



# CSIA Peer Group Guidelines

May 20, 2015

## Introduction

CSIA wants to provide an environment where peer groups can form to provide a deeper experience for its members. To help facilitate this and build on the experiences of the current peer groups, these guidelines are provided to those wishing to start a new peer group. These are not intended to be all encompassing, but a starting point and a guide for new peer groups and a place to capture future experiences and best practices.

## Background

Peer groups inside of CSIA have existed for many years and have neither been officially promoted or discouraged. The companies that have participated have gotten significant benefit from the more intimate relationship of a smaller group that meets on a regular basis at the member's offices. This also promotes participation in the larger organization.

## Approach

To be successful this experience needs to fit the needs, style, budget, and comfort level of each company. The variety of structures and approaches of the current peer groups demonstrates the variety that can exist and be successful and sustainable. The intent of this document is to provide guidelines with multiple options that provide structure but do not dictate how each individual peer group will operate. Each group will be free to choose a structure which fits its needs, but still be able to get support from the larger organization if required. This is a tool kit to allow each peer group to build it's own customized "wheel" without starting from scratch.

## Boundaries

The scope of CSIA's involvement is facilitating Peer Groups that are focused on sharing of best practices and learning from each other versus a business alliance where the companies share commercial information and may even market themselves together. Business alliances are beyond the scope of this program.

## Guidelines

These are suggested organizational criteria which should be considered by any peer group. This list of criteria can be used as part of a first meeting agenda to provide a checklist with potential options to provide the initial direction for the group. Once completed, it can become the written by-laws of the group or unwritten as "Peer Group lore."

# CSIA Peer Group Guidelines

- 1) **Focus**, can be one all of the following:
  - a) General SI centric
  - b) Sales
  - c) HR
  - d) PM
  - e) Specific technology
  - f) Specific industry
- 2) **Member requirements**, choose any, or none of the following:
  - a) Must be an active member of CSIA
  - b) Must be a certified member of CSIA
  - c) Must be located in the US
  - d) May be located outside the US
- 3) **Number of companies in a peer group**
  - a) Typically vary from 6 to 12 companies. Smaller numbers provide a more intimate experience and can be more manageable, larger provides a wider and more diverse breadth of experience
- 4) **Considerations for the right mix of companies** to avoid conflicts and make the best group:
  - a) Geography, too close may lead to more competition
  - b) Industry, many in the same industry can be good sharing common experiences, but they may see each other more at pre-bid meetings
  - c) Company size, variety of size is a benefit, but a very small company may not have very much to contribute to a very large one
- 5) **Frequency of meetings**
  - a) Typically 2 to 4 times a year. Once can be the day(s) before the Annual CSIA conference
- 6) **Meeting location & logistics**
  - a) Typically rotate around to each members office and/or at the executive conference site
  - b) Usually the hosting company provides all the logistical support for arranging hotel rooms, meeting space, food, etc.
  - c) The next hosting company can chair the meeting unless there is a paid moderator
  - d) Can't go to a chain restaurant for dinner
- 7) **Who pays for what**
  - a) Attendees pay their own travel & living expenses
  - b) The non-traveling companies pay for dinner
  - c) Hosting companies may pay for meals or it is split and invoiced afterwards or taken from a common account funded by dues.
  - d) A dues structure is established and expenses come out of the account
- 8) **Member fees**
  - a) Largely based on approach for meeting cost sharing and if it has a paid moderator
  - b) Can be equal or pro-rated based on company size, like CSIA dues
  - c) Will require one member to be the treasurer, which is usually a semi-permanent position.
- 9) **Commitment**
  - a) A representative from each member must attend every meeting
  - b) Must attend 75% of the meetings in a year or can't miss 2 in a row
- 10) **Attendees**
  - a) Must be the CEO
  - b) Can be the CEO and others
- 11) **Number of representatives** attending a meeting
  - a) Limited to 1-2
  - b) Unlimited

- 12) **Meeting agenda options**
  - a) Informal
  - b) Formal
    - i) Sharing of best practices and supporting documents
    - ii) Address topics in a parking lot
    - iii) Sharing of KPIs
    - iv) Potential discussion topics and supporting materials
    - v) Guest speakers, paid or unpaid
  - c) Peer Audit, a process where one company is audited by the principals of other companies
- 13) **Moderator**
  - a) Self-moderated, which changes on a rotating basis, typically per meeting
  - b) Paid moderator, increases costs but takes the burden off members for do their job.
- 14) **Adding/dropping members**
  - a) Need to have included in the by-laws which state the process for adding and dropping members
  - b) Should have guidelines for why the group wants to add new members
  - c) Typically requires a unanimous vote to add
  - d) Typically requires a 2/3 vote to expel
- 15) **Legal considerations**
  - a) Need to all sign a mutual confidentiality and non-solicitation agreement
  - b) Need to agree on how to manage competing in the market place.
  - c) If open competition is allowed, this may create some hesitancy to share sensitive information
  - d) If competition is not allowed, need to agree on the process to manage the situation
    - i) Principals discuss and agree on who will respond or possible approach as a commercial team.
- 16) **Commercial gain/opportunities handling**
  - a) Be prepared to address opportunities that are brought by one member of the group to one or more of the other members
- 17) **Governing body**
  - a) None, or a small number of member representatives to act as an executive committee with a fixed or rotating chair
- 18) **Changes in the group**
  - a) It is not uncommon for the members of the group to leave and others ask to join.
  - b) It is not uncommon for the group to want to change focus, format, and it's bylaws accordingly
- 19) **Name for the your group**
  - a) Handy to be able to refer to yourself as something other than "our peer group"