

OHTA STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

A world in which there is enough occupational health and hygiene capacity to eliminate the causes of occupational diseases.

Purpose:

OHTA was formed to promote better standards of occupational health and hygiene practice throughout the world. We develop and maintain standardized training materials that enhance the competency of those responsible for assessing and controlling worker health risks. These teaching materials are made readily available for use by students and training providers.

Principles and Values:

- Inclusive
- Transparent
- Accessible
- Engaging
- Sustainable
- Straightforward
- All stakeholders should benefit, from students to employers, professional associations and training providers
- The organization structure should minimize costs, complement other players in the OH community, and encourage participation from all
- Training quality will be monitored and improved by users and trainers alike, as we promote a climate of trust and transparency

Factors Impacting on OHTA Courses

There are a number of trends in the external environment affecting OHTA. It is difficult to narrow or prioritize the list of trends, all of which have current and future impact on the business of OHTA learning.

- Industry
 - High need in a large portion of companies, but for only a relatively small number of specialized skill participants at various levels of staff. This need is not always recognized or reflected in hiring demands.
 - Changing product portfolios creating new and different risks
 - Safety elements increasingly in demand.
- Globalization
 - New post pandemic priorities not fully understood
 - New countries and markets
 - Language barriers
 - High need for OH/IH and companion safety
- Training
 - Influence of technology on delivery
 - Role of companies' needs and budgets in developing requirements
 - Fast pace of change in industry needs and local legislation/regulation
- Demographics/Supply & Demand
 - IH profession failed to convert need to demand
 - Demand for occupational health and safety skills seems to be growing particularly in underdeveloped nations; with industrialization growing in these countries so will health and safety risks
 - The need/demand is really high in developing nations—the nations least able to pay for training.
- OH Profession
 - Sometimes not recognized or not influential in developed nations
 - Roles becoming more specialized in industrial health, broader for EHS professionals.
 - Competition from safety organizations in IH education
 - People seem to “stumble” into the profession rather than a clear career path.
 - More practitioners are moving into broader environmental, safety and health officer roles.
 - OH professional experts are rarely referred to in OHS legislation, globally, compared to safety or health & safety experts.
 - Profession is not growing quickly enough in many developed nations, although skill set competency still critical a part of broader range of EHS skill.

Among these trends, there are a number of “game changers”—trends in the environment that are very likely to change the way that business is done within the marketplace. The most important one identified is:

- Impact of online education providers in the space seems likely to have the most game-changing impact. The availability and expectation of online education needs to be addressed in this plan.

The OHTA business model faces a number of threats and opportunities, both from internal and external forces. Leveraging these threats and opportunities, particularly those from internal forces, for success is critical.

Threats:

- Core capabilities:
 - Volunteer tech expertise developing/reviewing training--courses developed reactively not strategically
 - Limited resources
 - Limited funding
 - to develop new course materials and translations
 - to explore more innovative methods of course delivery
 - for quality control
 - for market analysis
 - Technological weaknesses—unable to deliver online training
 - Collaboration can mean compromise

Opportunities also exist within the core capabilities of the business model:

- Highly regarded and well-used website which is key to the success of the scheme and can be updated/developed
- Opportunities to work with industry and/or other occupational health and safety organizations to develop new course materials
- Opportunities to work with industry and training providers to develop alternative delivery methods
- Lack of marketing plan

The customers' needs are as varied as their geographic locations, roles and industries.

- Students need access to good quality, low-cost occupational health and safety training that will enhance career and improve job performance, and enable career progression if desired—may need information on local regulations, language support or online/distance learning
- Training providers need good quality, easy to use, regularly updated course materials, wide choice of translations, responsive communication and engagement with OHTA.
- Employers need good value (and in this economic climate often low cost), good quality occupational health and safety training that furnishes employees with the right skills and knowledge for the companies' needs—may need information on local regulations, language support and/or online or distance learning
- Potential users of OHTA products need to better understand what OHTA does

- Potential users of OHTA products need to trust that OHTA can help them learn to prevent workplace illnesses/injuries

There are threats to the current and potential customer base/market:

- Customers originally came mainly via multi-nationals, but has changed to some extent now— need to clarify this in our definition of customers/stakeholders
- Economic climate could impact industry investing in training
- Increased awareness of occupational health risks needs to be harnessed and used to enhance mission goals
- Competition means students can go elsewhere and training providers potentially move away from using OHTA modules
- Lack of funding for translations limits opportunity to target particular geographic markets

A number of opportunities also exist for the OHTA customer base/market:

- Globalization has created access to the world and opened up enormous potential to reach people about this product
- Opportunity to develop stronger links with existing training providers through supporting their marketing activities wherever possible
- Increasing need to partner with member associations so far and possibility to harness their interest to promote OHlearning modules at local level
- Emerging markets give opportunity to focus on particular geographical areas and/or industries

Looking at stakeholders, in addition to customers, OHTA has the following:

- Students
- Training providers
- Companies that employ occupational hygienists or support occupational health
- National occupational health associations and IOHA
- Occupational health awarding and examination bodies
- Trade unions
- International health protection charities and associations
- All levels of Employers, training providers, IOHA, National associations, Government and individuals who could or do support OHTA with course development, resources for programs and core operations

OHTA's value proposition is offering free training of a consistently-high standard that is recognized across the globe. Threats to the value proposition include:

- Insufficient customer base worldwide (e.g., South America)
- Small number of translations available
- Insufficient monitoring of quality could threaten credibility training materials
- OHlearning.com update not completed

- Some students and employers may choose alternative courses that include local regulation (although some training providers may simply add it to the OHlearning module as necessary)
- Conflict of interest issues (e.g., national associations that are also training providers, national associations that are also training providers and approving bodies, OHTA directors who work for national associations) need careful handling to ensure integrity of scheme remains intact
- Lack of understanding about occupational health (and therefore perceived lack of need) in some developing countries

A number of opportunities have been identified that could potentially improve OHTA's value proposition:

- Online or distance learning options add accessibility and potentially reduce costs for course providers and employers in developing nations
- Lack of regulation information within course content means international transferability – good for careers and for multinational employers. Potential to encourage training providers and/or member associations to offer add-on products that include local regulation

Revenue sources are a very important factor in OHTA's success. Threats to those sources include:

- Not diversified - revenue almost entirely dependent on course levy paid by training providers
- Course levy too high for some developing world training providers
- Sponsorship very reliant on one or two organizations at present
- Competition from other charities for donations and sponsorship
- No opportunity to generate revenue through course materials as they must remain freely available
- Lost revenue if exam doesn't take place (but no way of knowing accurately how often that happens)

Possible opportunities to improve the revenue model include:

- Assist training providers by supporting their marketing activities
- Stimulate increase in courses by offering more translations
- Stimulate increase in courses by targeting growth industries
- Provide distance learning at a fee, either through OHlearning website enabling some form of distance learning or in partnership with an online training company
- Develop sponsorship options and promote to industry
- Lower the course levy in certain circumstances (according to strict criteria) to stimulate demand in developing countries
- Create a new donations page on website and promote

The cost structure provides a number of threats and opportunities:

- Higher fixed costs (THREAT) with staff resource. But if focused correctly, produces development (OPP)

- Commitment to SLA (THREAT)
- Costs to develop new materials including translations (THREAT)
- Currency exchange costs due to international nature of organization (THREAT)
- PayPal fees (for donations page) (THREAT)
- Web development and maintenance fees (THREAT)
- Private trainers (THREAT)
- Promotion of the profession – meaning and benefits to stakeholders (based on social, environmental, political and economic rewards) (OPP)
- Show how to develop networking groups and a mentoring program (OPP)
- Seek corporate and university sponsorship and work experience opportunities (OPP)
- Collaborate with IOHA (OPP)
- Simple business model– no fixed assets, very few costs (OPP)
- Possible funding for development of course materials and translations through industry and occupational health organizations, e.g., AIHA, IOHA (OPP)

Like every business, OHTA can identify a number of “lock-ins” which are ways of doing business based on historical data and decisions and to maximize the investment of historical resources:

- Resource allocation that prefers existing programs--limited staff resource could be used up reacting to stakeholder demands rather than focused on scheme development
- Free training material
- Reactive NOT proactive plan for new module development
- Lack of funding for market research
- Limited knowledge of emerging trends
- Member associations – collaboration essential
- Procrastination
- Not revamping our whole approach
- Not having a practical plan that can be executed
- Not being in full agreement to our approach

GOALS for 2021- 2024

The strategic goals for the next three years can be categorized into three broad areas: global customer development, training programs development (including online delivery methods), and a more sustainable business/financial model. All of these goals will support the vision of providing the premier global training program in OEHS.

Global Customer Development:

- Marketing and Communications Plan —
 - Identify marketing leader
 - Develop marketing plan that expands audience and demonstrates OHTA value to potential donors and volunteers.
- Complete transition to new website
 - Include rollout communication in marketing plan

Training Programs Development:

- Develop structured course selection plan with training courses based on needs rather than focusing on opportunities.
 - Evaluate existing portfolio for pruning opportunities
 - Conduct market survey to identify gaps in current offerings
- Delivery methods—Formalize online training procedures as a permanent part of OHTA operating procedures
 - Work with ATPs to include an online fee to support OHTA
- Translations—
 - Solicit contributions from those most likely to benefit from the translations
 - Based on the market data gathered, identify priorities for translations; select one major or two minor languages for second language focus. (Board decides; Roz coordinates)

Increased sustainability of business/financial model:

- Increase number of students taking exam by XX% through focused marketing based on data. (Dependent upon all the activities above)
- Determine viability of and implement viable options below: (Coordinated by XXXX)
 - Identify and secure high profile corporate sponsors
 - Targeted donations—to translations, specific marketing campaigns (for example, adoption within multi-nationals); product development fund
 - Strengthen US chapter foundation approach in these endeavors.
- Introduce a new revenue stream for OHTA in the form of fees on training providers.