



History

Predecessors

The *Association for Strategic Planning* (ASP) traces its history back to the early 1950s. On January 12, 1951, *The National Society for Business Budgeting* first met in Milwaukee, WI. In 1963 that organization changed its name to *Budget Executives Institute*, and moved its base to Oxford, OH. The group again changed its name to *Planning Executives Institute (PEI)* in 1968.

While the **mission of PEI** was heavily slanted towards financial planning, another organization called the *North American Society for Corporate Executives (NASCP)* was formed in the mid 1950s. Based in San Francisco, with sister organizations in Chicago, London, New York and Los Angeles, the group focused on the theoretical aspects of corporate planning and long-range planning (as the art of strategic planning was characterized). Companies such as Rand, SRI and Lockheed dominated the prevailing thinking of the time. The terms "long" and "budgets" tended to hold back growth of these early organizations and were abandoned in later organizational realizations.

Foundation Years

In 1985, **PEI and NASCP merged** under the name of *The Planning Forum (TPF)*, an organization that grew in international stature until it became a chain of 60 North American chapters and 8,000 individual members worldwide. The Planning Forum's three most important benefits to its members were: (1) its annual international conference which, at its zenith, attracted over one thousand attendees, (2) its own strategy journal, *Planning Review*, which developed an international reputation, and (3) its 60 chapters for local programming and networking, and its training of chapter presidents and officers.

During these years, very active chapters developed in San Francisco and Los Angeles in response to the need was a forum to get together and share experiences. It was during the 1980s that Dr. Stan Abraham (ASP's president for 2003-2004) and the late Sumner Alpert became actively involved in building **the Southern California chapter of the Planning Forum**. In those days, chapter dinner events and meetings were held in the Transamerica building in downtown Los Angeles. In the early 1990s, the Planning Forum's headquarters relocated to Oxford, OH from Chicago, IL.

In 1995 the organization once again changed its name, this time to the *Strategic Leadership Forum (SLF)*, seeking to expand its target audience to include corporate executives and CEOs. The SLF maintained its network of local chapters, but contracted its national oversight with the Chicago-based association-management firm, Bostrom & Associates.

Growth Years

The *Association for Strategic Planning* evolved from the surviving Southern and Northern California chapters of the SLF. The first organizational planning meeting was held in July 1999, and was attended by a number of people long involved in strategic management, including Sumner Alpert (deceased), Dr. Stan Abraham, Dr. David Crain and Janice Lauren. The following mission was adopted:

“To encourage the development and practice of strategic-planning processes by corporations, entrepreneurial businesses, and not-for-profit organizations by fostering and disseminating the latest ideas and techniques for formulating and implementing strategies.”

Official papers were filed and, from that time forward, the group hosted monthly dinner meetings at a restaurant located near Los Angeles International Airport. A dedicated board of directors built a solid infrastructure for the group. Every effort was made to build membership, increase member benefits, run itself professionally, and stay solvent.

Notable presenters to the Los Angeles group included Professor Cornelis de Kluyver (Dean of the Drucker School at Claremont Graduate University); Jose de la Torre of UCLA (now the University of Miami); Peter Schwartz, Chairman, Global Business Network; Dr. Kevin Clancy of Copernicus Marketing Consulting; and the CEOs of Trader Joe's, Earthlink, Applied Materials, The Disney Channel, XDrive, and Frederick's of Hollywood.

In 2001, ASP organized its **first annual conference**, *New Strategies for a Rapidly Changing World*. Chaired by Dr. Stan Abraham, the event attracted high-profile keynote speakers including Dr. C.K. Prahalad, Harvey C. Fruehauf Professor of Business Administration at the University of Michigan and cofounder and chairman of PRAJA, and ranked number eight on the *Financial Times'* 2001 top-50 business gurus worldwide list, Dr. Bill Rouse, CEO, Enterprise Support Systems, Jim Bandrowski, President, Strategic Action Associates, Dr. Richard T. Pascale, former professor at Stanford Business School and Oxford University, and the late Dr. Peter Pekàr, Jr., Director of Strategic Alliances at Houlihan, Lokey, Howard and Zukin.

The **second annual conference** - *Exploiting Strategic Alternatives: Strategic Conversations about the Central Focuses of our Times* - organized by the late Dr. Dick Goodman and Peter Schwartz, author of the best seller, *The Art of the Long View*, featured an innovative format for learning and sharing of new information. The conference attracted 100 paid registrations, double that of the first year.

The **2003 conference** - *Strategy in Action: Driving Results through Strategic Thought and Action*, organized by Jim Wilson and Noal McDonald - welcomed over 150 people to hear keynote speakers Dr. C.K. Prahalad, Rob Kautz, President and CEO of Wolfgang Puck Worldwide, and Drs. Elizabeth Gibson and Andy Billings, coauthors of *Big Change at Best Buy*, who, with Shari Ballard, Senior VP for HR, recounted a major turnaround at Best Buy, Inc., along with seven exceptional break-out sessions and speakers. Also featured at the conference were six vendor booths and conference sponsors Fluor Corporation, GEO Group Strategic Services, Y-Change, Inc., The Boeing Company, Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, and the Stern Memorial Trust.

Since then, national conferences have continued to be held in Southern California, attended by an ever-growing number of professionals and students. The **2004 conference** was co-sponsored by Pepperdine University, Graziadio School of Business and Management, and focused on *Strategy in a Turbulent World*. Over 130 attendees heard a wide range of presentations and panel discussions. There was no conference in 2005, as the board decided to move from fall to winter meetings. The next conference was held in February 2006, and the venue moved to Long Beach, CA. The focus was on *Lessons from Practice*, and added over 40 professional presentations, in five tracks, from practicing professionals to a program which featured keynote speakers Dr. W. Chan Kim and Dr. Miland Lele. The number of conference attendees, exhibitors and sponsors continued to grow. The **2007 conference** retained and refined the multi-track format and the *Lessons from Practice* theme. Michael E. Raynor was keynote speaker, and a panel of senior industry planning executives shared their perspectives with over 230 attendees. ASP also organized a series of post-conference workshops, which proved very successful.

At each of these conferences since 2004, the Association presented the Richard Goodman Award for excellence in strategic planning. Award winners included large and small firms, non-profit organizations,

universities and government organizations. At the 2007 conference, Dr Stanley Abraham was presented the first ASP Distinguished Service Award for sustained contributions to the Association.

As word spread of ASP's success in the Los Angeles area, inquiries were made from individuals in Northern California and San Diego. In 2003, organizational meetings were started in these areas which were quickly followed by events and programs, leading to enhanced exposure for the group in the business community, as well as many new memberships.

In 2004 ASP revised its constitution and created a national board that oversees chapters and helps new chapters get started. The mission of the organization was changed to:

To help individuals and organizations succeed through effective strategic thinking, planning, and action.

On this basis, the Los Angeles Chapter formally became an active chapter in October 2005. Later that year, the Northern California and San Diego Chapters were chartered as active chapters.

In subsequent years, additional chapters were formed by dedicated leaders around the country:

- The Dallas Area Chapter received a provisional charter in October 2005, and became an active chapter in November 2006.
- The Metro Detroit Chapter received a provisional charter in March 2006
- The Boston Chapter received a provisional charter in April 2006.
- The Minnesota Chapter received a provisional charter in June 2006
- The Orange County Chapter received a provisional charter in June 2006, and became an active chapter in April 2007.
- The National Capital Area Chapter received a provisional charter in July 2006
- The Heartland Chapter received a provisional charter in October 2006
- The Chicago Chapter received a provisional charter in January 2007
- The Phoenix Metro Chapter received a provisional charter in February 2007.

In 2006, ASP formally incorporated in California as a national organization, and restructured its governing documentation accordingly, replacing the initial ASP Constitution with a formal set of Bylaws.

In 2007, the ASP board significantly expanded the national awards program, and established the Council of Chapter Representatives, in accordance with the Bylaws, to promote effective communication with chapter leaders.

The organization has benefited from the sustained participation of several Corporate Members, including Boeing, Toyota, Countrywide Finance and the US Army Research, Development and Engineering Command. Other organizations have contributed in-kind support to ASP's operations.

ASP takes strategists back to where they started in the 1950s: a group of local professionals seeking forums to get together and talk, sharing ideas for developing the art and practice of strategy development and implementation.

Stan A. Abraham, David W. Crain, Janice Lauren, Margo Street. E.R. "Riggs" Monfort

August 2004 in Los Angeles, California

Revised October 2007 Stanley G. Rosen, Janice Lauren and David W. Crain