



"Framing our Future"

Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012



Introduction

CKUA's 2005-2008 strategic plan was constructed using fairly traditional planning processes, tools and participants. For the 2009-2012 plan, however, *scenario planning* was proposed as a foundational process. With its characteristic willingness to try new things, the organization agreed to adopt this new approach that was a little more 'out of the box'.

Scenario planning helps an organization to think of the future in non-traditional ways. It is a tool for asking "what if" in a disciplined and insightful way, and it stretches thinking beyond what is known or can tangibly be imagined today. It helps organizations think about the uncertainties of the future, and then deliberately and thoughtfully contemplate potential strategies to manage in the face of those uncertainties. It could be described as a tool for facilitating a strategic dress-rehearsal of the future.

The scenario planning process at CKUA was a year-long journey that involved deep thoughts and even deeper conversations. It was a process rich in questions, ideas and reflection. It caused meaningful contemplation about the true essence of CKUA, and it stimulated audacious imaginings of potential futures.

CKUA's experience with scenario planning was rich and rewarding. It instilled optimism as well as concern; it was exciting but also frustrating, linear though circular, and mind-expanding yet grounding. Any attempts to capture and share the fullness and rigour of this experience, however, would likely be inadequate – there was just so much. What we can summarize though, is that through the process CKUA was able to accomplish the following:

- We confirmed our Mission, Vision and Values;
- We determined that there were several core principles and strategies that were common regardless of what possible future scenario was imagined;
- We identified strategies that were unique to specific possible futures; and
- We selected our strategic course for the next three years, with an eye to how those strategies would play out over the longer term, and in consideration for how those strategies might need to be altered if the future unfolded in different directions.

Executive Summary

This strategic plan marks the continuation of CKUA's evolution toward long-term organizational sustainability.

Where We Were:

A feisty and impassioned cultural movement brought CKUA back on air in 1997, and for many years afterward the organization's primary operating strategy was understandably dominated by an ever-present focus on "survival". The emphasis was on managing hour-by-hour; making decisions and trade-offs necessary to keep the station on the air tomorrow. With significant compromise, commitment and a ground-swell of grass-roots gusto, CKUA did indeed survive and was able to move beyond crisis-management. CKUA's focus shifted from organizational survival to organizational stability.

Where We Are:

Coincident with CKUA's growing strength and soundness the organization's first strategic plan, called "*Constructing Cornerstones*", was created for the period 2005-2008. The plan's priority was on building a solid operational foundation from which to grow, and the emphasis was largely on ensuring stability in the basics of everyday operations. It was acknowledged that without sufficiently reliable operating and governance processes, CKUA might not be well positioned to successfully move forward. The focus shifted from managing operations day-by-day, to managing with a longer-term view for the organization.

Where We Are Going:

Having accomplished much foundational work since that first strategic plan, this next three-year planning cycle moves the organization forward with a priority on securing critical physical resources. While still working to enhance CKUA's stability, this plan has a targeted emphasis on special projects, over and above sustaining day-to-day operations. It builds on the four operational cornerstones laid in the previous strategic plan, and establishes the next layer of infrastructure necessary for the organization to move forward in its evolution toward long-term sustainability. Continuing with our 'building' theme, we are calling CKUA's 2009-2012 Strategic Plan, "*Framing our Future*".

It is worth noting that casting our eyes forward beyond a 3 year glimpse identified several bold and innovative strategic possibilities for CKUA. For the immediate future, however, the pragmatic realities of taking care of core assets and operations were deemed the most important priorities for the organization. Looking beyond 2012, with critical processes and resources solidly in place, there could be exciting prospects for *raising the rafters*.

Guiding our path to 2012, we have summarized CKUA's key strategies into four areas of priority.

- Optimize Physical Assets

With organizational stability still an important priority for CKUA, it is critical to ensure our core assets are physically safe, efficiently operated and optimally employed. Specifically we are referring to the library that provides our content, the network that supports our broadcast distribution, and the facility that houses our headquarters. Any plans for moving CKUA forward into an increasingly complex and sophisticated world will be undermined if these elements at the centre of our operations are not strategically managed.

- Secure Adequate Funding

CKUA exists largely based on the goodwill and generosity of donors. This provides an inherent vulnerability for the organization, while also being a fundamental touchstone of strength and strategic advantage. CKUA wants to remain a donor-funded organization, though in the upcoming strategic cycle significant incremental funding will be required to ensure the organization can address critical needs of the present, and continue to build for the future.

- Connect to Communities

CKUA embraces community; it is integral to our vision, our operations and our value proposition. Beyond passive, marketing-manufactured veneers, our community connections are active and genuine, and though deeply intrinsic, our community connectedness is tangibly visible. We will employ a variety of traditional and emerging tools to connect with traditional and emerging communities.

- Leverage Operations

The integrity and dependability of CKUA operations are critical enablers for helping the organization manage the evolution from survival to stability to sustainability. While the next three years will be focused on project-based initiatives, the organization will rely heavily on the strengths of its programming and its core operational systems, processes and people to provide a solid foundation upon which to build upward.

This 2009-2012 strategic plan was crafted using Scenario Planning as the primary tool. Involving CKUA staff, board, volunteers and members of the Alberta public, CKUA looked 10 years into the future to understand how the world might look, and what the possible implications to CKUA might be. Following numerous rich and provocative strategic conversations, the essence of this document was borne.

CKUA Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement: CKUA Radio is a community-supported, Alberta broadcasting service that enriches lives by presenting diverse music and original programming that entertains, inspires, enlightens, and educates.

Vision Statement: CKUA connects the hearts and minds of listeners to create better communities.

CKUA Core Values

Knowledge: CKUA believes in its founding principle that dissemination of knowledge is a valuable contribution toward development of healthy and productive individuals and communities.

CKUA will apply our collective expertise to broadcast relevant and engaging music and information programs that educate, challenge and inspire.

Respect: CKUA believes respect is a fundamental attribute for creating positive and constructive relationships internally and externally.

CKUA will provide an environment that supports dignity and self-esteem and is free of discrimination and harassment.

Creativity: CKUA believes creativity and the freedom to exercise it are essential to the development, delivery and ongoing improvement of CKUA's unique products and services.

CKUA will ensure an environment exists that encourages innovation and creative thinking.

Integrity: CKUA believes integrity is vital to everything we do.

CKUA will conduct its affairs in an open, honest and responsible manner.

Fiscal

Responsibility: CKUA believes fiscal responsibility is essential to CKUA's sustainability and growth.

CKUA will provide ongoing stewardship of financial and non-financial resources.

Relevance: CKUA believes being relevant will ensure our audiences are well served.

CKUA will understand our audiences and deliver meaningful programming.

Collaboration: CKUA believes collaboration benefits CKUA and our communities of interest.

CKUA will encourage and support collaboration and teamwork within our organization and will pursue partnerships in the broader community.