
Date: April 19, 2015

To: Minnesota Swimming House of Delegates

From: Sandra Hibbard

RE: Web Coordinator's Report to 2015 MN House of Delegates

This HOD marks my third year as Web Coordinator. Specific goals established last spring included:

- **Continuing to support meet management (beyond posting event files).** Progress was made not in the anticipated areas (online tutorials and use of the site's registration for meet directors to manage their contact details—both which still are valid pursuits in the upcoming year), but by supporting other areas including drafting of a new Meet Director's manual, collaboration on a new fillable form for sanctions, and increased communications with clubs about their meets.
- **Develop a promotions policy.** This was done and is in effect. In the upcoming year, we will continue to refine and increase visibility around promotions affected by this policy.
- **Look for ways to promote MSI and how it supports members.** This was done through an increase in stories and through promotions: in the upcoming year, a communications plan will be established that will be more deliberate and encompassing, through web coordinator collaboration with a new marketing/communications coordinator position that is being implemented.
 - **Support to promote MSI initiatives** such as the Swimposium, group requests (Athlete Committee, Team Minnesota), and targeted Core Values promotions and MNswim Firsts have been accommodated through collaboration on strategy and development of promotional materials as well as posting through stories, slides and increased website presence.
 - **Collaborated on development of a preliminary branding strategy**, that will create a Minnesota Swimming brand, is underway and will be implemented in the upcoming year.
 - **Increased visibility of team and athlete successes.** Initial efforts include "by the numbers" recaps of championship seasons, with individual and team highlights. This will expand in the upcoming year in an effort to raise swimming's profile against other sports.
- **Work with Committee Chairs to keep information updated and timely in all areas; continue working with MSI Staff and Board to adapt to changing stakeholder needs including ongoing integration with Facebook and Twitter.** Updates were posted in a timely manner and even at times proactively sought. That said, it was established that it is NOT within the Web Coordinator venue to chase down updates from committee chairs; those chairs will remain responsible for disseminating information to appropriate channels including the Web Coordinator for posting and promotion.

Heroes create personal focal points and desire for emulation; they "legitimize" the support in the eyes of a broader community that may know little about this sport.

Website Recap

Web layout and basic structure remained stable throughout the year. We continue to shift and consolidate pieces of information, but most of the “action” remains in the **Meets & Events**, **Athletes**, and **Documents** tabs. Besides continuing to increase the effectiveness of the slides on the home page for announcements and promotions, specific areas of note include:

- **The lost and found.** It started dormant, but used several times in the past three months.
- **The job board.** There were nearly 80 postings in the past twelve months—a huge increase. In the past, an informal policy suggested that only club and high school postings would be allowed. This was adjusted slightly this year to benefit those associated with clubs and water-based opportunities by allowing a broader scope of postings from those **“in the Minnesota LSC, affiliated in Minnesota or [who] have aquatics-related jobs that might appeal to coaches based in Minnesota...”**
- **Meet evaluations.** These decreased significantly this year, which is good because it means people felt less need to complain...but bad, because we don’t know if they’re more satisfied, what they think we’re doing right, and/or if they’re just walking away from the sport. In order to boost access and visibility to evaluation forms, a link was created and placed on the home page.
- **Team Minnesota.** The website also supports Team Minnesota’s increased presence through a home-page link to their site.
- **The About tab.** This has expanded with Core Values and MNswim Firsts promotions, which have been cross-promoted with social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)—through Minnesota Swimming’s presence as well as a new presence created by the Athlete Committee.
- **News.** With the Core Values and MNswim Firsts promotions, we established peak promotions during championship seasons—last month saw an astonishing 33 stories posted, half around these two initiatives. But even without these promotions pushing stories, we actually averaged eight stories per month with consistency across most months. This will increase in the next year, with the added position of a marketing/communications coordinator.

Social Media

Social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) was increased by Minnesota Swimming (as well as the Athlete Committee developing their own pages) with more depth this year. The “Likes” on these media increased by a third, and the reach of the top postings doubled.

While Google Analytics shows that use of social media successfully cross-promoted many of the stories published on our website, it also drives a need for **more thought around how each is being used and should be used.** In the upcoming year, this will be just a small part of establishing a more deliberate communications plan.

The Year Ahead

At the end of 2014, I posed the supposition that better communications was driving website development, and our understanding of the website was driving better communications. This continues to be true; and increased communications are increasing interaction and conversations between the LSC and clubs.

Like our social media presence, my time spent as web coordinator this year has nearly doubled, due in large part to pursuing a goal to increase communications and storylines about the clubs and people who make up the LSC.

In recognition of this and understanding the value of communications in an information-intensive society, the role I have been building within the Web Coordinator position has been recognized as a separate position of Marketing and Communications Coordinator. While I enjoyed my time as Web Coordinator, I am looking forward to moving to the Marketing and Communications Coordinator role and continuing to build the brand of Minnesota Swimming in representation, support, and celebration of its members.

The new Web Coordinator will be a close collaborator in planning and executing communications and promotions in the upcoming year. With the growth in the LSC and an upcoming Olympics year, this is an exciting time to capitalize on the potential that exists throughout our community.

Thank you for your support and insight in the past year and in the one that is just unfolding.

The LSC is YOU—athletes and clubs

Increased communications around activities and celebration of successes (from a first time diving into a pool to a first time achieving a new time standard, the demonstration of a core value in action or the expression of thanks to our volunteers) is a demonstrated asset.

Clear and deliberate communications and promotions, presented via the website and social media, can strengthen the presence of individual clubs as well as raise the profile of the LSC as a collective whole.