

***Charting the Future
of the International Municipal
Signal Association***



**March 2007
Strategic Planning
Session Report**

Prepared By
SIGHTLINE SOLUTIONS
from vision to results

Consultant's Note and Acknowledgements

Consultants Note

This report is a merely a summary of the discussions held during the International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA) planning retreat in Biloxi, Mississippi on March 14, 2007. While the participants did outstanding work, there was not adequate time to gain consensus on or prioritize specific initiatives or strategies. Additional effort is needed to determine priorities and confirm if all strategies should be included in the plan based on its return on investment for the Association. Even though representatives from the Board and Executive Committee were participants in the planning session, they do not have the authority to commit the Association to the plan. ***Final approval of the plan and authority to move forward with any initiative rests solely with the IMSA Board of Directors.***

Below are the steps necessary to bring the plan to the IMSA Board of Directors for their approval.

Project	Group Responsible	Timeline
Provide summary of strategic planning session to IMSA	Sightline Solutions	March 30
Plan review and feedback	Planning Session Participants	April 1 – April 30
Planning session report will be revised based on feedback	Sightline Solutions	May 7
Plan will be revised to include detailed strategies, timelines, responsibilities and budget impact including the impact of the current RFPs on the plan.	Executive Committee Strategic Management Committee Business Planning Committee Staff	May 7 – July 30

Explore ways to educate the Board on the plan priorities and execute that education.	Executive Committee Strategic Management Committee and Business Plan Committee Chairs	May 7 – July 30
Agree on what action can be taken at the Board meeting.	Executive Committee with input from Strategic Management and Business Planning Committees as well as staff	May 7 – July 30
Present revised plan to the Board of Directors for approval	Executive Committee Staff	August Board meeting

Special thanks to the IMSA leadership and staff that participated in the session, including:

Lenny Addair, Jr.
 Doug Aiken
 Norm Akin
 Lori Blaisdell
 Greg Bothwell
 Sharon Earl
 Don Fullerton
 Jay Heffelfinger
 Lenny Hulme
 Melissa Kinslow
 Steve Knopp
 David Kumke
 Marilyn Lawrence
 Craig McKenzie
 Bill Moroski
 Amanda Santell
 Jan Siedler
 Brian Stotler

The session was facilitated by Sightline Solutions Senior Consultants Leslie Murphy, CAE and Steve Ingram, CAE.

Planning Session Summary

Goal for Session: Reaching consensus on the most important priorities.

Group expectation for this planning session:

- Provide guidance, goals or direction for committee activities.
- Ensuring board discussion and decisions fit into the strategic plan.
- Ensuring our goals and activities measurable against the plan.
- Want to ensure that goals and objectives get set even if not today.
- Defining our destination and key activities we want to accomplish along the way.
- Clarifying the value of membership.

The group then focused on defining IMSA's vision and mission. By consensus, the following were adopted by the participants:

IMSA's Vision

To be the leading international resource for information, education, and certification for public safety.

IMSA's Mission

Dedicated to providing quality certification programs for the safe installation, operation and maintenance of public safety systems; delivering value for members by providing the latest information and education in the industry.

Role Clarification

Participants recognized the need to clarify the role of the Board, Executive Committee, Strategic Management Committee and Business Planning Committee. Such clarification is needed to ensure that decision making is knowledge based and avoid confusion or duplication of effort among various leadership groups. The following are the participants' viewpoints and may not reflect current policy or practice.

IMSA Roles and Responsibilities Comments

Board	Executive Committee	Strategic Management Committee	Business Planning Committee
<p>Establish direction for the Association</p> <p>Provide financial oversight and accountability</p> <p>Represent section members at the international level</p> <p>Board's evaluation of their own performance as well as evaluating Association goals</p> <p>Make decisions to facilitate achievement of goals</p> <p>Serve as ultimate decision makers</p> <p>Set policy, provide leadership and guidance</p> <p>Support staff and Board development</p> <p>Set qualifications for Board members and volunteers</p> <p>Be a champion of Board's decisions</p> <p>Provide proper Board orientation</p> <p>Actively participate</p> <p>Select Executive Director</p> <p>Understand the changing needs of the membership</p>	<p>Represent the Board</p> <p>Makes recommendations to the Board</p> <p>Assist staff between Board meetings</p> <p>Carry out the business of the Association and decisions of the Board between Board meetings as Bylaws prescribe</p> <p>Evaluate Executive Director</p>	<p>Make recommendation to the Board on the establishment of strategic goals and objectives for the future of the Association</p> <p>Monitor progress toward Association goals</p> <p>Periodically reevaluate the efficacy of the goals on the industry, Association and membership</p> <p>Serve as visionaries focusing on long-term issues</p> <p>Focus on results</p>	<p>Look at the financial ramifications of decisions including their return on investment</p> <p>Look at bottom line</p> <p>Evaluate what it is going to take to get to the goals</p> <p>Focus on short-term operations</p> <p>Develop suggestions for implementing goals that include a defined funding method</p>

Strategic Management Committee versus Business Planning Committee

The role clarification discussion prompted participants to ask - Does there need to be two separate committees due to their overlapping work? Also, in the decision making process, how should these Committees be utilized?

Based on the discussion, it was the consensus of the group that maintaining two separate Committees may allow visionary volunteers and analytical volunteers to utilize their strengths more effectively. It was acknowledged that the Board needs solid information to make informed decisions. Therefore, the Board may call on both Committees to provide input before making a decision. At times, the Committee may need to work together to provide that information utilizing their unique skill sets. That does not preclude the Committees from working individually or collectively to provide recommendations to the Board.

How to Keep the Strategic Plan Moving Forward

It will require setting deadlines and accountability then holding all volunteers and staff doing the work accountable.

Identification of Critical Issues

What is the most significant critical issue facing the Association today?

- Adequate resources to accomplish the goals and efficient use of those resources
- Staying in the forefront of certification
- Overall governance structure – process
- Keep up with changing technology
- Keeping certification quality and timely
- Operational efficiency
- Difficulty with change
- Staying focused on vision/mission
- Time and resources to get things done
- Relying too heavily on just one or two products
- Being a recognized “player” in all of interest areas represented by our members’ workplaces
- Keeping up with industry
- Changing the decision making process
- Why does the Association exist?

Key issues from above relate to: relevant certification; governance and operational model; and being a recognized player/leader.

What are the most significant critical issues or trends within the profession today?

- Delivery of information
- Finding and retaining quality employees
- Competition from other sources
- Rapid change in technology
- Privatization
- Rapid change of related industries updating their standards
- Funding issues
- Growth industry but not more resources
- Establishing benchmarks or standards
- Learning/training is being promoted
- Liability and litigation

Key issues from above relate to: education; training; and certification

If we could accomplish just one goal in the next 12 months, what would it be?

- Establish a presence near all the major industry players
- Commit the resources to decide and begin implementing recommendations of the governance and operation study including evaluating the headquarters' facility and location
- Develop and start implementing methods to engage members to be more active
- Identify and build strategic partnerships
- Identify and fund a key individual (volunteer, staff, consultant) to represent IMSA in the transportation field
- Respond to the certification and education issues facing our members
- Communicate expectations for professionalism at all levels
- Evaluate and establish direction in the certification market; including starting to implement the recommendation of the certification and education plan, including certification renewal issues
- Evaluate and develop a plan to keep current with methods to communicate with members and other stakeholders
- Development and presentation of Board 101 training

If we could accomplish one goal in the next 3 years, what would it be?

- Governance and operation structure recommendations are fully funded and implemented
- Become more international in scope
- Create IMSA University and establish online
- Have a viable succession plan for the chief staff officer position
- Evaluate a name change
- Certification and education are fully funded and RFP recommendations implemented

How do we measure success?

- Having a balanced budget without using cash reserves
- Membership feedback on value of the Association
- Membership renewal
- Net gain of membership
- Quality of certification and number of participants
- Focus on goals met (not just what hasn't gotten done)
- What is the return on investment?

Many of the measures of success can already be quantified. The IMSA should develop the following to allow for further measurement of success:

- member participation measures
- partnership measures

Next steps

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Participants agreed the need to emphasize to the Board that this is a process not just a document. That process is only as good as the organizations ability to live and change with it. To help bring this to reality, each Board meeting agenda should include a review of the progress towards the goals. In addition, the vision and mission should be on the agenda as a constant reminder to the Board, Executive Committee as well as other committees and work groups.

What criteria do we use to allocate our limited resources?

Look at the priorities that have the most significant impact on the Association.

IMSA Strategic Plan Draft

IMSA Vision Statement

To be the leading international resource for information, education, and certification for public safety.

IMSA Mission Statement

Dedicated to providing quality certification programs for the safe installation, operation and maintenance of public safety systems; delivering value for members by providing the latest information and education in the industry.

Key Strategic Directions to Accomplish the Vision and Mission

- I. IMSA will build, promote and enhance partnerships and relationships to ensure recognition as the leading source of public safety systems knowledge.
- II. IMSA will meet the needs of the industry by offering a contemporary array of relevant certification and education programs that is valued by members and other stakeholders.
- III. IMSA will facilitate the exchange of relevant, current information between and among members and other stakeholders.
- IV. IMSA will promote the Association internationally.
- V. IMSA will manage its resources, roles, responsibilities in a way to be responsive to the needs of the industry, the membership and to ensure goals are met.

Roles and Responsibilities

The IMSA leadership and staff are responsible and accountable for the implementation of this plan.

The **Board** will focus on:

- Key responsibilities of governance: vision, mission, principles, strategic directions, core services and priorities.
- Organizational outputs: quality, member satisfaction, achievement, support, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency.
- Being actively engaged in overseeing: budgets, accountability, progress and performance.

The **Staff**, with support from the Executive Committee, Strategic Management Committee and Business Planning Committee, will focus on:

- Preparing action plans to accomplish the goals and objectives.
- Preparing budget and resource estimates relative to each initiative.
- Identifying operational issues relative to each initiative.
- Assigning resources (human and financial) to each initiative.

IMSA Strategic Plan – as of March 30, 2007

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES/STRATEGIES	MEASURES	TIMELINE	ASSIGNED TO	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
<p>I. IMSA will build, promote and enhance partnerships and relationships to ensure recognition as the leading source of public safety systems knowledge.</p>	<p><i>I.A. Use <u>current</u> presence in key industry sectors and strategic partnerships to advance the goals of the Association</i></p>	<p>I.A.1. Establish list of current strategic partners and organizations of influence.</p>				
		<p>I.A.2. Identify current and future value to IMSA of current relationships which may include: gaining greater recognition by managers who are their members; as a possible partner for certification and/or education; and, as a possible funding source.</p>				
		<p>I.A.3. Communicate IMSA's value to identified organizations.</p>				
		<p>I.A.4. Establish a work group to develop the ITE presentation for delivery at a joint meeting. (Meeting is scheduled for August 5, 2007 therefore requires early approval and action.)</p>				

	<i>I.B. Create presence in key industry sectors and strategic partnerships to advance the goals of the Association</i>	I.B.1. Identify potential strategic partners and organizations of influence.				
		I.B.2. Identify value to IMSA of new relationships which may include: gaining greater recognition by managers who are their members; as a possible partner for certification and/or education; and, as a possible funding source.				
		I.B.3. Establish a presence with all identified organizations.				
		I.B.4. Identify and develop IMSA representatives that could focus on the transportation or other industry presence and do relationship building training and fund as required.				
		I.B.5. Communicate IMSA's value to identified organizations.				

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES/STRATEGIES	MEASURES	TIMELINE	ASSIGNED TO	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
<p>II. IMSA will meet the needs of the industry by offering a contemporary array of relevant certification and education programs that is valued by members and other stakeholders.</p>	<p><i>II.A. Continually maintain and evaluate direction of certification and programming for quality and relevance.</i></p>	<p>II.A.1. Review, evaluate and execute certification and education study which includes; evaluation of a full internal and external market analysis, analysis of delivery methods, financial analysis and business plan, related governance and instructor structure evaluation.</p>				
		<p>II.A.2. Incorporate recommendations from the certification and education study into the strategic plan.</p>				

	<i>II.B. Routinely evaluate and incorporate as feasible alternative delivery methods including the use of technology into the delivery of certification and programming.</i>	II.B.1. See above reference to certification and education study related to alternative delivery methods.				
		II.B.2. Incorporate recommendations from the certification and education study into the strategic plan.				
		II.B.3. Develop a plan to have IMSA University available.				
	<i>II.C. Continually evaluate and make recommendations on ways to respond more quickly to the certification and education issues facing the membership.</i>					
	<i>II.D. Develop and communicate professional standards that enhances the image of the</i>					

	<i>profession at all levels.</i>					
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STRATEGIC DIRECTION	OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES/STRATEGIES	MEASURES	TIMELINE	ASSIGNED TO	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
III. IMSA will facilitate the exchange of relevant, current information between and among members and other stakeholders.	<i>III.A. Stay current with methods of communication.</i>	III.A.1. Identify and obtain available, relevant information.				
		III.A.2. Identify current and potential avenues to share information among members and other stakeholders.				
		III.A.3. Evaluate and develop a plan to keep current with methods of communicating to members and other stakeholders.				

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES/STRATEGIES	MEASURES	TIMELINE	ASSIGNED TO	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
<p>IV.IMSA will promote the Association internationally.</p>	<p><i>IV.A. Enhance communications with members outside the United States and Canada.</i></p>	<p>IV.A.1. Develop and implement a plan to enhance communications to international members.</p>				
		<p>IV.A.2. Evaluate and develop a plan to become more international in scope. Develop list of potential countries to share information with; review issues of language barriers; contact other international Associations for information on how law and standards violations are handled.</p>				

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES/STRATEGIES	MEASURES	TIMELINE	ASSIGNED TO	BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
V. IMSA will manage its resources, roles, and responsibilities in a way to be responsive to the needs of the industry, and the membership and to ensure goals are met.	<i>V.A. Routinely evaluate and update strategic plan.</i>	V.A.1. Complete and present updated strategic plan to Board for approval.		August 2007		
	<i>V.B. Regularly evaluate and modify governance and operational structures to keep IMSA nimble in its decision making and response to members as well as changes within the industry.</i>	V.B.2. Complete the governance and operational study including; review of governance structure, staff structure and responsibilities, leadership and staff relations, member service, headquarters facility feasibility study, and business practices.				
		V.B.3. Incorporate recommendations from the governance and operational study into the strategic plan.				
		V.B.4. Create a viable succession plan for the Executive Director.				

	<p><i>V.C. Ensure that all Board members know and understand their roles and responsibilities.</i></p>	<p>V.C.1. Develop and present “Board 101” training.</p>				
	<p><i>V.D. Engage members to be more active to aid the Association in meeting its goals.</i></p>	<p>V.D.1. Send letters to management thanking them for supporting participation of their employee. Also identify and communicate the benefits of participation to higher level supervisors.</p>				
		<p>V.D.2. Develop mentoring program for future leaders.</p>				
		<p>V.D.3. Establish working groups that have short-term time limits to get the work of the Association done.</p>				
		<p>V.D.4. Systematically query new members to determine what motivates them.</p>				
		<p>V.D.5. Study impact of IMSA certification in reducing liability to the</p>				

		employer, thus saving them money.				
		V.D.6. Update new member marketing for use by the sections.				
		V.D.7. Create a sample membership recruitment and retention plan that sections can use and modify. (Also remind sections and all members what is available to be used.)				
		V.D.8. Explore what sections are doing related to membership and member involvement. Then share that information with all sections.				
	<i>V.E. Evaluate the image of the IMSA.</i>	V.E.1. Evaluate the current name of the Association in context of the vision and mission.				