

# Chapter Management Manual

2024-25



## COMMUNICATIONS

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**smps**<sup>®</sup>

## SMPS MISSION

**To engage, inspire, and empower A/E/C professionals for leadership and lifelong learning.**

## SMPS VISION

### **Business Transformed Through Marketing Leadership.**

Our vision is for firms to execute marketing principles (research, strategy, branding, communications) to drive business decisions and pursue work that aligns with their brand, which will result in profitable operations and a respected market position.

What does “business transformed” mean?

- Being able to clearly define and communicate what sets your firm apart
- Understanding the important balance between marketing and business development
- Helping our members anticipate and navigate the trends and challenges on the horizon
- Operating your business like it’s not business as usual

## SMPS DEI PHILOSOPHY & POLICY

SMPS recognizes, respects, and values the dignity of all people. We are united in our stance against all forms of injustice and inequity. SMPS commits to actively champion diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within our organization, the firms we represent, the communities we serve, and the architecture/engineering/construction (A/E/C) industries. We are intentionally working to increase participation in our organization and the A/E/C industries by underrepresented groups; advocate for recruitment and retention of professionals of all backgrounds by creating inclusive and welcoming environments; and promote equality and opportunities for advancement in the Society and industry overall. Together, we can transform our businesses, enhance membership experiences, and influence change in our communities.

We recognize that our diversity is reflected by our different people and firms. We believe our varying ethnicities, cultures, religious beliefs, genders, sexual orientations, ages, levels of experiences, physical abilities, and other differences benefit us as individuals and as an organization. In SMPS, we will organize and promote programs and activities that espouse our beliefs and increase awareness, understanding, recruitment, and participation of diverse persons and firms.

# Chapter Management Manual

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## SAMPLES, RESOURCES, AND FORMS

All sample documents, resources, and forms referenced in this manual may be found in the library of the MySMPS All Chapter Leaders Community, in the Chapter Management Manual Folder/ Communications Docs.

## INTRODUCTION

This information is intended to assist the chapter with a process for communications and public relations (PR). In its most basic form, communication brings your organization's message to the attention of an audience. A solid communications program builds a more effective organization. By raising the visibility of your chapter, you can gain credibility, generate interest in programs, and increase membership.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE

- Designate a spokesperson. Establish a policy stating who may speak on behalf of the chapter. The spokesperson should be well-briefed on the chapter's mission, issues, and activities. Typically, this would be the president or president-elect.
- If Public Relations isn't included as part of your chapter's communications committee, establish a Public Relations committee. Designate a chairperson in accordance with your chapter bylaws. Screen candidates carefully; look for someone who:
  - Demonstrates skill, experience, and a successful track record in this area
  - Is familiar with chapter policy, mission, and goals
  - Has knowledge of SMPS as a professional organization
- Develop a Public Relations plan. Include mission statement, specific goals, tasks, timeline for completion of tasks, persons responsible, and funds needed.

Since every member in some way represents your chapter to an outside audience, you must keep them informed about chapter policy, programs, and activities. Several effective methods for keeping members in the loop are a website, newsletter, email, phone calls, letters, and announcements during chapter meetings/events about member benefits and services (local and Society benefits).

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

### Identity Guidelines

The SMPS identity guidelines are a vital part of our communications efforts because they document our accepted standards for current and future applications by SMPS.

The guidelines are for your use in helping us keep these standards in place. Please follow these guidelines as you develop your chapter’s promotional materials. Guidelines can be found in the [All Chapter Leaders Community library in MySMPS](#).

### Editorial Guidelines

SMPS HQ follows the AP stylebook (for editorial style). A quick reference guide is provided in the [All Chapter Leaders Community library](#) in MySMPS to assist chapters.

### SMPS Online Community

[MySMPS.org](#) is the Society’s award-winning online community. This community can enhance chapter communication and interaction with and among members.

So, how can a chapter tap into MySMPS to better serve its members?

- Create a chapter community of your chapter’s members. Reach out to SMPS HQ if you’d like insight on how to get this set up.
- Encourage social networking among members of your chapter—each SMPS member is invited to share information via their personal profile, private messaging, creating opportunities to identify and connect with other professionals with common interests.
- Facilitate committee collaboration via work group communities and discussion posts.
- Organize, share, and archive chapter documents in one place using the library feature.
- Host message boards to continue the dialogue on hot topics that emerge out of your educational programs.
- Promote upcoming chapter events and meetings on your chapter’s community calendar.
- Connect your members to the Society’s resources like the [Marketing Resource Center](#) and its valuable marketing and business development samples and models, archived Learning Labs, and *Marketer* issues and articles.

## A Chapter's Guide To Using the SMPS Personas

SMPS created personas during our rebranding efforts to help us relate to and provide mental pictures of our members. We combined SMPS demographic data with available psychographic/buyer behaviors to create the personas. There are six different personas representing the most common demographics and segments of our membership including firm leader, vice president of marketing, director of marketing, business development manager, marketing manager, and marketing coordinator.

Chapters (along with SMPS HQ) can use the SMPS personas to help us better personalize our marketing, create targeted messages/programs that resonate with the different segments of the membership, and customize the SMPS experience. Below are some tips to help chapters utilize the SMPS personas. Please refer to [A Chapter's Guide to Using the SMPS Personas](#) that has been added into MySMPS for a full overview of the personas.

Getting Started:

- Review the SMPS personas and become familiar with them.
- Check your [chapter demographics](#). In the Membership folder of the All Chapter Leaders Community of MySMPS to see if all of the personas are currently represented in your chapter.
- Discuss/brainstorm ways to use the personas to improve the SMPS experience.
- Think about different ways to segment the membership by each persona to provide more personalized benefits, offerings, topical information.
- Does your programming offer something for each persona? If not, what can you do to change that or enhance your offerings? Based on your chapter make up, does this make sense?
- Keep the personas in mind as you plan for the current and coming years.

## E-newsletter

It's a chapter's duty to inform members about SMPS-sponsored activities and to report on other news of general interest. Your newsletter projects an image. If it appears professional in design and content, your chapter will come across as professional and organized as well. Consider segmenting your audience based on demographics, past behaviors and engagement to create more personalization and delivery of relevant content.

Determine newsletter content by the purpose it's designed to serve. You probably have a general idea about what the purpose of your newsletter is; put it in writing. When drafting a statement of purpose, think about the goals and needs of your chapter and how its newsletter can support them. Pitch the statement of purpose to your board of directors and get buy-in.

Various components can be incorporated into a newsletter. The table below outlines those items that are considered must-haves and those that are optional.

Considered “Must-Haves”	Optional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masthead</li> <li>• Chapter program coverage</li> <li>• Upcoming programs</li> <li>• Photos</li> <li>• Report on chapter activities other than monthly program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major news/information story</li> <li>• Expert column</li> <li>• Editorial</li> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Member spotlights</li> <li>• New members</li> </ul>

Where do I find content for my chapter newsletter? Consider sharing information from our monthly e-newsletter *Marketer QuickLook*. Arriving in mailboxes the third Tuesday of each month, *Marketer QuickLook* includes SMPS announcements, updates, and events.

## Periodic Communications

Following is a sampling of communication tools many chapters are using:

- A monthly email. Content is directed toward chapter business (e.g., program dates, due dates, calls for volunteers, venue changes, opinion polls)
- A phone call from a chapter leader. An outreach program is a way to talk to individual members and encourage two-way communication that can inform chapter decisions.
- A letter from the chapter president can be used to educate members about a specific topic that is too lengthy or complicated to be handled in newsletter format.
- Membership surveys. The most direct way to find out what members think is to ask them. Surveys can be conducted using any or all communications tools mentioned in the bullets. SMPS often conducts surveys using [Survey Monkey](#), an easy-to-use, web-based utility. Contact SMPS HQ to access your chapter’s own SMPS Survey Monkey account. Don’t recreate the wheel; there are many surveys created by chapters and HQ that HQ can provide and transfer to your chapter’s account.
- Social media posts on membership, benefits, meetings, events, and more. Follow SMPS HQ on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) to share and retweet posts.

## Mailing lists

Be sure to clean up these lists 2-4 times per year to ensure constant and successful delivery. Please remember to share your nonmember attendee and prospect list with SMPS HQ regularly. Most chapters maintain a mailing list composed of:

- Their local members
- Nonmembers who have attended chapter programs
- Prospective members in their area

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

### Website

A chapter website is a must-have tool for making information available to members and nonmembers alike.

Basic content usually consists of the following:

- **Home Page.** Introduction and information about SMPS (chapter and SMPS HQ) in addition to navigation bars and buttons, social media links, and contact information.
- **Contacts.** List of officers and committee chairs along with their contact information.
- **Call for Volunteers.** If your chapter is always looking for more volunteers, include a list of contacts that potential volunteers should reach out to if they're interested in volunteering. For example, "Interested in volunteering? Please contact..."
- **Programs.** Annual calendar of chapter events, detailed information per program, downloadable program registration forms, or a link to online registration.
- **Member Directory.** Link to the Member Directory on [MySMPS.org](https://www.mysmps.org)—find members via a basic or advanced search. Member profile includes contact information, company demographic information, photo, bio, social media links, education, and more.
- **News.** Post press releases and articles.

- **Resources.** Add links to the following pages from the SMPS website to assist members in locating valuable resources:
  - [Marketing Communications Awards](#)
  - [Marketing Innovation Firm of the Year](#)
  - [Business Developer of the Year](#)
  - [Emerging Leader of the Year](#)
  - [Chapter President of the Year](#)
  - [Fellows Recognition program](#)
  - [Marketing Achievement Award](#)
  - [Annual Conference](#)
  - [Bookstore](#)
  - [Career Center](#)
  - [Certification \(CPSM\)](#)
  - [Foundation research](#)
  - [Learning](#)
  - [Marketing Resource Center](#)
  - [Salary Survey](#)
- **Members Only.** Optional, depending on what your chapter offers as member benefits. Password protected.
- **Blog.** A great online resource to write and post articles about the A/E/C industries and news related to the profession.
- **Email signup.** An online email signup form to gather prospective member's contact information
- **Sponsorship.** List upcoming or annual sponsorship opportunities, pricing, and a point of contact

## Marketing Collateral/Brochures

SMPS has developed membership collateral materials to assist with recruitment and retention. If your chapter has a need for additional materials for a targeted chapter outreach effort, please visit [MySMPS All Chapter Leaders Community Library](#) or contact the membership team at [membership@smps.org](mailto:membership@smps.org) to discuss. Up-to-date flyers, videos, and benefits information can be found on the [Why Join](#) and [Members](#) page of the SMPS website.

## Social Media

### Member Social Media Policy

The Society for Marketing Professional Services believes in fostering a thriving online community and supports social media as a valuable asset for membership development and communications. We've created a policy which outlines the legal and membership maintenance implications of social media use regarding the organization. We encourage all

chapters to be familiar [with the policy](#).

## Social Media Tools

Here are some tools that we use and recommend to assist SMPS chapters with images and social media.

**Canva** is a free online resource that gives users the ability to create beautiful layouts through a simple drag and drop tool. Through Canva's search function, you can choose from more than one million layouts, stock photographs, and illustrations for your designs. The paid version of Canva (Canva for Work) gives the user the ability to upload their own images and to collaborate with teams.

**Unsplash** and **Pexels** are websites dedicated to sharing stock photography for free. Make sure to read their FAQs and/or licensing page(s) prior to using photos to ensure what is allowed.

**Hootsuite** allows users to manage multiple networks, save time posting content to your networks, schedule posts, and engage your audience, all in one place. Get started free or upgrade to pro or business level.

**Sprout Social** is all-in-one social media management platform. Uncover trends and actionable insights from social data to inform brand and business strategy.

## Public Relations

This is a step-by-step process that aims to increase external exposure for the chapter. Develop a media list, gather event information, write and distribute press releases to the appropriate audience, and assemble a media kit.

- **Media List Development.** Target the news media you need: daily or weekly newspapers, local magazines, television, and radio stations. Keep in mind that chapter news is generally of local interest.

Invest the time to educate a few reporters and keep them informed about news of interest in your chapter. Your goal is to become a valued news source for the reporters who cover your industry. If your chapter has an awards program, consider inviting local reporters or editors to participate as jurors. This creates an opportunity to build media relationships while exposing the media to the news and activities in your chapter and to the value of marketing in the A/E/C industries.

- **Press Releases.** Press releases convey basic information: the who, what, where and when of chapter news. When preparing a chapter press release, keep the following in mind:
  - Use chapter letterhead
  - Keep the length under 500 words
  - Date the release
  - Include the name, phone number, and e-mail address of a chapter contact
  - Stick to the facts; keep the writing clear and concise

- **Fact Sheet.** A fact sheet is a quick reference about SMPS in general and your chapter specifically that can be of great help to the media or organizations you are partnered with for a program or event. It answers questions such as:
  - How many members do you have?
  - Who are your members?
  - What trades do your members represent?
  - What is your organization's purpose?
  - What services do you provide for your members?
  - What issues are of concern to your members?
- **Q&A Backgrounder.** A Q&A backgrounder is helpful in answering commonly asked questions about your chapter. It can serve as a reference to member prospects, the media, and outside organizations and can also be used to supplement a fact sheet.
- **Community Outreach.** Analyze your chapter's public relations goals. How do you want the public to perceive you? Is there a public service project that will help you achieve your goals? Many SMPS chapters have found that public service projects increase their community visibility, promote the professionalism and civic responsibility of their members, and build an esprit de corps within the chapter. The following factors can contribute to the success of community outreach projects:
  - A project that inspires a majority of members and taps into their special strengths
  - A volunteer willing to spearhead the effort and a dedicated committee
  - A full appreciation of the time involved and a serious commitment by the chapter as a whole
  - Cash and in-kind contributions, since almost all public service projects require a financial investment
- **Industry Liaisons.** Maintaining ongoing communication with affiliated industry and business organizations is important for building and maintaining credibility for the chapters, SMPS, and the profession.
  - Exchange monthly newsletters
  - Volunteer to write guest articles for their newsletter
  - Offer to provide speakers on topics of common interest
  - Put volunteer leaders or staff on your chapter's mailing list
  - Offer to share and repost social media articles and posts
  - Plan joint programs

## NEED ASSISTANCE?

Please connect with [SMPS HQ STAFF](#)

For general inquiries, please contact us at: [info@smps.org](mailto:info@smps.org)



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