

# Developing a State Resort Ministry Strategy

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The ideas of a state strategy and a long-range plan (LRP) are perplexing at best. Most models of strategies appear too complex and unfocused. There is an essential difference between a “strategy” and a “long-range plan,” as much difference as between the two sides of a coin. They are symbiotically linked together, yet they are totally different organisms.

A strategy could be compared to the skeletal system of a body. It provides the structure to which the muscles and tendons of the program connect. It provides for the effective functioning of the programs so that resources are received, channeled, and dispersed. Like the skeleton, it provides the basis for motion, and essentially determines the directions of the program’s growth.

A long-range plan is a statement of the purpose for the program and major objectives, goals, and action plans on a timetable for the next three to five years. It functions only within the context of the strategy. If it does not, it will be at cross purposes with the state convention.

The LRP is action-oriented rather than policy-oriented. It outlines the intention to start or continue programs, sets goals by which the effectiveness of the work can be evaluated, assigns responsibility for certain goals and action plans, and sets a timetable for completion of these tasks.

A strategy can be precise in the statement of policies. It will state succinctly what the purpose of the program is, what direction the program will take, how it will be administered, who will be responsible for it, how it will relate to other programs in the convention strategy, how priorities will be determined, and how resources will be allocated.

What are the steps in developing a resort mission’s strategy?

- I. Organize the work group.  
You may be the only person available to write a strategy. Often there are concerned pastor and directors of missions with whom you can work. If so, an ad hoc committee of three to five people can help with gathering and interpreting data. They should also be able to pool their experience and expertise to help set the policies that make up the strategy.

At your first meeting, set out the time line for study and make assignments to each member. Share the deadlines for their reports. Often only three or four meetings will be necessary to finish the strategy.

- II. Gather data.
  - A. Each state has the equivalent of a department of tourism that can give you vital information about the economic impact of tourism in your state. This information is broken down into data by county, such as total dollars of income and tax dollars to local governments. The state parks system may be able to provide information on the traffic count at the various state parks. This kind of information will

be helpful in justifying determining priority areas for leisure ministry.

- B. Though all men may have been created equal, that is not true for resort areas. You will want to select the priority areas for your state.

Area-specific information should be gathered. You can obtain demographic and psychographic information, as well as economic profiles of specific areas, from either the North American Mission Board (NAMB) or from LifeWay Christian Resources.

From the local area, you should find out the type of leisure activities offered, length of seasons for tourism, and types of tourists who frequent the area. This information will help determine priority areas for the state, as well as give vital information for long-range planning. The Special Ministries Unit of NAMB can help you develop a survey form suited to your needs. US/C-2 missionaries or Mission Service Corps (MSC) volunteers can help gather this data.

- C. Crucial to determining priorities is the strength of local support. Assess the number and location of Southern Baptist churches in the area and make a list of churches and volunteers interested in starting resort work.
- D. A careful assessment should be made of the state convention/NAMB resources available for the resort program. Administrative support (including the priority of resort work in the state missions strategy), financial resources available, missions personnel (such as church planters, church and community missionaries, and campus ministers), and availability of volunteers are important.

Having gathered your information, you are ready to write the strategy.

### III. Write the Strategy.

- A. The mission statement. This is a brief statement of the vision, or purpose, for resort work in the state. It should not be wordy or lofty but concise.
- B. Objectives. Objectives are things you want to accomplish. Using the analogy of a house, the mission statement tells you which room you are in; the objectives tell you what furniture is in the room. In the LRP, the goals and action plans are the legs of the tables.

Objectives should include evangelizing the lost, bringing them into union with a local church, ministering to them within the resources available, and encouraging and equipping local churches to minister.

- C. Statement of principles and policies. This section outlines the relationships between cooperating agencies, policies for funding programs and personnel, and the development of long-range plans.

The strategy document does not have to be long, perhaps several of pages in length. It should be sufficiently detailed to provide a good basis for the state convention to work cooperatively with associations and churches in resort work.

The strategy is a guideline for meaningful and efficient use of resources.

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