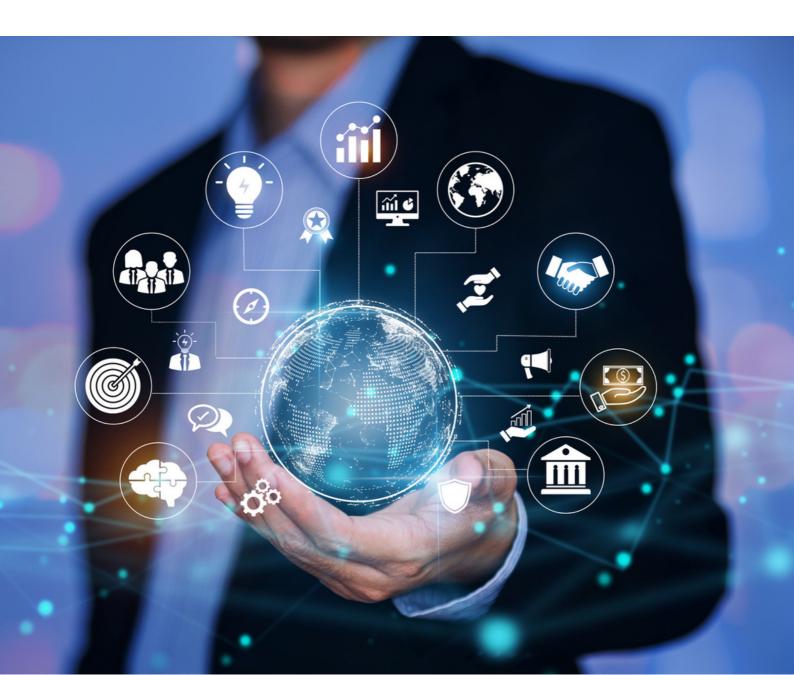# masonadvisory

Insight 1 of 4 - Memberships in the Digital Age: Laying the Technology Foundation for a Digital Association

How can Membership organisations and Professional Bodies best approach improving their technology provision to ensure current services are efficient and effective, whilst laying the foundations for a digital association?

Laying the Technology Foundation for a Digital Association

Common technology problems of Membership organisations and Professional Bodies

Many membership organisations and professional bodies have evolved their technology provision over many years, adding functionality and services that the wider business demands, and acting quickly to provide a good service to their internal customer.

Membership management, fee payments, access to professional development or other training resources, certifications etc. through mobile apps is increasingly recognised as a digital service offering that is expected by digital natives joining these organisations, and the underpinning technology platforms don't necessarily fit well with these ways of interacting.

This has in many cases led to technology decisions and implementations being driven ad-hoc in an effort to keep up and has often driven large amounts of customisation of software. This leads to difficulties in maintaining platforms to supportable software versions.

There is often not the focus or indeed the budget allocated to ensure technology platforms are managed in the optimum way. Over time, exposure to risks – of data loss, bad actor infiltration, poor service and poor reputation to name but a few – becomes increasingly a drain on the resources.

Understand the current state

In many cases, the evolution has been so piecemeal, that the IT department no longer has a full understanding of what it's dealing with.

A comprehensive review of the services offered through the technology - and explicitly which systems, applications, processes
and people combine to provide those services – will enable the IT department to understand the size of the technology problem they may have and equip them with the tools to do something about it.

Reconnect with the wider business

The next step is to dig into what is really required to support the business. Ask yourself – why are we doing this?

By delving into gaining a full understanding of fundamental business processes, the IT function can come to a view on where to focus the most effort in the short-, medium- and long term to bring the technology landscape under control. Armed with this information, they can define strategies to ensure they are able to manage the technology framework correctly, whilst supporting the business needs.

Technology can have a real influence on the actual service offering for member organisations; incoming technologies such as AI can provide services to members not previously considered, and the technology team need to stay
ahead of the game to make sure these are considered in strategic thinking in business as well as IT circles.

Plan out the opportunities for improvement or step-change

Of course, none of this is done in a vacuum, and the business still needs to forge ahead following the business vision and strategy they have defined.

A key element that is often missed in member organisations is that IT management is a part of the business too and has a responsibility to ensure the tools and services provided are secure, robust and fit-for-purpose. It is vital therefore, that the business strategy and IT improvement strategies are complimentary, and work in unison to deliver the ongoing improvements to service, and perhaps transformational programmes of work to make a step-change in IT provision, as well as supporting the business and moving forward appropriately.

Membership organisations and professional bodies, anticipating the future digitalisation of their services, may face a daunting task. However, this challenge becomes considerably easier when the correct steps on the journey are taken. Our experienced consultants, employing our best practice frameworks, can support you swiftly on this journey.

For more information or help on your journey to Membership in the Digital Age, email contact@masonadvisory.com to discuss further.

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About Mason Advisory

Mason Advisory has offices in Manchester and London and employs over 100 staff, with plans to continue its expansion. We enable organisations to deliver value through digital & technology transformation, solving complex business challenges, and helping clients set strategy through the intelligent use of IT resources including architecture, cyber, operating model and organisational design, service management, and sourcing. We operate in sectors such as financial services and insurance, legal and law, government, health and social care, emergency services, retail, FMCG, transport, and not-for-profit.

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