

# VFW National Strategic Planning Team Update

April 07, 2018



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# Department Level Long Range Planning

- Who is doing it?
- How is it going?
- Are you sharing best practices?
- Who hasn't started but wants to figure it out?
- What is preventing it?
- Is there a need for assistance or guidance?



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# National Level Long Range Planning

- Milestones
  - Group formed late 2016
  - Proposed way ahead for Long Range Planning under (then) Sr Vice Commander Harman December 2016
  - Worked Staff Level ideas and initiatives through convention 2017
  - AG Brian Duffy noted that there were problems too big for the National Staff and working with CinC Harman called a Tiger Team to explore ideas February 2018



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# Five Focus Areas

- Membership
- Marketing
- Revenue
- Programs and Services
- Structure and Governance



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# SWOT

## • Strengths

- Brand/Historical Relevance
- Expertise
- NVS
- Partnerships
- Embedded in Communities

## • Weakness

- Media Outreach
- Brand Confusion/Fragmented message
- Lack of Strategic Goals
- Lack of diversity in revenue sources
- Image “Smoky Bar”

## • Opportunities

- Coordinated Marketing Plan
- Media-partnerships/practice
- Restructure Revenue Streams

## • Threats

- Aging Membership
- Fundraising costs
- Bad Press
- Lack of At-Large Membership Program
- Quantity of Partnerships vs Quality



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# What we are going to accomplish

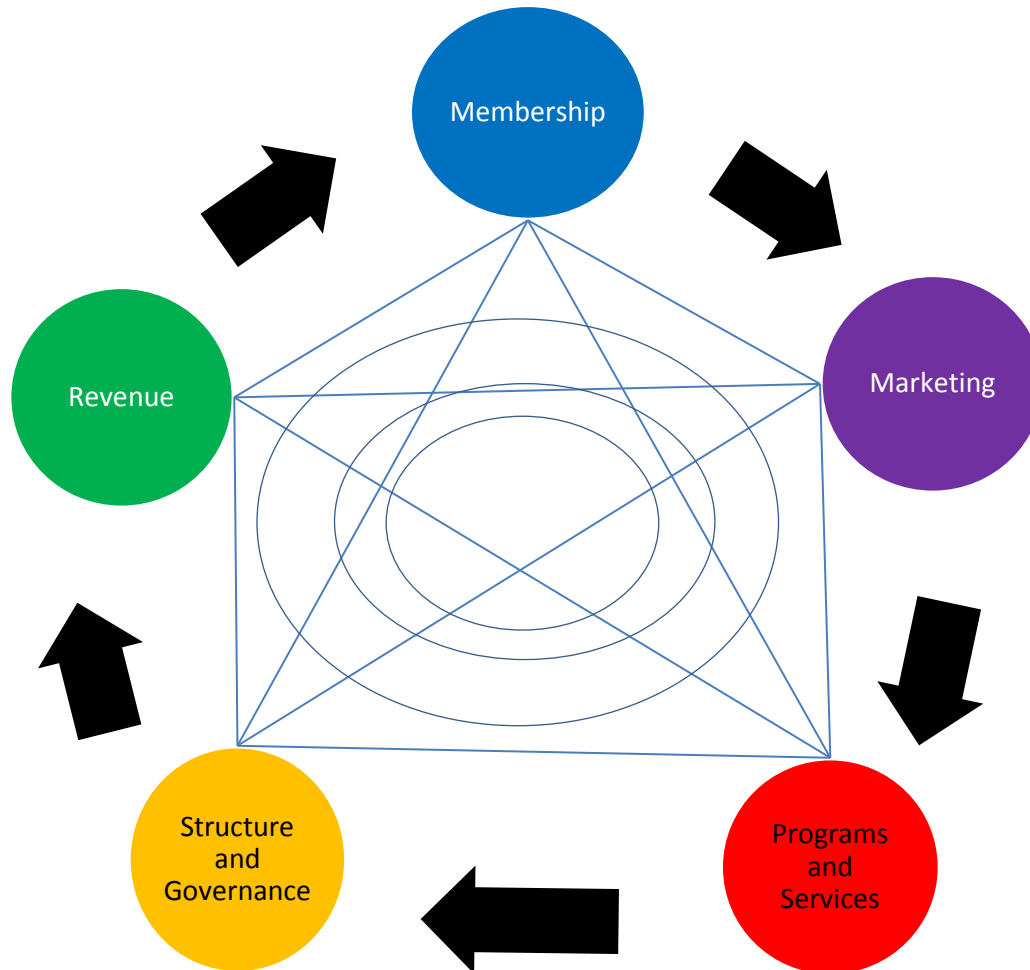
- Introduce concepts
- Demonstrate need for change
- Cover 4 areas of concern:
  - 2 we can address as National HQ
    - Branding
    - Member at Large
  - 2 we need field input to solve
    - Revenue
    - Evolution of Fraternal Structure



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# Strategic Planning



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# Membership

Continue to attract new members growing the number of Gulf War Era Veterans while the number of Vietnam and earlier members diminish. Experience year-over-year growth. Members engaged with the organization in a variety of ways from member-at-large to the post, district, and department.



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# Membership

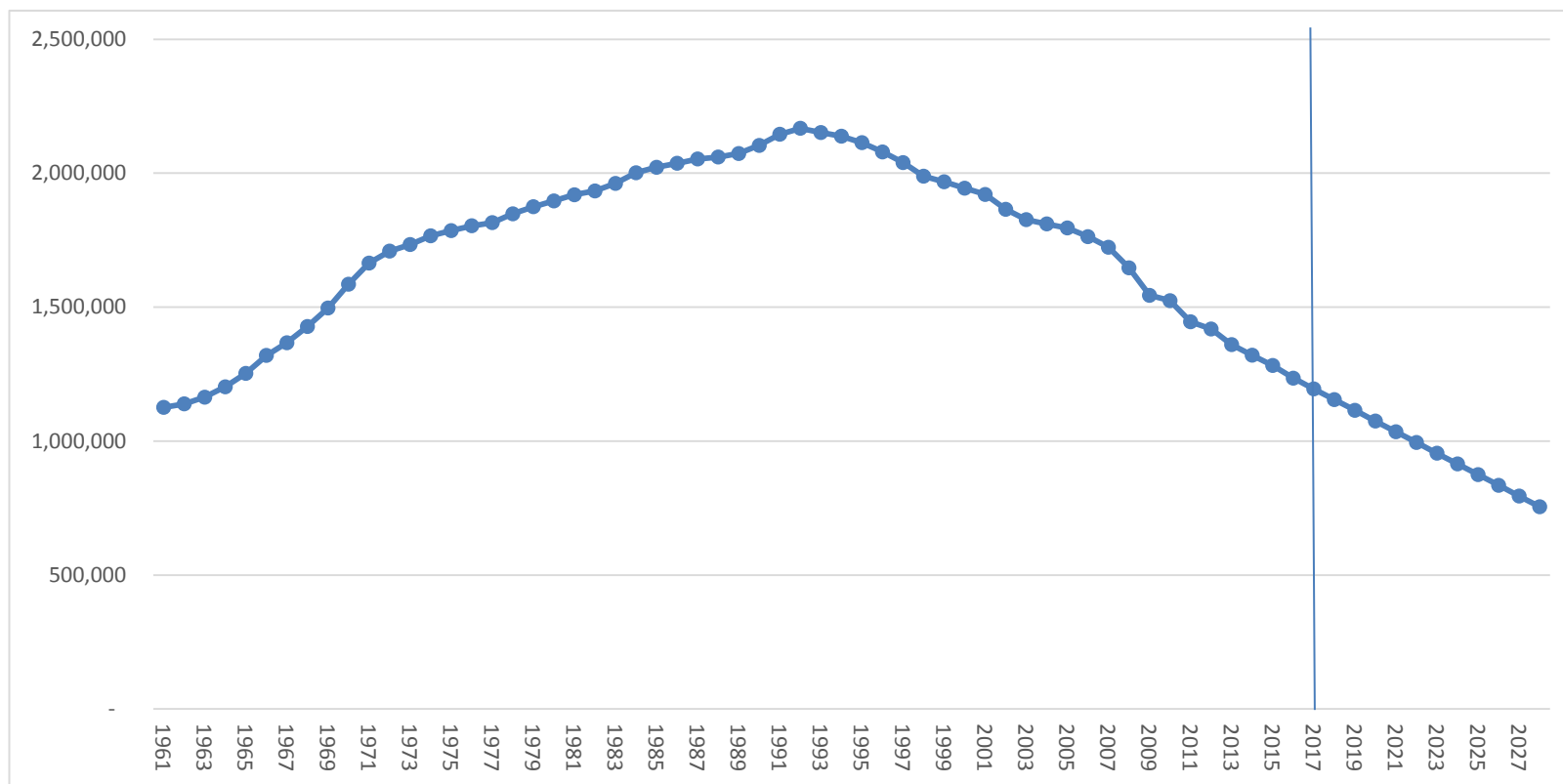
- **Create and implement Member At Large supplemental program**
- **Provide value to those members who do not want to be part of the legacy post structure but still want to be a member of a vibrant community**
- **Post Development and Revitalization process**
- **Structure, resources, tools, for development of new Post and revitalizing struggling posts ensuring our Post are a strategic assets to communities for veteran engagement**



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# VFW Membership 1960 - 2027

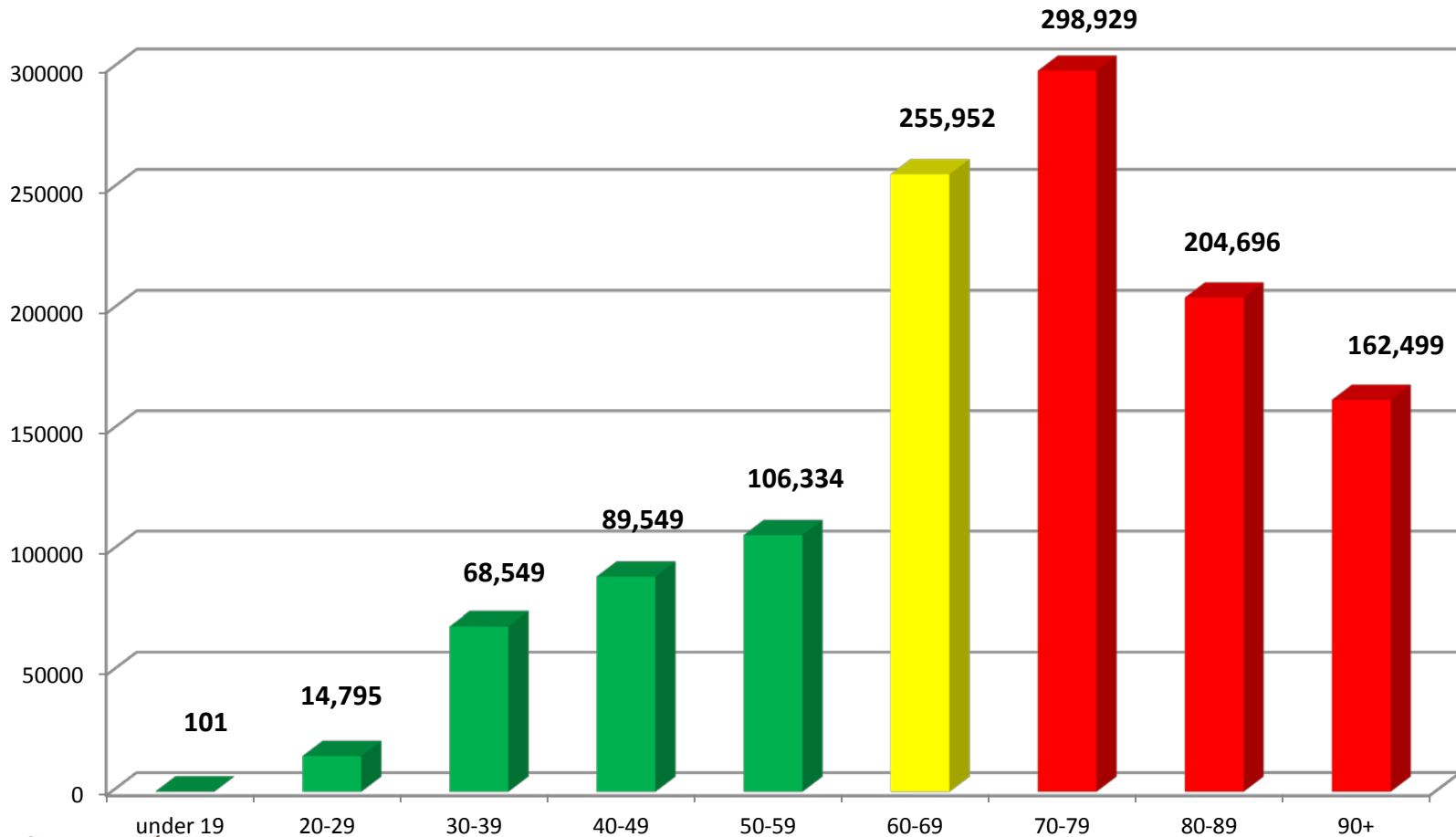


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# VFW Membership Age

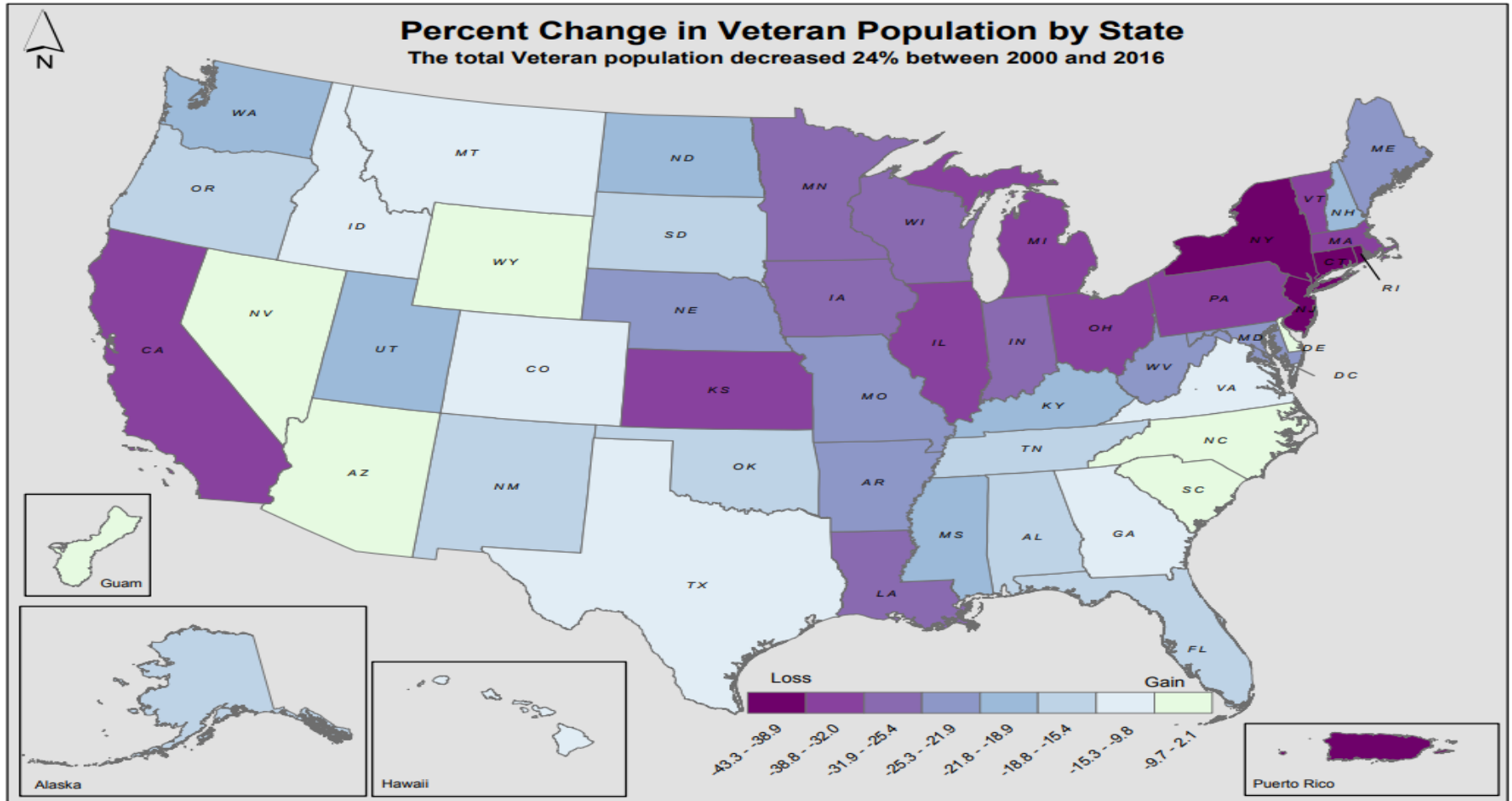
30 June 2017 end of year total



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# Percent Change in Vet Population



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Data Governance and Analytics, Veteran Population Projection Model (VetPop), 2016 as of 9/30/2016

Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics



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Member at Large Enhancement



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## Member at Large Supplemental Program

- Members count at department level
- Revenue for DAL stay with departments
- Tenants of the Program
  - Enhanced contact
  - Affinity grouping
  - Episodic Local Events
- Using technology to connect members and posts to DAL's



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# Marketing

Dedicated and skilled marketing department provides cohesive messaging. The VFW brand is strengthened with a cohesive, homogenous message and placement. Leaders and members alike are proud to take credit for the great work they do at the local and national level. Our posts are viewed as filled with vigorous and engaged members of the community.

- **Re-Branding and Marketing Structure initiatives.**
- **Cohesive message which penetrates internally and externally consistent in tone and placement. Research based decision drives engagement and outreach**



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# Brand Enhancement



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# We Must Strengthen Our Brand ... Now!

- The combined components of our company's character that work to make it identifiable.
- Our “brand” is what our audience thinks of when they hear or see our brand name – both factual and emotional.
- An effective brand strategy gives us a major edge in increasingly competitive markets.

A few threats to our brand include...



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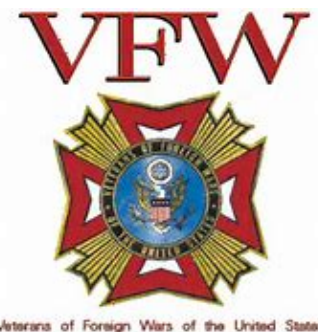
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# Stereotypes



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# Logo Inconsistency



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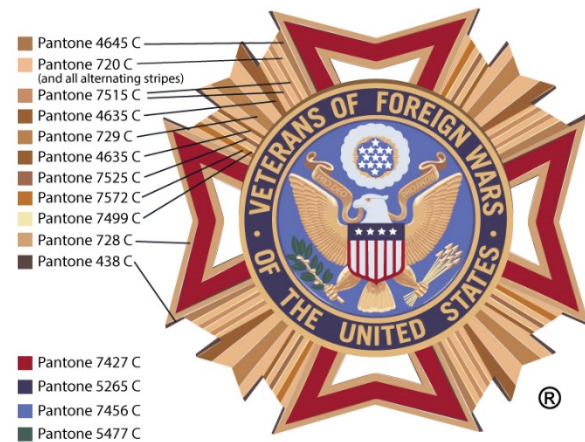


# Approved Logos ...



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# A Deeper Look at Our Logo



- Can our logo design be used consistently? Does it stand out from the clutter?
- Does it well represent us in today's market? Is it engaging?
  - Is it relatable?
  - Is it scalable?



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# Can We Modernize and Simplify?

- The Cross of Malta adds much complexity.
- The cross is the official seal – not a modern, flexible logo.
- VFW unique elements are few.



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# Can we Modernize and Simplify?



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Should we look like this?



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Or this?



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# Revenue

Our strong brand and reputation brings additional individual donors, members, corporations, and private foundations who see value in supporting our programs. Relationships with corporate partners are deeper, and new revenue opportunities are realized; helping to strengthen the VFW's financial position. Consistent revenue growth decreases fund raising expense ratio, expanded programs and services, and enhanced visibility for the good work done by the organization.

- Increase in corporate and foundation giving and build structure to support that vision
- Strengthen and deepen our relationships with corporate partners create new revenue opportunities via matching donations
- Decrease our fundraising expense ratio



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# Program and Services

Provide proof that “No One Does More For Veterans.” Strengthen National Veterans Service, National Legislative Services, Unmet Needs, Help a Hero Scholarships, Mental Health Awareness, Adopt a Unit/ Military Assistance Program, Operation Uplink, Transition and Employment services, Patriotism is promoted through youth scholarships, youth programs, and teacher awards.

- Enhanced VSO training and Certification
- Creation of an online video platform for training



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# Structure and Governance

Structure supports both fraternal membership organization and the business of service to veterans. The VFW continues to “right-size” based on membership numbers with appropriate intermediate headquarters and national programs. Leaders think long-term, planning 5 to 20 years in the future. The organization responds quickly to outside events when needed. Overhead is minimized in favor of programs. Lean and responsive are watchwords. Governance at all levels is effective, ethical, and professionally executed.

- Compliance Assistance team - Fly away team that review, audit, and support departments and posts work within the bounds of the by-laws and general accounting principals.
  - On-site adjustments
  - Share best practices



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# Discussion/Questions



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# Discussion Questions

- With Departments managing shrinking membership, what alternative structures should be considered?
  - Regionalization
  - Consolidation
  - Smaller Department structures (fewer required positions and/or an executive director)
  - Administering non-Department Posts from National
- If consolidation is the answer, is it mandatory or voluntary? What is the trigger point?



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# Discussion Questions

- How does a Department begin the process of exploring these questions?



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