

THE BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS

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Case Objectives and Use

This case exposes a variety of strategic issues which must be considered relative to the future of a non-profit, fraternal organization - the Brookings Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE). The central decision that must be made is whether or not the organization should continue both lodge (philanthropic) and club (social) operations in their current capacities. The case highlights a need for planning, management, and improved communication between the lodge and club interests of the organization. Students will learn about the management challenges associated with a non-profit business and how they relate to profit-based management. Students will also become aware of how societal influences shape an organization's mission and development if it is to remain competitive.

This field-researched case would be appropriate for use in undergraduate or graduate Strategic Management, Small Business Management, or Industrial Organization courses.

Case Synopsis

This case study describes the situation facing the Brookings, South Dakota BPOE. As a nonprofit, fraternal organization, the Brookings BPOE has two interests it must consider: the lodge's completion of charitable works in the community and the club's unique role as a private, social gathering place for members. Without participating members, the club has no business and few charitable works can be completed in the community. Declining membership and declining participation among current members, in addition to substantial debentures, has prompted the organization to assess its strategic position. In order to avoid liquidation, the organization must consider turnaround strategies for lodge and club operations to energize the membership and restore the BPOE's lively presence in the Brookings community.

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