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# Advancing the World Federation of Music Therapy: Strategic Planning Process

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## Abstract

The World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT) is a nonprofit organization committed to its mission of developing and promoting music therapy throughout the world as an art and science. Since the organization's inception in 1985, there have been significant changes in the world and many positive developments within the organization. These are reviewed providing a rationale for the initiation of this executive work. Methods utilized to complete the strategic planning process are outlined, along with the challenges and discoveries encountered throughout. Outcomes of the strategic planning process are also highlighted.

**Keywords:** Music therapy, strategic planning, WFMT.

## Resumen

*La Federación Mundial de Musicoterapia (WFMT) es una organización sin fines lucrativos comprometida en su misión de desarrollar y promocionar la musicoterapia en todo el mundo como un arte y ciencia. Desde la creación de la organización en 1985, se han producido cambios significativos a nivel internacional y muchos acontecimientos positivos dentro de la organización, los cuales son revisados proporcionando una justificación para el inicio de este trabajo ejecutivo. Se describen los métodos utilizados para completar el proceso de planificación estratégica, junto con los retos y descubrimientos encontrados en este proceso. También se destacan los resultados del proceso de planificación estratégica.*

**Palabras clave:** Musicoterapia, plan estratégico, WFMT.

## Introduction

Mission and vision are the driving forces of an organization. The World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT) was founded on a vision to create an international organization

to support the growth and development of music therapy worldwide. While the original intention of the WFMT has not changed, the world and the profession of music therapy have experienced many new developments. The organizational structure of WFMT evol-

ved to meet the growing global demands of the profession, striving to ensure regional representation was provided effectively in every area of the world. Technological developments were a significant source of change and connection for the WFMT. The Internet enabled the organization to provide a wide array of resources to the global community, ensuring members had access to information, updates from the work of the Council and news about music therapy events from all around the world.

All of these developments supported and served as a means of creating greater visibility, stability and growth. They served as indicators of the organization's evolution, as well as its commitment to respond to the many changes taking place in the world, and those impacting the profession. The Council determined these developments were leading the organization to the position of needing a strategic plan. The advances and growth the organization fostered and experienced required an informed and intentional process. Rather than the Council determining the needs of the profession worldwide, it was determined the needs of the global community needed to be identified and understood on an international level which required gathering information from members. This led the Council to approve the organization's strategic planning process to be initiated in January 2013

A Strategic Plan Workgroup (SPW) was formed that included seven WFMT Council Members. Marie-Thérèse Barbé-Légrand, the Public Relations Commission Chair (2011-2014), guided the group through the 18-month strategic planning process. During the 2014 World Congress of Music Therapy in Vienna/Krems, Austria, the Council approved the WFMT strategic plan and presented the outcomes to the WFMT membership. Following

the meeting, the full report was published on the WFMT website (Barbé-Légrand, 2014). This article details the strategic planning process and addresses the following: a) Brief history of the organizational development of WFMT, b) Organizational development and strategic planning, and c) WFMT's strategic planning process. It is further hoped that providing a clear overview of the process as a whole may assist similar organizations in undertaking such a task.

### **Brief History of the Organizational Development of WFMT**

In 1985, ten international music therapists from Argentina, France, Italy, United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Puerto Rico, Brazil, and Poland formally established the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT) during the 5th World Congress of Music Therapy in Genoa, Italy (WFMT, 2008; Wheeler, 2010). Until this day, the founders' shared vision of promoting the profession globally guided eleven consecutive Presidents and their respective Councils in articulating goals and objectives and responding to immediate needs of WFMT members worldwide.

Over the past 30 years, key points included: a) building awareness and recognition of music therapy worldwide, b) recommending guidelines for music therapy education, research, and practice, and c) disseminating information about music therapy through publications and congresses (Kern, 2013).

During the first decade, the founders developed a legal structure and formulated the WFMT Constitution and Bylaws. Parallel discussions around establishing various Commissions (i.e., Education Commission, Research and Ethics Commission, and Communication and Exchange Commission) arose to address

the feasibility of worldwide research and practice standards and effective disseminating of information. Additionally, promoting a universal understanding of music therapy and bringing together representatives from each country was debated (Kern, 2010).

Between 1993 and 2008, many of the founders' initial intentions manifested. In 1996, WFMT officially became a non-profit organization in New Jersey (USA), and a member voting procedure was established. Additionally, five Commissions were created (Education, Training, and Registration Commission, Clinician Practice Commission, Research and Ethics Commission, Government Accreditation Commission, and Global Crises Intervention Commission), the Council also appointed an Executive Assistant, a Business Manager, a Webmaster, and several co-opted members to expand representation of various countries. The Commissions released Model Guidelines for Ethical Conduct (1993), a Definition of Music Therapy (1996), Guidelines for Education and Training (1999) held three Education and Training Symposia (2002, 2005, 2008) (which were held at the world congresses), and conducted a Survey on Clinical Practice in member countries (2005). The WFMT also published a newsletter and hosted a world congress every three years. As the Internet became more accessible in the mid 1990s, WFMT collaborated with [www.musictherapyworld.net](http://www.musictherapyworld.net) to host the first WFMT webpage and make the World Congress of Music Therapy Proceedings (2002) accessible on a CD-ROM (Kern, 2013).

Building on the foundation of WFMT's work, the 2008-2011 President and Council undertook major changes in three phases to respond to the changing demands, requests, and technology/social media opportunities. During the Stabilization Phase, the Council secured the non-profit status of WFMT by getting

incorporated and represented by an attorney in the state of North Carolina, USA. A fiscal year was set for June 30th and a three-year budget developed. Following the model of the World Health Organization (WHO), member regions were defined and eight Regional Liaisons appointed to represent the interest of music therapists in all parts of the world. The Council also reviewed and revised the WFMT's vision, mission, and value statements for the first time. Moreover, the WFMT gained momentum in visibility and communication through the launch of its own website [www.musictherapy.info](http://www.musictherapy.info) (growing to 15,000 visits/month by July 2011) and its presence through Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn Group, Twitter, Wikipedia, and printed materials, as well as hosting booths at conferences and roundtables at major international music therapy events.

In the Production Phase, the Council created: a) the online Publication Center (i.e., WFMT articles, Fact Pages, podcasts, videos, the Sound Board, International Library of Music, and the [musictherapyworld.net](http://musictherapyworld.net) archive), b) the Education Center (i.e., music therapy-related video episodes), c) the Job & Volunteering Center (i.e., worldwide monthly job and volunteering postings), d) the Regional Liaisons' Blog, e) WFMT Official Documents (i.e., Introduction to Ethical Practice, Guidelines for Creating Music Therapy Codes of Ethics, Internet and Privacy Issues Related to Music Therapy, Research FAQs and Answers, Introduction to Ethical Practice, and an Endorsement Policy). During this phase, the Council also revised the WFMT Definition of Music Therapy, created various activities for students (i.e., Window to the World, Connect, Info Cards in 20 languages), and celebrated the 25th Anniversary of WFMT with monthly events.

The Transition Phase was characterized by defining organizational procedures (i.e., genera-

ting comprehensive meeting minutes, brief Council reports, distributing annual reports to WFMT members), as well as preparing for elections and Council appointments (i.e. producing Council job descriptions, online nomination forms, and a new Public Relations Chair).

The WFMT also launched a member recognition program, student congress scholarship program and created the first Assembly of Student Delegates (ASD) to prepare the next generation of leadership led by a student Executive Assistant. The change in moving the Executive Assistant from a role filled by a professional to that of a student served to foster student engagement and preparing students for leadership roles. New student membership categories along with new membership benefits were added as well. To reflect the contemporary organizational structure and procedures, major revisions of the Constitution and Bylaws were undertaken and approved by the WFMT Council and membership at the first World Congress of Music Therapy held in Asia (Kern, 2011, 2013).

During the past four years (2011-2015), WFMT maintained and expanded upon these exciting activities and events. The ASD prospered and contributed to the student projects while starting an initiative to connect with students worldwide. The Clinical Practice Commission added the Folk Project to the digital WFMT Library of Music and developed an International Internship Directory. The Commission on Research and Ethics established an online WFMT Music Therapy Research Forum and released the Consent Requirement for Publication of Music Therapy Research. The Global Crises Intervention Commission responded to disasters in various countries and created a Disaster Fund. The Accreditation and Certification Commission created information about the

Accrediting Status and Procedures of Member Countries and held a roundtable to further discuss the feasibility of planning and implementing a global Music Therapy Equivalency Certificate.

A newly appointed Public Relations Chair reinforced shaping the public face of WFMT and supported the Council in engaging in a strategic planning process to set clear directions for the future. While the Council discussed the rapid growth and future directions of WFMT, the WFMT President resigned (November 2012). Consequently, an Interim President was appointed who started in January 2013 with a complete overhaul of the WFMT website (Kern, 2013). Since then, Council members diligently worked on creating the WFMT's Strategic Plan, which was presented at the 14th World Congress of Music Therapy in Krems, Austria. The 2014-2017 Council is currently in the second year of implementing six identified core strategies that will ensure continuity and development of the Federation for years to come.

### Strategic Planning of Organizations

WFMT was facing challenges typical of growing nonprofit organizations that strive to "meet missions while facing severe resource and personnel constraints" (Reid, Brown, Mc Nerney, & Perri, 2014, p. 31). Organizations often struggle to demonstrate their impact as a result of poorly defined goals and outcomes, lack of a process for monitoring progress, and an absence of procedures for creating and communicating meaningful reports and information surrounding their work (Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009; Reid et al., 2014). These challenges can lead nonprofit organizations to explore ways to better define their mission, goals, and outcomes. While organizations strive to determine how to better engage in the community to

achieve their mission, there is limited literature regarding strategic planning for nonprofit organizations (Reid et al., 2014).

Strategic planning is a starting point for an organization. It includes a process of clarifying goals and objectives, determining how to acquire and distribute organizational resources and how to translate decisions into action (Fernsler, 2014; Reid et al., 2014). Engaging in a strategic planning process serves as an opportunity to find value in underused resources, as well as new revenue streams (Davis, 2015). While not all aspects of strategic planning are easy, experts report it can be disruptive to an organization and create disagreement (Cothran & Clouser, 2009), it can enable an organization to transform, develop new competencies, and accomplish major goals that are key to the mission.

Research does demonstrate that “more successful organizations tend to prepare for strategic planning more rigorously and conduct the process with more focus and discipline” (Reid et al., 2014, p. 35) and that successful organizations initiate the strategic planning process with commitment to address mission, vision, and organizational goals (Reid et al., 2014; Sahlman & Nanda, 2015). Experts suggest that, “missions shouldn’t be static. A mission statement should be reviewed regularly to determine whether the organization will be able to continue to serve the cause for which it was created. If the mission has become an obstacle to achieving the organization’s goals, it must be changed” (Sahlman & Nanda, 2015, p. 117).

Recent research suggests that successful nonprofit organizations utilizing strategic planning to “guide processes for plan development, create a culture of discipline for implementation and stress the value of planning, which clearly promotes organizational success and improved community impact” (Reid et al., 2014, p.

38). The strategic plan becomes the road map for the organization, guiding their direction and providing clear outcomes and structured timelines. Establishing the strategic plan creates opportunities to report on progress, helping to maintain the momentum of action, as well as a process of accountability.

The WFMT Council recognized that as an organization, the WFMT had reached a point in their development that necessitated exploration and clarification in order to be an effective organization and meet the growing demands of professionals worldwide. The WFMT Council acknowledged the need to evaluate the mission and impact of the organization and better understand the needs of professionals around the world, as well as explore the ways to best address these needs and create a clear plan to accomplish these tasks.

### WFMT’s Strategic Planning Process

In January 2013, the WFMT Council initiated work on the organization’s strategic plan under the guidance of Marie-Thérèse Barbé-Legrand, who had experience and expertise in this area and was the Public Relations Commission Chair (2011-2014). A Strategic Planning Workgroup (SPW) was formed and included seven WFMT Council members (e.g., Interim President, Past President, Secretary/Treasurer, Clinical Practice Commission Chair, Public Relations Commission Chair, and two Regional Liaisons). The SPW held hour-long monthly Skype meetings over an eighteen-month period and completed the process in five phases.

- Phase I - Determining the initial work plan: included fostering the SPW’s understanding of strategic planning and the process required while determining the timeframe.
- Phase II - Reviewing the mission, vision and values: involved reviewing whether these core statements remained appropriate in

the context of the growth and development of the organization.

- Phase III - Development of surveys and data collection: involved the development of three surveys to collect data and feedback from internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are those individuals within an organization who have an interest in its success and failure (Boundless, 2015). External stakeholders are individuals or groups on the outside of the organization that are affected by the consequences, actions or outcomes of the organization (Boundless, 2015). Internal and external stakeholder questionnaires were created and distributed through SurveyMonkey™. In addition, one survey was developed for Facebook™ to reach the maximum number of individuals. Surveys utilized in the strategic planning process are available at <http://www.wfmt.info/leadership/comission-public-relations/>
- Phase IV - Analyzing the survey data and determining emerging priorities: involved categorising survey response data to identify common themes, needs, and challenges.
- Phase V - Defining the core strategies and goals for the strategic plan: included translating the emerging themes and priorities into six core strategies. The core strategies were further delineated with specific goals and objectives and prioritized and will be addressed below.

#### Internal Stakeholders Survey: SWOT Analysis

In order to gather the perspective from internal stakeholder, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was initiated. A SWOT analysis is a management tool used to provide a broad overview of the internal strengths and weaknesses, and the primary external opportunities and threats for an organization (Mind Tools, n.d.). This tool allows an organization to explore the interplay of core competencies with the key factors and

forces impacting the organization. A SWOT analysis can provide insight and suggestions about actions an organization should consider.

## SWOT Analysis



FIGURE 1. Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats Analysis.

The intention of the SWOT analysis in the WFMT strategic planning process was to engage WFMT Council members and volunteers in the overall process and to gain their perspective on the organization. It was also utilized to assist the WFMT in understanding opportunities with respect to pursuing and advancing the mission of the organization. The information gathered related to whether the WFMT was meeting its mandate outlined in the mission and vision statement, views of the overall administrative leadership and connection to members, and the growing needs of music therapy internationally. The goal of this analysis was to understand the strengths and weakness of the WFMT and identify external opportunities and areas for improvement.

Internal stakeholders were invited to complete the survey and provide specific feedback, rather than general or broad information. Additionally, a follow up phone conversation was provided to all those who requested an opportunity to discuss their input and/or if for clarification was needed by the SPW.

Individuals were invited to provide feedback on the following areas:

1. WFMT's primary (program/commission/regional liaison and administrative/officers') strengths and weaknesses: internal forces working for and against the organization achieving its mission.
2. WFMT's key opportunities and threats: political, economic, social, technological, demographic or legal trends that may impact WFMT's ability to achieve its mission.
3. Possible connections between an opportunity or threat and a strength or weakness.

#### Analyzing the SWOT Data

Overall, internal stakeholders felt that the WFMT could improve the manner in which it evaluates its impact and gains performance feedback from members. There was also an expressed desire for the establishment of clearer goals, along with review and evaluation of projects initiated by the various WFMT commissions. While projects were seen as important and valuable, it was noted that overlaps between some commissions and projects should be examined to reduce work-load.

There was consensus on the clarity of the mission, the core program areas and the primary audience of the WFMT. Recent and current projects were aligned with the WFMT mission. Additionally, the WFMT continued to advance the organization's goals, there was a greater desire for the organization to strive to expand its influence through participation in alliances and working collaborative relationships with external groups. The WFMT leadership was well respected and perceived as committed to the organization, while a respectable division of labor and sufficient opportunities for input with regular me-

etings occurring throughout the year. One challenge is that the large workload can be taxing, challenging officers' work-life balance while they navigate multiple additional commitments.

A primary strength was the transparency of the WFMT budget. However, one of the greatest weaknesses of the WFMT was a lack of funds to support projects and sustain the WFMT. It was suggested that the WFMT consider new sources of funding. One of the challenges the WFMT faces is that music therapists may belong to various of professional member organizations requiring fees, which can limit their membership options. Additionally, financial issues of members in developing countries and regions may prohibit and impact membership. The WFMT website was seen as a strength of the organization, while at the same time a challenge to maintain, requiring continued attention and frequent re-development. A recommendation from this assessment was to continue to grow the resources available on the website and to create more online educational opportunities.

#### External Stakeholders Survey

In order to complement the internal stakeholders survey, a survey of external stakeholders was designed to gather feedback from members about their understanding of WFMT services and level of satisfaction. Additionally, input and feedback was requested regarding potential strategies and partnerships to meet current social, economic, political, and technological challenges they felt were present in their particular region. A pdf of the survey is available at <http://www.wfmt.info/resource-centers/publication-center/wfmt-documents/>.

Following the development of the survey, the WFMT Interim President sent an email

to all WFMT members inviting them to contribute to the organization’s strategic planning process via a SurveyMonkey™ link. The 95 email addresses included 26 full organizational members, 3 associate organizational members, 1 student organizational member, 41 individual professional members, and 24 individual student members. Organizational member representatives were also encouraged to forward the link to their membership, so that all members could provide their feedback. There were 69 survey responses received from WFMT members representing 20 different countries, with the largest number of responses co-

ming from Australia, New Zealand, United States, and Canada. Figure 2 displays the overall breakdown of survey respondents by country.

Survey respondents articulated that the organization was meeting its mission in terms of promoting global connections, support and promotion for music therapy. One respondent shared, “WFMT is a respectful, multicultural, democratic organization that must strive for establishing the profession of music therapy in countries around the world, offering music therapists assistance in networking, education, certification, public policies,

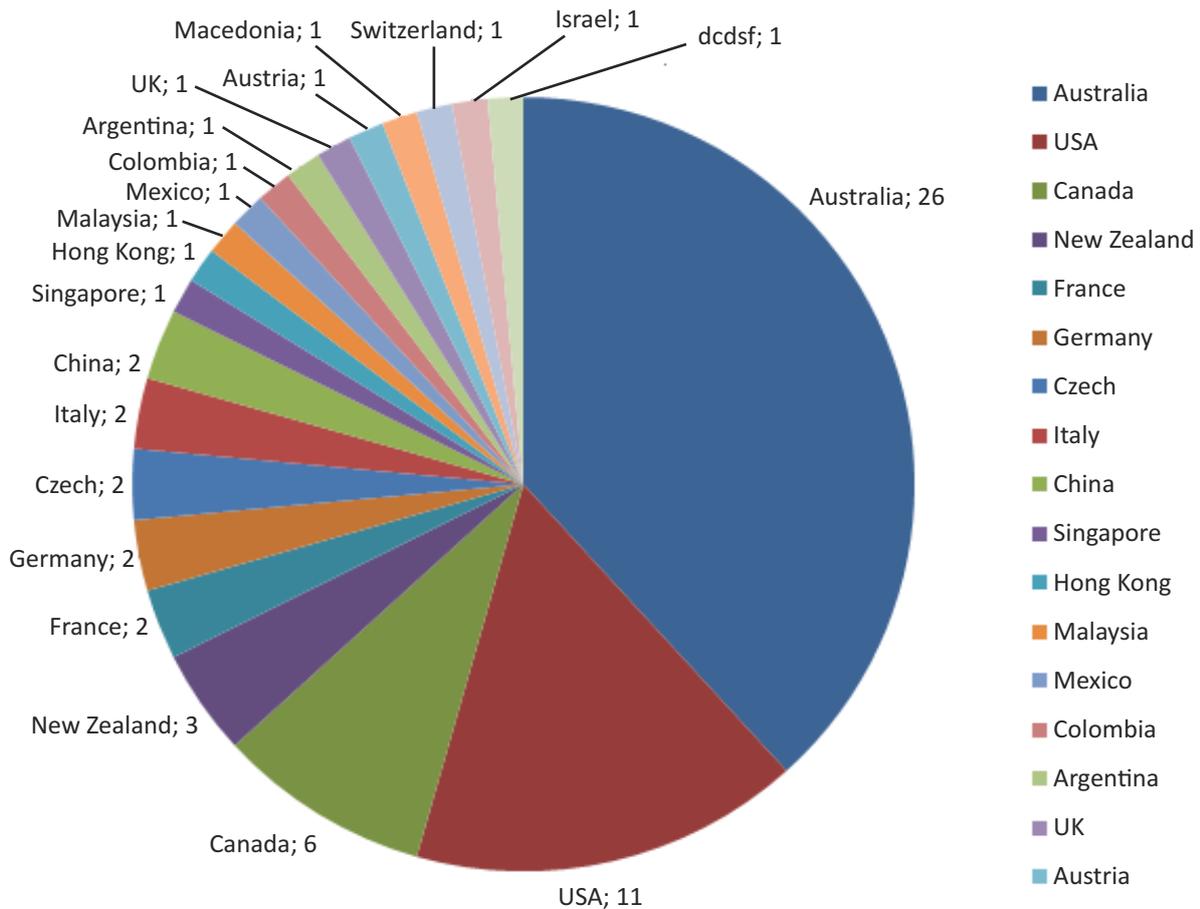


FIGURE 2. Members Survey Respondents (Country of Origin).

and crisis intervention.” The majority of respondents reported they joined WFMT in order to participate in and contribute to a global community. They valued WFMT services such as the World Congress and having access to information on international developments, clinical practices, conferences, training programs, work opportunities, publications, and research.

Survey feedback also affirmed that technology rather than print media is the way most people find information on the WFMT, with most using the WFMT website and Facebook page to keep informed about international events, publications, and contacts. They rated these WFMT services as very important, along with student and professional clinical networks, maintaining the website, Facebook™ and Twitter™ and supporting music therapists and others facing crises around the world.

Although member satisfaction with these WFMT services was high, some respondents reported being unaware of existing services. These included services related to networking, training programs, research, publications and crisis support. Several respondents suggested that WFMT could promote membership benefits more effectively to member organizations and training programs. More emails were requested to foster member involvement, collaborations and networks.

When asked about social issues impacting music therapy, respondents commented that general awareness of music therapy had improved due to increased media coverage and a general shift toward wellness and community models of health. However, they reported that challenges such as poor recognition and understanding of music therapy continue to prevail, including untrained practitioners and misperceptions of music therapy as new

age, alternative and unscientific. They suggested that WFMT initiatives that might address these professional issues including improving communication strategies, setting standards for quality management, and providing leadership and support to less developed countries.

Survey respondents also indicated that economic issues were negatively impacting the profession of music therapy. They reported that the economic downturn and recession was causing healthcare budget crises, thus hindering employment opportunities and growth. A few respondents did express optimism about employment growth, new disability funding options, philanthropy, and reimbursement opportunities. It was suggested that WFMT could address economic challenges by providing grant/funding information, supporting new training programs, and conducting a survey of salaries and reimbursement options. Additionally, respondents indicated they would like access to a global evidence base, including cost-benefit analysis studies, as well as the impact of music therapy on wellbeing and on the chain of care.

When asked about political events impacting the development of the music therapy profession, respondents noted the positive impact of democratic change, universal health care, increased media and advocacy and improvements in licensing, regulation and recognition. Some respondents commented on the negative impact of political dictatorship, communism, service cuts, privatizing of health care and a general lack of recognition and evidence for the profession. Respondents suggested that WFMT could drive a unified movement with coordinated approaches to information sharing and political campaigning for music therapy recognition and legislative regulation.

Technological advances were seen by many as having a positive impact on the profession with faster media, connectivity and information sharing as well as more affordable Internet and technological devices, apps, software and instruments. Some respondents expressed concerns about how the fast pace of change was causing difficulty absorbing and applying new technologies. Others articulated trepidation regarding the current obsession with digital technology and fear that this might undermine the traditional acoustic and personal relationship aspects of music therapy practice. Suggestions for addressing technological issues included a global network or forum to design, share, and review new applications and to provide online training.

In summary, survey respondents expressed support and appreciation for the WFMT. They expressed concerns regarding the struggles of developing the profession in their respective country and area of the world. They identified what more they need from a global organization to foster the growth of music therapy, and they made many constructive suggestions regarding ways to enhance membership engagement and regional representation. One respondent expressed a desire for broader global input beyond the North American influences suggesting, "It would be great if the whole music therapy world and different cultures would become more active, involved and heard in the WFMT."

### Facebook Survey

While the external stakeholders survey was the direct pathway to surveying the membership, the SPW felt it was also worthwhile to reach out to members via the WFMT Facebook page. Since the membership on the WFMT Facebook page has steadily

increased each year, the SPW recognized the value of social media in reaching members and other interested stakeholders. The SPW developed a survey specifically to be distributed among WFMT Facebook group members. A pdf of the Facebook™ survey is available in the WFMT Documents subsection of the website's Publication Center <http://www.wfmt.info/leadership/comission-public-relations/>

Rudimentary data obtained included respondent's connection to music therapy, method of discovering the WFMT and its Facebook group, primary reason for joining the group, main expectations of the organization, and membership status in the organization. Open-ended questions allowed respondents the opportunity to share their understanding of WFMT's purpose, areas of strength, and areas of need. Respondents were also given the option to enter a drawing to win an item from WFMT's online boutique for taking time to complete the survey.

A total of 107 individuals participated in the Facebook survey. Over 80% of respondents were music therapy professionals or students at time of participation. Roughly the same percentage professed to either holding WFMT membership or an interest in joining the organization. The majority of respondents learned about WFMT through a professional association, colleague, or conference. Internet searches contributed to nearly a quarter of respondents' initial discovery of the WFMT. Respondents reported the most common methods of learning about the Facebook group included a colleague, the WFMT website, and Facebook suggestion. The primary reasons most respondents joined the group were to keep informed of organizational news and to connect with others.

Survey respondents communicated clear expectations of the WFMT, including: (a) sharing news of global music therapy developments; (b) connecting individuals with other music therapy organizations, professionals, and supporters; (c) developing resources to enhance individuals' music therapy advocacy, practice, and research; and (d) providing information on music therapy related events. Perceptions of WFMT's purpose primarily related to the overarching themes of connection, unity, advocacy, and development in the profession. Key strengths of the organization identified by respondents included sharing information, promoting awareness, and advocacy. Online presence, connection, support, development of the field, and publications were also listed.

Areas for improvement communicated by respondents highlighted a desire to see WFMT expand current areas of strength, specifically (a) increased information sharing related to global perspectives, clinical practice, and research; (b) additional connection opportunities through dialogue, presence in training programs, service opportunities within the organization, and social media; and (c) more support towards students, national associations, and training programs. Some respondents also expressed a need for additional membership benefits and assistance with the credentialing processes.

The Facebook survey provided an additional body of information to review and analyze in addition to the internal stakeholders SWOT analysis and the external stakeholders survey. Reviewing all the data allowed the SPW to identify themes and areas to address for the strategic plan. The next task was for the SPW to translate and articulate these themes into a plan that could be put into action.

### Translating Data into a Strategic Plan

The SPW identified six core strategies from all the survey data. These six core strategies included:

1. Information
2. Revenue
3. Visibility and collaborations
4. Internal communications
5. Accountability
6. Volunteering

Once the core strategies were identified the next step in the process involved identifying goals, objectives, the WFMT Council member(s) responsible for accomplishing the objectives, and a timeline for these various actions. This step was critical in the process as it ensured that clear steps were identified to how this core strategy would be addressed, what needed to happen to address it, who would be in charge of completing that objective as well as the time frame for task completion. For example, the first core strategy was information. This was divided into four goal areas with each goal having a series of objectives.

Due to the comprehensive nature of the WFMT strategic plan, it will not be presented and discussed in its entirety. The complete strategic plan (Barbé-Legrand, 2014) is available on the WFMT website. Table 1 includes goals 1-4 and the objectives specified for each goal. This illustrates of how core strategy of information was delineated into an action plan with proposed timelines.

This strategic planning process was complex and challenging for the SPW. It is not always possible to anticipate the challenges that may be encountered when engaging in a new process; but it is helpful to reflect and share

TABLE 1. WFMT cores strategies, goals and objectives for 2014-2017.

**Goal 1. Produce data based information****Objectives**

- Review Fact Sheets and demonstrate in graphic form how many mts serve how many clients per year and publish it on the WFMT sites. (Clinical Practice Commissions) (Year 1)
- Identify other relevant information and make it available publicly. (Research Commission) (Year 2)
- Ensure that timely, accurate, and useful information is available at all the times. (Public Relations) (Year 3)

**Goal 2. Build community awareness****Objectives**

- Write and send press releases to community stakeholders within regions. (Public Relation) (Year 1)
- Create a poster for community social media pages and local sites. (Public Relations in collaboration with Regional Liaisons) (Year 1)
- Make key documentation (e.g., WFMT brochure, poster, press releases) available in various languages. (PR & RL) (Year 1)
- Review cost effectiveness of music therapy services worldwide. (Research Council) (Year 2)
- Launch a music therapy day/week. (PR & RL.) (Year 2)
- Investigate potential partnerships (i.e., celebrities, politicians, organizations) and develop partnerships for representing music therapy (PR and RL). (Year 2-3)

**Goal 3. Expand the use of technology for networking opportunities****Objectives**

- Develop specific networks: Clinical and professional directories. (Education, Clinical Practice, Research & Accreditation) (Year 1-3)
- Create a forum to review software and hardware through Skype meetings and blogs. (E & T, CO, R & E, A & C) (Year 2-3)

**Goal 4. Demonstrate leadership as a leading knowledge based organization****Objectives**

- Investigate and apply for membership with WHO and UN. (Public Relations and Officers) (Year 1-3)
- Link Global Crises Commission with UNHCR. (Global Crises Commission and Officers) (Year 1-3)
- Focus website/emails content on outstanding examples of mt practice, training, education, and research and business development (cost effectiveness of music therapy). (Public Relations and Officers) (Year 1-3)
- Develop and provide figures in the mt industry with regular updates. (Public Relations & Officers) (Year 1-3)
- Present remarkable examples of world leading mt training courses. (Accreditation and Training Commission) (Year 1-3)
- Provide a “straight to the point” FAQ for general public on mt evidence, links to trusted sources and reputable research database and journals. (Research Commission) (Year 1)
- Produce information resources to assist countries where mt is less developed based on outstanding development examples of the profession in other countries, and in comparison with other allied health professions. (Commissions and Regional Liaisons) (Year 1-3)

them in order to further foster the learning process. It is also important to recognize that the strategic planning process may also be rich with discovery.

### Challenges and Discoveries in the Process

The process of completing a strategic plan is extensive and placed considerable demand on the SPW. All members of the WFMT Council volunteer their time, as there are no paid positions within the Council. This required members of the SPW group to not only complete the strategic planning tasks, but also attend to their other WFMT duties, in addition to their employment responsibilities. Due to the fact that the WFMT is an international organization and members of the SPW reside in different parts of the world, different times zones (Australia, Canada and the United States) posed challenges in scheduling online meetings.

The SPW volunteers were Council members whose collective backgrounds and training reside in music therapy and not in organizational development. Thus, it was vital having Maïté Barbé, WFMT's Public Relations Commission Chair, who had experience in strategic planning (outside the field of music therapy) to guide the workgroup through this process. It was apparent that without her guidance and leadership, the overall strategic planning process could have been much less effective and productive.

Engaging in the strategic planning process also requires taking a broad perspective. To complete an effective SWOT analysis, stakeholders must consider political, economic, social, technological, demographic, or legal threats or trends that may impact the WFMT's ability to achieve its mission. The process also includes considering unexplored opportunities such as new partnerships or new revenue

streams to support meeting the mission of the organization.

It is important in the strategic planning process to be willing to also identify procedures that are ineffective or issues within the organization that may need to be addressed to foster successful operation. This may create stress and tension and highlight various barriers to progress. Ultimately, addressing these issues leads to a more successful organization, enabling it to achieve its mission and have a positive impact on the profession and ultimately the community.

While the strategic planning process is an extensive and intensive process, it is rich with opportunity for organizational insight, growth and development. The process is more robust if all parties are committed and fully engage in each aspect of strategic planning. The process requires a team working together collaboratively for the benefit of the organization and maintaining a sense of openness for discovery.

### Conclusion

Organizations are guided and motivated by their mission, vision, and values. Throughout the life and development of an organization, the world continues to experience economic, political, social, governmental, and technological changes and each of these factors impact organizations. This can be a challenging and complex process for organizations that serve an international community and are navigating these issues on a global level.

Strategic planning can provide nonprofit organizations a process to assist in elucidating goals and objectives and ways to translate these into action plans. This exploratory and evaluative process can also support organizations in discovering under-utilized resources,

allocating resources, and discovering new sources of revenue. These are important considerations, as organizations need to demonstrate fiscal responsibility and viability.

Research demonstrates that a strategic plan can become the informed plan that guides the organization. This blueprint not only provides direction, but creates opportunities to set clear outcomes and structured timelines. These procedures establish rich reporting mechanisms for progress updates, which serve to maintain the momentum of action and accountability, fostering effective communication for all stakeholders, while ensuring transparency for organizations regarding their operation and productivity.

This strategic plan for the WFMT serves as a road map for the organization for the next three years (2014-2017). Six core strategies were identified, developed into specific goals, objectives, and action plans to guide the work of the organization. The strategic planning document may serve to guide the organization further into the future if the Council feels the goals and objectives continue to be relevant for the organization. The strategic planning process now serves as a model for the WFMT to continue to understand, explore and evaluate its mission and vision in the future.

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