Inventures Insights

Technology Alliance Formation – A Method to the Madness

Forming a technology alliance isn't as straight forward as one might think and there is a method behind the madness to ensure timing, the right steps and a plan for success are all in place before launching.

Technology alliance formation is our exclusive proven process to help form an alliance by a group of aligned stakeholders. Inventures uses our three-stage process to determine: (1) whether to form a new collaborative alliance, (2) what form that alliance should take (3) when and how to launch the alliance. Once a new technology collaboration is launched, Inventures also provides a suite of services capable of managing and growing the collaboration over its complete lifecycle. A go / no-go decision at the end of each stage is used to determine whether to proceed to the next phase or not.

Before an alliance is legally formed, founding stakeholders must ensure they are aligned on an area of focus, including deciding on a mission, vision, value proposition, scope of participation and a general timeline for the deliverables of the entity.
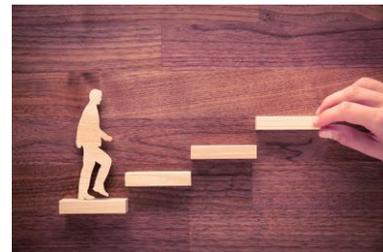
The goal of this **Validate/Incubate** phase is to gain consensus from the founding stakeholders on the alliance's purpose and deliverables, validate the feasibility of forming the new collaboration and develop a game plan for creation of the new alliance.

The **Structure** phase involves developing the legal and structural frameworks for the new alliance. The legal framework includes all necessary legal documents for the new alliance to become a functioning entity, such as Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Antitrust Policy, Intellectual Property Policy, and Membership Agreements. The structural framework includes the formal legal constitution of the entity, its organizational structure, and funding platforms. Both the legal and structural frameworks are created through an interactive process typically involving one or more face-to-face workshops and several review sessions with founding stakeholders.

In the **Launch Preparation** phase, work begins on the operational framework that prepares the alliance for formal public launch. The operational framework consists of three parts:

1. Executing the incorporation of the new alliance and the initial Board of Directors meeting.
2. Developing an initial twelve-month budget for the organization based on expected members and planned initiatives.
3. Instantiating the different operational aspects of the organization – including the Board of Directors, committee chairs, officers, membership administration, financial management configuration, collaboration tools, and website.

Before a new technology collaboration is launched, **Ongoing Operations** must be considered. Inventures provides a suite of services capable of managing and growing the alliance throughout its complete lifecycle. The organization will require infrastructure components such as opening a bank account, establishing a headquarters, defining collaboration tools, creating a member database, and establishing essential operational policies for handling and reporting finances. Inventures Business Operations Services have served multiple new alliances and associations with turnkey solutions, allowing the alliance to stay focused on achieving its mission. At this point, the new alliance is fully operational and open for business. The alliance starts executing on its mission, whether that is specification creation, software delivery, market development, and/or certification program implementation. Inventures will be there to support the ongoing operation and management of the organization through its a la carte suite of alliance management services described on our website.

Planning for the Unthinkable: Meeting and Event Preparedness

While substantial effort is spent on every event, much of that energy is focused on the content, structure and activities to make it valuable for attendees. However, time also needs to be spent on the unthinkable. Disasters can strike anywhere and at any time. It could be a medical emergency, an evacuation for a building fire, a weather or natural disaster, or human-caused disturbance such as theft or terrorism. Without pre-planning, response times may be slower and more difficult to achieve best-case scenario solutions.

For Inventures' event managers, *preparedness* is part of every event. We know what *is* happening, and are prepared for what *might* happen. While extensive experience with events of all kinds in all areas of the world provides a foundation for much of our preparedness, we also leverage industry best practices and other checklists to better prepare us to create a safety strategy.

Here are a few tips on how we ensure our client events and meetings are prepared for the unthinkable:
- Collect attendee emergency contact information, both name and direct phone number, prior to the event
- Have a check list with all local emergency contacts and numbers
- Ensure the Force Majeure Clause in the venue contract is well defined and includes full inclusion and all possible coverage for our clients

- Work closely with the venue contact to cover emergency policies and a contingency checklist during the pre-conference meeting
- Consistently monitor weather, news, Department of State advisories, and conditions in the meeting location
- Use an app-based registration system allowing push notifications to all attendees
- Strictly enforce use of nametags to ensure only those with a reason to be in a room have access to event spaces
- Lock meeting rooms when not scheduled to be occupied

If you're attending a meeting or event, there are some steps you can take to ensure your preparedness:

- Bring sealed envelopes with medical information and a copy of your passport or ID
- Do not use the metal swing bar lock in your sleeping room since it will delay medical emergency personnel from accessing your room
- **Register with your embassy when traveling overseas to be appraised of alerts in the country you are visiting**
- Leave extra credit cards, cash or other unrequired materials in your hotel safe for a backup in case you lose your wallet
- **Review monetary conversions and ensure your credit card works in the country you are visiting**
- Always check venue and sleeping room emergency exit plans
- Know where fire extinguishers and fire pull alarms are located

Every geographic region is prone to certain natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, tornadoes, and volcanoes). While it's impossible to predict the future, we do our part to be prepared and keep our events safe so you can come better prepared for it.

Reinvention with Alliance Strategic Management Services

Strategic Management Services includes a set of tools Inventures offers for clients and part of this offering is helping Alliances plan and execute a "reset" to extend the application and value of the organization if needed. Pioneered by Inventures, our Technology Alliance Lifecycle Management toolset assists organizations with strategic planning helping them adapt, sustain, and remain relevant through the four-lifecycle phases – Introduction, Growth, Maturity, and Reset/Decline – that all organizations will experience over the course of its lifetime.

This discipline has been utilized for many Inventures clients but we'd like to share one very successful example of how the Technology Alliance Lifecycle Management tool was applied. This Alliance was trying to determine how it's then proven and acclaimed technology could serve new/additional applications while continuing to advance the organization's original mission.

Inventures recommended it conduct a thorough review and analysis to decide if it should gracefully shut down or "reset" by expanding or redefining the market/product that the alliance was focused on. When an organization executes a "reset" it typically develops new value propositions and changes its mix of activities and objectives.

As a result of the review recommended by Inventures, the Alliance Board decided to test a new value proposition for the attributes of the Alliance Technology in a targeted new market. Outreach was performed with key players in this market and several committed to join the Alliance if a Working Group was formed to pursue development of the target market specifications.

The Alliance decided to perform a "reset" of the current direction of the organization, and pursue this new technical area, which resulted in new members, addition of companies to the Board, and execution of an expanded mission.

By utilizing the Inventures Technology Alliance Lifecycle Management tool, correctly assessing the situation, taking the appropriate actions, and resetting the organization, the Alliance was able to extend and sustain its success.

How to Build and Maintain Trust in the Age of Volatility

Trust plays an increasingly vital role in organizations today. As a result, having a real understanding of the mechanics of trust is critical. Today's executive leaders are expected to be less like battlefield generals and more like orchestra conductors. According to the article's authors, this requires "stepping outside well-defined boundaries of behavior and expectation." Few will be comfortable doing so without trust in their colleagues, the membership, and the overall organization.

There are four pillars of trust that must be present: predictability, or doing what one said one would do or what responsibilities demand; transparency, which is acting without a hidden agenda; accountability, or taking ownership of one's actions and holding oneself to standards of fair dealing; and common aims — mutual support between individuals and shared goals to support the organization.

While top executives and leadership committees cannot create trust by decree, they can create the conditions that make it easier to maintain trust-building behavior. "They do so by modeling trust-building behaviors themselves, rewarding those behaviors in others, and creating policies that support such actions," the authors state. To this end, leaders should replace zero-sum thinking with win-win scenarios centered on a shared mission. Fight the urge to micromanage, but know when to step in. Other tips include looking beyond the surface when assigning credit, "don't shoot the messenger," and "make constructive feedback an integral part of communication."

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