Operating model for a successful alliance

The Synaptic Health Alliance operates as a consortia-led business network. In other words, there is no one party or person in charge and decisions are made by specific functional teams that have been setup within the alliance. It has taken two years since its inception for the alliance to strike the right balance between governance structure, operating model, people and process. The diagram below describes the various teams that form the core operating model of the alliance. These teams are staffed by resources from each alliance member organization. Refer to our governance content here for more details on the alliance teams and their workings.

Financial management

The alliance's operations, including niche solution design efforts are funded via annual membership fees that are paid by member organizations. These membership fees are laid out in the table below. One of the Founding members is appointed as the Alliance Treasurer to maintain the financial books for the Alliance as well as collecting membership dues from its members. The spend decisions and monitoring of the Alliance budget is the responsibility of the Executive team in collaboration with the Operations team and the Product Owner. For example, any member can make spend recommendations which are vetted by the Product Owner and the Operations team in conjunction with the Alliance roadmap. These recommendations and spend requests above a pre-established threshold are reviewed and approved by the Executive team. The Program Manager in collaboration with the Treasurer closely track all Alliance spend and provide financial reporting to the Executive team on a regular basis.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

	Founding	Board	Alliance	Services	Advisory
Annual Fee	$100,000	$100,000	$25,000	$50,000	–
Node Hosting	✓	✓	✓		
Voting Member	✓	✓	Can provide input and feedback, but have no voting power		Can provide expertise and advice, but have no voting power
New Member Approval	✓	✓			Can provide expertise and advice, but have no approval power
Included in Initial Pilot	✓				✓
Governance Strategy Input	✓	✓	Can provide input and feedback, but have no approval power		Can provide expertise and advice, but have no approval power
Master Alliance Agreement Input	✓				Can provide expertise and advice, but have no approval power
Anti-trust Documentation Input	✓				
Chair Alliance Teams	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Create Alliance Delivery Teams	✓	✓			
Propose Alliance Projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Participate in Alliance Teams	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to Source Code	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Rights to Use Production Data	✓	✓	✓		
Ownership Opportunity	✓				
Participate in Strategic Planning	✓	✓	Can provide input and feedback, but have no approval power		
Source Data Contributor	✓	✓	✓		
Maximum Members	6	4	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Use Founding Member Designation	✓				

As the Alliance rolls out business solutions to its members, the cost of operating and using a particular solution will be shared equitably amongst the members who use that solution. Bottomline, the Alliance aims to be financially self-sustaining without needing to make an annual profit from the membership fees or solution development and usage.

Solution development

The Product Owner is responsible for setting the vision for the solution and laying out a roadmap to deliver features and capabilities that will bring business value to the alliance members. Solution design is a collaborative effort that involves the Business Stakeholders team as well as the Technical team. The Product Owner leads regular business requirements or visioning sessions that are focused on current state operational challenges, external market needs and evolving regulatory considerations. Business value generation is kept in the forefront of these discussions to ensure that the solution will meet the needs of the alliance members. The most effective way to ensure this is to identify measurable metrics that will help understand how the proposed solution is being used and translating those measures into business value projections. Solution features are continually identified, documented and prioritized. The Product Owner then decides whether to plan for a business pilot to test out these feature ideas or feed them directly to the Technical team for construction.

Business pilots are conducted regularly to test out solution features and/or hypotheses related to operational processes, business data and value generation. These pilots are usually executed over a short period of time for a specific market and the results are tabulated and analyzed. Once again pilot results have to be based on specific operational process metrics that are then translated into quantifiable business value estimates. These quantified findings are critical in guiding the further design and prioritization of solution features.

Any member can propose a new solution idea to the alliance. Interested members collaborate on writing up a new project proposal that elaborates on the solution idea, potential business benefits, use case scenarios and constituencies that the solution might serve. Project proposals are evaluated by the Operations team for relevancy to the mission and strategic direction of the alliance as well as feasibility of business value generation. Once support for the project proposal is confirmed across more than one member, it is then submitted to the Executive team for approval.

Intellectual property and usage rights

As members collaborate on solution development, they identify components of the solution they are interested in developing and contributing to the alliance. Sometimes the development work and resulting intellectual property ownership rights are shared among the contributing members. In other cases, a single member takes on sole development responsibility and intellectual property ownership. Other members are given usage rights to the solution and its components while they are members of the alliance.

Operational support

The developer of the solution or its components, usually provides ongoing technical and usage support to the other members using it. This includes, but is not limited to onboarding instructions, pre-go-live and post-go-live support, issue reporting and resolution services and testing support. The developer also documents and communicates policies and processes that must be adhered to while using the solution such as data integration specifications, user interface instructions, data file format specifications, supported hours of usage, support contact information etc.

Each member is still responsible for the workings and support of their own blockchain node(s) that are being used to connect to the Synaptic platform. Members might also create their own front-end to the Synaptic solution which could include a customized user interface, a business rules engine, etc.

Summary

Successfully operating and developing solutions within an alliance is a team sport, which requires collaboration and consensus building at every stage. Governance roles, processes and policies should be clearly defined. Strong and accountable financial management is a foundational must-have. New solution ideas need to be vetted and should benefit more than one member. Development and testing work need to be shared by members interested in using the proposed solution. Solution features need to be evaluated and prioritized based on feasibility and business value opportunity. Intellectual property and usage rights need to be clearly agreed to early and often. Success factors and business metrics need to be identified, measured and reported regularly. And finally exit strategies, policies and processes should be documented well in advance of them being needed.

To learn more about the Synaptic Health Alliance,
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