

USMS Convention—Anaheim, California 2007

Committee Name: Executive	Session #: 1	Report #: 3
Committee Chair: Rob Copeland	Vice Chair:	
Minutes recorded by: Meg Smath	Date/time of meeting: 9/25-26/07	

Number of committee members present: 10	Absent: 0	Number of other delegates present: 1
Committee members present (list all, including chair and vice chair): Rob Copeland, Leo Letendre, Mark Gill, Mike Heather, Julie Heather, Meg Smath, Tom Boak, Jim Miller, Patty Miller, Todd Smith		

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m. 9/25/07.

1. MSA the minutes to the 8/21/07 Executive Committee conference call.
2. Rob listed some of the accomplishments for the year:
 - Hired an executive director.
 - Developed a strategic plan.
 - Instituted benefits for our paid staff.
 - Renewed the contract with Douglas Murphy Communications for our national publication.
 - Signed two new corporate partners, bringing our total to two gold, six silver and three bronze.
 - Signed a contract with Club Assistant to develop online registration.
 - We are also in the process of implementing a program for club development.
 - Filed paperwork for trademark of USMS logo and phrases.
 - Jim added that recent developments with UANA (Amateur Swimming Union of the Americas) are very positive.
3. Rob also listed some work in progress:
 - Club development.
 - LMSC development.
 - Corporate branding — Lynn Hazlewood has agreed to lead a task force on branding.
 - Dual sanctioning — Todd is working with USA Swimming.
 - Strategic plan.
4. Todd gave the executive director's report:

The selection of an online registration vendor has been completed. The task force, after a thorough and rigorous process determined that Club Assistant, a company owned by a USMS swimmer and operated by more USMS swimmers, was the best combination of competency and value. An agreement between USMS and Club Assistant has been executed, and united we will proceed to the next phase of providing this new technology to the members. The target date for being "live" is still in the November/December timeframe.

The next phase of strategic planning will occur here at this convention. Every member of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors needs to be committed to "staying the course." As each committee reviews, revises and refines their missions, objectives and goals, they need to ask themselves: 1) Is this realistic? And 2) Can we really do this? The surest way to gridlock is to ask for the impossible or to make unreasonable demands on the time of volunteers.

A frequent complaint about strategic planning is that it produces a document that ends up collecting dust on a shelf. To avoid this, we need to monitor each committee and encourage them to:

1. Keep it simple and realistic.
2. Create their own action plan with priorities.
3. Make sure they specify who is doing what and by when.
4. Build in regular reviews of the implementation by the committee chair.
5. Give constant feedback to the committee chairs and vice presidents, who in turn provide feedback to the EC, president, and ED.

In addition to managing online registration and the implementation of the strategic plan, the following is a brief overview of

my goals and objectives for the next year:

1. Online registration. Manage the development and implementation of the system. (November 15, 2007)
 2. Strategic plan. Produce comprehensive strategic plan and communicate it to the membership. Break the comprehensive plan down into committee action plans and regularly monitor its progress. Incorporate the vice presidents into this process and assist with objectives and goals as needed. (Continuous)
 3. Branding. Membership growth, promotion and sponsor acquisition are reliant on a brand strategy that delivers a clear message of the value of USMS membership. I intend to work with the Branding Task Force to create and implement the branding strategy as soon as possible. (March 1, 2008)
 4. Succession plan. USMS relies on certain personnel to provide services and carry out the goals and objectives of the organization. We need to think about what would happen to those services or our ability to fulfill our mission if any of the personnel, be it staff, board member or committee chair, left suddenly or were just unavailable. A succession plan is a component of good planning and management. It acknowledges that volunteers and staff will not be around forever and it provides a plan and process for addressing the changes that will occur when someone leaves. I plan on developing such a plan for the staff. I would charge the vice presidents to do the same for their committee chairs. I would add that the EC should give some thought to their own succession and begin to create a plan to groom replacements. (Staff plan by February 1, 2008)
 5. Club development. Julie Heather and her committee have worked diligently to produce an excellent document laying out their objectives and goals for the development of clubs. This plan will be a significant factor in creating value and providing hands-on service to the membership and, hence, growth. I believe staff will play a role in its implementation. I look forward to working with Julie and her committee to see how the staff can make a contribution to their efforts.
 6. LMSC development. Everything that was said about club development applies to LMSC development as well when the plan is ready.
 7. Establish Indianapolis office and new hire. I have located office space in Indianapolis, which provides flexibility and is cost-effective. It is 312 to 360 square feet and may be divided easily into two separate work areas. The cost is \$495 to \$550 per month. The tenant may move to a bigger space in the building at any time without penalty. The lease term is 12 months. The job description for the new hire is to be determined. The results of strategic planning and online registration may have an impact on the duties and requirements of this new position. (November 1 – December 1, 2007)
 8. Employee handbook. The rules and regulations of employment at USMS may be found in different policy documents and in minutes of various meetings. An employee handbook is needed so that existing employees may review from time to time these policies and new hires may be made aware of them before joining the organization. All employees should be required to execute an agreement acknowledging that they have read the handbook and understand the policies contained within. (Midyear meeting)
 9. National events. There are only two bids to host the 2009 national championships. Both bids were to host the long course nationals; however, one host changed its bid to the short course so both meets are now covered. If packaged properly, these events can be attractive to city event and tourism boards, creating a competitive situation in the bid process. Some cities might provide a financial incentive to USMS and/or financial assistance to the LOC in order to win the bid, but this needs to be presented in the proper manner and very early in the process. In cooperation with the Championship Committee, I would propose to develop a strategy and package to achieve multiple bids for the 2010 championships and beyond. (April 1, 2008)
 10. External organizations. Establish stronger relationships with USA Swimming, USA Triathlon, the YMCA and other external organizations in an effort to facilitate communication, provide opportunities for athletes in each organization, and grow our membership. We will need to find solutions to the issues of dual sanctioning, joint or one-time memberships and insurance coverage. I intend to meet with the leadership in these organizations and develop a spirit of cooperation and outside-the-box thinking.
 11. Corporate partnerships. Coordinate and participate in the cultivation and acquisition of corporate partners. The goal is to acquire three new partners and/or \$75,000. (December 2008)
 12. Financial Operating Guidelines. Work with the treasurer, Finance chair and controller to review and modify the Financial Operating Guidelines to make them more streamlined and efficient. (July 2008)
 13. Professional Management Guidelines. Review, revise and refine the Professional Management Guidelines. (July 2008)
 14. A discussion of the employee vs. contractor status of our paid staff led to the realization that the larger issue that needs to be tackled is information technology. The committee agreed to discuss hiring a consultant to evaluate our communications/IT structure.
5. The EC went into executive session to discuss employee performance evaluations, after which the meeting was recessed until 8:00 a.m. September 26.
 6. Talking points were devised to help the BOD at-large members focus discussion at committee meetings on the strategic plan. The Board members will give a brief explanation of how the plan was devised and direction on what we want to accomplish. Committees must make sure their objectives and tasks are supportive of the strategic plan. Todd will give an overview of the strategic plan to the House of Delegates. Vice presidents are encouraged to have quarterly conference calls with their divisions, and committees are encouraged to meet monthly. Talking points are:
 - Provide member services.
 - Return on investment – prioritization.
 - Keep it simple and realistic.

- Assign tasks with a realistic timeline.
- Regular communication.

Tasks for the Upcoming Year

1. Strong leadership in implementing our strategic plan.
2. Effectively manage shift to greater staff involvement with leadership.
3. Institute accountability — for HOD, BOD, EC, committees.
4. Improve communication.
5. Recognize and reward volunteers' successes.
6. Set goals for all committees.
7. Get committees thinking about return on investment.
8. Encourage committees to engage volunteers and staff.
9. Put succession plans for staff and volunteers in place.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.
