATIONS

DEVELOP ONLINE TRAINING TO INSTRUCT ACCREDITATION SITE EVALUATORS

INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENTS TO ACFEF REQUIRED STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES FOR PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION

IMPLEMENT AND MARKET CAPSTONE PROJECT TO EDUCATE AND INFORM CULINARY GRADUATES OF BENEFITS OF ACF MEMBERSHIP AND CERTIFICATION

Develop Program Standards and Requirements for an Advanced Apprenticeship Program

Transition Apprenticeship Programs to the Apprenticeship Online Portal Website

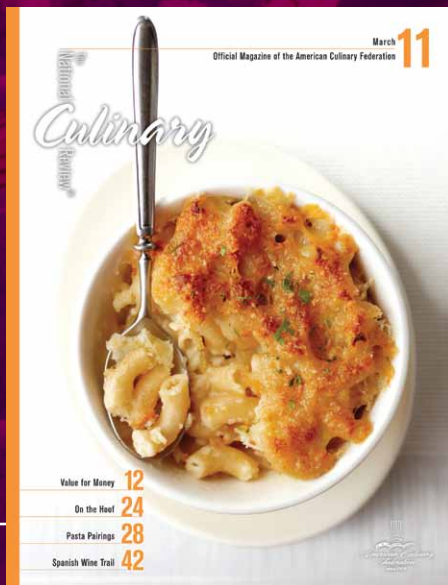
Increase the Number of Apprenticeship Programs Registered within the Hybrid Model of Apprenticeship

Expand Apprenticeship Program and Offerings with the U.S. Military

Apprenticeship

In August 2009, the ACFEF Apprenticeship Program was awarded a \$481,200 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to advance the growing needs of apprenticeship in the 21st century. ACF volunteers were recruited to facilitate initiatives stipulated by the grant, which resulted in a total of 60 viable apprenticeship programs across the country. A website portal was created. The portal automated the training logbook and provides apprentices, program coordinators and supervising

chefs with the opportunity to track and log training from any computer. A sustainability statement was also incorporated into the program and training. Pilot apprenticeship sites began implementing the new initiatives in June 2010. The portal will be available for military and approved ACFEF programs. Expectations are for growth and continued improvements to the program, as it is a viable option for training and education in the culinary industry.



Publications

Digital versions of *The National Culinary Review* (NCR) and *Sizzle* premiered in April 2010. The decision to publish digitally was based on eliminating printing and postage costs, enhancing the reader's experience and reducing ACF's carbon footprint. Increased savings were seen in the bottom line as a result of printing fewer magazines. The content of both publications was revamped

to better meet readers' needs and offer industry-wide information. Challenges include providing additional member benefits through the digital publications, continued advertising sales and maintaining quality delivery of digital publications. ACF has also created and redesigned its e-newsletter, *The Culinary Insider*, to reflect the changing needs of the membership and the organization.

Provide Professionally Written, Visually Appealing Publications in Print and Digital Form

Continue Content and Design Enhancements of the Publications to Meet ACF Member Needs

Maintain Implementation of NCR Digital Format to New Members to Incur Cost Savings

Enhance Marketing Efforts of *Sizzle* to Culinary Students to Increase Distribution and Promote Benefits of ACF Membership and Certification

Develop a Financial Model that Maximizes Return on Investment

ACF's financial strategy will include viewing each area, department and project as it relates to return on investment, both financial and social, to maximize the intent to practice good financial stewardship.



Develop a Financial Model that Maximizes Return on Investment

Initiate Review Processes to Audit Existing and New Programs and Budgetary Expenses

Evaluate Return on Investment

Set Policies and Procedures for Unanticipated, Nonbudgeted, Operational and Programmatic Needs

Institute Evaluation Process for Investments and Capital Assets

Practice Good Financial Stewardship



Develop and Maintain a Positive Cash Flow and Reserve

Historically, ACF has borrowed funds to maintain operations in between cash flow influxes during the fiscal year ranging from \$400,000 to \$600,000. A positive cash flow and sufficient reserve would allow ACF to end this practice. After reviewing the potential sponsorships and grants, it is evident that ACF needs to seek external assistance from someone who will be paid or receive

a commission based on the gross he or she secures. This could be a case-specific grant writer who would eventually transition into a development director.

Maintenance of positive cash flow to the extent that it will result in a reserve large enough to fulfill the total expense load at all times will entail all areas of ACF's operations and programs.

Seek External Assistance in Securing Underwriting

Pursue Educational, Government, Corporate and Foundation Grants

Maintain a Positive Cash Flow with a Sufficient Reserve



Build a Business Case Model for Budgeting Approval

There are many departments and areas that make up the ACF budget. Most of them are tied into services that the member receives directly or indirectly. Currently, budgets are derived from historical data, forecasting and new programs and initiatives by ACF management. The review process entails approvals by the national president, national treasurer, ACF Finance & Investment Task Force and Board of Directors. Upon finalization, the budget is sent to the Board of Governors 60 days prior to the national convention and the Board of Governors meeting, where a vote takes places on it.

Currently, budgetary consideration for committees and commissions is based on historical trends and from opinion and review by the Board of Directors, per the methodology described. A major percentage of ACF's revenue, activities, staffing levels, member benefits and public exposure come through the work of the committees and commissions and their corps of volunteer chefs. Therefore, a budget approval process should be in place for these committees to oversee their own funding levels.

Review Processes and Increase Efficiencies

Establish Uniform Policies and Procedures for Budget Submissions

Implement Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance for Committee Initiatives

Evaluate Return on Investment

Practice Good Financial Stewardship





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