

## SD Association Case Study

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### Sustained Innovation and Market Relevance

The SD Association (SDA) was formed in 2000 to set and promote industry standards for SD Cards as removable memory storage. From this initial introduction, there have been many innovations and developments that have enabled the SD Cards to maintain market relevance. These innovations and developments include changes in form factors (e.g., the micro SD card), increases in interface speeds, capacity improvements, and support for new SD Hosts and Ancillary product and applications such as speed classes for video recording, application performance classes for random access applications, and applications other than memory storage such as wireless communications, security and more.



From this initial introduction, it can be noted that the lifetime of the SDA is relatively long (17+ years) for a technology alliance. Some might ask how the SDA was able to sustain itself for so long and adapt to changes in technology and the market. This case study will describe the services that Inventures provided to the SDA that enabled the SDA members and participants to focus on the technology and market success of the organization without having to worry about the operation and management of the organization.

#### Situation

The SDA Technical Committee and work groups that consist of volunteers of SDA member companies have been focused on the continued evolution, growth, and expansion of the SDA Specifications in order to meet the changing needs for removable storage in devices. Correspondingly, the SDA Marketing Committee, which is also made up of volunteers from SDA member companies, organizes and participates in events that help promote the advantages of SD technology, along with events that promotes the SDA activity attracting new members to participate in the constant development of the SDA Specifications. These resources from SDA member companies are responsible for the success of the SD Card technology, but due to time and resource constraints, the member companies are not able provide the people to fully manage and operate the SDA organization – assistance is required. The SDA is a unique standards development organization that that in addition to

specification creation, performs compliance checks, and technology promotion initiatives. All these activities require various kinds of support that the SDA member company volunteers either don't have the necessary expertise or the time required – for example, event management, financial management & administration, legal support, and marketing & communications.

## **Solution**

In 2008, the SDA turned to Inventures to request support for the management and operations of the SD Association. This support includes services such as advice and counsel to the Board of Directors, program management, event management, marketing support, external communications (PR & publicity), membership administration, and financial management. The support services provided by Inventures are matched to people or groups in the SDA in order to ensure that the SDA's needs are being met and to provide accountability. For example, an executive director supplied by Inventures reports to the Board of Directors and provides advice and strategic guidance and financial management support is provided to the SDA Finance Committee and Treasurer by supplying monthly reports and information. The event management support for the SDA bi-annual general assembly ("all member") meetings, board & committee meetings, and tradeshow management is an Inventures service that is done in cooperation with the SDA Marketing Committee. Likewise, the SDA created a "corporate communications" team to work with the SDA Director of Communication, supplied by Inventures, in order to deliver press releases, white papers, webinars, member newsletter and monthly email blasts – this combination ensures that SDA requirements are met and that the quality deliverables are consistently on-time.

## **Outcome**

The various SDA people and groups that interfaced with and/or utilized the services provided by Inventures were able to leverage that support to ensure their specific deliverables and programs were completed. For example, the Board utilizes Inventures to help track the progress of activities related to annual objectives that are aligned with the SDA's strategy and goals. Inventures is able to provide assurance to the SDA Board of Directors, that the SDA is "well managed" so that the Board does not have to actively manage the organization.

## **Conclusions**

By utilizing the specific Inventures Alliance Management Services needed by the SDA that were tailored to the SDA organization, the SDA member company volunteers were able to continue to focus on and execute the SDA mission. The fact that SDA volunteers could rely on Inventures for operations and management of the organization helped enable the SDA to sustain its success as an organization and in the market.