



STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUGUST 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Women's Energy Network ("WEN") National Board of Directors ("National Board" or "National") recently completed its first ever WEN strategic planning process. In early 2020, the National Board hired strategic planning consultant Shelli Bischoff of Nonprofit Impact, who guided the planning process. Based on that process, the National Board and Ms. Bischoff then prepared a Strategic Business Plan (the "Plan"), which the National Board approved June 19, 2020.

Additionally, the Plan incorporates recommendations from the WEN Task Force on Racial Equality in the Workplace. The task force was convened to recommend actions WEN could take to address disparity in the treatment of and opportunities for women of color in the energy industry and in WEN itself.

The Plan serves as a guide for WEN's growth and development to achieve strategic goals and to attract and serve a more global and diverse membership. The Plan is direction-setting and is to be implemented incrementally and over time. A Strategic Planning Implementation Committee (the "Implementation Committee") appointed by the National Board is charged with refining the Plan, including identifying specific three-year strategic goals and strategies to achieve those goals.



OVERVIEW: **CONNECTED LOCALLY, NETWORKED GLOBALLY**

Through the strategic planning process, WEN's mission, vision, and core values were honed and refined. WEN endeavors to be an organization of local chapters ("Chapters") and global members, providing unique programming, international networking, and exclusive mentorship to foster the professional growth and success of women across the energy value chain.

WEN's vision is for its members to be connected locally, networked globally. WEN's collection of Chapters, National Board and staff, and charitable WEN Foundation ("Foundation") comprise an impressive network of networks, providing value beyond any single Chapter. With a solid platform on which to build, WEN seeks to leverage its assets of dedicated and savvy volunteers, tight-knit Chapter structure, excellent and professional association management staff, and impressive group of sponsors, partners, and supporters.



SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS

The Plan is derived from an analysis informed by 34 interviews conducted by Ms. Bischoff with the National Board, WEN Advisory Council, Chapter leaders, Foundation, staff, and other WEN constituents, along with a review of reports and organizational data. On April 30, 2020, the National Board held a virtual retreat where they reviewed the analysis prepared by Ms. Bischoff and addressed strategic issues identified therein, which resulted in a strategic framework that was used to develop the Plan.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

WEN is dedicated to the professional growth and success of women across the energy value chain. Women who participate in WEN gain skills, confidence, experience, and support to advance in their careers. An organizational analysis completed for the strategic planning process found WEN to be a thriving and growing organization with a respected reputation. As a mostly all-volunteer, women-led operation, it has positively impacted thousands of women in the energy sector.

HIGHLIGHTS

WEN has set ambitious goals to diversify membership; affect positive change for women in energy; deliver high quality, value-add programs and services; build a network-wide and global brand; sustain and grow network-wide revenues from diverse sources; and ensure the human resources and operational efficiencies for success.

▪ **Programs**

The Plan recognizes and builds on WEN's core programs and services, which include:

- networking
- mentorships
- information
- education
- thought leadership
- experiential skill-building.



It calls for programs to be designed to achieve professional development outcomes to help members advance in their chosen career path.

The Plan also recognizes the need for WEN members have access to network-wide programs and services such as:

- cross-network programs on leadership or emerging topics
- an organization-wide mentoring program
- collaborative peer, special interest, and affinity groups.

These programming initiatives will allow WEN members to benefit from close relationships and customized programming at a Chapter level, and from high quality, specialized content from the larger, more diverse global network.

- **Membership and Marketing**

WEN seeks to reach and serve women in all stages of their careers, all ethnicities and orientations, across the energy and energy-related sectors. We embrace the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the governance and operations of every aspect of the organization. We will continue to expand WEN's global footprint.

The Plan identifies renewable energy, utilities, and energy financing as areas of diversification for WEN to ensure that WEN is well represented across all energy sectors. It also calls for WEN to add Chapters in strategic



markets for broader national and global exposure and impact. WEN's membership growth will continue to happen organically through Chapter word-of-mouth and programming, and through a culture of belonging where differences are embraced and women of color feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued.

The Plan calls for these areas to be increasingly coordinated and supported by National marketing initiatives that support the growth of all Chapters.

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values at WEN. WEN believes that organizations like ours can be a powerful vehicle to drive transformative change across the energy industry. WEN is committed and engaged to foster change through our task force, partnerships, programming, initiatives, and setting DEI goals that are concrete and measurable.

- **Volunteers**

Volunteering in WEN provides a hands-on professional and leadership development opportunity, ensures meaningful engagement, and carries out core functions of the Chapter or the global network. Given the importance of volunteer service, the Plan calls for a WEN commitment to support volunteers more fully through careful placement, helpful onboarding and training, ongoing support, and enhanced recognition. Volunteers, whether as leaders, committee members, or in activity support, are providing essential services and are assured the training, support, and mentorship required to be successful.



- **Staff and Boards**

An important theme that emerged during the strategic planning process is that, in essence, the National Board and supporting staff are WEN’s “franchisor,” whose primary role is to serve, support, and help ensure the success and long-term profitability and value of its Chapters, the franchisees. While each affiliated Chapter is independent, they are stronger by being part of the whole. As such, pursuant to the Plan, National’s value is much more than a coordinating or administrative function; National provides leadership, facilitates the success of all its Chapters, and ensures member satisfaction. National board members bring their leadership and management skills, and functional expertise to the organization. National also plays an important role in attaining efficiencies and economies of scale through consistency and continuity of core and centralized functions.

The WEN Foundation, as the organization’s philanthropic 501(c)(3) complement, attracts charitable tax-exempt contributions, distinct from membership dues and fees. The Plan recognizes the need for the Foundation to work seamlessly with National in support of the Chapters and the global network.

- **Operations**

WEN’s data management, membership, website, and finances are skillfully and professionally managed by association management staff. As WEN grows and matures, the Plan identifies the fact that it will need to assess its technology platforms to accommodate a customer relationship management (CRM) function, a robust resource library, and a more fully functioning communities platform.



- **Financial Implications**

The Plan recognizes that growth requires an increase in staff, technology, and other expenses. It calls for those expenses to be offset by an increase in revenues from memberships, sponsorships, and conferences.



IMPLEMENTATION

WEN's implementation of the Plan will be incremental: slow, steady, and measured as conditions and resources permit. The Implementation Committee is engaging in further work on three-year strategic goals and strategies to achieve those goals. Progress toward the goals will be measured and evaluated by the National Board on an annual basis. To fully implement the Plan, changes in National Board structure and roles, staffing capacity and functions, and the use of committees will need to align with the goals and related strategies and deliverables.

CONCLUSION

The Women's Energy network fills a unique niche in the energy industry, with a solid operating base, an impressive reputation, and extraordinary leadership from its women volunteers throughout the network. Despite difficult pandemic and economic times, WEN has an opportunity to leverage its significant human resource assets, and to continue to support **women empowering women**. The Plan builds on WEN's established brand, and its implementation will allow WEN to sustain additional growth in a streamlined and sustainable manner.

