

# Charting a Course to Success

By ALPA Strategic Member  
Development & Resources Staff

Every flight begins with a plan. Like ALPA members preparing for takeoff and landing, the Association has implemented a systematic approach to tackling challenges and capitalizing on opportunities facing the airline piloting profession and the airline industry. The result is a comprehensive strategic plan that has advanced the interests of ALPA members and guided the Association toward safeguarding the profession at the local, national, and global levels. Continuing to trend positive and remain effective, however, requires that ALPA's strategic plan be reviewed on a regular basis and modified when necessary.

In October, ALPA's Board of Directors (BOD), the Association's highest governing body, will convene for its biennial meeting. The BOD is composed of the 193 local council status representatives from ALPA's master executive councils (MEC). On the agenda: the BOD will examine the Association's current strategic plan and establish the priorities that will direct ALPA's course over the next two years. Some of these priorities may be a continuation

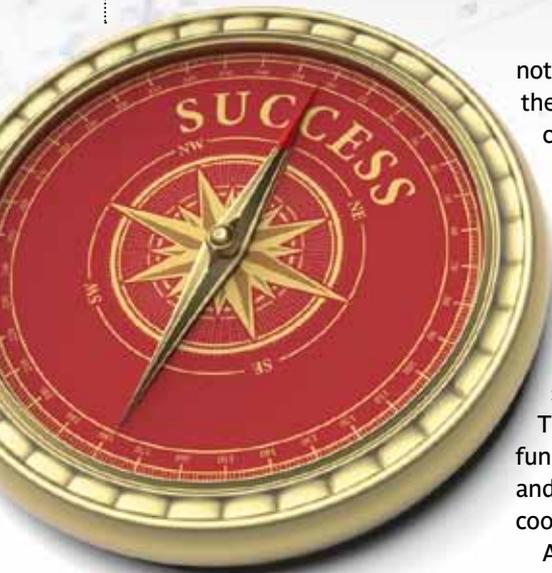
of or an expansion of work already under way, while others may be new as the BOD discusses and recalibrates goals to meet members' needs and address any recent challenges.

## *Advancing goals, protecting interests*

Despite the challenges the Association has confronted over the past several years, and the near-term challenges facing some of ALPA's U.S. and Canadian members who fly for carriers in certain segments of the industry, the union has made progress advancing members' goals and protecting their interests through its strategic plan. However, there is much more work to be done.

As BOD members shape and approve ALPA's strategic plan priorities, they are ►►►





*Through ALPA's coordinated efforts, collaboration with industry and government, and worldwide status as the voice for all airline pilots in the United States and Canada, the Association will successfully advance its strategic priorities and be stronger moving forward.*

not just serving as the plan's architects—they are working as agents of change. ALPA continues to face many opportunities and challenges, and the union's strategy must encompass the collective goals of its members and be executed in a coordinated fashion by its leaders.

Before ALPA's BOD members vote on resolutions to modify or revise the Association's strategic plan, they split into eight delegate committees.

These eight groups carefully examine the fundamental operation of the Association and how its undertakings are organized, coordinated, and processed.

As part of this analysis, delegates consider reports from national committees and proposed priorities from the Association's Executive Council and Executive Board. With this information, the committees look for ways ALPA can maximize its opportunities and better position itself for unforeseen challenges.

**The eight delegate committees divide the strategic planning workload in the following manner:**

**Committee 1** looks at the Association's structure and resources to maximize the benefits and services provided to ALPA members, enhance professional development opportunities, strengthen pilot group alliances, and streamline or eliminate duplications of effort.

**Committee 2** examines contract negotiations and enforcement approaches and retirement and insurance models, ensuring that they keep pace with the changing negotiating environment and pilot demands, as well as activities related to organizing and training volunteers to build unity, coordinate across pilot groups, and help carry out Association and MEC goals.

**Committee 3** addresses safety, security, pilot assistance, and flight- and duty-time initiatives that tackle existing system inadequacies and weaknesses with the goal of minimizing operational risk and further enhancing airline safety.

**Committee 4** assesses ALPA financial policies and strategic assets to capitalize on better ways to allocate finances and budget in support of Association-wide and individual pilot group strategic priorities.

**Committee 5** evaluates the Association's communication efforts to educate and inform both internal and external audiences about the Association's positions for the purpose of building unity and support.

**Committee 6** considers the legal and merger-related issues that face ALPA, including defending the Association against lawsuits, protecting the airline piloting profession against threats (such as Norwegian Air International), and implementing ALPA's risk-management policies and programs to safeguard the union and its members.

**Committee 7** studies legislative and regulatory efforts to promote pilot-, airline-, and labor-friendly policies in the U.S. and Canada.

**Committee 8** analyzes organizing opportunities to strengthen and grow the union and promote ALPA as the unified voice of the airline piloting profession.

### *Guiding the union*

At the 2008 BOD meeting, delegates officially engaged in strategic planning for the first time, unanimously adopting a series of agenda items that identified the Association's priorities to guide the direc-



tion of the union. BOD members directed ALPA's national officers, national committees, Executive Board, Executive Council, and staff members to develop action plans to ensure that initiatives were completed and to maximize ALPA's ability to achieve the priorities its highest governing body set forth.

The strategic planning process evolved to include an ongoing cycle of prioritizing issues; developing and implementing action plans; communicating, actively managing, and advocating ALPA's priorities; achieving or recalibrating goals and approaches; and identifying new issues to incorporate into the strategic plan. The process also created a more defined framework for decision-making and allocating Association resources. The Executive Council and Executive Board received regular briefings on the status of the Association's activities and provided guidance and input as new issues arose. Communicating with ALPA members about the strategic planning process has remained an integral part of building unity and support for the plan's priorities and goals.

During the 2010 and 2012 BOD meetings, the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) built on this solid foundation and included progress reports summarizing the initiatives undertaken to support each priority, what had been accomplished, and what work remained. In its report to the BOD, the SPC outlined recommendations for updated priorities—some of which were in the plan already—to reinforce the importance of ALPA reaffirming its key goals or to ensure that outstanding work continued. Other priorities arose in the ongoing discussions and recalibration of goals. As before, BOD delegate committees heard briefings from subject-matter experts on key industry, profession, and

Association issues and activities; discussed and debated the issues and established priorities; and updated ALPA's comprehensive strategic plan for the next two years and beyond.

### *Stronger moving forward*

Today's environment is much different than it was when ALPA's strategic plan was first developed in 2008—and even since the plan's last major review in 2012. The process by which the SPC develops recommendations starts with an assessment of the environment—both external and internal—in which the Association operates, closely scrutinizing key issues that affect the profession and the union. The airline industry's performance is highly dependent on external factors: economic growth, fuel price volatility, and geopolitical influences. ALPA's Economic & Financial Analysis Department recently reported on these and other issues affecting the industry, noting that 2014 second-quarter economic results were encouraging: economic indicators that affect the demand for goods and services, including air travel, have been trending upward. (See "The Continued Evolution of the Airline Industry," September, page 25.)

ALPA's strategic planning process will not end at the conclusion of the 2014 BOD meeting. Once delegates set a new, two-year course for the union, the implementation phases will begin. Through ALPA's coordinated efforts, collaboration with industry and government, and worldwide status as the voice for all airline pilots in the United States and Canada, the Association will successfully advance its strategic priorities and be stronger moving forward.

Look for information on ALPA's 2014 strategic plan priorities in the November issue of *Air Line Pilot*. 

## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

ALPA's Board of Directors (BOD) charged the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) with identifying the major issues, trends, risks, and opportunities facing the Association and making recommendations to ALPA's governing bodies regarding the union's strategic plan priorities.

The SPC develops these recommendations using a three-pronged approach: (1) constant monitoring of the activities and plan progress since 2012; (2) evaluating internal and external issues that affect ALPA; and (3) receiving input from ALPA's leaders and subject-matter experts. The recommendations do not include every institutional task, project, or responsibility. Instead, the proposed priorities establish a foundation from which the BOD is able to move ALPA into the future. Every BOD delegate is engaged in the strategic planning process as a member of one of ALPA's eight delegate committees. The BOD members are responsible for crafting ALPA's strategic plan and making the final decisions regarding the union's priorities.