

Marine Corps Association STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

The Marine Corps Association Strategic Plan 2025 is a five-year look forward at our organizational goals, objectives and the supporting actions required now and into the future in order to achieve our vision for the Marine Corps' professional association. This actionable plan builds on the direction set in our previous strategy, applies many lessons learned and serves as a roadmap to help navigate into the future. Writing this plan as we continue to serve our members during a pandemic, we are fully aware that there will be obstacles to overcome and opportunities to be embraced in order to further improve upon our current recognition as the preeminent professional association supporting the United States Marine Corps.

This plan has been developed through the hard work and input of numerous groups of individuals including the MCA staff, board members and other key stakeholders. It is informed and influenced by several external organizations, most importantly the feedback and demand signals we receive from the active Marine Corps. It is constructed with a deep appreciation for current and anticipated impacts on organizations such as ours as the nation recovers from a pandemic and the Marine Corps we support goes through significant change as it postures for the future.

MCA VISION, MISSION and VALUES

Vision. To be universally recognized as The Professional Association of the United States Marine Corps.

Mission. To be the preeminent association for all Marines and Friends of the Corps dedicated to leader development, recognition of professional excellence and expanding awareness of the rich traditions, history, and spirit of the United States Marine Corps.

Values. We believe in advancing the values of the Marine Corps and are dedicated to building an adaptive, engaged, and informed community that is focused on the development of Marines for our Corps and Nation.

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

As articulated in this document, the MCA fosters a close partnership with the Marine Corps, enhances the relevance of our programs and products, increases and strengthens MCA's support community, and grows resources to support demands for our mission and programs that directly aid the professional development of Marines.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION AND OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The MCA is a Military Service Association (501 (c)(19)) with a supporting Public Charity (501 (c)(3)). We are the only organization dedicated to serving all of today's Marines, veteran Marines and Friends of the Corps. The MCA includes two iconic publications, a retail department that includes a brick-and-mortar store and e-commerce operation, member services, a corporate support and events department, a strategic communications department including all marketing, information technology, and business operations and financial departments. Our supporting charitable foundation, the MCAF, is managed as a separate but related entity that provides essential resources to the MCA family and to the Marine Corps.

The MCA was chartered in 1913 as the professional association of the Marines and remains so today. In this context, "professional association" refers to Marines and Friends of the Corps engaged in the profession of arms, dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of professional knowledge and conduct and representing our profession in the public interest. Throughout the history of the MCA the most recognizable part of the organization was and continues to be the *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Leatherneck* magazines. Those two publications and The Marine Shop, the provider of the highest quality and finely tailored dress uniforms, are true hallmarks of MCA.



Other organizations have shared interests with the MCA since 1919. Most notable is the Marine Corps League, the oldest and largest Congressionally Chartered Veterans Service Organization for Marines. We are teamed with MCL on events of great importance to the active Marine Corps.

Various other Marine service associations have exclusive memberships based on MOSs, units/commands, and past wars such as the Marine Corps Aviation Association, The First Marine Division Association and The *Chosin Few*.

Since the 1980s the number of public charities supporting specific needs and sub-groups of Marines has also increased. The Marine Corps University Foundation, the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, and the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation as examples all have worthy missions that also rely on individual and corporate donations.

The Marine Corps is transforming rapidly because of technology. All of our activities need to leverage technology as it continues to accelerate change.

PURPOSE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This actionable Strategic Plan defines the goals, objectives, and high level responsibilities for the MCA over the next five years. The scope of this plan is not exhaustive and it does not account for the continuous, day-to-day operations at the departmental level that accomplish the core functions of the MCA to include serving our membership, publishing two magazines, conducting events, fundraising, business operations and our retail enterprise.

This strategy lays out our goals and objectives while the detailed tasks necessary to accomplish them are the province of a dedicated and lean staff.

The MCA staff routinely utilizes supporting and supported relationships for the myriad of things we do to support Marines. In a lean non-profit organization everyone understands that "we do windows." To be successful in achieving the aims of this strategy and the unique requirements of each unique goal and objective, those same supporting relationships are essential to success. Each goal and objective will have a designated lead accountable for

development, execution, reporting and achievement of that Goal or Objective.

This MCA Strategy includes nine strategic goals. Each goal is either focused directly on improving the support we provide to Marines or on ensuring that MCA retains the ability to efficiently grow and manage the resources and relationships necessary to maximize our value to all Marines.

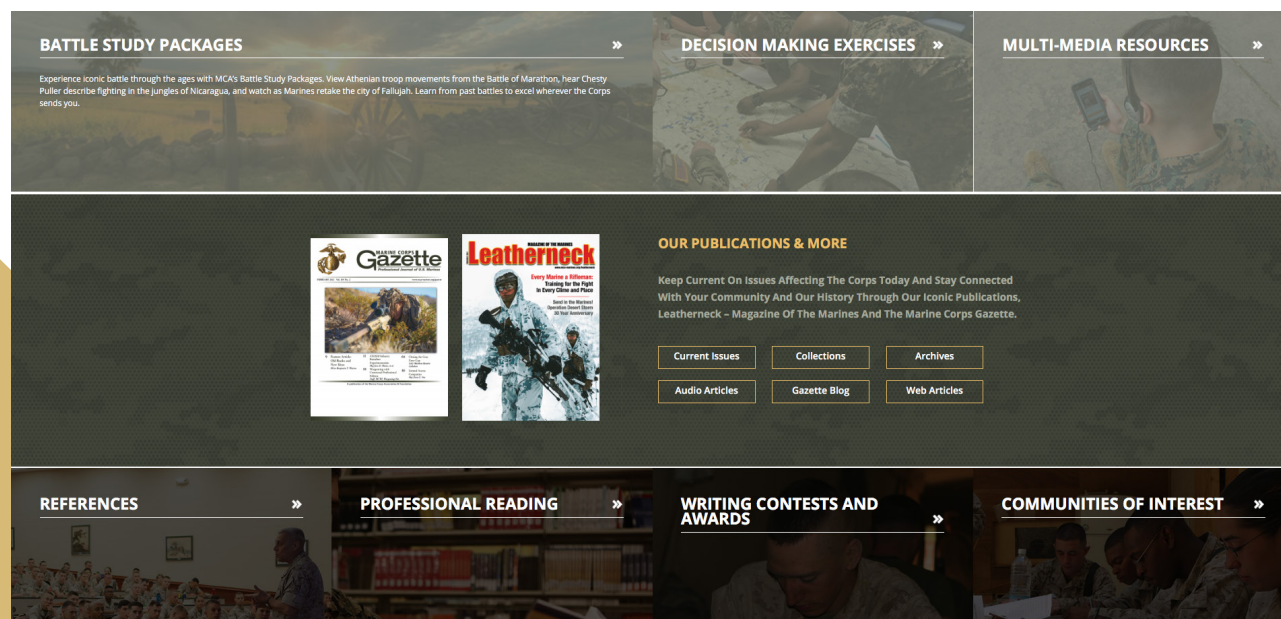
This Strategic Plan also establishes how we assess progress at the Objective level, and when/how we report these assessments to inform organizational resource allocation decisions.

DEFINING SUCCESS

Overall success towards mission accomplishment for MCA can be determined by both growth and value.

Growth refers to such factors as the number of overall members and publication readership, the number of Marines and commands supported through our programs, the number and amount of donations to our Foundation, and the net profit from retail uniform sales to Marines. Growth provides the resources necessary to fund improvements in supporting information systems, facilities, and internal processes. It also helps ensure our employees are trained and adequately compensated to perform our important mission. Growth provides fiscal flexibility to help withstand unexpected changes in the environment caused by downturns in the economy, actions of other organizations, internal Marine Corps issues, and other unforeseen factors.

Value refers to the often-intangible benefit that our professional association adds to the Marine Corps. This value is determined and measured in large part by the comments and support of the Commandant, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SMMC), and Marine general officers as to whether MCA, as their professional association, assists in developing Marine Corps leaders, and representing and advancing our profession in the public interest. This value is also determined and commented on by Friends of the Corps and other Marines, young and old, both still in uniform and those having transitioned to another phase of their lives yet still proudly representing the glorious traits and historic lineage of the Corps.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. **Support** the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) and other senior leaders across the Marine Corps by providing platforms to message key audiences, inform required future warfighting capabilities and assist in developing Marines.

I.a. Using direct personal coordination, and analysis of written works published by Marine Corps leadership such as the Commandant's Planning Guidance (CPG), new/revised doctrinal publications, and other published written guidance from senior leaders, identify needs and opportunities to support the vision and direction of the Corps across all platforms and venues: print, web-based and social media, and live events and engagements.

I.b. From 2021 to 2022 focus on continued enhancement of the "intellectual component" of the Modern Day Marine (MDM) expositions. Starting in 2022, based on the future of the two regional expositions (Marine West and Marine South) as determined by CMC's requirements, develop "intellectual components" focusing on the regional/operational priorities of the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) and Marine Forces (MARFOR) commanders.

I.c. Starting in 2021, arrange one new symposium, summit, or wargame-style event per year in partnership with (first) Naval professional associations, (second) other Marine Corps-affiliated non-federal entities (NFEs), and eventually other organizations such as Joint Service associations and foundations, as deemed beneficial.

I.d. Sustain and promote the *Gazette* as the Corps' professional journal, the principal print and web-based public platform for CMC and senior leaders to message key audiences, inform future capabilities and support the professional development of Marines through the free exchange of ideas on issues of importance to the Corps.

I.e. Determine future investment opportunities for the *Gazette* and *Leatherneck* and promote these publications as "core brands" of the Professional Association and the "platforms/forums of record" for their respective primary audiences and all Marines and Friends of the Corps.

2. **Strengthen** current partnerships and relationships and establish new ones to ensure continued growth and influence.

2.a. Develop targeted engagement plans with specific organizations which provide reach to our target audiences and financial support to MCA.

i. Renegotiate the Affinity Partnership agreement with United Services Automobile Association (USAA) in 2021.

ii. Identify ways to complement the current USAA agreement with other organizations (i.e. First Command, Pearl Insurance) which provide services and products that would be permissible in the context of the USAA agreement and add value for our members.

iii. Evolve current relationship with the Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) and reassess current relationship with Sandboxx to determine future value to MCA.

iv. Execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Navy League and conduct at least one event in 2021.

2.b. Assess and pursue where deemed feasible and beneficial, teaming and partnership opportunities with other military journals/resources, societies, websites/blogs to enhance MCA's contributions to the profession of arms in the Marine Corps and to provide additional tangible member benefits.

2.c. Prioritize then assess and develop our relationships with other USMC related NFEs organizations that we would like to engage for the future including the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation (MCSF), Marine Corps Heritage Foundation (MCHF), Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation (MCLEF), Marine Corps University Foundation (MCUF), Semper Fi and America's Fund, Toys for Tots, Young Marines, and National Marine Corps Coordinating Council



3. Advance professional development programs to increase our value to today's Marines.

3.a. Using written works provided by Marine Corps leadership such as the Commandant's Planning Guidance (CPG), and speeches or other published written guidance from senior leaders, identify needs and opportunities for which new professional development programs could be created. Continuously evaluate current programs to determine whether or not, and when, some may be "retired." Identify partner organizations that might work with the Marine Corps Association to support new programs.

3.b. Preserve and increase the relevance of the programs, publications, and other tangible and intangible products of the professional association in order to continually demonstrate value to today's Marine Corps community. We do this through continuous engagement at all levels of the Marine Corps and via our events, publications and programs. We listen!

3.c. Analyze historical usage statistics to define and refine the requirements for leader development and professional growth programs (such as Commander's Forums, Unit Libraries, etc.) in order to forecast annual fundraising requirements.

3.d. Determine the elements of various programs (existing or new) that can have firmly defined annual financial and support requirements. Employ better defined and fully burdened financial and support requirements for individual program elements, such as individual awards, in order to coordinate and focus outreach, donor development, and sponsorships to create endowments for those program elements while continuing to build unrestricted funds.

3.e. Increase overall MCAF net revenue by 6% over the next 5 years with a target of 1% growth in 2021. Identify potential donors capable of large donations and engage board members to support.

4. Recognize the superior performance of individual Marines and units who have excelled in their respective technical specialty areas and broader professional accomplishments through our awards and events.

4.a. Coordinate with Marine Corps leadership and organizations to identify new awards to recognize the excellent performance of Marines, civilian Marines and Marine Corps organizations. Identify Military Occupational Specialty producing schools and courses where Marines should be recognized by MCA awards but are not currently.

4.b. For new or existing awards, work with Marine Corps leadership to identify appropriate venues for presentation. Coordinate to ensure existing MCA professional awards events continue to be appropriate venues for the presentation of exclusive awards.

4.c. Coordinate with Marine Corps leadership and attempt to have each MCA excellence award captured by a Marine Corps order or directive in order to help ensure their permanence and ensure Marines and Marine Corps leaders are comfortable participating without running afoul of military legal and/or ethics regulations and policies.

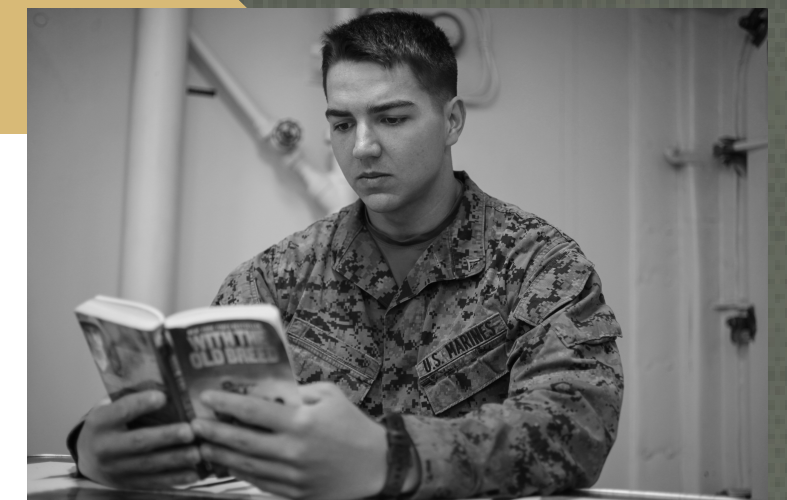
4.d. Grow recognition of our awards and participation in our award events among Marine Corps senior leadership.

5. Grow resources to ensure organizational stability and continued support of the professional development of Marines.

5.a. Continue to explore and develop new revenue opportunities such as partnerships, grants, and advertising sales (both endemic and non-endemic) and non-defense corporate support to increase net income. Find at least one new "non-defense" contribution to net income annually.

5.b. From 2022 to 2025 increase combined net revenue from corporate sponsorships and all advertising by 15%. In 2021 maintain "status quo" and accept 0% growth due to impacts of the persistent pandemic environment on events.

5.c. No later than 2022, identify the MCA core operations, products, and/or programs that provide the most value and relevance to the Marine Corps. Develop a resource allocation and investment plan, including establishing endowments, to ensure the financial security of these operations, products and/or programs.



5.d. Explore printing and sales of existing copyrighted materials to include professional references, and collections of previously published archival materials.

5.e. Sustain a market share of greater than 70% of all newly commissioned officers' uniform sales. Increase overall retail by 5 % annually above 2019 levels over the next three years

5.f. Beginning in 2021, concluding in 2022, and utilizing external expertise as necessary, conduct a comprehensive, objective assessment of all current MCA Retail-related lines of effort including Brick and Mortar and E-commerce operations in order to determine the way ahead for the retail enterprise.

6. **Provide** relevant resources to all Marines and friends of the Corps to inspire continued participation in their professional association.

6a. Continue to promote and exploit magazines as principal and most effective benefits of membership. Determine additional ways in which magazines can be used given their brand recognition and popularity.

6b. Continue to develop and enhance the Professional Development resources to include identifying potential new resources and improving/enhancing both quantity and quality of existing ones.

6c. Identify additional media streams to develop an omnichannel approach to program delivery; analyze platforms to maximize compatibility; review and update all apps; review and enhance as needed social media promotion of professional resources.

6d. Create new Membership Campaign Plan to include

i. Determine membership goals by active duty, reserve, and veteran Marines

ii. Membership vs subscription concept review

iii. Review current area representative model

a. Determine need for broader focus beyond entry level Marines

b. Review authorities and responsibilities to ensure greater standardization and less personalization of marketing efforts

iv. Analyze feasibility of campaign focused on veterans

v. Review Professional Development Membership Awards Program (PDMAP) conduct analysis on its success to date and implement actions for growth.

vi. Determine feasibility of donors sponsoring memberships for specific demographics i.e. sponsor memberships for all Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) graduates.



vii. Develop and implement plans and actions for improvements to the Membership Campaign.

6. e. Collect data, to include website traffic, downloads and anecdotal usage information in order to continuously evaluate the relevance and value of on-line professional development resources to include the publications and the PDMAP.

7. **Succeed** in establishing the Marine Military Exposition series as the Marine Corps' service-level showcase events.

7.a. As soon as possible, formalize planning and coordination relationships with HQMC (CMC) in a "Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)-like Agreement" through the Counsel for the Commandant (CL) and the Director of the Marine Corps Staff (DMCS). Sustain and revise this agreement periodically as required by Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC).

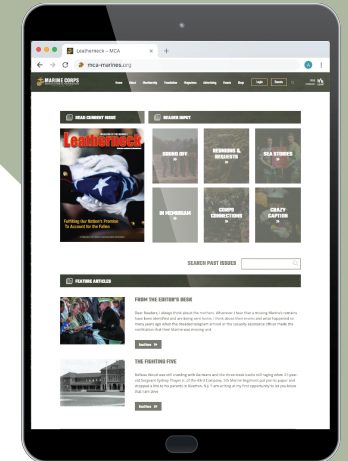
7.b. Use MDM 2I as a proof of concept for supporting CMC's messaging and engagements agenda and coordinate "next level" content including Congressional Engagement via Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) such as Capabilities Exercise (CAPEX) Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)/Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of the Navy (DON) leadership panels and/or House Armed Services Committee (HASC)/Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) Staff Director presentations.

7.c. Hire the Director of National Military Association Engagement and Expositions (tentative position title) no later than May 2021 and identify other specialty areas within the organization (such as marketing or corporate sponsorships) where additional expertise and hires may be necessary.

7.d. Re-negotiate EmeraldX Contract for 2023 and beyond in coordination with the Marine Corps League (MCL) (negotiation/legal review: May 2021- Jan 2022, New Contract executed NLT May 2022): Keep HQMC (CL) updated on progress of this effort throughout for their situational awareness only.

7.e. Re-negotiate the Sponsors Teaming Arrangement with the MCL during 2021.

7.f. For MDM 2022 (to be held in May 2022 at the Washington Convention Center), in compliance with the formal agreement with HQMC and the new Sponsors Teaming Arrangement, ensure the new timing and location of the event supports CMC's vision and collect execution date to inform decisions for the future of the Expositions Series.



7.g. Continue to enhance digital/virtual attendance opportunities to both address ongoing COVID concerns but also to reach a wider audience.

7.h. Pursue permanent designation of the MCA as a National Military Association (NMA) including execution of an annual National Meeting coordinated with the new model for the Modern Day Marine expositions. This event must have the full support and participation of CMC and is expected to evolve beyond a “breakfast event” starting in 2022. From 2023 forward, the Annual National Meeting may take the form of an awards dinner, professional event or “Grand Banquet/Gala” for members including sponsors and donors based on the best mutual support for the Marine Corps and MCA. Lead effort to identify “value added” for Marine Corps leadership in “having two NMAs.”



7.i. Assess and, if feasible and supportable, develop a comprehensive long-term plan for up to two new events (to include the Annual National Meeting and a Symposium event as per Obj I.c.) over the next three years to establish presence in geographic areas distant from Marine Corps installations such as the mid-west, deep south, New England, and Pacific Northwest for the purposes of messaging/engagement, increasing memberships and donor development.

7.j. Continue to secure a range of non-USMC speakers for appropriate professional/awards dinners. Our range of speakers should highlight the Marine Corps’ role in naval integration, joint force interoperability, and enhanced relationships with DON, DOD and Congressional leadership.

8. **Implement** improvements in governance and business operations to increase organizational and employee effectiveness.

8.a. Support evolving board structure aimed at gaining, retaining and engaging talented board members who contribute needed leadership, skills and experience to optimize operations by all elements of the organization.

8.b. During 2021, employing outside expertise as required, conduct a detailed study of the current integration of the five elements of our digital presence (Content Management System, (Association Management System, the Accounting System, the Information Management System and Retail Systems) and make recommendations for future enhancements. Determine when/if we should invest in development of a comprehensive MCA mobile application (“app”) that brings easier access to the features, programs and resources that Marines of today need from their professional organization and supports usage data analysis.

8.c. Continuously evaluate and improve MCA business operations and include an annual reporting plan to provide transparent feedback on the success of achieving all established strategic goals and objectives to the board.

8.d. Assess and modify as needed, the MCA Human Resources Management in order to

provide flexibility and depth in the workforce and competitive employee benefits in addition to evaluating new practices including telework to ensure a productive workforce capable of accomplishing MCA’s mission

8.e. During 2022, in close coordination with the Board, conduct comprehensive organizational review in order to assess efficiency specifically looking at the overall organizational structure, including departments, with an eye towards the future.

i. Review leadership structure to ensure optimal coordination, communication, and effectiveness

ii. Review departmental personnel assignments and job descriptions with a goal of updating and maximizing talent given the changes and upheaval experienced over the last year

8.f. In coordination with Chairman and Board of Governors, develop detailed courses of action for the future of MCA headquarters (715 Broadway Street) evaluation and decision in advance of 2026.

8.g. Identify and assess core operations that can be funded through establishment of an investment product (an endowment). Develop a plan to resource this endowment in order to ensure the security of this/these core operations for execution by 2022.

9. **Identify** other transformational initiatives to advance the MCA mission and support of all Marines.

9.a. Assess and prioritize (recommendations for board approval) the implementation of new revenue sources, lines of effort/business, and relationships with the Marine Corps proper and our members.

9.b. Upon formal DoD designation as a National Military Association, work with senior Marine Corps legal offices to determine the ability of senior Marine leaders to encourage Marines to take advantage of the programs and opportunities provided by MCA, their professional association.

9c. Assess feasibility of providing “no cost to them” memberships to all active duty Marines.

9.d. During 2021, and for the future “home” of the MCA, determine opportunities beyond current/projected workforce space requirements. Develop alternatives or courses of action for board consideration and eventual decision including, for



example, the possibility of developing an MCA headquarters paired with a purpose designed “event space” as a sustainable future revenue source.

9.e. Engage with and leverage the expertise of the Board and individual members to assess, prioritize, resource and implement transformational initiatives to include but not limited to: MCA headquarters re-location, the Retail Enterprise, and Business Systems.

RESOURCING THE PLAN

Reconciling the allocation of resources to the objectives of this Strategic Plan shall be a continuous and iterative process. The authority to apply resources of MCA rests solely with the CEO based on the advice of the COO and CFO and the input of the Department Heads. Approval of the Board of Governors/Directors is required for major capital expenses and initiatives.

Resourcing the Strategic Plan will be accomplished in a phased approach and will influence the development and approval of the MCA annual budget and mid-year budget reviews when needed.

Phase One: Annual Budget development. As part of the annual MCA budget development, Department Heads participate with the CFO and COO in discussions to produce anticipated revenue and expense projections based on historic performance and known or reasonably anticipated changes. Actual revenue generation and anticipated expenses are very much a part of those discussions and the budget that is then recommended to the CEO for his and ultimately Board approval.

Phase Two: Due to timing of the 2021 budget plan and the development and approval of this Strategy, unrestricted thought and ideas for this the strategy will be considered in conjunction with a 2021 midyear review. Departments Heads, the CFO and COO will meet to account for the potential/projected resource requirements and revenue expectations associated with each Goal and Objective in the Strategic Plan. Review of these projections at midyear, led by the leads for each of the nine goals, will be unconstrained looks at what is needed to accomplish initiatives of the strategic plan. Budget adjustments, if needed, may require CEO and Board approval.

Cost Analysis and Estimation: During execution of the Strategic Plan, the CFO, COO, and Department Heads shall collaborate to develop a standardized methodology for Cost Analysis and Estimation of the costs of future work and strategic initiatives appropriate to the needs of the MCA. This standard approach shall address the “fully burdened” cost of activities including historical data on materials; travel (includes lodging, M&IE etc.) support contracts and distribution of common operating costs (utilities, etc.). However, given the diverse nature of MCA work activities and difficulties of collecting labor data, labor estimates will be based on the subjective judgment of Department Heads.

Revenue Projection: During execution of the Strategic Plan, the CFO, COO, and Department Heads shall collaborate to develop a standardized approach to Revenue Projection for all ongoing activities and new initiatives that forecasts Gross and Net revenues. This method shall also balance immediate returns versus returns over time.

Priorities for Resource Allocation

The chart below outlines general categories of expenses, and can be used as the basic framework guiding resource allocation decisions.

Priority	Examples
1. Mission Critical (“Must Pay” Bills)	Payroll/benefits, taxes, lease, utilities, existing contracts
2. Mission Essential (Core MCA&F Functions)	Membership/Member Services, Publish Gazette and Leatherneck; Foundation Programs; Events, Fundraising, Retail Operations
3. Growth Initiatives (direct and indirect revenue generation)	Increased/Enhanced Events, Business Systems Integration, Capital Improvements

REPORTING THE PLAN

During implementation, beginning in the first quarter of 2021, the Goals and Objectives of this Strategic Plan will form the basis of routine reporting and updates to the CEO and the MCA and MCAF Boards.

Bi-weekly: Department Heads, as part of their regular CEO updates, may report on relevant task/objective level activities associated with the Strategic Plan as needed.

Quarterly: In conjunction with quarterly financial reviews for the CEO, Goal Leads may report on activities and progress towards their assigned Goals.

Semi-Annually: a Goal-level report on the progress of the Strategic Plan will be prepared and presented to the CEO by the COO, CFO and Department Heads. This internal report and presentation shall complement the CFO’s Budget Report. Goals Leads and Department Heads will all participate.

Annually: In concert with Winter Meeting of the Board of Governors/Directors, a review of Strategic Plan implementation shall be conducted by the CEO with appropriate participation by MCA staff. The purpose of this review will be to assess the management of the plan, adjust goals, objectives, responsibilities and tasks as needed, and evaluate the results of any other “proofs of concept” troop-to-task analyses and other recommendations regarding future initiatives or sustained activities that are at the level requiring board interest.

Financial Reporting: The Strategic Plan shall not delay or modify the statutory and regulatory requirements for financial reporting and auditing mandated for 501.C.19 and 501.C.3 organizations.

This Strategic Plan is principally an internal MCA governance document. As such its intended audience is the MCA staff and MCA and MCAF Boards. However, elements of the Strategic Plan may be valuable for external engagement with Marine Corps leadership, MCA membership and MCAF donors, and the leadership of other related organizations.

Decisions on the external use of elements of the Strategic Plan are the authority of the CEO and implementation of those decisions shall be the responsibility of the COO, the Director of Strategic Communications and when necessary, the CFO, and the Publisher.

