



The STAP Program for Florist Associations

 *“Cultivating strong entrepreneurship, step by step.”*

STAP is short for ‘**S**trategic **A**nalysis & **P**lan’. Florint is rolling out the STAP program for entrepreneurial development exclusively for its members, with thanks to Dutch florist association VBW. Through the STAP process, we carefully analyse your organisation and market and, together with you, identify opportunities for growth...

Step by step!

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Step 1: Strategic Analysis

- ✓ We redefine your organisation's mission, vision & business model. Trying to be as clear and realistic as is possible.
- ✓ We make a SWOT analysis of your market and your organisation. Including the crucial financial side in our analysis as well, of course.
- ✓ We identify the needs of your member associations (and of the consumers that are your members' target audience). We'll make a list of these needs, and put the most important ones at the top of the list.
- ✓ We also consider any other relevant developments: is there anything else going on that affects your business, which we haven't analysed yet in the steps above..?



In step 1 of the STAP program, we gather important information for our analysis. Together, we critically look at your association's goals and plans; what your current activities are, and how you got here.

A great tool to guide you through this assessment is the '5M problem analysis' system, described on the next page.

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5-M Problem Analysis



The 5 M's are five important aspects of an association where challenges often arise. They are: Members, Mission, Money, Management and Message. Below, we describe typical challenges in these areas, as well as their solutions.

1) Members & member satisfaction

✓ **Develop a bottom-up approach and focus on personal contact:**

A personal approach makes for strong connections. It is important to meet with your members face-to-face regularly. You can do this either through personal meetings or by organising a meet-up or business conference for florists. Identify your members' most important needs. Build your association's business program up from there.

✓ **Expectations and your promise to your members:**

What is your promise to your members, in just a few words? This question should be easy to answer for you. Keep it simple. Your focus should be on improving their business life. Raising your members' expectations is tricky: they will be quick to criticise you for any delay or disappointment. Remember that in business, it is always best to under-promise and over-deliver!

✓ **Your member = your customer/client:**

When members sign up with your association, you are entering a personal business relationship with them. Treat the relationship as such. If you see your role this way, you are more likely to deliver on your promise of improving their business life.

✓ **If your members perform well, you will grow...**

When your support is improving their business life, your members will quickly notice this in the better performance of their shop(s). They will be interested in more of your added-value services, and spread the word of your valuable support to other potential members as well. They become your repeat customers, as well as your ambassadors and advertisers. This is the start of what we call a 'virtuous cycle': a positive feedback loop, or snowball effect!

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2) Mission & Vision

✓ **Base yourself on the needs of the florist (SWOT)**

Your mission should be a more detailed version of your promise to your members; to improve their business life. Start with the SWOT analysis you made: look back at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats you identified in your market.

✓ **What can members really expect from you? What is your promise to them?**

Based on your SWOT results, what can you do to improve the business situation of your customers; your members? If they expect support from you that is different from the support you can realise, problems are inevitable. Do not promise them more than you are currently able to provide.

✓ **Vision: What is your actual plan for improving business life..?**

You have clearly identified the opportunities and threats your members face. And you have carefully thought about which of those threats you can help relieve, and which opportunities you can help them grasp. That will be the basis of your added-value business model.

Now, prioritise: what will come first? Focus on finding a solution to their most pressing problem, and only then move on to the next challenge. State your priority clearly, and specify the steps you will take to address this issue.

3) Money

✓ **Membership fee <-> Added value?**

Having to justify your membership fee to your members is frustrating, yet we often must. Added value is not always easy to quantify. And even when just the product discounts you have negotiated for your members are already higher than your member fee, some people will still have questions. When it comes to money, scepticism is in our nature.

However, this also works the other way around: when your members directly see their margins improve because of your support, they notice. They will be less critical, much more interested in your added-value services, and help spread your message as well.

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✓ **Extra budget: Spending/Investing**

At the beginning of the year, you created your budget. At the end of the year, you may find you have some left-over budget (assuming you budgeted carefully!). It's tempting to spend that extra budget that you have realised, on various extras...

There's an important rule of business to remember here, however: the 'rule of compounding'. Investing that extra budget into something that gives you a good financial return, will ensure you of an even better budget next year. For most associations the best investment is, in fact: developing your next added-value solution that improves your members' margins! The profits from the first instrument you developed, should flow into the development of the next one..

✓ **Earning money and being commercial**

So, see your association as a business first: you need to make a profit! There's nothing wrong with that. To realise your ambitions, it is simply necessary to make money. Every single part of your amazing plans will require financing to execute. And the contributions paid by your members will not be high enough to cover all those expenses.

As a result, you must look for alternative revenue streams. Talk with potential sponsors and, even more importantly, commercial partners. Find out how you can help each other's business – then negotiate a deal that benefits you and your members.

4) Management

✓ **Florist or Entrepreneur..? Craftsmanship versus Entrepreneurship**

Many florists consider themselves floral artists, more than floral entrepreneurs. And association managers with a background in floristry tend to think the same way: they focus more on supporting good craftsmanship than supporting good entrepreneurship.

Both are incredibly important to our trade. Beware, however, that the development of added-value programs in craftsmanship and floristry education is usually expensive. They are long-term investments in our industry. Added value solutions in entrepreneurship are more short-term investments: they can improve your members' margins quickly, and thereby improve your finances quickly. The profits from your entrepreneurship solutions can easily flow into the development of a craftsmanship program. The other way around is much more difficult!

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✓ **Client/cost focus**

As the manager of your association, do you see your members as your business clients? This also means you see yourself as a service-provider, working hard to satisfy their needs -- and make returning customers out of them. This is not very different from when you work in a flower shop, in fact.

*While developing services that address your clients' needs, always keep in mind that:
- 'the cost comes before the profit', as the famous old Dutch expression goes
- but it's even more important to make sure that the profits cover the costs!*

✓ **Focus on relationships and cooperation**

Being a businessman means doing a whole lot yourself. But one of the big dangers is to think you should (or can) do everything yourself. The needs of your members, which you identified in your analysis, can never be met by you alone. To think so, is to invite failure!

You will need team members and partners. Experts who are very good at other things than you yourself are very good at. The challenges for a florist association are overwhelming. Learning to identify those people who can help you solve your challenges, and involving them, is essential. Acknowledge your own weaknesses honestly. Focus on your own strengths. And delegate your other responsibilities to the right people. That is smart leadership.

✓ **If necessary, do it yourself. Even better: outsource it (on margin)**

Just like you need a good team to make the most of your ambitions and plans, you need good business partners. You want to connect with companies that can effectively fulfill one of the member needs you have identified. Whether it's for business services; floristry products; insurance or staff trainings, many potential partners exist. It is up to you to get in touch with them, explain your needs, and work out a solution that benefits both businesses.

Note: as an association, the most effective business arrangement is often a margin-based model. Your partner company takes care of the delivery of a beneficial business service to your members, and your association receives a commission based on every customer you provide them with. It's a win-win situation: you, your member and your partner improve their business. And because you outsource the work to the experts, you save a lot of valuable time.



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5) Message and Marketing

✓ **Are you a Merchant or a Pastor..?**

There are many ways to broadcast your business message, and market the added value services you offer. But when it comes to your communication style, one important distinction worth thinking about is: Merchant versus Pastor. Do you speak like a salesman, or a preacher..? Are you pushing a product, or converting people to your worldview..?

Either approach will say a lot about how you come across to your (potential) members. Being aware of your communication style is a valuable tool.

✓ **The Money is the Message..?**

Money may be the most successful invention of all time. For millennia, the marketplace has been where countless people meet. With self-interest in mind, but mutual benefit as the outcome...

How will members save money by joining your organisation? How will you make money for your partners, if they go into business with you? These questions are on people's mind for very good reasons, so make sure you are able to answer them.

✓ **Keep it Personal**

Personal contact is important when it comes to business relationships, and very important when it comes to your members. Show real interest in their situation and struggles, and they will feel that you are personally involved. Once you are close, it is much easier to receive the information you need. And to convince someone to implement the changes you suggest!

✓ **It your messaging Effective..?**

Don't be afraid to take a critical look at the image of your organisation. What is your reputation like? What positive and negative things have shaped your reputation? How did (a lack of) communication contribute to that? These answers will tell you a lot about how to improve your messaging.



**Your marketing-communication is very important to your success.
Do not make this the last item on your budget...**

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Step 2: Plan!

- ✓ Now, we develop a new, **smart** plan for the future together
- ✓ And will quickly start to realise a (more) profitable business



Plan and execution:

- **Plan:** based on our analysis, we make a new short-term and long-term business plan.
- **Execution:** we realise this new plan, by making use of Florint's Toolbox of added-value instruments (some of which are paid tools) as well as other instruments you develop locally.
- **Results:** Guaranteed improvement of your financial results (and other goals), higher member satisfaction, and a better business margin.

In Step 2 of the STAP program, we use all the important information we gathered and analysed in Step 1 to develop a new, promising business plan for you.



We turn your promise, mission and vision into reality..

Are you ready to take the first STEP..!?



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Appendix:

The current Business Program of the Dutch Florist Association, the VBW.

Successfully developed through STAP.

	Info/comm.	Lobby	Member-services	Coaching/Advice	Training/Workshops
<u>Entrepreneurship</u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Segmentation/positioning</u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Marketing</u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Business operations</u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Online/data</u>	✓	✓	development	development	development
<u>Personel</u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Sustainability/Quality</u>	✓	✓	development	development	development

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