Inventures Insights

Is My Organization's Mission Obsolete or Complete?

What should leaders of an organization do if they find their organization's mission is either obsolete or already completed?

In the world of technical alliances and standards development organizations, this happens more often that one would expect. Technology moves at a rapid pace. Some technical collaboration organizations launch around compelling missions but the speed of technology outruns them making their initial mission obsolete.

Still others are wildly successful and find their missions "complete" and needing to do something new.

Whether your organization's mission is obsolete or already complete, your organization needs to make an important and sometimes difficult decision as a next step.

The decision is whether to sunset or reset the organization. Sunsetting an organization can be accomplished using two approaches. Moving the organization into some sort of hibernation mode to preserve access to its deliverables. Making their specifications public could be one approach. Or, a second approach is to legally wind down the organization. Most organizational bylaws have specific clauses that govern an organization wind down and these should be followed carefully. Sometimes, the cost of time and effort to continue an organization, especially one where technology has "outrun" its mission, may suggest that putting the organization to bed is the next best step. While this is often a blow to the ego of founding member organizations, it can be a blessing in disguise as it frees up resources and money to pursue work in a different or new organization with a more compelling and fresh mission and focus.

If an organization decides to "reset" the organization around a new mission, best practices suggest that it should follow three essential steps to determining the new mission.

Step 1 is to determine the organization's "pivot point". A pivot point is a description of an organization's core strengths from which it could pivot to a related focus. Resetting an organization to a mission far from the core strengths is rarely successful. Even though many technologies have a way of eventually relating to each other, an organization whose strength is in video conferencing would probably not want to reset to a mission in blockchain-based financial systems. Most successful resets are made to adjacent technologies in which key contributors already have a foothold. So, step 1 is to determine the organization's pivot point.

Step 2 is to explore technology, business and consumer trends influencing the areas surrounding the pivot point.   What are the primary adopting stakeholders in adjacent technology spaces talking about? What business problems are they trying to solve? What changes in how they are doing business requires application of a new technology? What products are consumers preferring and why? The answers to these questions should provide organizational leaders with the data and intelligence to make decisions about a new mission and focus for the reset organization.

Finally, step 3 is to re-envision existing organizational leaders and, if necessary recruit new leaders around the new mission and focus. Sometimes, founding leadership isn't as agile or willing to adjust their involvement around a new mission and just need to move on, suggesting that new leadership that is more convinced of the new mission should take their place. A compelling mission must have compelled leaders evangelizing and contributing to the new mission for the organization to be successful. This is an essential third step to a successful reset.

Many technical organizations have long lasting missions or are able to sustain their activities regardless of technology shifts. While other wake up and find themselves with a mission that is no longer relevant. If your organization is in this second category, decide first to reset or sunset. And if a reset is the decision, identify your pivot point, explore technology, business and market trends in areas adjacent to that pivot point and ensure you have envisioned leaders actively support the mission to make the reset successful.

Inventures Welcomes New Client

Inventures welcomes West Coast Lumber & Building Material Association (WCLBMA) to its client roster providing a range of services including strategic management.

"We're happy to welcome West Coast Lumber & Building Material Association into the Inventures fold," said Stan Moyer, Vice President, Ecosystem Development & Collaboration at Inventures. "Our team looks forward to supporting WCLBMA in achieving their mission and delivering value to their members."

WCLBMA is a non-profit trade organization that provides legislative and regulatory representation, education and training programs, professional development, communications and industry information, benefit programs, and industry networking and social events.


Client News: ONVIF Reaches Milestone of 20,000 Conformant Products

ONVIF, the leading global standardization initiative for IP-based physical security products, has achieved another key milestone with 20,000+ conformant products that are conformant to its global interoperability specifications. This new milestone underscores the strong market demand for interoperability of hardware and software offerings and the relevance of ONVIF as a leading driver of open standards within physical security.

Governance & Operations Assessment

As collaborative organizations grow and evolve, there can come a time when it may be wise to consider conducting a review of the overall operations and governance of the organization. Embarking on such a review certainly gives leadership an opportunity to streamline processes, as one might expect. But it also allows leadership to identify and adjust focus on areas of interest that can benefit the organizations missions and its members.
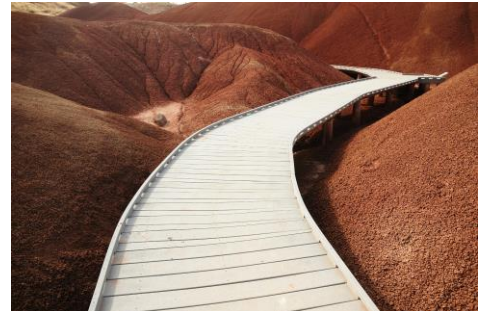
Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Has your organization experienced success, or failure, in an area? Or maybe expanded its focus into two or three new areas.
2. Not every organization lives on forever, do you need a lifecycle review so you know where your organization is headed?
3. Has your organization seen growth or a contraction in membership?
4. Suddenly have too many members, or not enough?
5. Is your in-house staff saying "that's the way we've always done it" and it's in the way of success?
6. Is your CPA keeping you informed of changes in accounting practices regularly?
7. Do you have any intellectual property that needs to be reviewed for export compliance?
8. Do you lack staff or have a high turnover rate?
9. Are your IT systems down more than they are up?
10. Are your board meetings collaborative, a bar fight, or eerily silent?

If you answered yes to any of these, or thought of a few others on your own, it might make sense to engage an independent, third-party familiar with operations of collaborative organizations to assess your organization.

Inventures takes a two-phase approach to our governance and operational assessments. The first phase is **Assess & Recommend** focusing on:
- Governance & Strategy
- Technical Group Operations
- Communications
- IT/Tooling
- Membership Recruitment/Engagement
- Finance/Audit
- Staffing/Contractors
- Certification/Compliance

The second phase is **Adjust & Evaluate** where we:
- Plan adjustment projects
- Execute and track adjustment projects
- Evaluation adjustment outcomes

Engaging in a governance and operations assessment may reveal opportunities for improvement and set your organization on a path of enhanced productivity and growth benefiting your members.