

21st Century Membership-based Organizations

Many organizations use the term "association" to reflect some form of affiliation with their constituents; regardless whether or not they align in purpose with those that represent trade, professional or personal avocations. While the term suggests some type of connection, not all organizations operate with the same scope, focus, goals and direction. Those representing various fields of endeavor in our society exist to advance those involved as well as the domain itself.

Membership-based organizations (MBOs) represent a population of eligible individuals and/or organizations that voluntarily join together to promote and protect their mutual interests; advance their body of knowledge through a high-degree of member engagement.

Because MBOs operate differently and because their impact is so significant to the larger society, they deserve their own identity, designation, and model for management. Among all organizations that exist in the nonprofit sector, approximately 155,000 are given the special designation as MBOs.

MBOs, for the most part, are established to secure respect and legitimacy to those involved in a specific and often emergent profession, trade or personal avocation. The founders of MBOs recognize that this could only be accomplished by building the competencies and capacities of all involved. Getting members to share and exchange information is pivotal. For MBOs, members are the primary source of content to building the body of knowledge, standards and norms to advance their field of endeavor. Because of this, MBOs have to create opportunities where members build bonds and trust that transform into meaningful relationships.

MBOs contribute in the following ways...

- developers of human potential
- harbingers of data, information/knowledge
- providers of lifelong learning opportunities
- incubators for innovation
- advocates for collective action
- pioneers in generating shared leadership models

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An MBO-specific Management Model



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