

APCO International



Strategic Plan 2006

As approved at the 2006 Executive Council Mid-Year
Meeting January 29, 2006

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From the President

Strategic planning assists forward-thinking organizations to recognize strengths, challenges and opportunities for development. It is an exercise that provides a chance to influence and guide the future of APCO International. This process began in 2001 with many hours of discussion and collaboration by dedicated leaders of the APCO International mission.

APCO International's 2005 strategic planning process was enabled by preliminary planning work that resulted in the 2001 Strategic Plan. This process offered a solid foundation to build upon. In September 2005, the process continued by inviting active participation from all Board members, APCO International staff directors and members of the APCO International Executive Council representing the committee groups and Management Committee to analyze and evaluate the existing plan and validate its ability to match the stated mission of the organization. Giving focus to the appropriate grand strategy, vision, and opportunities in concert with contemporary issues, the group worked to define important goals for the future.

Over the past several years, APCO International has made significant progress toward achievement of the objectives in the current Strategic Plan. The APCO International Policy Manual requires that the plan be reviewed annually and linked to the allocation of Association resources through the annual budgeting process. APCO International is dedicating significant resources to expanded activity and our Association leaders require guidance from the Strategic Plan.

One area in which APCO International has made significant progress is in the International arena. The APCO International Development Committee is undertaking a process to identify and recommend a new international structure that will serve the needs of all member and affiliate organizations regardless of where they are located globally. As member and affiliate organizations are committed to this collaborative work through the International Development Committee, no further discussion of the topic is included in this document pending their formal recommendations.

I would like to express my appreciation to the numerous members and staff for their participation in this valuable planning process. While the document is designed to be flexible, it will serve as a guide to convey the goals of premiere Public Safety Communications professionals and their vision for direction of their professional association.

Gregory S. Ballentine
President
APCO International
2004-2006

Authorization

This plan has been reviewed and approved by the Executive Board of APCO International. Those members include:

Greg Ballentine – President
Wanda McCarley – President-Elect
Willis Carter – First Vice President
Chris Fischer – Second Vice President

The following APCO International leaders were involved in discussions and revision work:

Nancy Pollock, Executive Council/Committee Group Leader
Gregg Riddle, Executive Council/Management Committee Chair
Vinnie Stile, Executive Council/Past-President/Committee Group Leader
Glen Nash, Executive Council/Past-President/Committee Group Leader

Cindy Casey, Director of Publications
William A. Cade, Director of 9-1-1/Communications Center Operations
Dennis Devine, Director of Information Technology
Ron Haraseth, APCO AFC Director
Courtney McCarron, Communications Affairs Manager
Ricky Marshall, Director of Standards and Human Capital
Barbara Myers, Director of Conference Services
Yucel Ors, Director of Legislative Affairs
Tim Ryan, Chief Financial Officer/Interim Executive Director
Candice Solie, APCO Institute Director
Susan Stowell, Director of Membership Services
Loredana Elsberry, 9-1-1 Services Manager (staff support)

The following APCO International groups provided valuable input into the plan update:

APCO Institute Advisory Committee
APCO International Development Committee
APCO AFC Advisory Committee
APCO Commercial Advisory Committee

Executive Summary

By all standards, the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International is an outstanding professional association dedicated to enhancing public safety communications at all levels of government, utilizing highly dedicated members and staff who are committed to serving citizens with the highest quality services. To assist this effort, the APCO International has developed a Strategic Plan that will provide the framework for assigning resources and setting direction for activities of the Association. The plan is a culmination of a process involving numerous members of APCO International, including the Board of Officers, members of the Executive Council, and staff.

The following strategic goals have been selected to guide APCO International in fulfilling its mission:

- A.** Foster professionalism in public safety communications.
- B.** Ensure APCO International's continued growth and development.
- C.** Ensure the availability and effective use of Spectrum to meet the needs of public safety communications.
- D.** Ensure APCO International's position as the premiere professional association that sets the standard for excellence in professional development and leadership in public safety communications.
- E.** Establish timelines and procedures for extended planning by all integrated APCO International units to promote more accurate forecasts of resource needs.
- F.** Pursue extended funding opportunities.
- G.** Promote the effective and efficient operation and management of public safety communications functions at all levels of governments.

A total of twenty-three objectives have been established to guide APCO International's approach to accomplish the seven goals. Each objective relates to a specific goal, which will be addressed in the Strategic Plan implementation process.

The strategic plan forms the basis for the numerous tasks and strategies which will be managed by the APCO International Executive Director and staff. The Board of Officers of the Association will ensure that resources are appropriately allocated and that membership committees are charged with activities in support of the goals. Strong member support will be necessary to respond to the rapid growth in activities and workload. APCO International will strive to effectively respond to the needs identified by the planning process.

APCO International Mission Statement

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO) is a member driven association of communications professionals that provides leadership; influences public safety communications decisions of government and industry; promotes professional development; and, fosters the development and use of technology for the benefit of the public.

APCO International Vision Statement

APCO International will continuously enhance public safety communications through leadership, professionalism and service.

APCO International Values

In fulfilling our mission and pursuing our vision, we hold in common these values:

Quality and Professionalism

APCO International is committed to the highest levels of professionalism and quality of our programs, our members and their development needs, and the chapters we support.

Service

APCO International shares the common purpose of serving our members and the Public Safety Communications community at large and the issues that are unique to our industry.

Integrity

APCO International promotes respect for all partners and stakeholders in the Public Safety Communications industry and seeks the highest standard of integrity and accuracy to represent the position of our membership.

Courage

APCO International will pursue opportunities to shape the future of the Public Safety Communications industry with its ever-present challenges in a dynamic environment of change, while keeping focus on the global perspective with the willingness to face and influence challenging and uncertain topics of concern.

Leadership

APCO International believes it is more important to do what is strategically right than what is immediately possible and will seek the wisdom to lead in that direction.

Motivation

APCO International remains motivated and enthusiastic about the promise to make a positive difference in Public Safety Communications.

Strategic Focus: Goals and Objectives

Professional and Program Development

Goal: Foster professionalism in public safety communications

Objective 1 – Lead the industry with new and updated standards for operations, training, minimum qualification, and performance programs in public safety communications.

Objective 2 – Provide contemporary training and resource materials that assist members in achieving or exceeding accepted standards of performance.

Objective 3 – Develop and communicate training certification standards and opportunities for re-certification through continuing education and testing.

Member Management

Goal: Ensure APCO International's continued growth and development

Objective 1 – Recruit and mentor emerging leaders who can respond to membership dynamics.

Objective 2 – Strengthen membership retention.

Objective 3 – Communicate APCO International strengths to new audiences by developing outreach strategies to initiate new member contacts.

Objective 4 – Expand potential of technology assisted customer relationship management.

Spectrum Management

Goal: Ensure the availability and effective use of Spectrum to meet the needs of public safety communications.

Objective 1 – Coordinate a unified public safety position for regulatory and legislative strategies through alliances with select affiliated public safety oriented professional associations.

Objective 2 – Improve the efficient use of spectrum through the utilization of enhanced frequency coordination processes and procedures.

Objective 3 – Create opportunities to outreach to target audiences regarding current spectrum initiatives and APCO International’s advocacy of established spectrum management positions.

Objective 4 – Support public safety agencies through aggressive legislative, regulatory and legal advocacy related to spectrum initiatives.

Objective 5 – Encourage planning and coordination of public safety agency transition to narrow band technologies in advance of the FCC deadline through education and outreach.

Image and Advancement

Goal: Ensure APCO International’s position as the premiere professional association that sets the standard for excellence in professional development and leadership in public safety communications.

Objective 1 – Develop an integrated marketing strategy that supports every segment of the Association with annual budget support.

Objective 2 – Develop and implement a 3-year marketing plan for APCO International that supports APCO sustainability and focused growth.

Planning and Budgeting

Goal: Establish timelines and procedures for extended planning by all integrated APCO International units to promote more accurate forecasts of resource needs.

Objective 1 – Maintain membership database to provide improved input to policy planning, budgeting, report analysis and decision making.

Objective 2 – Annually review structure, priorities, and resources to remain effective and adaptive to forces of change.

Goal: Pursue extended funding opportunities

Objective 1 – Assign all APCO International staff directors a formal role to identify non-traditional funding opportunities in support of the APCO International mission.

Objective 2 – Establish creative funding mechanisms that support internal focus on activities in support of the APCO International mission that are not reliant on direct return on investment to offset costs.

Industry Operations

Goal: Promote the effective and efficient operation and management of Public Safety Communications functions at all levels of governments

Objective 1 – Evaluate systems, technology, human resources, leadership and policy affecting the operation and management of communications centers and ensure that APCO International responds to industry needs identified.

Objective 2 – Participate in the standards development and revision process, including those coordinated by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to ensure that best practices affecting public safety communications are included.

Objective 3 – Provide training opportunities, guidelines and forums for the development of operational plans, policies and procedures related to continuity of operations multi-agency response to emergencies; personnel safety and protection as well as physical security of facilities.

Objective 4 – Advocate for regulatory and legislative requirements that support the nationwide deployment and enhanced accuracy of E9-1-1 systems including the requirement that emerging technologies ensure compatibility with existing systems.

Appendix A – 2006 Strategies (Not Published)

Professional and Program Development

Establish training standards for Communications Center Supervisors by July 2006.

Update and review communications training officer curriculum by December 2006 and communications supervisor course curriculum by December 2007 based on updated standards adopted by APCO International.

Review all training and resource materials published by APCO International to eliminate obsolete or dated product/information and to ensure that emerging issues are addressed by December 2006.

Identify and implement new methods of providing recognition to public safety communications professionals who achieve academic or professional credentials by August 2006.

Member Management

Expand new member participation in committee work by enhancing outreach and recruiting methods by June 2006.

Determine factors that influence membership renewal and implement specific strategies to strengthen retention rates by the beginning of the 2007 membership renewal period. Ensure that implemented strategies are benchmarked to evaluate results.

Expand participation in programs that support member honors & recognition through enhanced outreach. Ensure that current participation is benchmarked to evaluate results.

Review benefits of membership by June 2006 and develop strategies for continued assessment and improvement. Ensure that member benefits are integrated into the overall marketing plan.

Review and analyze membership data to enhance knowledge of member demographics. Establish a process to ensure more accurate membership records by August 2006. Develop outreach and recruiting strategies to target specific potential members based on gaps identified in membership classifications and/or geography.

Develop methods to measure member satisfaction and include ways to consider member satisfaction as a performance standard for staff personnel by September 2006.

Review APCO's strategic alliances and partnership strategies to evaluate methods of identifying appropriate association relationship criteria by January 2006. Pursue formalization of strategic relationships in areas only where the mission of APCO would be supported by defined strategic alliances.

Spectrum Management

Identify current public safety challenges related to the 800 MHz rebanding processes by October 2005. Develop and implement strategies to ensure that APCO mitigates public safety communications concerns through legal, regulatory and legislative advocacy. Expand educational outreach to public safety agencies.

Continue aggressive legislative advocacy to clear access to 700 MHz band nationwide by December 31, 2006.

Develop an educational and outreach campaign to ensure that public safety agencies are familiar with FCC narrowbanding regulations. Encourage public safety agencies to undertake planning efforts to ensure an orderly transition to narrowband technology within the required timelines.

Image and Advancement

Develop specific opportunities and methods to support communication of the APCO International advantage to current and new audiences in support of the overall mission by August 2006.

Increase member participation in conferences and symposiums by improving overall content, value and marketing. Establish benchmarking data to evaluate overall results during 2006.

Grow enrollment in Institute programs by improving overall content, value and marketing. Target specific audiences where customer data indicates gaps in participation. Establish benchmarking data to evaluate overall results during 2006.

Establish internal communications procedures to ensure APCO International communicates with consistency in all media and external communications activities.

Coordinate, analyze, and monitor market effectiveness internally and externally through database management and technology assisted methodology.

Develop and implement a proactive external communications plan directed at executive-level decision makers in all levels of government to ensure widespread

familiarization with APCO's three highest priorities by March 2006. Ensure that the communications plan includes identification of criteria to evaluate results.

Planning and Budgeting

Ensure a process to review the APCO Strategic Plan prior to 2007 budgeting activities to validate appropriate allocation of association resources in support of adopted mission and vision.

Pursue grant funding for the development of educational and planning efforts to support interoperability coordination between public safety agencies including NIMS and Communications Unit Leader training.

Industry Operations

Analyze the opportunities for APCO to initiate an industry PSAP database project that will provide a source of accurate emergency call routing to commercial service providers while protecting the integrity of data use. Complete cost analysis and benefit determination by January 2006 in order to support implementation by December 2006 if the project is deemed a viable APCO activity.

Develop methods of identifying the issues of importance for industry leaders and members of APCO to ensure that APCO International is engaged and focused on the primary operational challenges affecting public safety communications by December 2006.

Engage in standards setting processes through CALEA and the Department of Homeland Security by December 2005. Engage in best practice development for public safety communications through the FCC NRIC VII process by December 2005. Ensure that processes are in place to engage APCO's subject matter experts in forums that will result in the development of new/updated standards and accepted best practices for public safety communications.