

Strategic Plan 2020 - Key Results and Initiatives

Date: March 30, 2021
To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place
From: Don Boyle, Chief Executive Officer
Wards: All Wards

SUMMARY

This report sets out a summary of key 2020 initiatives and results accomplished by Exhibition Place staff and the implementation of the extended 2021 Strategic Plan from the remaining strategic goals and objectives from the 2017 - 2019 Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer recommends that:

1. The Board receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no negative financial implications to this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The 2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan had an Organization and Staffing Goal to deliver a customer service strategy that embodies employee empowerment and engagement, and as a Strategy to develop annual departmental objectives that drive success.

At its meeting of July 27, 2017, the Board approved of the proposed tactics to be undertaken by Exhibition Place staff to implement the 2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EP5.6>

At its meeting of April 10, 2019, the Board received report EP2.7 that provided an update of the implementation of the goals, outcomes, and strategies of the 2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan for the year 2018.

At its meeting of June 24, 2020, the Board approved an extension of the remaining strategic goals and objectives from the 2017 - 2019 Strategic Plan, from the Chief Executive Officer, Exhibition Place, to December 2021.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EP11.13>

COMMENTS

In reporting out on the 2020 Strategic Plan initiatives, context would be appropriate as staff navigated uncommon circumstances. Given the unusual situations presented in 2020 by the COVID-19 crisis, several work themes surfaced as part of the Strategic Plan initiatives that kept the team at Exhibition Place nimble and responsive to quickly changing emergency Provincial Legislation. The following sections illustrate these themes and sample key results from each area.

Responding to COVID-19:

Industries geared to congregate gatherings faced unprecedented challenges related to COVID-19. The pandemic may represent a transformational moment, fundamentally altering how we work and re-examine operational procedures. A purposeful and analytical examination of the future was a significant planning effort to manage the present environment and the opportunity to envision new safe, and trusting ways to deliver services to our clients. Exhibition Place staff have been at the forefront of this change and staff have actively participated as industry experts with various business organizations. Although the Strategic Plan does not name a targeted objective to manage this unprecedented period, the organization modified work plans and responded to the shifting outlook. The sales team's ability to focus on new business opportunities while operational staff continued efforts to retool for regular business resumption has been a central achievement of 2020.

A highlight of this responsive enterprise in 2020 is the GBAC STAR accreditation. The GBAC STAR Accreditation Program is performance-based and designed to help facilities establish a comprehensive cleaning system, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention for staff and building use.

Exhibition Place was the first facility in Canada to achieve the GBAC STAR Facility accreditation, which demonstrates to our staff, clients, and guests that we perform the correct work practices, procedures, and systems to prepare, respond, and recover from outbreaks and pandemics.

Workplace Culture and Communication:

Every organization strives to be a place where employees are energized and inspired by the mission and values espoused. The continued attention to building an informed and empowered workplace culture was another theme that permeated the approach that drove priorities, building on and developing processes that strengthened engagement, communication, and drive a connected workplace. Adding to the urgency of this initiative was the decision that staff work remotely from home. A comprehensive

communications plan that kept all of our employees connected and updated during COVID-19 was critical in cultivating this outcome.

The pandemic created an environment of physical isolation and separation of our employees. As we divided our teams into those who were physically required to perform operational and legislative duties on-site and those who could work remotely, it was imperative that we increase our communication and information-sharing with employees and incorporate various new technologies. Exhibition Place senior management deployed a multi-faceted communication strategy that included daily/weekly crisis communication within our Incident Command team, engaging twice-weekly employee newsletters (available via email and voice-recording), tenants and clients newsletter communications, and a weekly all staff town hall telephone call hosted by the CEO. Further, supplemented engagement through regular division and department meetings and pre-shift talks using video platforms, telephone communication, and in-person briefings were utilized. Exhibition Place initiated an employee Text Alert platform for emergency messaging and infection alerts that affected our employees and tenants. Our communications strategy extended to the general public through regular updates on our website, all social media channels and across the grounds via our digital display signage. Our view was that constant information supported our employee's engagement and mental health during this time of isolation.

Operational Efficiencies and Continuous Improvement:

Continuous improvement remains a core value for Exhibition Place staff. The aggregation of incremental gains though small, collectively can lead to significant advances. Exhibition Place staff continue to look for any improvement, including small gains. A typical example is the approval processing of invoice documents in Finance. A review of current procedures and controls to reduce paper and duplication of entries was undertaken while ensuring effective oversight and safeguard controls. After the assessment, Accounting Services updated their systems and moved to a shared online approach to expedite preparation and approval of journal entries and invoicing. The procedures identified maintained controls over authorization, access, preventative measures, and segregation of duties.

These procedural revisions eliminate paper approvals, expedited the process and moved all documents to an online platform. With many staff working remotely, this approach has ensured that there has not been any omission with accounts payables.

Technology - Improve Remote Capabilities:

When the decision was made to work primarily from home, Exhibition Place had in its portfolio some remote working capabilities that included Remote Desktop Portal, mobile email, telephone, and web-based electronic mail. Staff began procuring additional laptops and initiated expanding the use of the network's firewalls Virtual Private Network ("VPN") capabilities. In combination, IT staff rapidly provided increased remote office capacity. Further, Microsoft Office 365 was introduced and deployed for staff in transitioning to, Cloud-Based connectivity. This increased capability provides three different technologies for the Exhibition Place team to stay connected with reduced reliance on the grounds hardware infrastructure.

A summary of the 2020 Strategic Plan - key results and initiatives can be found in Appendix A attached.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Don Boyle
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Strategic Plan 2020 - Key Results and Initiatives