

The Preferred Future for Melbourne PC User Group Inc.
Review Discussion Saturday 26 September 2015, 10am -1pm

Facilitator: Bill Ford

Report of Meeting

The main meeting room was set up with 5 tables of 10 places to accommodate the 50 attendees.

1. Introduction

People spent a few minutes writing their responses to the 4 questions below. Then, when finished they were asked to stand up and find another person that they don't know very well and share their answer to each question.

Q1 *An out-of-work non PC interest I have is..... ?*

Q2 *This is what I value in belonging to Melbourne PC User Group.....*

Q3. *The main challenge facing this organisation is.....?*

Q4 *I can make a positive contribution to today's discussion by.....?*

I wrote up some #3 and #4 answers to serve as a visual reminder

Challenges: Growth; Smart phones; Technology Change; Survival; Lack of targeted advertising; Gaining and keeping members of all ages; Ageing membership; Value for \$; Future services and income; Keeping members informed; Lack of volunteers as members of Melb PC Committee or as SIG leaders

Positive Contributions to today's discussions: Preparing a vision for the future; Being positive and listening to others; Willingness to turn words into actions; Looking for ways to affordably better promote MelbPC; Thinking creatively

2. **Key Strategy setting brainstorm (The Vision and the Task)** In order to save time I floated a possible vision based on what some people had suggested on Yammer or by email to the President, together with some of my own ideas.

2.1 The vision:

This is the year 2020 and Melbourne PC User Group is the most vibrant and exciting consumer IT group in the world: new members are rolling in and it is working well.

As an organisation:

- **We are taking full advantage of developing trends in IT and as such we excite all sections of the community – the young, the middle aged and the elderly**
- **Specialists in all sorts of IT areas (e.g. new systems, devices and technologies) are happy to come along and educate our members in their particular fields of expertise.**
- **As a result we are the “go-to” place on Consumer IT matters; the first port of call for all media who want to know the impact of IT trends on ordinary consumers (Think of the RACV)**
- **Our SIG groups, staff and premises are welcoming and new members immediately feel at home and are enthusiastic about continuing involvement – and our meeting places are accessible by public transport.**
- **We consciously educate our members and are paid by non-members in all aspects of consumer IT.**

- **We market our SIGs and education and training services, including the social aspects through advertising and social media such as Yammer , Facebook and Meetup or their successors**

2.2 Action Planning in the big group using brainstorming rules:

(including “Nobody says: No; That will never work; That is a stupid idea; That will cost too much; That has already been tried: that’s a great idea. Also, no clarification; zany ideas welcomed; build on other’s ideas”)

What were the 5 things that we did in 2015 to get the vision realised in 2020?

I noted various strategies suggested by attendees to achieve their visions for Melb PC:

- Adopt a new name and image to encompass all technologies
- Expand membership by – targeting schools, retirement villages and homes, outside clubs and organisation such as Probus, RSL, CWA, U3A, Universities and TAFEs with our advertising material and as, appropriate partner with them to get a wider spread of knowledge of MelbPC in the general community. Where appropriate work with IT retailers to promote MelbPC to customers; Link with Social media (Facebook, Yammer, Meetup etc.) and You Tube. [This is an amalgamation of many suggestions brought together under one heading – “Focussed Marketing and Promotion of MelbPC”]
- Sponsoring and adopting new technologies
- Go national by liaising and partnering with other groups and organisations
- Expand the number of Special Interest Groups; develop new online SIGS and other online communities and activities (2 suggestions amalgamated as “SIGS expansion”)
- Develop a new membership management system, NBN friendly, and one that could be used for promotions to members and to define who attends meetings and uses the facilities of Melb PC.
- Mentoring volunteers who wish to become Management Committee members or SIG leaders
- Monthly meetings during the day, especially targeting retirees
- Broadcast the monthly meetings at other times
- Head Office relocated to the centre of the membership demographic
- Market the availability of our current Head Office Premises for hire by outside organisations; improve the signage at Head Office; focussed offerings such as dynamic training to attract people who will pay to learn aspects of IT [This is an amalgamation of a number of suggestions into one heading “Better use of our Head Office”]
- Make our website professional and intuitive
- More social activities for members

The attendees then voted on the top 5 suggestions, which were identified as:

1. Focussed Marketing and Promotions (unanimous)
2. Make our website professional and intuitive
3. Adopt a new name and image to encompass all technologies
4. Better use of our Head Office
5. SIGs Expansion

2.3 Action Planning in smaller groups

Each table was randomly allocated 1 of the 5 key strategies

- Using the SMART goal setting procedures (that is - goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and have a Timeline) they developed action plan mechanisms for delivering their strategy - writing down the action plans for reporting back, including what, how and when.

3. Plenary Session – Reporting Back

Reported back action plans to deliver the 5 key strategies – 1 reporter from each table

“These are the things that people think we did, starting in 2015 to achieve the vision that has been realised in 2020”

1. Focussed Marketing and Promotions

- Facebook/Twitter presence
- Contact retirement facilities, U3As, CWA, Probus groups, genealogical groups, local councils, governments to link to our programs , promote MelbPC in Seniors Week
- Promotional material on You Tube, Vimeo, Meetup, etc. with opportunity for public feedback
- Liaise with retailers selling IT material including home entertainment, mobile phones, to distribute promotional material
- Nominate a media spokesperson as a MelbPC point of reference on IT matters

2. Make our website professional and intuitive

- Spend \$10,000 in October on a professional graphic designer so that the web site is a good marketing tool
- Address non-members
- Full and up-to- date SIG information
- Reset slider time to longer
- Add a web counter

3. Adopt a new name and image to encompass all technologies

- Persuade members of the need
- Find 5 or more new names to select from
- Market test candidate names with focus groups including non-members
- Choose ONE

NB THE ABOVE SHOULD OCCUR WITHIN A PERIOD OF 6 MONTHS – the old name would be used alongside the new name for a period of familiarisation.

4. Better use of our Head Office

- Generate a list, understandable to non-members, of what we have to offer
- Add to offerings by moving some SIGs to HO premises
- Identify to whom to promote the use of our premises – probably in the local area/region initially
- Identify how to promote the HO usage to each entity on the Focussed Marketing list- by phone, letter, online, local paper, etc.

NB URGENCY impacts HOW!

5. SIGS Expansion

- Creation of new SIGs to include training in creating, using and promptly updating websites for each group
- Ensure that groups meeting away from HQ have sufficient space to take expanded membership
- Identify new technologies and seek to create SIGs to support them
- Set up SIGs in greenfield sites, new housing developments (This will also aid promotion and marketing)
- Mentor current and potential new SIG leaders and consider some sort of reward/ small benefit for their work
- Share speakers across SIGs where possible

4. The Final Challenge - Where to from here?

Melbourne PC User group needs a future directions group to start to implement the plan items identified in each of the 5 key strategies to move towards the vision, perhaps as members of the next Committee or assisting that Committee.

The names of volunteers and specific task offers made on the day:

- John Swale - web site
- John Hollow - marketing
- John Bade - web site
- Dave Botherway - Facebook
- Richard Solly - online SIG groups
- Jim Hanna - finance & administration

MORE are needed! Including volunteers for the Committee, which must set up a Future Directions Group including the above volunteers and others, to meet urgently and get to work in order that today's momentum is not lost!

Thanks to the participants who attended or, unable to attend, offered suggestions.

Bill Ford

September 2015