

USMS Board of Directors–Approved Communication Plan

Communication with USMS’s membership plays an important part in providing the best membership experience possible. USMS manages numerous mediums (e.g., usms.org, email, social media, virtual meetings, discussion forums, newsletters, *SWIMMER*, etc.) to disseminate information, communicate with members, market USMS membership, and collect input. All of these mediums must be carefully coordinated to ensure messaging is received, responses are collected in a manner that is useful to USMS, and members aren't overwhelmed with communication.

The National Office is available to provide guidance on the most appropriate approach and timing for committee communication and serves as the clearinghouse for all requests from volunteer committees. USMS uses a robust communication calendar to ensure that the appropriate channels are used, and relevant messages are sent to different audiences. This calendar is planned anywhere from one month to one year in advance, depending on the type of message and the channel on which it will be distributed.

If anyone wants to send information to a committee, that committee’s chair has the discretion to determine whether to forward the information to the full committee for discussion.

The types of communications and their guidelines below provide the structure national committees should consider when planning a communication.

Important Note on Official USMS Statements: The president and CEO are the only people who may speak for the organization, unless a designated person is assigned to address a specific topic. Members holding USMS positions (e.g., officers, Board of Directors members, committee members, etc.) should refrain from referencing their positions in outside communications.

Peer-to-Peer Virtual Trainings

USMS has several standing virtual training series hosted by committees.

- LMSC Development Committee peer-to-peer virtual trainings (typically held the first Tuesday of each month when scheduled)
- Coaches Committee peer-to-peer virtual trainings (typically held the third Tuesday of each month when scheduled)

Newsletters

If your committee wants to send information to members, coaches and clubs, Adult Learn-to-Swim instructors, or volunteers, the *STREAMLINES* newsletters are the best avenue for communication. Member and coach editions are sent the first and third Tuesday of each month, respectively. The ALTS edition is sent quarterly, and the volunteer edition is sent bimonthly.

Committee topics will typically be included within two to six months, depending on previously established content and the timing of the request. Please submit all requests to volunteer@usmastersswimming.org.

Reviewed by USMS Board of Directors 2.16.2021
Approved by USMS Board of Directors 7.17.2020
Reaffirmed by USMS Board of Directors 4.17.2023

Dedicated Member Email Communications

Dedicated email communications are reserved for critical business topics, announcements, and press releases. Committee topics will likely land in a specific *STREAMLINES* newsletter or other standing communication tools. Please submit all requests to volunteer@usmastersswimming.org.

Social Media

All USMS members are encouraged to follow USMS's social media accounts for great information, fun content, and special updates. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are all used to connect with adult swimmers on a range of topics. USMS social media is not used for committee communications.

SWIMMER

The content plan for each issue of *SWIMMER* magazine is built several months in advance, and all content is due 2 ½ months before an issue is released. Committees hoping to share their information with the USMS membership should use the *STREAMLINES* newsletters or other communication tools.

usms.org

The USMS website has undergone significant improvements in recent years, and many of the public-facing pages have been updated recently. Request for volunteer content adjustments can typically be handled relatively quickly (within a week) when approved. Requests for updates should be made to volunteer@usmastersswimming.org.

How to Request a Survey

Surveying member segments (e.g., coaches, open water swimmers, event directors, etc.) can be a valuable source of feedback and input in USMS's decision-making process. However, surveys must be well-structured and timed accordingly to ensure the highest possible response rates and gather information in an unbiased manner. It is also important that a member, who may be part of several groups, isn't overwhelmed with too many survey requests.

The National Office typically has at least one significant member-wide survey annually to gather data on membership benefits and value. Coaches and clubs are also surveyed on relevant topics often.

Before building a survey, contact the VP and staff liaison assigned to your committee. They will facilitate a discussion with the appropriate National Office representative to discuss the approach, timing, communication channel, and format for your survey.

Surveys will be coordinated into the calendar at the right time and, when approved, may take as long as six months to work into the calendar. Surveys may also be combined with other already established efforts to minimize requests of a member segment.

How to Make a Request of the National Office

The National Office staff is managed by the CEO, who reports to the Board of Directors. Staff

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strategy and work assignments are planned weeks and months in advance to ensure the high level of productivity and professionalism USMS has come to expect. And the communication calendar is choreographed to ensure the right audience receives communications without overwhelming any specific group of members.

Staff liaisons are part of the committee structure to ensure committee needs are part of the planning and all USMS leadership groups are aligned. The National Office will respond to requests, coordinate with appropriate groups, and quickly address needs that are critical or emergency in nature.

However, significant requests of the staff for projects, analysis, and communication with member segments should be elevated to the committee's assigned VP and staff liaison assigned to your committee so they may be vetted by the Board of Directors and prioritized for the National Office. To allow for Board of Directors review and so the National Office may plan the request into its calendar of work, please provide as much lead time as possible. The committee VP or staff liaison will provide updates on the status and approach to the request. Committee chairs who believe they haven't received an update in a timely manner can email volunteer@usmastersswimming.org with details of their request.