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Version: 1.0

Affinity Group Policy

PLMA Affinity Groups are a forum for member practitioners with a common set of characteristics to have a place for sharing, interacting, and making improvements to their working environment, careers, community, or PLMA. This policy provides information to PLMA Affinity Group members and leaders.

Summary

PLMA desires that Affinity Groups have the following attributes:

- Support and enhance the mission, vision, and values of the PLMA organization.
- Comply with the PLMA Code of Conduct: Antitrust, Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Whistleblower policies.
- Comply with the Code of Conduct: Anti-Harassment and Conference Promotion Policies.
- PLMA Affinity Group membership shall be open to all interested PLMA member practitioners without restriction. Participation is voluntary and isn't contingent upon race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, or military service.
- PLMA Affinity Group sponsored events shall be:
 - Open to all PLMA Affinity Group members without restriction.
 - May include events that are open to all PLMA member practitioners or PLMA audiences.
 - Conducted in a professional manner. Presentations and discussion at Affinity Group events shall use the Presenter Policy and Co-Chair Roles as guidelines.

Affinity Group Formation

Affinity Groups shall be formed by PLMA member practitioners as follows:

- PLMA member practitioner(s) provide the Executive Committee with a written proposal to form an Affinity Group. The proposal shall include a statement of the group objectives; alignment with PLMA's goals and objectives; the first year's event plan and milestones; and the Affinity Group's proposed leadership.
- PLMA member practitioners present the proposal at a PLMA Executive Committee meeting.
- The Executive Committee shall evaluate the proposal and work with the Affinity Group to establish a final charter and structure. The Affinity Group charter shall include and address the following:
 - Purpose
 - Objectives
 - Alignment with PLMA Mission, Vision, and Values
 - Leadership (Executive Committee Sponsor, Chair, Co-Chair(s))
- Affinity Group formation will be approved by majority vote of the Executive Committee.

- Every year, the Affinity Group’s leadership and the PLMA Executive Committee will review the progress and health of the group with focus on opportunities to continue as is, modify, expand, or sunset the group.

Affinity Group Leadership

It is recommended that two to three people take on the leadership role of an Affinity Group. This structure provides for collaboration and consistent transition of leadership.

- Affinity Group leaders shall be assigned the role of Co-Chair(s). The Co-Chair(s) can be organized with joint Co-Chair responsibility, or in a Chair and Vice Chair relationship.
- Leadership of an Affinity Group should provide a cross-section of PLMA membership interested in the Affinity Group’s charter (e.g., one utility and one vendor as Co-Chairs).
- A Co-Chair(s)’ commitment responsibility should be at least one year, as long as the Co-Chair(s)’ own member organization remains in good standing with PLMA.
- Affinity Group Co-Chair(s) shall have a succession plan such that there is consistency in leadership. The Affinity Group Co-Chair(s) shall be responsible for recruiting and proposing leadership changes to the Executive Committee for review and approval.
- The Affinity Group Co-Chair(s) shall identify and recruit an Executive Committee member to act as their Executive Committee “liaison” and to support the activities of the Affinity Group.

Affinity Group Leadership Responsibilities

The Affinity Group Co-Chair(s) have the responsibility to organize and run their group’s sessions, events, and meetings. They shall also have the following responsibilities:

- Recruit and support the development of the constituency group members that they serve.
- Present a summary of the activities and accomplishments of the group at PLMA’s Spring and Fall Board Meetings. Prepare materials (slides, etc.) to be included in the Board Meeting package.
- Create an annual plan of activities for their Affinity Group. This plan shall include any PLMA funds or support required, and also address the Affinity Group’s leadership succession plan. The schedule for the Annual Plan is as follows:
 - Quarter 3: Provide materials to the Executive Committee for review and approval processing.
 - Quarter 4: Present the Annual Plan at the Fall Board Meeting.
- Plan, organize, and conduct at least two PLMA events or meetings annually of the Affinity Group members.
- Prepare meeting notes and summary information for posting on the Affinity Group portal. This includes the collection of presentations, reports, white papers, and other applicable resources for the group’s Resource Library.
- Provide information for the Affinity Group portal page that includes the group mission, charter, objectives.
- Oversee the group portal page content, forums, discussions, and communications.

- The group mission, charter, and objectives shall be reviewed at least annually and updated as needed.
- Affinity Group Co-Chair(s) shall be responsible for addressing an Affinity Group member practitioner's concern or complaint concerning any violation of the PLMA Code of Conduct.
 - If the Co-Chair(s) cannot resolve the concern or complaint, it shall be escalated as follows in order: Executive Committee Sponsor, Executive Director.
 - If the Co-Chair(s) are involved in the concern or complaint, a group member may direct their concern as follows, in this order: Executive Committee Sponsor, Executive Director.
 - Any concern or complaint that cannot be resolved at the Executive Director's level, or lower, will be resolved by a quorum of the PLMA Officers.

PLMA Staff Responsibilities

The PLMA Staff shall support the function and operation of all PLMA Affinity Groups. The support includes:

- Logistics scheduling of events and meetings, both online and in person,
- Coordination with other Affinity Groups,
- Preparation and update of the Affinity Group information portal,
- Group member management and onboarding,
- Training group leadership in administration and management of the group portal and resources.

Document Revision History

Date	Version	Person	Change/ Modification Description
19 Aug 21	0.56	JEC	Initial Draft
27 Aug 21	.56	JEC	Women in DM Review
8 Sept 21	.6	JEC	Officer Review and Edits
10 Oct 21	.76	JEC	Executive Committee Review
19 Oct 21	1.0	JEC	Approved by Executive Committee

Notes: Items with black font have been completed. Items with shaded font are planned.