



**Member Engagement Session**  
**Friday, April 19, 2024**  
**8:15 am - 10:00 am**  
**Mayflower Park Hotel**  
**Seattle, WA**

The Strategic Alignment Task Force hosted a 90-minute member engagement session on the second day of the Spring Member Meeting. The session immediately followed brief business announcements on Friday morning.

The session agenda had three key elements:

1. Hearing highlights from the recent member survey
2. Discussing key strategic questions the survey raises
3. Reviewing each other's feedback from small-group discussions

We assigned members to one of 8 tables, each hosted by a board member, to ensure a mix of perspectives in each discussion. [See the groups here.](#)

The slides that follow show a lightly edited version of the session presentation, with photos of the written small-group reports included.

# Strategic Alignment Task Force

Carlyn Madden & Tom O'Connor, Co-Chairs

John Tarvin, Board Chair

Agnes Zach, Treasurer

Gabriel Lucas, Program Committee Co-Chair

Michelle Hynes, Facilitator and Consultant

Johnny Hadlock, Association Manager

## Our Charges

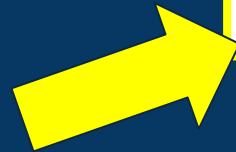
1. Ensure that NNSC's priorities and programs are aligned with member needs and interests, and are resourced accordingly.
2. Spare everyone an exhausting Strategic Planning process.

The survey

Half-day executive  
committee  
meeting

Today's  
conversation

Updates and  
recommendations in  
October



Our main goal for this time is to **gather input** that:

- (1) adds texture to the survey responses, and
- (2) helps inform short-term strategic priorities.



## Over the next 90 minutes we will –

- Hear highlights from the member survey
- Discuss reactions, questions, ideas related to NNSC priorities and value
- Summarize & share your feedback
- Identify next steps



**18**

**19**

## Highlights from the Survey



# NNSC Strategic Planning Survey

- Deployed March 2024: 61% response, 49 of 80 members
- Sections:
  - Personal Data & Views on the Field
  - Membership Satisfaction
  - Member Participation
  - Value Proposition

These survey results will enable the Board to make decisions where alignment is clear, and invite further input where questions remain.

# Key Findings: About the Respondents

- 55% of members have 10+ years in their positions – experienced, tenured members
- 4 out of 5 respondents were firm owners
- Nearly half of respondent firms work on 10-30 searches/year
- A quarter of respondents have been with NNSC 10+ years, and more than half for 5+ years, representing our recent growth in the research sample
- Nearly half cited the membership size as “just right,” with a clear desire in the comments to maintain the intimacy of its earlier, smaller form while providing an inclusive welcome and sense of belonging at its larger size

# Key Findings: Business Concerns & Interests

- Main Concerns Expressed
  - Succession Planning
  - Scaling Business Growth
  - Advancement of AI
  - Increased Search Competition
- Value Proposition of NNSC: Interest and Satisfaction Aligned
  - Networking
  - Community
  - Professional Development
  - Best Practices

# Key Findings: NNSC Satisfaction & Opportunities

- Conference & Zoom Meeting Participation
  - Over 90% have attended 1+ conferences in the past two years
  - 68% have attended 2+ conferences in the same period
  - Approximately 75% either frequently or occasionally attend the Member Zoom Meetings
- Additional Resources
  - Overwhelming interest in additional conference-related professional development and prioritization of owners' calls
  - 80%+ were interested in a direct communications tool for Members
  - Scattered interest in regional meetings in addition to national (resources pending, both volunteer and paid)

# Key Findings: NNSC Satisfaction & Opportunities

98% are Satisfied/Somewhat Satisfied (free hugs for the 2%), with high rates citing a sense of belonging.

Overall, the survey provides clarity that **NNSC is a powerful and unique network within our niche industry.**

There is a strong openness to an increase in dues (average cited was \$829), provided we align value with increased costs, and a clear and transparent financial plan.



[Here's a full summary of the survey results,](#)

authored by Carlyn for members. This document was shared with all members following the April 19 meeting, rather than expecting everyone to digest all the detail in a short session.



We invited people to talk at their tables to raise any questions they had about the survey findings. Then, we passed the mic for Q/A. Carlyn took about a half-dozen questions.



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**Discussing Key Strategic Questions**

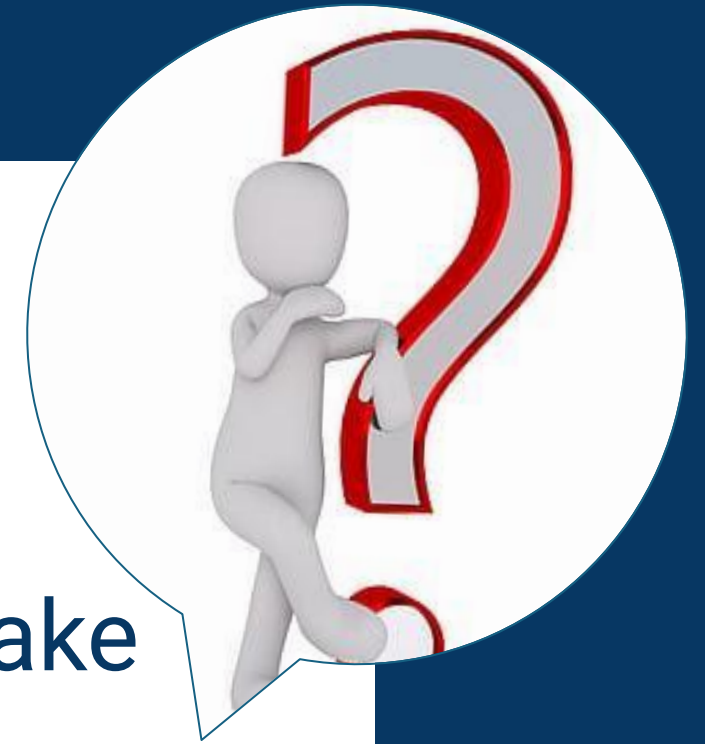




**Let's discuss!**

## We're inviting you to –

- Stay curious.
- Listen to each other's perspectives.
- Add your voice, and step back to make space for others.
- Accept that we will leave with some questions that need more discussion.



## Discussion x 30 minutes

- NNSC currently has about 80 members, all of whom handle retained search for nonprofit organizations. The Board does not have any intention to grow NNSC purely for growth's sake; but we are interested in knowing:  
(1) What do you want to be true about NNSC no matter the size? (2) What could be the benefits of a bigger NNSC? (3) What do you want to make sure is not lost from our time as a smaller NNSC?
- What would you like to see NNSC do **more of** over the next year? What about **less of**?
- What affinity groups could best serve the members we have now, and respond to your top concerns related to both your firms and our evolving field?

## Group Instructions

Your group will probably only have time to tackle one question during the 30-minute discussion. So that we are sure to hear some feedback on each question, we are asking that each group start in a different place, as indicated below. Thanks so much!

<p><u>Groups 1, 2, and 3 please start with:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NNSC currently has about 80 members, all of whom handle retained search for nonprofit organizations. The Board does not have any intention to grow NNSC purely for growth's sake, but we are interested in knowing: (1) What do you want to be true about NNSC no matter the size? (2) What could be the benefits of a bigger NNSC? (3) What do you want to make sure is not lost from our time as a smaller NNSC?</li></ul>	<p><u>Groups 4 and 5 please start with:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What would you like to see NNSC do <b>more of</b> over the next year? What about <b>less of</b>?</li></ul>
	<p><u>Groups 6, 7 and 8 please start with:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What <b>affinity groups</b> could best serve the members we have now, and respond to your top concerns related to both your firms and our evolving field?</li></ul>



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**Reviewing Each Other's Feedback**



Every group reported back in this format.

**Group #**  
**Question(s)**

We agreed that ...

We disagreed about ...

We recommend ...

We wonder....

Anything else?



**8 minutes**

**Gallery Walk!**



## **Group Responses: Size & Growth**

NNSC currently has about 80 members, all of whom handle retained search for nonprofit organizations. The Board does not have any intention to grow NNSC purely for growth's sake, but we are interested in knowing:

- (1) What do you want to be true about NNSC no matter the size?
- (2) What could be the benefits of a bigger NNSC?
- (3) What do you want to make sure is not lost from our time as a smaller NNSC?

group #1

# Question 1

**Agreed:** Keep trust, generous spirit, transparency, non-profit/public good/impact focus, centering the Code of Ethics, Commitment to member quality  
*FUN! (Jazz Hands)* Not worried about RFP competition in NN3C

**Disagreed:** ∅

**We Recommend:** Focus on diversity in growth, more presence of indigenous voices, Code of Ethics getting an increased focus; More assigned seating!

**We Wonder:** How do we best on-board members?  
What the perfect seat size is?  
How we enhance the member opportunities at different levels?  
How do AESC's evolving offerings impact us?

**Anything Else?** Why wouldn't someone want to join NN3C?!

# What's true... Benefits of bigger... Don't lose...

We  
Agreed  
That

Spirit of generosity  
Trust + reciprocity  
Trade secrets - keeping secrets  
Shared best practices  
Attributing good work

True experts  
Financial benefits  
• Sponsorships  
• Paid speakers  
• Credentialing  
Visibility among  
prospective clients  
RFPs  
Sponsorships  
Clearing house @ scale  
Standardization/  
templates

We  
Disagreed  
About

Scarcity vs abundance  
~~Exclusivity~~  
Exclusivity

We  
Recommend

Statement of values  
Affinity groups  
More resources for firm owners

Onboarding  
membership pipeline  
(pathway)

Anything  
Else?

TABLE 3 (three)

## WE AGREE :

- DON'T LOSE THE POWER OF  
CAMERAD~~ERIE~~IE! DO NOT JUDGE  
OUR SPELLING
- NON PROFIT FOCUS
- 

## WE RECOMMEND

- COHORT OF NEWER MEMBERS IN  
THE FIELD
- FORUM TO DISCUSS BUSINESS OF THE BUSINESS
- SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF:
  - SUCCESSION PLANNING
  - CONTRACT TERMS
  - PAL TEMPLATES
- NNSC OUTPUT / SHARED THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
- SALARY DATA

## **Group Responses: More/Less**

What would you like to see NNSC do **more of** over the next year? What about **less of**?

## > Group # 4

> Question: What would you like to see NNSC do more of over the next year?  
What about less of?

- Fireside Chats - experienced Recruiters with  $\frac{1}{1}$  panelist
- Day before for new members consultants + guests to learn from organizational leaders - Ambassador or Mentor
- Dedicated session for wisdom + newer - young professionals
- Less late dining

Q2

We Agreed We would like to see NNSC do more of...

- Continue to build the online member library, including
  - White papers
  - Salary Surveys [exp AFPs annual report]
  - link to articles
- AI tools
- list of executive coaches
- Trends

More Df: AI, Grab bags, Views,  
Conference in the Accommodation

Less Df: Lack of room to spread out

More of:

- sharing of ideas / think tank
- more vetting of members?
- driving business to member firms  
↳ marketing, networking etc
- member consultation

~~brand NNSC~~

brand NNSC as best-in-  
class → ethical code

## Question 2

more:

List-serv format for questions  
and communication

Affinity Meetings

Principals

Marketing

Operations/mechanics

Research/Sourcing

Regional

Future Looking

Trends

Look beyond search (?)

Less-

Emails

1 Room Meetings

Wonder-

What is our mission?

Non-Dues Revenue

Where do we incubate new  
ideas/publish ideas



## **Group Responses: Affinity**

What **affinity groups** could best serve the members we have now, and respond to your top concerns related to both your firms and our evolving field?



What we agreed? <sup>Yes to A.G.</sup>

Topics: (A.G.) New <sup>to user</sup>, owners, specialty search groups, BIPOC (or ask type), research, AI/Tech, Legal, support staff (marketing, etc.)

What we disagreed?  
Point of clarification, do A.G. groups also serve as a 'program'

We recommend? <sup>regional A.G.</sup>

② For owner group or search co. have or quantify size, length of service

③ Pilot <sup>regional</sup> A.G. first to test + evaluate

Anything else?

① If we do A.G. by region, how do we determine? (where firm is based, clients are, where staff lives, or enough representation)

② How do we evaluate + measure success, #, structure

3. Affinity groups - Don't like word  
Geographic/no  
Business owners  
Recruiters  
Ops / Research / Finance  
BIPOC

Q3

We agreed: Affinity groups would  
add value

We recommend: Several options

- IT, tech
- Finance, opps.
- Marcom
- topics/groups by sector (i.e. arts,  
| higher ed, etc.)
  - by role/function (i.e. CFO, MG, ED)
- hiring + training search consultants
- succession planning - firm owners +  
those next in line
- search implementation (by topic - i.e.  
offer negotiations)
- other PD topics - DEI

Group 4

Question: What affinity groups could best serve the members we now have and respond to your top concerns related to both your firms and our evolving field?

Spotlight on change makers - feature a story or leader who is making a difference



**What did you  
notice?**

**Before taking a break:**

*How are you feeling now?*

**The next session begins at 10:15.**

Thank you!



# NNSC

NETWORK OF NONPROFIT  
SEARCH CONSULTANTS