

PMJA BOARD RETREAT

Planning Notes – November 13, 2023

BACKGROUND

On November 14, 2023, Media Bridge Partners conducted an all-day workshop with the staff and board of the Public Media Journalist Association. In preparation for the workshop, MBP met three times with PMJA staff and one board member to better understand their work and receive their perspective on the existing DEI work and thoughts for an organizational initiative. This report explores trends, confirms assumptions, and discusses areas of focus for the board going forward.

STRENGTHS

PMJA is ahead of many boards, it has the big D - it intentionally assembled a Diverse board - with people from different ages, races, identities, and experiences in Public Media. The board is also intentional about providing spaces where board members feel a sense of inclusivity and belonging.

This intentionality expands beyond the board, it is communicated throughout the organization. The board is committed to creating inclusive spaces for its members to connect, build community, and find a place where they belong.

OPPORTUNITIES

The PMJA board has an opportunity to evaluate the DEI projects and initiatives it has completed and look at what worked, but more importantly at what didn't work and why. This will allow them to iterate on what they have done well and make it better for the Public Media system.

- Expand Meetup Groups
- Be More Strategic About Mentorship & Internship Programs
- Move from collecting Data to Using It As A Guide for Action & Decision Making

The PMJA board has an opportunity to harness the DEI knowledge it has gained over the past two years. This combined with its strong mission and strengths, can serve as a model on inclusion for the Public Media industry.

- Better Engage Members

- PMJA can do more outreach & spotlight diverse members (BIPOC, new to PubMedia, women), or orgs that are leading in DEI. Helping diverse groups be seen, publicly recognized, & supported.
- Use The Network to Build Community
 - PMJA can expand its networking and community building aspects to improve retention in PubMedia.
- Create Intentional Pathways to Build The Pipeline
 - PMJA can be a launching pad for workforce development. Training is a legacy strength of PRNDI that can be a useful foundational element for PMJA's future.

PMJA has made strides with the big D (Diversity), I (Inclusion) + B (Belonging). However, it is uniquely positioned to be a leader in pushing the industry forward when it comes to Equity. PMJA can identify specific DEI strategies that the organization and board can commit to build systems, create a plan for how it will alleviate barriers, and create equal access for all.

- Intentional Focus on Equal Access
 - The conference is a great place where PMJA has the capacity and capability to provide equal access.
- Support Stations on “Building the Good Bones”
 - PMJA can help all of PubMedia by focusing on the employee life cycle - hiring, onboarding, manager coaching, org. goals setting, etc.
- Focus on Fundraising For Equity
 - “PMJA is not a newsroom.” It can take on equity in a way that stations might not have the capacity to do. It can also use its status as an association to find funding that might not be available to stations.

ASPIRATIONS

MOVING PMJA & STATIONS

FROM	TO
Some stations get the “Big D” but don’t understand the I & E and aren’t motivated to invest in the extra effort.	ALL stations understand all aspects of DEIB and are invested in making Public media a better place to work for everyone.
People are burnt out & leaving Public Media because they don’t see a growth path for them or a place where they belong.	People are energized about working in Public Media because they have connections, career pathways, good places to work, and see diverse faces at all levels.

PMJA is seen through the lens of its former legacy of exclusively providing opportunities for management.	PMJA seen as THE premier public media resource that is inclusive of all people at all stages in their career.
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- The vision for the future of Public Media is one that is bright with diverse people in positions from editors to leadership. It's also one where a diverse pipeline is in steady flow. And PMJA is the glue that connects people across generations, builds bridges to career growth, and is a safe space for everyone to belong.
 - Atlas That Connects The Dots of Public Radio: PMJA would like to be seen as a place where people can find an atlas of maps for how to navigate public media and receive guidance on how to create a personal road map for their career.
 - Close Knit Community of Way Makers: PMJA would like to create spaces where people from different walks of life can go to “Phone a Friend” to demystify the complexities of the industry, hear what worked for others, and create bridges for those who need to pivot or find their way.
 - Resource For All Journalists: PMJA would like to create revenue generating, sustainable products that individuals can use to educate themselves on new skills.

BIG PICTURE

In 4 years, we will have doubled down on what we do best - building connection and community for public media journalists.

We will reduce feelings of isolation and disconnect for our members by providing brave spaces where they can express uncertainties about skills for advancement and share their stories.

We will also provide them with opportunities to develop new skills for professional growth through training, forging individual connections, and exposing them to a range of career opportunities.

We know we have arrived when we have a more diverse membership, event participants, and increased conference attendees.

PATH FORWARD

A path forward has been identified by the board to explore two new DEIB driven projects aligned with the PMJA mission. The DEI committee can use these two thought starters to help create results driven initiatives using the expertise of PMJA's current membership.

- Knowledge Exchange to address power dynamics instead of mentorship. Build strategic supportive connections.
 - Conference - 10 pairings with meetings pre-conference (Jan)/during report on experience (Jun) /post conference next steps
 - Year long matches - 10 pairings
 - Speed dating during the conference. After dating is complete giving people agency to decide which dates they think they can learn the most from
 - Matches made to connect people from different background
 - Measurement and data taken throughout
- Employee Life Cycle Buddy Program | Phone A Friend Program For Affinity Groups
 - Focus on the different parts of the Employee Life Cycle - Getting people in the door, creating good workplaces so they will stay, focus on advancement
 - Pairings created in Affinity Groups
 - Use the existing Meetup and Slack channels as a way to make connections
 - Create at least one pair in each Meetup or Affinity Group as a pilot
 - Surveys can be taken to help measure success.

A path forward was also identified for taking the available \$30k and turning it into a revenue generating product or initiative with a DEIB focus. These initiatives would require the board to be intentional about next steps.

- Proprietary Curriculum Creation + Follow Up ● Dedicate 80% of the \$30k to developing a curriculum that can be offered to members ● Topics discussed: ○ Curriculum development could include: culture, visioning curriculum, curriculum for producers, editor, hosts. ○ Create a learning track ○ Certification Program ○ Training could be virtual, onsite at stations
- Improve Brand Marketing & Outreach Support
 - Dedicate 20% of the \$30k to working on improving the PMJA brand so that others understand who PMJA is, what it does, and the value of membership.
 - Increased marketing would lead to
 - Increased membership
 - Increased impact
 - Increased revenue
 - Start with an MVP, significant investment later

PMJA was formerly known as PRNDI whose membership was management focused. In 2019 it changed its name to be more encompassing of all journalists. This organization is the only one of its kind in the industry that is designed to serve everyone working in public

media newsrooms. It is uniquely positioned to be an innovator and leader for inclusivity. And now is the time to lean into that and own it.

- Clarify The Brand
 - The name change created an opportunity for PMJA to reinvent who it is and what it does, but this needs to be communicated to the industry in a strategic communication plan.
- Clarify The Vision For PMJA
 - PMJA has a defined mission, but it lacks a clear vision, and collective values that the entire organization can get behind. It's time to define the overall vision not just for DEI.
- Clarify How It Plans To Impact The Industry
 - PMJA has inspired ideas and it also needs to create an action plan that identifies change levers for how it will get there and includes a way to measure success.

DEIB Definitions Used For this Workshop Include:

- Diversity: Hiring and retaining employees from a variety of backgrounds and identities
- Equity: Building systems that provide equal access for all staff
- Inclusion: Creating space for all voices to be heard
- Belonging: Curating a culture where everyone actively feels welcome and included