



Inventures Insights

March 2023 Newsletter



A Q&A with Jim McNeil: Evolving an Association & Alliance Management Structure



In January of this year, Smithbucklin, Inventures' parent company, [announced](#) the creation of a new network-based organizational structure and leadership role designed to

serve the dynamic and emerging needs of the association and alliance industry. As Inventures is also a provider of association and alliance management services, Smithbucklin included Inventures as one of the networks in this new organizational structure.

We invited Jim McNeil, the recently announced president of Smithbucklin's Association

Management business that comprises this new structure, to answer a few questions that Inventures friends and clients might have regarding this new structure. The questions posed to Jim and his responses are included below.

What was the main driver for this organizational change within Smithbucklin?

Jim: It's about unlocking potential for what's possible with our association clients and delivering high-quality, high-value work and outcomes. Our clients are diverse and complex, and they value our ability to learn from each other and share common practices. We are focusing on innovation and excellence in our core business by creating more synergy amongst our clients.

Will Inventures' clients see any immediate differences as a result of this change?

Jim: There are no plans to change any of the people, processes, and systems used to serve Inventures clients, so Inventures clients should not see any impact of this change.

What are the potential benefits of this new structure for Inventures' clients?

Jim: A central goal is growth for our clients that is both sustainable and inclusive. We are fostering the strong sense of community within and across our client teams to improve work quality, client outcomes, innovation, and growth opportunities.

Your role as president of the Association Management business is a new one, what do you see as your main responsibilities?

Jim: I am eager to advance the ambitions of our current and future association management clients while developing and advancing the next generation of association executives. This is a pivotal moment for Smithbucklin, as we set a long-term aspiration to help shape and accelerate a new era of growth for associations that is both sustainable and inclusive.

Taking Time to Brainstorm

Too often we find ourselves anxious, excited, or even dread when identifying a new strategy or starting a new project. But are the initial ideas and approaches always the best ideas?

Taking time to brainstorm with yourself and in a group can provide fresh thinking and new ideas that might not have ever come to light.



Here are a few Do's and Don'ts to keep in mind when brainstorming and always remember the #1 rule – there is never a bad idea in a brainstorm!

Do's

Come to the brainstorm with seeds of ideas

Research what other similar organizations or companies are doing

Involve everyone – encourage everyone to contribute and CONTROL dominating participants

Cross-fertilize – Build on each other's ideas

Get out of the box – use different techniques to get bigger and wilder ideas. Think creatively and NOT tactically

Don'ts

Don't focus on the negative aspects of problems and expend energy on worry

Don't be fearful of looking foolish or being laughed at

Don't fear repetitions – the same idea at different times can spur different reactions

Don't overlook the obvious – sometimes the obvious idea is the best

Do NOT stop and discuss - Go for quantity, not quality

Keeping these tips in mind will set a path for a successful brainstorm with fresh ideas flowing for a new initiative, strategy or project!

Employee Spotlight:

Sue Schmitt
Senior Coordinator



What is your role at Inventures?

My primary role at Inventures is to provide membership support for our client organizations and I help maintain, organize and integrate membership data daily to keep all Alliance and Association's membership

information accurate and quickly accessible. I am kind of the "point guard" of the team. I take the ball, in the form of an inquiry or question, try my best to take it down the court to score, but if I can't, I hand it off to the person who is best in position to help, sometimes passing the ball back and forth until we successfully "make the basket". Recently, I also started serving one of our clients, COVESA, as their Operations Manager, working closely with the Executive Director and Board members. A totally different view of our clients as I participate in Board and strategy meetings.

What does your job entail and what is a typical day like?

Since our clients can be in several different time zones, I don't have a typical day. Some days can start at 5:00am with a Board call and end at 8:00pm with a Slack conversation with a Program Manager, all while helping members navigate their member benefits, profiles, and systems during the day. I enjoy the constantly changing schedule as it never gets boring!

What's the key to excellent customer care?

For me, the key to providing the best customer care is two-fold. First, you have to know and care about your client understanding their personality, needs, goals, and mission. Secondly, you have to know the technology and platforms that are being used. Technology and their needs are constantly changing and it's our job to make sure we are up to date on their platforms and procedures. Every client has different personalities, and there are going to be bumps in the road, but if you understand what they are striving to achieve, and keep in mind that we are all working toward the same goal, all bumps can be paved over.

Client News

Client News: ONVIF Reaches Dual Milestones of 25k Conformant Products, 15th Anniversary



ONVIF®, the leading global standardization initiative for IP-based physical security products, continues to deepen its influence and impact in the physical security market with the dual milestones of surpassing 25,000 conformant products and celebrating 15 years as the defacto industry standard for interoperability. Since its inception in 2008, products that conform to ONVIF profiles have consistently grown in number and scope, beginning with core products such as IP cameras, video management software, and network video recording solutions.

Today's database of conformant products now encompasses intercoms, license plate recognition cameras, and can also include drones, and services such as video surveillance as a service (VSaaS), a reflection of both the growing value of video and the advantages of using cloud solutions. Read the full announcement [here](#).

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5000 Executive Parkway, Suite 302 | San Ramon CA 94583 USA
T: +1.925.275.6690 | info@inventures.com



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