



## A new year, new reflections



The start of a new year is always worth celebrating. We celebrate the achievements of the previous year. We also celebrate making it through the previous year's challenges and, with optimism, look forward to twelve more fruitful months ahead. However, the fact that a year of our life has just passed by also usually leads to introspection. We question our decisions, actions, ambitions (or lack thereof), as well as many other things we have done or not done in the previous year. The start of the year is an ideal time to reflect on the past and anticipate the future. Hence, the tradition of the New Year resolutions, which are meant to motivate us to do better than what we have done in the past. These resolutions come through self-reflection; we make these resolutions based on the inadequacies that we have acknowledged exist within us.

Self-reflection is about questioning, in a positive way, what we do and why we do it and then deciding whether there is a better, or more efficient way of doing it in the future. Because this process is like looking into a mirror and describing what you see, it is not an easy process; it does not come naturally and can even be painful at times.

Self-reflection and self-appraisal is not limited to individuals, but also applies to organizations. It is vital for organizations to occasionally stop and think about where they are coming from and where they want to be in the future. This is essential for effectively and efficiently strategizing for the bigger picture and for the future. Organizational appraisal and analysis involve an intense examination of the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, identifying gaps in performance between what the organization would like to achieve and what it is actually achieving. Linking the strengths and weaknesses to environmental opportunities and threats can be an effective method of strategic decision-making. From a value perspective, this is essentially recognizing what is not in alignment, disclosing the challenge, and seeking a solution. Although organizational appraisals are not easy; requiring careful planning, consultations, and endless meetings, they become more relevant during volatile times in a changing industrial landscape and when successfully conducted, yield huge returns.

In the past month, the SAIMM embarked on a retrospective analysis. The new year might be the right time for the Institute to forge ahead with this initiative by taking a good look at its current offerings and position within the mining and metallurgical industry, especially since the industrial landscape is changing. It might be a good time to look at both the internal experiences and the external environment through fresh New Year-ready eyes. Maybe it is the time to assess, in detail, the Institute's strengths and weaknesses and to ask some difficult questions. Is the Institute still relevant and doing right by its members? Is it doing what it does in an impactful way? Is it engaged with the members and the industry that it serves? Is it aligned with current events in the industry? How does it position itself so that it is always ready for the changes happening in the industry? Is it meeting the member needs? What are members' perceptions of the Institute? Do they identify with the Institute? These are some of the questions the SAIMM might need to consider as it looks to the future.

As with the reflection that you don't want to see in the mirror, the answers might be hard to swallow. However, change for the better will only come through asking difficult questions, having the courage to answer them honestly, and doing something positive with those answers.

The answers we get might mean that the Institute needs to change what it does and the way it does things. But nevertheless, its core focus and purpose must be maintained. If we don't do this, we run the risk of mission-drift. Purpose is what drives us but holding on to that purpose does not mean that our journey to that purpose shies away from essential and meaningful turns. The start of the year might be that pivotal point where, as an Institute, we embrace that sense of readiness and purpose in order to refresh the SAIMM's aspirations and approach to serving and meeting the needs of its members.

A very happy and productive 2018 to you all!

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