

HBA Member Networks Policy

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HBA maintains a defined set of member networks (formerly known as: affinity groups) that address the needs and deliver value to subgroups within our membership. Member Network participation is a member value add, and members may join any number of groups. Effective setup and leadership of these groups are critical to their success.

HBA's member network policies define how new groups are established within the HBA and when, why, and how legacy groups are discontinued.

Policy users

This policy should be adhered to by all HBA members and HBA leaders, including all levels of board members, regional directors, functional area presidents, regional council members, global committees and their chairs, member network committees and volunteers.

Definition of a Member Network

Member Networks are self-forming communities of HBA members that connect through a common interest, focus, or need associated with their career and professional development. Member Networks provide additional value for members from professional networking, development and career support with a specific specialty or focus. Member Network participation as either a member or as a volunteer is limited to HBA members only.

Member Networks offer a variety of ways to be involved and engage, including: virtual communities for discussion and dialogue; in-person or virtual events focused on group-specific information and education; networking and development opportunities for members within their HBA chapter and/or local geography; platforms for members to share their work and accomplishments.

HBA members have the exclusive opportunity to participate in one or many member networks based on their individual professional needs. HBA members can move in and out of the groups per their individual professional needs. Any HBA member can attend any affinity group event, regardless of being a registered member of the member network. To be a member of an HBA Member Network, members must belong to the respective HBA community.

Member Network Operations

HBA Member Networks are self-managed in accordance with HBA operating policies and procedures and under the guise of a global committee chair, who sets overarching strategic direction and priorities for group and facilitates collaboration and coordination. The global committee chair works directly with a member of the HBA senior staff to ensure alignment of the group's activities with HBA's mission, values, and priorities. The primary HBA staff contacts for global affinity group chairs include HBA's Senior Manager of Member Programs.

Established member networks are led by a global AG chair volunteer leader who sits within the Global Affinity Group Committee 'reporting' to the global committee chair. The global AG chair

forms and manages their own volunteer committee and ensures compliance with HBA central operating policies and procedures.

Member Networks may offer programs or events providing specific information, education, and/or access to relevant industry leaders related to their specific focus.

Member Network events are planned and executed at the global level by the affinity group volunteers under the auspices and guidance of the affinity group global chair and AG director of education and events. Events must adhere to all HBA event policies.

Established Member Networks

Established Member Networks are shown on HBA's website www.hbanet.org/affinity-groups. Communities that are in the formation stages are added to that website page once they are approved, branded, and officially announced.

Establishing New Member Networks

Every member network begins as an HBA community. The HBA will establish member networks where there is sufficient member interest within that community. At least 200 members in a community must demonstrate an interest in order for an affinity group to be considered for global status.

New groups must move through four stages of formation to ensure there is both member interest and leadership capacity for the group to be successful. HBA staff work with interested members through these stages of formation.

Groups that successfully complete the formation stages must present an action plan for the affinity group to the HBA Senior Manager of Member Programs. HBA staff leaders make the final determination on the member network status and will establish the official member network name.

HBA's Senior Manager of Member Programs will also:

- coordinate the launching of the new member network
- coordinate the announcement of the new group across the HBA membership
- introduce the new member network global chair to the global committee chair and committee.

Formation stages for new Member Networks

Member Networks must complete the following four formation stages:

Establish interest: HBA members interested in forming a member network connect and discuss the opportunity with other members to assess the level of interest. These members are encouraged to use the HBA community to create awareness and identify interest in the new group. Arranging informal networking and/or meet-up sessions helps build awareness and interest.

Designate a leader: at least one group member must agree to act as an interim group leader for the member network and work with group members to create goals and objectives for the group. This leader works with HBA Senior Manager of Member Programs to understand best practices regarding building a member network.

Organize Member Network event: the interim group leader, along with a few volunteers, coordinate the planning and execution of a group event – virtual or in-person – to assess and demonstrate member interest in the group. This event committee, works with their regional marketing committees, to promote the event and work among themselves to plan and execute this event according to HBA event policies.

Present Member Network proposal: Once there are 200 members in the community, the interim group leader, along with some group members, as appropriate, will prepare and submit a proposal for establishing the new member network to the HBA Senior Manager.

Proposal should include:

- the goals and objectives of the group
- recommendations for a group name
- recommendations for the group leader and identification of committee members
- an action plan for the next twelve (12) months describing thoughts and ideas for group events and member experiences
- a summary of the inaugural group event

Terminating Member Networks

HBA maintains a defined set of Member Networks that address the needs and deliver value to subgroups within the membership.

Once established, Member Networks will continue as sanctioned groups as long as the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The group should have at least 200 active members participating in at least three regions. “Active” is defined as individuals attending events, working on affinity group committees, and supporting/engaging in group discussion via the HBA online community.
2. Member Network leaders are actively participating in their group’s committee meetings.
3. There are at least five (5) volunteers on their leadership team.
4. Each affinity group must offer at least two (2) events per year, in-person or virtually, to group members. These events can be an ‘HBA event’, planned and executed by HBA members or done in partnership with a region or chapter which shares the member network focus.
5. HBA member network events should at least break even financially.
6. The HBA online community for the affinity group should demonstrate frequent, relevant dialogue among members (target goal - at least one post a month).

Member Network participation and performance will be assessed periodically. Member networks that fail to meet fifty percent (50%) of the stated criteria will be put into probationary status and are at risk of being dissolved.

The probationary period can extend up to six months. While in the probationary period, member network leaders will be encouraged to work with HBA Senior Manager of Member Programs to address group shortfalls. If at the end of the six-month (6) probationary period, participation and performance have not improved, the member network will be dissolved.

Affinity group governance

HBA Senior Manager of Member Programs is responsible to establish and appoint global chairs for each affinity group. Global chairs are generally appointed when there are three (3) or more affinity

groups up and running¹. The global chair sets overarching strategy and priorities for their affinity group and facilitates collaboration and coordination across the regions. The global chair works directly with the HBA Senior Manager of Member Programs to ensure alignment of the group's activities with HBA's mission, values, and priorities and is a participating member of the global affinity group committee.

Member Network Global Chairs are approved and appointed by the HBA Senior Manager of Member Programs in collaboration with the global affinity group committee chair.

Compliance tracking

Member Network membership counts and event performance will be reviewed annually by the HBA. Additionally, the global committee chair will be asked to provide qualitative assessments of performance. The quantitative and qualitative data will be used to evaluate member networks' compliance with continuation criteria.
