

# MNLA STRATEGIC PLAN

## *Executive Summary 2017-2020*

**Governance:** MNLA will be an association whose governing and operating structures are nimble and agile enough to seize opportunities and respond to challenges in an extremely timely fashion.

### Key Points:

- a. Maintain the existing seven committees: Board Development, Education and Certification; Government Affairs; Membership; Networking; Communications and Technology; and Trade Show. Explore the potential to expand the committee structure by a maximum of two new standing committees that are issue-focused or defined by knowledge areas such as water use, etc.
- b. Establish additional Task Forces, when appropriate, to work on time-limited and project-specific issues to offer further opportunities for member volunteer service, input and involvement.
- c. Continue grassroots input via industry segment networking groups and task team/town hall meetings.
- d. Identify opportunities to build more formal leadership development pathways for members.
- e. Balance desired level of member involvement with the timing of their business cycles and their limited available time for volunteer activities.
- f. Maintain a rigorous Board member screening process.

**Education:** MNLA will offer educational opportunities for members to enhance their business acumen through an agile and progressive educational program decision-making process.

### Key Points:

- a. MNLA to assess feasibility of, assemble, and implement a long-term plan to furnish industry workforce development.
  - i. Offer specialized educational/trade show events for niche markets.
  - ii. Develop and offer specialized educational programs on topics including human resource management, succession planning and other critical business issues.
  - iii. Explore opportunities to collaborate with other organizations to offer education, training and resources focusing on critical issues impacting small businesses. Initial groups to consider include SCORE, the Small Business Development Centers and the Minnesota Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management.
  - iv. Re-evaluate the Certification program to focus on developing individual skills to improve member businesses, not just individual knowledge of horticultural topics. Certification could be re-focused to better reflect necessary skills to move along career pathways and build business-related skills.
  - v. Create targeted opportunities to expose member employees to the benefits and value of MNLA including pathways for career training, certification and volunteer opportunities.

**Government Affairs:** MNLA's government affairs program will advocate for the interests of MNLA's members.

Key Points:

- a. Be a prominent resource for lawmakers on environmental, agricultural, construction, and small business issues.
- b. Take a proactive role in shaping the narrative on critical public policy issues, improve public understanding and effectively express MNLA member concerns about issues being discussed.
- c. Improve communication and create venues for members to interact with association leaders on government affairs.
- d. Continue to grow the association's capacity to influence regulations affecting members.
- e. Build coalitions with other like-minded organizations to amplify the MNLA message and share resources to impact public policy.
- f. Develop a well-thought out grassroots outreach program to provide members with effective skills to bring forward MNLA positions and more effectively influence public policy at all levels of government.
- g. Utilize social media and other technology to engage with interested parties and provide short snippets of information on key public policy issues.

**Business Connections:** MNLA will become *the catalyst* to help members and related professionals build business opportunities, foster industry camaraderie, and provide a fun atmosphere.

Key Points:

- a. Continue to emphasize small groups as the cornerstone for business connections and to encourage CEO-level networking.
- b. Reformat networking opportunities to focus on multi-purpose meetings designed to link committee/task force activities with social networking events.
- c. Utilize short-term Task Forces to engage members on important initiatives.
- d. Establish a Mentoring program to enhance member development and build deeper connections among members.

**Membership:** MNLA will be an association that green industry companies aspire to join because it represents professionalism and prestige, as well as because it provides a competitive business edge through education, government affairs, access to information, business connections and leadership development.

Key Points:

- a. Incorporate best practices into all areas of MNLA enterprise operation, leadership and programming.
- b. Demonstrate the value of membership in MNLA through offering high quality programs, effective governmental affairs efforts and by capturing member testimonials.
- c. Continue to enhance member professionalism and prestige by using a clear set of standards/expectations for being a member.

- d. Identify opportunities to build a strong MNLA community in which members take pride in being part of something bigger than their own enterprise.
- e. Explore opportunities to promote the Green Industry Leadership Institute (GILI) program to members and their employees through exposure at MNLA events and in all communication vehicles.
- f. Develop a GILI Alumni group to provide a next step of engagement for graduates of the program in order to continue to develop their leadership skills, deepen their long-term relationship with MNLA, and build relationships with each other. This will be done by involving them in key committee and task force activities or a special project.
- g. Develop a GILI phase 2 program both for GILI alumni and for those wishing to explore an alternate, lower cost leadership model.
- a. Collaborate with the MNLA Foundation to support their efforts to promote careers in the green industry and support other identified activities such as collaborating with organizations focused on young people involved in agriculture-related groups such as 4-H and Future Farmers of America.

**Information, Marketing and Communications:** MNLA will be a critical hub for members to access vital and unique knowledge.

*Key Points:*

- b. Provide access to vital information that MNLA members can rely on in areas including business trends; industry analytics; pertinent research results; and regulatory compliance.
- c. Be a critical information hub for members to access marketing expertise, tools and techniques designed to enhance their business success.
- d. Provide vital and unique knowledge through online resources via a clear and easy to navigate members-only website portal.
- e. Provide members with research and insight on changing consumer trends and how to better utilize emerging communications tools to reach their customers.
- f. Consistently review and analyze member communication approaches to ensure resources are timely, succinct and relevant.
- g. Enhance MNLA's social media presence to take advantage of the wider range of options including LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, as well as use of memes, video, podcasting and other emerging tools or techniques.
- h. Evaluate the potential to develop an outreach program to Millennials to assist in building member insight and understanding of this new group of consumers.
- i. Continue to serve as a conduit to members about key environmental stewardship to lead the dialogue on evolving opportunities and in how they conduct their business operations.