

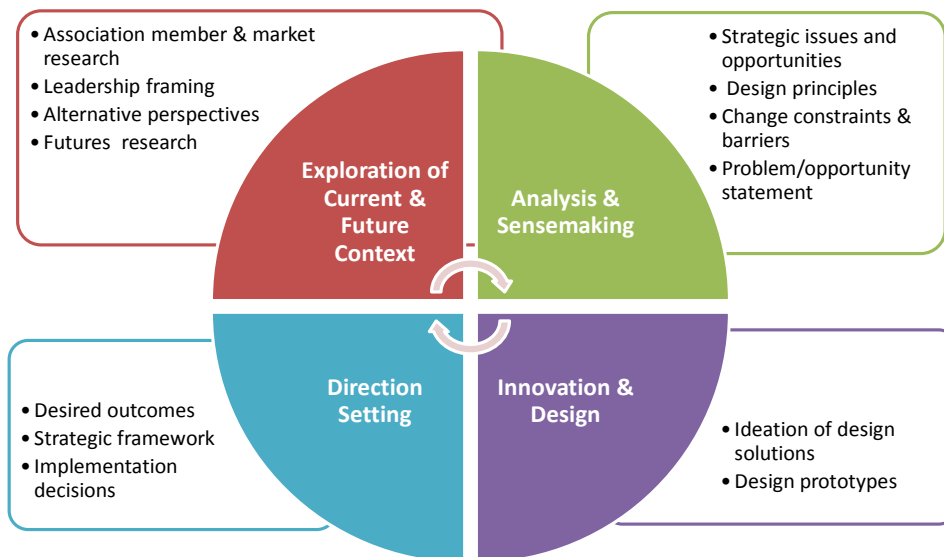
Forward Design for Associations and Nonprofits

Signature i, LLC offers an alternative and innovative methodology for strategic planning and strategy development that helps associations and nonprofits design their organization and programs for greater service and impact. We call this innovative approach *Forward Design*, because we combine futurist processes to learn about and anticipate the future with design thinking to encourage more creative and innovative options.

Forward Design is a systematic and creative process for exploring an organization's current and future context, analyzing strategic issues and opportunities, inviting aspirations for design, and then using this learning to inspire an organization's future.

We kept the best of what has always worked and piloted new processes from design thinking with association executives interested in a fresh approach. Signature i uses Forward Design to develop strategy, conduct strategic planning, and design new programs and initiatives. Five national associations and nonprofits have now tried Forward Design giving us the opportunity to learn, evaluate and revise this new approach with association executives and volunteer leaders. This methodology can be scaled up or down to meet an association's priorities and resources.

Forward Design for Associations & Nonprofits



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Forward Design

We offer this orientation to the steps in Forward Design. In associations and nonprofits, we can often take advantage of typical meetings and engagement processes to accomplish these tasks. We just customize these processes and order them to fit client requirements and schedule.

Exploration of Current and Future Context

1. Association Member and Market Research—analytical review of current association data and programs.
2. Leadership framing—dialogue and discovery processes to discover aspirations and assumptions for the profession and association.
3. Alternative perspectives—probes for different thinking through dialogue with diverse, external or divergent stakeholders.
4. Futures research—systematic search for patterns of significant change to forecast future conditions.

Analysis & Sense making

1. Design principles—expression of aspirations and desired outcomes that set the parameters for what the profession or association should be designed to do.
2. Change constraints & barriers—pragmatic recognition and acceptance of any limitations that must be addressed through design.
3. Problem/Opportunity Statement—clarification and agreement on the focus for innovation and planning.
4. Strategic issues and opportunities—assessment of strategic leadership opportunities for the organization.

Innovation & Design

1. Ideation of design solutions—processes to discover and brainstorm innovative approaches to solve problems or pursue opportunities.
2. Design prototypes—creative images that convey the future direction, structure and capabilities of an organization, program, product or service.

Direction Setting

1. Desired outcomes—agreement on what an organization, program, product or service must achieve.
2. Strategic framework—statement of vision, mission and goals for an organization.
3. Implementation decisions—next steps to execute the new direction and develop and pilot the prototype.

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