SGMP Chapter Communications

Of the Year Award

There have been significant changes to the Communications of the Year Award. Please review the information below prior to submitting your application for the 2024 Award.

**Purpose**: The SGMP Communications of the Year Award honors chapters which have adhered to best practices in chapter communications during the last fiscal year.

**Award:** All chapters meeting the minimum standards for communications will be honored with a commendation. One chapter demonstrating outstanding effort in chapter communications will be honored with the Communications of the Year Award.

**Minimum Standards:** The minimum standards to receive a commendation for communications are as follows:

## Membership Communications

Chapter completes the following steps each month:

**Retention**

1. Welcome new chapter members with an email explaining chapter benefits & listing upcoming chapter events.
2. Help remind at-risk and expiring/expired chapter members to renew. If they are struggling to login/renew, please direct them to SGMP Membership [membership@sgmp.org](mailto:membership@sgmp.org) for assistance.

**Recruitment**

1. Review the At-Large chapter roster for local members & reach out to them to encourage them to join your chapter.
2. Review the [SGMP Membership Leads guide](https://sgmp.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/ChapterTools/Brainstorm%20list%20of%20places%20to%20find%20Government%20Planners%201.xlsx) to help identify potential members in your area. Reach out to them via various communication channels to encourage them to join SGMP. The SGMP Chapter Toolkit includes flyers and scripts to help you with new member outreach.

## Programming Communications

Chapter uses a minimum of 2 communications channels to regularly communicate programming opportunities with chapter members. The following best practices are demonstrated.

### Website

1. Website is clean and clear.
   1. Website design is overall attractive, professional, and accessible.
   2. Colors and fonts are professional and accessible.
   3. Graphics and/or photos are professional and applicable to content.
2. Website has a clear and responsive design and navigation.
   1. Buttons/links are active.
   2. Quick links or sitemap is available.
   3. Menus/submenus are logical and consistent.
   4. Social media buttons are featured in header or footer.
   5. Website has an attractive masthead.
3. Website clearly brands the chapter as a regional subsidiary of SGMP.
   1. SGMP logo is listed, with link to [www.sgmp.org](http://www.sgmp.org).
   2. Chapter Board contact information is listed.
   3. Chapter history is presented on any subpage linked from main navigation.
4. Website is focused on chapter professional development opportunities.
   1. Chapter/committee activities are listed.
   2. Calendar of activities is available on the homepage or linked prominently from the homepage.
   3. All events/activities include the following information:
      1. Title of Event/Activity
      2. Date & Time
      3. Location (in person or virtual)
      4. Sponsors, if applicable
      5. Pricing
      6. Description
      7. Link to register or registration information
5. Website has few/no errors in spelling, grammar, and writing tone & style is clear and professional.
6. Advertising content is clean, clear, fair, linked, accessible, and not distracting to the main site content.
7. Pages have been tagged with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) parameters to increase keyword search visibility.
8. Website is updated at least monthly.

### Social Media

1. Post at minimum 3-5 times per week.
2. Use a social media scheduling tool such as HootSuite to synchronize your social media postings.
3. Focus on branding and storytelling.
4. Advertise chapter events.
5. Linkback to any registration forms, membership forms, or website, as applicable.
6. Use engaging graphics, photos, or videos in at least 75% of posts.
7. Share SGMP National posts via your social media channels.

### Email

* Send no more than 2-3 all-member communications in any week. Consider a monthly summary blast to reduce email volume.
* Use your AMS contact center or Constant Contact to create attractive and engaging emails.
* Focus on branding and storytelling.
* Advertise chapter events.
* Linkback to any registration forms, membership forms, or website, as applicable.
* Use engaging graphics or photos.
* Use appropriate and accessible fonts and graphics to promote a professional look to all emails.
* Make available a webpage or plain-text version of your emails for those without HTML email available.

### Newsletter

1. Send monthly or quarterly, summarizing recent and upcoming activities and events.
2. See email best practices for additional information.

### Other Channels

Other communications channels might include:

1. Phone Calls
2. Office Visits
3. Flyer Distribution
4. News Media

**Communications of the Year:** Chapters may compete for the Communications of the Year Award by demonstrating excellence in any of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)/Metrics shown below. Chapters should document both the specific communications resulting in the positive KPIs/Metrics, as well as the successful KPIs/metrics themselves.

For example, if submitting for the award based on a successful social media campaign, the chapter should submit 4-6 examples of social media posts within the evaluation period; and the chapter should submit documentation of increased profile impressions, profile reach, followers, or engagement.

As another example, if submitting for the award based on a successful website initiative, the chapter should submit a listing of webpages for review (with links); and the chapter should submit evidence of pageviews, users, time on page, or the bounce rate.

Below are examples of the KPI/Metrics you might include with your sample:

#### Website KPI/METRICS:

* Total Users (should be greater than your chapter membership number in any month)
* Total Unique Users (should be greater than or equal to your chapter membership number in any month)
* Time on page (greater than 50 seconds)
* Bounce rate (lower than 40%)

#### Social Media KPI/METRICS:

* Profile impressions
* Profile reach
* Followers
* Audience growth rate
* Engagement rate
* Video plays
* Posting frequency
* Clicks
* Shares

#### Email KPI/METRICS:

* Unsubscribe rates – increasing unsubscribe rates indicate that the email content does not engage or interest your chapter members.
* Share and forward rates – high share/forward rates indicate engaging and interesting content.
* Click-through rates – high rates indicate engaging and interesting content.
* Conversion rates – high rates indicate engaging and interesting content that is resulting in registrations/renewals.

**JUDGING CRITERIA**

Overall, our Awards Committee will verify that:

1. You have met the minimum standards for best practices in chapter communications (all submissions). If you have met the minimum standards, your chapter will receive a communications commendation.
2. You have increased engagement across at least one communications channel (if submitting for communications of the year).
   1. The specific communications efforts submitted for review meet the standards of best practices listed above.
   2. The key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics submitted indicate a significant increase in engagement.
   3. The following scale will be used to award points for the communications of the year award:

**The specific communications efforts submitted for review meet the standards of best practices listed above.**

0 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, does not meet best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above.

1 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, minimally meets most best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above.

2 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, minimally meets all best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above.

3 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, meets all best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above.

4 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, meets all and exceeds some best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above.

5 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, exceeds all best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above.

**The key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics submitted indicate a significant increase in engagement.**

0 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate negative growth or reduction in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: negative growth

1 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate no growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: 0% growth

2 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate minimal growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: 5% growth

3 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate some growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: 20% growth

4 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate significant growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: 50% growth

5 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate maximal growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: more than 50% growth

# Judging Form

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Membership Score** | **Total Programming Score** | **Total Award Score** | | |  |  |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | | |  |  |
| *minimum 4 points to qualify for commendation* | *minimum 16 points across 2 channels (32 points) to qualify for commendation* | *highest score, 10 points per section, 4 sections* | | |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Membership** | | | |  |  |  |
| Retention | | | |  | **Membership Standard** |  |
| Chapter welcomes new chapter members with an email explaining chapter benefits & listing upcoming chapter events. |  | 1 |  |  | 0 | Out of 4 |
| Chapter helps remind at-risk and expiring/expired chapter members to renew. Chapter directs members with technical support issues to SGMP HQ. |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Recruitment | | | |  |  |  |
| Chapter reviews at-large roster for local members and reaches out to them to join their chapter at least monthly. |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Chapter conducts regular outreach to non-SGMP members to recruit new members. |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Programming** | | | |  |  |  |
| **Chapter Uses the following Channels:** |  | | |  |  |  |
| WEBSITE | | | |  | **Website Standard** |  |
| Website is clean and clear. | Website design is overall attractive, professional, and accessible. | 1 |  |  |  | Out of 16 |
| Colors and fonts are professional and accessible. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Graphics and/or photos are professional and applicable to content. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Website has a clear and responsive design and navigation. | Buttons/links are active. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Quick links or sitemap is available. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Menus/submenus are logical and consistent. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Social media buttons are featured in header or footer. | 0.5 |  |  |  |  |
| Website has an attractive masthead. | 0.5 |  |  |  |  |
| Website clearly brands the chapter as a regional subsidiary of SGMP. | [SGMP logo is listed, with link to www.sgmp.org.](http://www.sgmp.org/) | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Chapter Board contact information is listed. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Chapter history is presented on any subpage linked from main navigation. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Website is focused on chapter professional development opportunities. | Chapter/committee activities are listed. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Calendar of activities is available on the homepage or linked prominently from the homepage. | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| All events/activities include the following information: Title of Event, Date/Time, Location, Sponsors, Pricing, Description, Link to Registration | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Website has few/no errors in spelling, grammar, and writing tone & style is clear and professional. |  | 0.5 |  |  |  |  |
| Advertising content is clean, clear, fair, linked, accessible, and not distracting to the main site content. |  | 0.5 |  |  |  |  |
| Pages have been tagged with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) parameters to increase keyword search visibility. |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Website is updated at least monthly. |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| **Sample Submitted for Website** |  | 5 |  |  | **Website Award** |  |
| Total Users (should be greater than your chapter membership number in any month) |  | 5 |  |  | 0 | Out of 10 |
| Total Unique Users (should be greater than or equal to your chapter membership number in any month) |  |  |  |  |
| Time on page (greater than 50 seconds) |  |  |  |  |
| Bounce rate (lower than 40%) |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| SOCIAL MEDIA | | | |  | **Social Media Standard** |  |
| Post at minimum 3-5 times per week. |  | 4 |  |  |  | Out of 16 |
| Use a social media scheduling tool such as HootSuite to synchronize your social media postings. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Focus on branding and storytelling. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Advertise chapter events. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Linkback to any registration forms, membership forms, or website, as applicable. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Use engaging graphics, photos, or videos in at least 75% of posts. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Share SGMP National posts via your social media channels. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| **Sample Submitted for Social Media** |  | 5 |  |  | **Social Media Award** |  |
| Profile impressions |  | 5 |  |  | 0 | Out of 10 |
| Profile reach |  |  |  |  |
| Followers |  |  |  |  |
| Audience growth rate |  |  |  |  |
| Engagement rate |  |  |  |  |
| Video plays |  |  |  |  |
| Posting frequency |  |  |  |  |
| Clicks |  |  |  |  |
| Shares |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| EMAIL | | | |  | **Email Standard** |  |
| Send no more than 2-3 all-member communications in any week. Consider a monthly summary blast to reduce email volume. |  | 2 |  |  |  | Out of 16 |
| Use your AMS contact center or Constant Contact to create attractive and engaging emails. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Focus on branding and storytelling. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Advertise chapter events. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Linkback to any registration forms, membership forms, or website, as applicable. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Use engaging graphics or photos. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Use appropriate and accessible fonts and graphics to promote a professional look to all emails. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Make available a webpage or plain-text version of your emails for those without HTML email available. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| **Sample Submitted for Email** |  | 5 |  |  | **Email Award** |  |
| Unsubscribe rates – increasing unsubscribe rates indicate that the email content does not engage or interest your chapter members. |  | 5 |  |  | 0 | Out of 10 |
| Share and forward rates – high share/forward rates indicate engaging and interesting content. |  |  |  |  |
| Click-through rates – high rates indicate engaging and interesting content. |  |  |  |  |
| Conversion rates – high rates indicate engaging and interesting content that is resulting in registrations/renewals. |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| NEWSLETTER | | | |  | **Newsletter Standard** |  |
| Send monthly or quarterly, summarizing recent and upcoming activities and events. |  | 2 |  |  |  | Out of 16 |
| Use your AMS contact center or Constant Contact to create attractive and engaging emails. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Focus on branding and storytelling. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Advertise chapter events. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Linkback to any registration forms, membership forms, or website, as applicable. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Use engaging graphics or photos. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Use appropriate and accessible fonts and graphics to promote a professional look to all emails. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Make available a webpage or plain-text version of your emails for those without HTML email available. |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| **Sample Submitted for Newsletter** |  | 5 |  |  | **Newsletter Award** |  |
| Unsubscribe rates – increasing unsubscribe rates indicate that the email content does not engage or interest your chapter members. |  | 5 |  |  | 0 | Out of 10 |
| Share and forward rates – high share/forward rates indicate engaging and interesting content. |  |  |  |  |
| Click-through rates – high rates indicate engaging and interesting content. |  |  |  |  |
| Conversion rates – high rates indicate engaging and interesting content that is resulting in registrations/renewals. |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Scale** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **The specific communications efforts submitted for review meet the standards of best practices listed above.** | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 0 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, does not meet best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above. | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, minimally meets most best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above. | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, minimally meets all best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above. | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, meets all best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above. | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, meets all and exceeds some best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above. | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 – The specific communications efforts, as evidenced by submitted documentation, exceeds all best practices for the communications channel according to the standards listed above. | |  |  |  |  |  |
| **The key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics submitted indicate a significant increase in engagement.** | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 0 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate negative growth or reduction in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: negative growth | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate no growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: 0% growth | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate minimal growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: 5% growth | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate some growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: 20% growth | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate significant growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: 50% growth | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 – KPIs/Metrics demonstrate maximal growth or improvement in audience size or engagement over the period of time covered by the specific communications effort. Example: more than 50% growth | |  |  |  |  |  |

# How to Apply

**To apply for a Commendation, please submit the following:**

## Evidence of compliance to membership communications best practices

1. Does your chapter welcome new chapter members at least monthly?

* Yes, by email (please include a copy of your welcome email)
* Yes, by phone
* No

1. Does your chapter remind at-risk and expiring/expired chapter members to renew, at least monthly?

* Yes, by email (please include a copy of your reminder email)
* Yes, by phone
* No

1. Does your chapter regularly review the at-large chapter roster for local members & conduct outreach to encourage them to join the local chapter?

* Yes
* No

1. Does your chapter regularly conduct outreach to non-members?

* Yes, please describe how
* No

## Evidence of compliance to programming communications best practices

1. Please indicate which of the following communications channels you use to regularly communicate with your members about chapter programming. Note that to qualify for a commendation, you must select at least 2 for judging. *checkbox*

* Website
* Social Media
* Email
* Newsletter
* Other

1. (WEBSITE) Please provide us with the login credentials for a “dummy” member account for your chapter’s website so that we may more easily review and score your site.
2. (SOCIAL MEDIA) Please provide link(s) to your social media account(s). Include all accounts you regularly use.
3. (SOCIAL MEDIA) Does your chapter use a social media scheduling tool? If yes, which one?
4. (SOCIAL MEDIA) Please provide a recent social media calendar showing posts over at least a 4-week period. The calendar should include posts from a timeframe sometime between July 1, 2023 to present.
5. (SOCIAL MEDIA) Please provide 3 examples of your social media posts demonstrating compliance with the SGMP best practices for social media posting. *File upload*
6. (EMAIL) On what frequency does your chapter send emails?
7. (EMAIL) Please upload up to 3 recent examples of emails your chapter has sent to your membership. *File upload*
8. (NEWSLETTER) On what frequency does your chapter send newsletters?
9. (NEWSLETTER) Please upload up to 3 recent examples of newsletters your chapter has sent to your membership. *File upload*
10. (OTHER) If your chapter uses other communications channels, please describe what your chapter does to communicate with members and how these efforts meet SGMP goals and best practices for chapter communications. *Text area*

**To apply for the Communications of the Year Award, please submit the following additional information:**

Standard: The specific communications efforts submitted for review meet the SGMP standards of best practices for communications.

1. You may select any communications channel in which you believe your chapter has demonstrated excellence (website, social media, email, newsletter, other). Please upload samples of a specific communications effort or campaign for evaluation. Note that you should include enough information for our judging panel to review your work for evaluation of compliance with SGMP best practices for this communications channel. *File upload*

Standard: The key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics submitted indicate a significant increase in engagement.

1. Please share evidence of key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics indicating significant growth in audience or audience engagement. This could be screenshots of your Google Analytics applicable to the period in which you have made website edits; this could be screenshots of your social media analytics applicable to the period in which you launched a specific campaign, or similar evidence. *File upload*

Judging will be based on the criteria as outlined in this document. Winners will be announced at the 2024 National Education Conference. Questions? Contact [membership@sgmp.org](mailto:membership@sgmp.org) for more information.