

**Strategic Plan for the Interpretive Profession**  
**Prepared by National Association for Interpretation**  
**January 2008**

**Purpose:** The stated purpose of NAI is “*to inspire leadership and excellence to advance the profession of heritage interpretation.*” This complements the NAI vision “*to be the recognized voice of interpretation.*” The strategic plan is focused on advancing the profession, and looks beyond the current scope of operations of the NAI organization. The plan can be used to help us think more strategically as future opportunities and decisions present themselves.

**Background**

The NAI board, executive staff and Strategic Planning Task Force Chair met February 3-7, 2007 in a facilitated workshop to address the question, “What is our vision for the interpretive profession in the year 2015?” The input was winnowed down to five vision statements with supporting ideas and information for three of the five vision statements to be organized into a new strategic plan for the profession of heritage interpretation.

The Strategic Planning Task Force then began the process of establishing a format for the plan, defining key terms, and organizing the board input into goals for each of the vision statements. The Strategic Plan was formally adopted by the board at its January 2008 meeting with the understanding that it will be revisited each year to review and revise goals as needed and determine priority goals for the following year’s business plan development.

**Definitions**

**Strategic Vision:** The desired future state or condition (in this case related to the status of the profession of interpretation).

**Goal:** The state of affairs that a particular endeavor is intended to achieve through a long-term, overarching direction; inexactly formulated aim that lacks specificity.

**Current Initiative:** A program, product or service NAI is already doing by itself or in partnership with others.

**New Initiative:** A program, product or service NAI or other entities could act on alone or in partnership in the future.

**Strategic Plan:** Guiding document with 5-7 year horizon from which annual business plan activities are developed.

**Business Plan:** Annual document that establishes operating parameters and measurable objectives for the national office.

**Work Plan:** Specific action items to accomplish measurable objectives.

**Strategic vision 1.0:** The interpretive profession will have a foundation of universally accepted standards.

**Goals:**

- 1.1 Operate a professional certification program to provide training in key skills and knowledge. (Current program)
- 1.2 Develop and implement a dissemination plan for results of the Definitions Project. (Current program)
- 1.3 Document current “best practices” or preferred practices in interpretation. (Current initiative)
- 1.4. Disseminate best practices (preferred practices) through a variety of methods. (New initiative)
- 1.5 Support rigorous evaluation of interpretive efforts and methods. (New initiative)
- 1.6. Support a program of sound research to improve effectiveness of interpretation in all areas. (Current initiative)
- 1.7 Develop and implement an accreditation program for interpretive programs, agencies, academic programs, sites, etc. (New initiative)

**Strategic vision 2.0:** The interpretive profession will play a critical role in policy making.

**Goals:**

- 2.1 Explore strategic partnerships with other organizations to leverage advocacy efforts. (New initiative)
- 2.2 Train interpreters to be more effective in communication with their senior management and administration. (New initiative)

**Strategic vision 3.0:** The interpretive profession will advance cultural competency and relevance and promote diversity among its practitioners and audiences.

**Goals:**

- 3.1 Actively promote and model diversity within interpretation. (New initiative)
  - 3.1.01 Define cultural competency and diversity.
- 3.2 Establish mentoring program for diverse professionals at various levels in their career. (New initiative)
- 3.3 Develop and promote training about diversity and cultural competencies for interpreters. (New initiative)

- 3.4 Identify existing and potential audiences to determine what about interpretation is relevant to those audiences. (New initiative)

**Strategic vision 4.0:** The interpretive profession will be universally recognized and valued by the public, management, educational institutions and ourselves.

**Goals:**

- 4.1 Train interpreters in management skills and interpretive planning to increase their value/status in organizations. (New initiative)
- 4.2 Train mgrs and administrators to view interpretation on equal footing with security, maintenance. (New initiative)
- 4.3 Calculate and articulate value of interpretation using case examples. (New initiative)
- 4.4 Establish mentoring program. (New initiative)
- 4.5 Integrate leadership courses and skills into core competencies training. (Current initiative)
- 4.6 Establish Leadership for NAI Institute (New initiative)
- 4.7 Develop a recognizable brand for interpretation and interpreters. (New initiative)
- 4.8 Increase efforts to market interpretation at colleges, high schools, internships. (New initiative)
- 4.9 Explore innovative marketing techniques (i.e. viral marketing, buzz marketing, etc.) to improve visibility of interpretation. (New initiative)
- 4.10 Increase efforts to market the value of interpretation to for-profit entities (New initiative).

**Strategic vision 5.0:** The interpretive profession will be served by a strong, sustainable professional organization.

**Goals:**

- 5.1 Periodically review the structure of the board and overall organization to ensure NAI is relevant to current needs of the profession. (New initiative)
- 5.2 Ensure the long-term financial viability of the organization. (Current initiative)
  - 5.2.01 Establish Industry Council or Resource Development Council for the purpose of

developing additional financial resources, in-kind services and expertise.

- 5.3** Periodically review and update the Strategic Plan. (Current initiative)
- 5.4** Integrate annual business plan, work plan, board initiatives with Strategic Plan. (Current initiative)
- 5.5** Periodically review our programs and activities as lines of business to ensure sound business practices are followed.
- 5.6** Ensure business continuity for NAI at all levels.