

TO: U.S. Masters Swimming House of Delegates  
FROM: Dawson Hughes, CEO  
DATE: August 30, 2016  
SUBJECT: Annual Meeting Report

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

When I left the swimming world after my sophomore year in college, it was a much needed break from the pool. However, I would never have imagined that break would last 20 years nor that I'd be joining U.S. Masters Swimming in my current capacity. As I progressed through the interview process for the CEO role, I spent time reflecting on my swimming career and realized how much of an impact it had on my upbringing, including friendships that continue today, nurturing my goal oriented and competitive nature and a respect for the health and fitness benefits of the sport. I am honored to join USMS and work with all of you to guide the organization into the future.

Since joining USMS on March 28, much of my focus has been on learning about the history, culture, mission, values and the vision for the organization moving forward. I have had the opportunity to speak with people who touch USMS – members, sponsors, leaders, employees. These conversations served as a great introduction to the many people that make USMS great and they inspired me as we develop our road map for the future. These were the first steps in the process of reviewing and updating USMS's Strategic Plan, the outcome of which will be unveiled at the 2016 USAS Convention.

In parallel to the Strategic Planning efforts, the National Office Team has placed focus on building upon our 2016 efforts, particularly in the critical area of membership registration.

Outlined below are progress updates by department through 2016 to date:

## **MEMBERSHIP SERVICES**

- Membership was budgeted to grow approximately 4% in 2016. Through the first half of the year membership growth was flat as compared to 2015.
- On August 1st we launched four new initiatives to encourage membership registrations. The timing of the launch was scheduled to coincide with the Olympics. The initiatives included: 1.) start the discounted year plus memberships one month earlier than usual; 2.) "Try Masters Swimming Day" on August 15th; 3.) Anthony Sullivan "Pitchman" video through social media outlets with member assistance; and 4.) offer five pace clocks to be awarded to the top five clubs based on number of members registered in August. Social media, e-mail, word of mouth and digital advertising channels (e.g. Google, Facebook, Active.com) were all used to deliver these various messages.
- The early returns from this campaign have been positive with over 2400 members registered during the month of August, compared to 930 in August of 2015 and providing a bump to 2% annual growth compared to the end of August 2015.

- Of note, over 70% of August 2016 registrations selected the Year Plus membership giving us over 1700 members pre-registered for next year.
- The final steps are being completed to update Places to Swim functionality to provide Clubs and Workout Groups the ability to update their information during the registration process. This will be a much needed improvement in the accuracy of information on facilities that offer Masters Swimming programs, workout times and Club contact information.
- A staff position has been repurposed to add a Membership Services position to help support Volunteer, Member and Club services. In addition, this position will focus on growth initiatives.

## MARKETING SERVICES

- Although several partnerships unexpectedly ended their relationships with USMS in 2016, we were able to replace the \$75,000 in lost revenue with new partnerships.
- Sponsorship revenue has remained flat year over year but the new relationships had a positive impact that mitigated the lost revenue.
- A comprehensive potential member survey was conducted in early 2016. The survey company was contracted to target swimmers that met the following criteria: over the age of 25, have never been a USMS member and swim at least once a week. The report and results from this survey will be used to help target marketing messages and relevant USMS benefits to encourage new member registrations.
  - Findings of note:
    - 56% of respondents had no knowledge of USMS
    - 25% of respondents had limited knowledge of USMS
    - Health, fitness, fun and technique information are main reasons for interest in joining.
    - Misconception that USMS is for competitive and elite swimming only.
    - Mean workout time is 45 minutes
- In 2016, the USMS digital footprint was expanded through use of Google and Facebook. This resulted in an additional 420 registrations. Facebook advertising continues to bring in roughly 500 registrations as well. Moving forward we will continue to strategically use digital and database marketing to target our messaging and drive growth.
- **College Club Swimming:** For the past several years, USMS has been a supporter of the college club championships and hosted a college club swimming summit in early 2016. This summit included 11 college club presidents and three different college club advisors. From this summit, the task force gained insight into what the college club swimmers and clubs are looking for to enhance their swimming experience. The current college club structure is disjointed and program offerings are inconsistent. The goal for USMS is to help unify these clubs starting in 2017, provide best practices and structure so that more swimmers continue to swim through college. USMS will engage with these swimmers at the college club level with the goal of transitioning them to Masters Swimming after graduation.

## **EDUCATION SERVICES**

- Demand for both the Coach Certification and Adult-Learn-to-Swim Instructor Certification remain strong.
  - 2016 Level 1 and Level 2 Coach Certification: 24 classes
  - 2016 Level 3 Coach Certification: 8 Classes
    - Over 700 Coaches participating in a coach certification
  - 2016 Adult Learn to Swim Instructor Certification: 28 classes
    - Nearly 500 Instructors certified this year.
  - Stroke Clinics: 16 hosted clinics with nearly 500 participants.
- The Education Department will continue to make Club visits and develop new Masters swimming opportunities through Club and Facility outreach.
  - Plan is for over 100 visits to Clubs and/or facilities in 2017
- Both the USMS coach certification and adult-learn-to-swim curriculums have been copyrighted (pending approval).

## **SWIMMING SAVES LIVES FOUNDATION**

- The SSLF will again award grants to help support programs that teach adults to swim. Although the final amounts to be awarded will be finalized at the USAS Convention, it is likely to be a similar amount to last year, both in dollars and number of grand recipients.
- The goal of the SSLF is to provide as many adults as possible the opportunity to learn to swim.
- This is an engaging cause for our membership and moving into 2017 we will better position our fundraising capabilities and efforts to be able to grow the number of programs and future swimmers we support.
- April is Adult Learn-to-Swim Month will continue to promote the SSLF (in addition to Adult-Learn-to-Swim Instructor Certification) and the USMS brand.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS**

- Our Communications and Publications business unit produces six issues of *SWIMMER* magazine, 30 issues of *STREAMLINES*, video content, regular features to usms.org, and, in conjunction with the Marketing department manages our social media efforts. In addition, event communications surrounding our national events, including 10 pre-event email updates and the meet programs, are managed and produced in-house.
- In order to better respond to our members, a digital version of *SWIMMER* will be more heavily promoted. Members will be given an option during registration to choose digital or paper magazine delivery. This may provide production expense savings depending on digital adoption.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE**

- Risk management and insurance services will continue through partnership with Entertainment Sports and Insurance eXperts. Risk management programs include expanded insurance coverage, an online sanction database, a national-level event compliance review and a waiver.
- Minimal increases are expected in cost of coverage in the coming year.

## **ADMINISTRATION & VOLUNTEER**

- The early stages of planning for the second LMSC Leadership Summit are underway for 2017.