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Trust. Value. **ISACA**®

Evolution of a Strategic Direction

In June 2008, ISACA dedicated itself to developing a strategy that will ensure that the association continues its top-priority focus on member service while also positioning itself as the global leader in information systems assurance and security, enterprise governance of IT, and IT-related risk and compliance, now and in the future.

ISACA is proud of its past—and should be. As an influential, established organization, it has grown dramatically over the past decade and expanded far beyond its origins in information systems audit. This growth has brought with it a multitude of new products and services, a dramatic increase in constituents, and a secure financial base.

But, while it may be tempting to rest on the foundation we have built, we cannot. The association must evolve and adapt to today's dynamics or risk losing its leadership position. We choose the former.

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I have always found it exciting and gratifying to be international president of this wonderful association, but it is especially so in its 40th anniversary year. We have much to celebrate, and we will not hesitate to do so throughout the year, but for now, I ask you not to look at the past, but instead to focus on our future.

In June 2008, ISACA's Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) recognized that it was an opportune time—based on our growth and the extensive diversity of our membership—to revisit our strategy. They recommended that a comprehensive study be done, using outside expertise, to come to know ourselves and our environment better.

But, why now? After all, ISACA® and the IT Governance Institute® (ITGI) have been very successful over the past several years. Why not just keep doing what we have been doing?

It is indeed true that we enjoy some superlative strengths:

- We have experienced several years of growth in membership and certification numbers, and in financial stability.
- We have built a global reputation for leadership in our professional field.
- We are fortunate in having access to an incredibly large and enthusiastic group of volunteers who are always ready to pitch in, whether it be in development of knowledge, standards, conference programs, certification exam questions, *Journal* articles or any other of a number of association activities.

However, in today's world, events and the environment are always changing, and if the organization does not change as well, it can quickly find itself behind the times. For example, the needs of our constituents have changed. The landscape of other organizations in our professional space has changed. The association itself has changed in terms of the way it gets things done. And, of course, the economy has changed.

In acknowledgment of these changes, it is a good time to continue to evolve what has been a successful strategy for us, and position ourselves for the future.

I encourage you to read this briefing carefully to understand our evolving strategic direction, encompassing products, markets and organization. McKinsey & Company provided the supporting research, working from external and internal sources. Not all of the strategy is finalized, and it will certainly be a living “document,” as we retain the flexibility to respond as needed to changing circumstances. However, with the Board of Directors' enthusiastic and unanimous support of the strategy, we believe we have identified a path that will prove beneficial for our constituents and for the association.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize and thank the more than 1,800 members, certification holders, chapter leaders, and key board and committee chairs who participated in the interviews and surveys that guided and informed the strategy development. Between that valuable input, and the many meetings and discussions of the board, SAG and ISACA staff, we feel confident that the conclusions drawn represent the very best thinking of a wide and representative sample of our members and constituents.

Sincerely,

Lynn Lawton, CISA, FBCS CITP, FCA, FIA
ISACA and ITGI International President, 2007-2009

+ Constituent Targets

ISACA's core constituent segments are identified as IT auditors, information security professionals and IT professionals. These three groups collectively constitute more than 75 percent of ISACA's membership, and will continue to receive ISACA's most focused attention. The information security and IT professional constituencies show significant opportunity for membership growth. Meanwhile, chief information officers, executives, business leaders, academics and boards will not be overlooked, as they are core influencers and executive consumers. They play a valuable role in supporting our core members in the delivery of services to their enterprises and communities.

+ Proposed Vision and Mission

ISACA recognizes the value of a clear vision and mission to inspire and align current and future members, volunteers, partners and staff. Because the wording of these key statements is so important, work is still being done to ensure that they convey their messages accurately and succinctly. Generally speaking, they will focus on:

- The trust users and organizations must feel in their information systems, and the value they should realize from them—these are the outcomes of our members' endeavors
- ISACA's leadership position in knowledge, certifications, community, advocacy and education
- ISACA's focus on information systems assurance and security, enterprise governance of IT, and IT-related risk and compliance

The portfolio of initiatives outlined in the strategy and beyond should always reinforce each other and support the stated mission and vision.

+ Strategic Themes

A series of initiatives has been outlined to focus on ISACA's many constituents worldwide. The initiatives will enable ISACA to serve the needs of members; make our intellectual property, especially CoBIT, even more useful; and provide greater opportunities for members to participate in and contribute to ISACA and their profession. The initiatives are grouped within five major strategic themes. The initiatives will be carried out over the next three years, many of them beginning right away and some of the results becoming available by the end of 2009.

- 1. Realize CoBIT's full potential.** *Control Objectives for Information and related Technology* (CoBIT®) is widely known and adopted, giving it a leadership position and favorable brand recognition. To build on that reputation, ISACA will extend the CoBIT family of products through creation of new intellectual property (IP). In addition, existing IP (e.g., on value, information security and risk) will be incorporated under the CoBIT architecture, resulting in a truly holistic IT governance framework. Also, volunteer involvement will be invited, through an open source model, to drive development of CoBIT level three and four controls material.
- 2. Enhance commitment to the core constituency of IT audit and controls.** Constituents' needs have evolved over the past decade; they wish to supplement their understanding of frameworks with very pragmatic, useful

information. The strategy will address this need expressed by ISACA's constituents, including security professionals, through a greater focus on the development of more practical, how-to, benchmark, and topical information, and on input and response to major regulations affecting IT security and controls. More recognition through certificate programs and additional credentialing will also be explored.

- 3. Distinctly serve the certification needs of IT professionals.** As previously noted, IT professionals represent a significant number of individuals—roughly 8.5 million worldwide—many of whom have professional interests and concerns within ISACA's areas of expertise. Additional offerings will be investigated on the topics of using proper IT controls to identify, quantify and manage business and technology risks, and comply with regulations impacting information systems. An enterprise certification based on CoBIT will be explored as well.
- 4. Maximize return on marketing.** Regardless of the economic climate, every organization needs to maximize its return on expenditures. The strategy identifies many opportunities for ISACA to do so in the marketing arena: launching an expanded member retention program, focusing on regional growth efforts, adjusting messages about ISACA certifications, targeting member segments in a more needs-focused way, and leveraging new techniques such as viral marketing to build and enable ISACA's community.
- 5. Build ISACA's capabilities to deliver benefits to its constituents.** As ISACA grows and its constituents' needs continue to diversify, new development and delivery mechanisms must be identified to enable the association to keep up with member needs. Volunteers, long the source of ISACA's development process, find it increasingly difficult to devote long hours to association projects. ISACA's continued growth will require it to rethink some of its approaches, even its branding. ISACA will fully embrace open innovation to develop deeper content and new products, enabling the many members throughout the world who have indicated a desire to volunteer to engage in knowledge creation. ISACA will reach out in a more formal way to partner with other organizations, thereby increasing capacity to create and disseminate knowledge and understanding of issues in our professional space. As the strategy progresses, changes will be made to ISACA's own organizational structure and governance, to enable the association to act and react more quickly and effectively.

+ What's Next

The next steps encompass the hard work of transitioning the strategic initiatives to tactical plans, and weaving those plans into the program of work already scheduled for the year. This effort has already begun and will be reported regularly via the web site and print articles.

Many individuals and groups will be involved in executing the strategy: chapters, key boards and committees, subject matter experts, staff, and a host of others. The support of all those who have participated to date and those whose expertise will be needed in the future is gratefully acknowledged.

