

THE 2008 WESTERN CAPE BUZZ GATHERING REPORT

The sixth Buzz Gathering of the Probus Association of the Western Cape was held in Stanford, (a small village close to Hermanus on the Southern Cape Coast), on the 25th & 26th February 2008.

The Association Chairperson, Bob Goebel, opened the formal session on the Tuesday morning with a welcome to all Club Delegates, Elizabeth Stewart, (representing the Probus Council and Gauteng Association) and Jack Wood, the KZN Association representative.

Probus Hermanus were thanked for their help and the organisation of the excellent Braai held the previous evening at which 63 Probians and partners enjoyed great fellowship.

Bob then introduced Mike Underwood to explain the Meta planning procedure, (also known as a SWOT analysis). Mike was the prime motivator of this concept and we owe him a big vote of thanks for his detailed preparation and analysis of the results stemming from the Gathering. Mike then introduced Dave Black, Dave, most ably, conducted the balance of the morning's proceedings.

Delegates were allocated to seven tables, eight per table, and given 30 minutes to discuss and list on individual cards a specific answer to each of the questions listed in the analysis that follows. The "Number" in the chart reflects the number of individual responses collected. For example, in line one 34 delegates felt that fellowship was a Probus "strength". The after lunch session was devoted to a discussion of the findings lead by Mike and Bob. The discussion is summarised under "Comment" and "Suggested Action".

The "Analysis" will provide both Clubs and Exco with a sound basis for future planning as it represents the feelings and wishes of the Gathering.

In closing the meeting, Bob paid tribute to the hardworking Exco team that made this event a resounding success and to our hosts Probus Hermanus for their hospitality, finding the venue and creating the opportunity for Great Fellowship.

THE SWAT ANALYSIS

Question 1. What are the current STRENGTHS of Probus?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Suggested Action</u>	
Fellowship	34	The bedrock of Probus	Ensure that there are many opportunities for fellowship within the club's activities	Clubs
Stimulating & interesting speakers	15	Brain food	Promote inter-club activities	Exco liaison
Meeting people of similar background, interests & age	14		More of the same! Use District Data Bank	Exco/Clubs
Outings	9	Important Fellowship opportunity	Careful recruitment – Quality not quantity	Clubs
No fund raising	5	Keep it that way	Plan REGULAR outings. Use District Data Bank. What about group Theater bookings & weekend holidays.	Exco/Clubs
World organisation / reciprocity	4	Use Website www.probus.org.za	Encourage Probians to visit other Probus clubs when traveling	Clubs/Probians
Good venues	4	Essential for a "happy" club	Keep venue "performance" under review	Clubs
Well structured organisation	3			
Social responsibility/	3	A vital strength of Probus	Institute a system of support, regular contact & follow up.	Clubs

Members support			Appoint a Club "Almoner"	
Small with simple objectives	3	Easy to build fellowship	Know your fellow club members to build a family spirit.	
Enthusiasm of members	3	Essential for a successful club	Work at keeping & increasing members' enthusiasm	Clubs
Club autonomy	2	Anything goes!	Stimulating activities!	
Informality	1	Dress code?		
Low costs	1		Keep as low as possible without effecting quality of operation.	Exco/Clubs
Good Executive	1		Persuade members to sit on Exco	Clubs
Strength in numbers should = discounts	1		Negotiate discounts with national/local suppliers	Council/Exco Clubs
Entertainment	1		See speakers/outings above	Clubs
Fun	1	Should be much higher on list of strengths	See speakers/outings above	Clubs
Rotary connection	1		Under review	Council/Exco

Question 2. What are the perceived WEAKNESSES of Probus?

Reluctance to serve on committees	21	A problem with most voluntary organisations	Plan succession. Recruit members who are likely to "bring something to the party". Encourage incumbents to seek his or her successor. Make committee meetings sociable & fun. Share the work amongst as many members as possible <i>The Probus Manual, (Management Committee Edition).</i> to be found under "Downloads" on the Website www.probus.org.za . has loads of ideas for the Management Committee. Give members small jobs to do and in this way encourage them to realise that doing things for the good of the club can be enjoyable.	Clubs
Old age!	11	Rotary?	Careful recruitment of new members	
Lack of young members			Seek persons about to retire or who are already in part time employment	Clubs
Lack of method of recruitment	9		See "Club Members Manual" and "MC Edition" on Website	Clubs
Cliques	6		Vary table seating plans	Clubs
Rising costs of meals & travel	6	Almost inevitable!	"Forced" mixing in any group activities	
			Carry out regular review of all costs	Exco/Clubs
			SPONSORSHIP (of newsletters, etc.)	Clubs
Poor inter-club relationships	5		Joint activities especially in sports	Exco/Clubs
Finding good speakers	4		Use District Data Bank for ideas	Exco liaison
			Find out what good speakers have been found by other local organisations such as	Clubs

No promotion of Probus	4	Is this a Club or an Exco responsibility or both	Rotary, U3A, ARP&P, etc. Exco to recruit a PR Officer. Clubs to send photos and reports of club activities for publication in local press.	Exco/Clubs Clubs
Lack of Stimulation	4		The list is endless!	Exco/Clubs
Poor communication – both internal and external – Council – Exco – Clubs	3		Establish chain of communication. Distribute Association Newsletter, or read extracts at club meetings. Place “Communication” on club meeting agenda	Council/Exco Clubs
Pettiness, "Stirring", Inward looking	3	Old age problem?	Careful recruitment Good "man management" by club management committee	Clubs
Lack of venues to accommodate large numbers	2	A problem in many areas	Keep looking!	Clubs
Lack of Rotary interest	2	Are we missing something? May be a two way thing!	If it is going to be beneficial, invite Rotary involvement in a few club activities. Invite Rotary President to be a guest speaker	Clubs
Only one meeting per month	2	Clubs are autonomous Some clubs have up to six optional activities per month	Split organisational work between a number of members to create more activities but watch costs	Clubs
Incompetent leadership	1	Exco or clubs? Often "Hobsons Choice"	Careful recruitment - see above	Clubs
Poor Morale	1		Encourage club members to serve on Exco Again, the list is endless! Find out what the members want	Clubs Exco/Clubs
Language	1	Clubs are autonomous	There are four predominantly Afrikaans speaking clubs in the Western Cape and the “Probus Handbook” has been translated into Afrikaans. Go to www.probus.org.za click “Downloads” <i>Die Probus Handboek, (Afrikaanse Uitgawe).</i> Die laaste bladsy gee aanwysings vir publikasie.	
Elitism	1	Clubs are autonomous	Open up & broaden recruitment	Clubs
Same sex clubs	1	Clubs are autonomous	Promote image of the club in local press	
Formation of new clubs	1		Part of review of relationship with Rotary	Council/Exco
Fear of accepting change	1		Slowly, slowly! - a management technique!	Exco/Clubs

Question 3. What ACTIONS are needed to improve, strengthen and grow Probus?

Publicity/Promotion	23		Exco to recruit a PR Officer. Clubs to become “Publicity” conscious. Take photos at outings and any group of happy faces – at club AGM – the incoming Management Committee for publication in the local Community Newspaper.	Exco Clubs
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Speakers & Outings Data Bank	14		Exco to update on an annual basis but ... Clubs must provide requested information	Exco Clubs
Recruit "Swallows"	13		They can make a significant contribution to the club	Clubs
Recruit younger members	8		see "old age!" above	Clubs
Improve inter-club communication & activities	7		Exco to initiate	Exco liaison
Clubs to do own SWAT analysis/meta plan	7		Help from Exco if required	Exco liaison
Encourage Rotary to promote Probus	6	Depends on outcome of forthcoming review of Rotary/Probus relationship	Review	Council/Exco
Broaden membership drive	5		Guidelines to clubs from Exco	Exco/Clubs
Seating plans to discourage cliques	5			Clubs
Split larger clubs	3	Great reluctance to split within established clubs	Clubs to be urged to limit membership to 35/40 except for clubs which have a high "swallow" membership.	Exco/Clubs
Institute properly structured inductions	3	New members are not given the full Probus picture	Download the <i>The Probus Manual, (Member Edition)</i> from the website www.probus.org.za . Click on "Downloads" and follow the instructions that are clearly set out on the last page for print and make up. Present the Manual to "New Members" together with the "Club Badge" and "Probus Button" during an Induction Ceremony.	Exco/Clubs
Improve Exco-Club communication	3			Exco
Include members in Club Planning	2		Find out what the members want Listen to what the members say	Clubs
Assist struggling clubs	2		Liaison officers to keep close watch on club "health"	Exco
Encourage mixed clubs	2	Clubs are autonomous	Consider wishes of existing members. Consider carefully at "interest" meetings for potential new clubs.	Clubs Exco
Accept change	1			
Use membership numbers to obtain discounts, etc.	1			Council/Exco Clubs
Make committee meetings more enjoyable	1		Social occasion; changes of venue, etc	Clubs

Question 4. Are there any THREATS to Probus?

Rising costs v. Fixed Incomes	20		Manage costs without "taking away" the	Exco/ Clubs
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Aging membership	12		effectiveness of Probus	
Other organisations	11	You always find the time for something that you really want to do! Rotary, U3A, ARP&P, Share your talents!	Recruit younger members - see above Extol the advantages of the Probus brand. Make Probus "a want to join" organisation. Promotion/Publicity	Clubs Exco/Clubs
Shortage of time	6		Make Probus a "priority" on members' time	Clubs
Organisation inertia	6		Chart a new strategy when the Rotary/Probus relationship review has been completed	Council/ Exco
Probus perceived to be elitist/racial	3	If size of venue is the problem, this is a good reason for splitting large clubs and/or limiting the size of existing/new clubs	More publicity about the organisation. Broaden recruitment	Exco Clubs
Lack of knowledge about Probus	2		External - publicity/ promotion Internal - Liaison officers talk to Clubs	Exco/Clubs Exco liaison
Shortage of acceptable meeting venues	2		Consider changing format of meeting	Clubs
Inability to accept change	2		Good club leadership & management "style"	Clubs
Possible governmental legislation	1		React quickly & positively if it happens.	Council/Exco
Clubs becoming impersonal	1		Limit number of members Plan activities which mix members Seating plans	Clubs

THIS REPORT IS THE RESULT OF THE JOINT EFFORTS OF DAVE BLACK, DAVID GAMSU AND MIKE UNDERWOOD AND EDITED BY BOB GOEBEL.

