

WASFF Convention Steering Committee



Strategic Plan

April 2011

1. Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Contents..... | 2 |
| 2. Introduction..... | 3 |
| 3. Strategy..... | 4 |
| 3.1. Member Retention..... | 4 |
| 3.2. Member Attraction..... | 4 |
| 3.3. Swancon Improvements..... | 10 |
| 4. Actions..... | 12 |
| 5. Conclusion..... | 13 |
| 6. Appendix A – Demographics & Market Segments..... | 14 |
| Appendix B – Promotional Markets & Activities..... | 15 |

2. Introduction

2.1. *Executive Summary*

2.2. *Background*

2.3. *Vision*

To be the premier SF convention in WA & Australia with a regular membership of over 700.

3.Strategic Analysis

3.1. Strengths

Starting with stretch, let's examine what Swancon does really well:

- Longevity, year after year.
- In depth panels & discussions.
- Social aspects of convention.
- Community.
- Intellectual engaging convention.
- Balance of genres, crossover between them.
- Retention of loyal members.
- Professional networking & development.
- Lit Guest selection & recruitment.
- Masquerade.
- Auction.
- Awards.
- 5 day conventions.
- Broad appeal.
- Cos play within Masquerade

3.2. Weaknesses

Let's look at the flip side of this and identify what we don't do well, we can work out later whether we want to do it, and if so, how to improve it:

- Consistency from year to year.
- Market to people who don't know about us.

- Advertising.
- Keep records of members / demographics / etc.
- Gaming stream.
- Video stream.
- Academic stream.
- Anime stream.
- Dealers / Hucksters.
- Family friendly.
- Art show.
- Recruiting & keeping volunteers.
- Rewards / Acknowledgement.
- Accountability.
- Accessibility.
- Formal knowledge transfer.

While we're looking at things we don't do well, how about things we don't do at all, but think we should:

- Don't consider it at a professional level - operate at an amateur level.
- Don't design programme around attracting members - target existing.
- Don't use programme to market / promote.
- Long term vision.

3.3. *What we want*

Okay, so what do we want to do with Swancons:

- Keep character.
- Slow and steady growth.
- Brand recognition.
- Gaming.

- Workshops.
- Panel discussions.
- Fan based discussion.
- Masquerade & Cos Play.
- Academic stream.
- Children's & Y/A stream / facilities.
- Strategic programming - genres to meet growth.
- Strategic selection of guests.
- Accessibility friendly.
- Art show

3.4. *What we don't want*

And the flip side, what we definitely don't want to do with Swancons:

- Don't want to be an expo.
- Don't want daytime only convention.
- Don't want a 24 x 7 video stream

3.5. *Competition*

Who are our competitors, what do they provide & where do they fit on cost / benefits axis:

- Interstate lit cons - Similar costs & benefits - closer to East Coast.
- Supanova - Cheap entry, expensive addons - media guests, cos play
- Waicon - Cheap - anime, cos play, dealers.
- Genghiscon - Cheap entry, gaming focus, no guests.
- KSP Minicons / Writers Festivals - cheap, professionally focussed, access to professionals.
- Small cons - cheaper, limited guests, limited programming.

3.5.1. Competition Comparison

Identify where we differ from our competitors, what we do better:

- Community
- Longevity
- Indepth investigation & discussion
- Panels
- Access to high profile lit guests
- Social access to professionals
- Broad range of interests

4. Strategy

4.1. Mergers / Alliances

Identify if we want to merge / acquire / develop strategic alliances with any other groups:

- Writers festivals - want professional contacts, provide ?
- Clubs (gaming, comic, etc) / Guilds / etc - want more members, provide discounts / guest access.
- Supanova - want media guests & exposure, provide guests / exposure

Starting to tie things together, looking at what we do well, what we do poorly or don't do but want to do, what's emerging as our overall strategy:

- Retain members
- Attract new members
- Improve Swancons
-

4.2. Member Retention

Looking at Member Retention:

- Post con mailout with wrapup / thankyou.
- Determine why people don't come back:
 - No longer interested / interstate / etc.

- No action required.
- Swancon isn't what it used to be.
 - Find out what is missing, determine if we want to provide it -> Improving Swancons.
- Momentum of not going anymore.
 - Find out what they want, determine if we want to provide it -> Improving Swancons.
- Not value for money: sell the value / -> Improving Swancons.
- Priced out: Newbie membership / day memberships / discount days / club discounts / lockin deposits.

4.3. Member Attraction

Attract members:

- Promotion!
 - Students
 - Clubs: In person pitches to clubs
 - Identify clubs
 - Make contact with reps
 - Build pitch to their interests
 - Deliver pitch
 - Find out if club wants to be involved / run an event
- Interstate Fans
 - Specific Conventions
 - Continuum
 - Conflux
 - Gencon
 - Convergence
 - Other state conventions
- Promotion methods:
 - Attending the convention

- Fliers in con bags
- Advertising in con books / PRs
- Spruiking
- Taking membership sales
- Show launch video
- Provide freebies / Prizes
- Run a party
- Provide 'Net Access
- SF Spec Stores
 - Specific Stores
 - Minotaur (Vic)
 - Swords & Sorcery (Vic)
 -
- Promotion Methods
 - Bookmarks
 - Fliers / Posters
 - Signings?
- Clubs
 - Specific Clubs
 - MSFC
 -
- Promotion Methods
 - Fliers / Posters
 - Group discounts for promotion
- Publishers
 - Co-promotion
- Big book chains
 - Specific Stores

- Borders
 - Angus & Robertson
 - Dymocks
- State Rep
 - Concession for state rep
 - Membership sales
 - Advertising / Book store relations / etc
- Waicon / Supanova attendees
 - Presence at expos
 - Conversations on upsell
 - Fliers / posters
 - Competitions / freebies
 - Contras for advertising / tables
- Lost members
 - Identify people who used to come regularly but aren't.
 - Email / contact them to find out why they stopped coming.
 - Identify changes to be made / that have been made.
 - Let them know & thank them for their feedback.
 - Post con wrap up / PR - nostalgia.
 - Paper / posted PRs / cutdown PR for those not on email.
- Writers
 - Groups
 - NaNoWriMo publicity
 - Writers groups
 - KSP
 - ?
 - University Writing Clubs
 - Offers

- Networking
- Professional Development
- Programmed Content
- Publicity for their work
- New members
- Anime
 - Supanova & Waicon (PAniC)
 - JAFWA
 - Tokyo Underground
 - Madman
 - Empire Toys
 -
- Spec Fic (Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, Urban Fantasy)
 - Bookstores
 - Fantastic Planet (WA)
 - White Dwarf (WA)
 - Planet Books (WA)
 - Dymocks
 - Borders
 - Angus & Robertson
 -
- Comics
 - Comic Stores
 - Quality Comics (WA)
 - Comic Zone (WA)
 - Supanova
- Gaming
 - Tabletop / Board Games

- Games Stores
 - Tactics (WA)
 - Games Workshop
- Clubs
 - Eurogames (WA)
 - WABGA (WA)
 - Gamers Guild?
 - Indie Games?
 - Napoleonic Wargaming Society (WA)
 - Unigames? (WA)
 - Rebel Empire
- Commercial Fanbases (TV Show / Movies / etc) & Pop Culture
 - Cinemas
 - Video Stores / Rentals
 - Fanbase Communities
- Pricing
 - Full
 - Current pricing about right.
 - Index with price rises.
 - Concession
 - Student
 - 70% - 75% discount
 - Keep them coming, they'll move to full members
 - Unemployed
 - 70% - 75% discount
 - Keep them coming, they'll move to full members
 - Other
 - 70% - 75% discount

- Day
 - Useful for taste / teaser
 - Not good long term, want to encourage people towards full members.
 - 20% - 25% overhead to discourage
- Masquerade
 - Cos Players
- Club Discount?
 - 5% - 10% discount to specific clubs if they promote us.
- Group Discount?
 - Buy 10, get 11th free?
 - Clubs only, or for everyone?
- New member discount??
- Referral discount?
 - Discount for new member & member who referred
- Professional Membership?
 - Not really of value
 - Free membership or they come anyway
- Free membership
 - Guests of Honour
 - A few invited professional guests, who wouldn't come otherwise
- Guest Presenter's free day / half day membership
 - Guest presenter on an area of expertise not otherwise available
- Dealers
 - New dealers, value add to members
 - Nexus Toy Fair
 - Empire Toys
 - Bookstores

4.4. *Swancon Improvements*

- Locking in price.
- Further consideration required.
- Selling value to existing members
 - Building enthusiasm about Swancon
 - Sell the big picture - theme, big events, etc
 - Discount for new members, eg 10% off for each new full member brought
 - Reminding people what they're getting
- Dealing with feedback
 - Channel complaints into feedback form so they feel heard
 - FAQ on a website for common complaints / questions
- Strategic selection of guests
 - Criteria for selecting guests
 - Balance of gender & genres
 - Marketing based on guest
 - Programming based on guest

5.Actions

Actions to take, priorities & time frames:

- Swancon 2011 targetting:

- Writers & Editors - 2011
- Waicon & Cosplay -> Masquerade - 2011
- Ex members (come back for Natcon 50!) - 2011
- Crunchy programme - 2011
- Children's stream - 2011
- Eastern states fandom - 2011

- CSC to target:

- Venue Selection & Negotiation - early 2011 onwards.
 - Form a subcommittee (During H1 2011 for Swancon 2012-14 onwards) Lead by TR
 - To build a database of hotels, facilities, capacities, pricing, etc.
 - Build a profile of Swancon spend - rooms, catering, bar, etc.
 - Long term contact with hotels over time.
 - Investigate long term contracts, eg multiple years.
 - Liaise with Perth Convention Bureau.
- Promotion - mid 2011 onwards (Lead by AR).
 - Marketing brain storming session - New CSC, mid 2011.
 - Investigate a professional marketing strategy - H2 2011 for Swancon 2012-16.
 - Split between Swancon marketing (CSC) and individual conventions.
 - Staged marketing.
- Budgeting - Late 2011 - 2013.
 - Finance subcommittee - WASFF & convention treasurers. Lead by EK.
 - Feedback based on accountant.
 - Preparation for GST collection & BAS reports - Estimate 2012/2013.

- Content - programming concepts / database - Late 2011 - 2015.
 - Programming Concepts
 - Subcommittee of programmers & interested parties (solicit interest at under construction?). Lead by AK.
 - Template with key events scheduled - Maquerade, AGM, etc.
 - Programming Databases
 - Categories / Genres / Topics
 - Good panelists for topics
 - Programme Ops
 - Use of guests
- Programming Tools - H1 2012 - 2015.
 - Web based programme.
 - Genres / Categories / etc.
- Guest Selection
 - Criteria for selection - H2 2011.
 - Balance of gender & genre
 - Good at public speaking
 - Fitting into overall marketing (in particular previous membership targets)
- Swancon 2012 to target:
 - TBD - H1 2011 - 2012
-

6. Conclusion

7. Appendix A - Demographics & Market Segments

Demographics / market segments we want to target:

- Students
- Interstate Fans
- People growing out of Waicon / Supanova
- Lost members
- Writers
- Artists
- Anime
- Science Fiction
- Fantasy
- Horror
- Gaming
- Comics
- Urban Fantasy
- Commercial Fanbases (TV Show / Movies / etc)
- Pop Culture

Appendix B - Promotional Markets & Activities

- Gaming
 - Tabletop / Board Games
 - Games Stores
 - Tactics (WA)
 - Games Workshop
 - Clubs
 - Eurogames (WA)
 - WABGA (WA)
 - Gamers Guild?
 - Indie Games?
 - Napoleonic Wargaming Society (WA)
 - Unigames? (WA)
 - Rebel Empire
- Commercial Fanbases (TV Show / Movies / etc) & Pop Culture
 - Cinemas
 - Video Stores / Rentals
 - Fanbase Communities