EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having consistently been among the top five chapters in terms of overall membership, and boasting 32 CPSMs and 11 Fellows, SMPS Boston has been recognized for its strength and stability. However, as we studied the chapter’s performance entering the 2018-2019 program year, some worrying trends emerged. A slow decrease in membership was occurring, and event attendance had slipped. Our board leadership decided to reverse these trends by approaching our operations a little differently. With that, we dedicated the 2018-19 program year to the theme “Shake Things Up.”

Using the theme as a battle cry, we achieved something significant. Our board and committee volunteers embraced the theme in the events we planned and the new members-only benefits we introduced. Our members embraced the theme in their professional and personal lives. Together, we invested in the chapter and grew from the 5th largest to the 2nd largest SMPS chapter!

We emphasized learning opportunities, mentorship, and network growth for our entry-level members; scholarships, top notch programming, and leadership development for our mid-level members; and kept our senior-level members engaged in the chapter with opportunities to share their knowledge through mentoring younger members, speaking at events, and volunteering in our community.

This helped us attract 61 new members and retain members at a 3% higher rate than last year, growing from the 5th largest to the 2nd largest chapter. We did this while increasing the sentiment of SMPS Boston as a leading marketing and business development thought leader, as measured in our annual member survey.

Some accomplishments that highlight how we worked to “Shake Things Up” include:

» Investing in our members by providing scholarships to send seven members to SMPS Northeast Regional Conference, six members to Build Business, and one member to The Pinnacle Experience; introducing lower registration rates at educational events for CPSMs and covering the exam fees for three CPSM candidates; launching an anniversary recognition program that celebrated 50 members’ milestones; and hosting eight members-only events.

» Giving back to the community by launching a marketing collateral design competition benefiting the BSA Foundation; donating 10,000 pounds of clothing and $2,180 through fundraising efforts to Big Brother Big Sister Foundation; feeding 150 disadvantaged women and children by financially supporting and working the dinner shift at Rosie’s Place; and continuing the chapter’s financial support of Canstruction ($500) and the SMPS Foundation ($1,000).

» Ensuring Chapter management success and stability by developing an easy-to-read and executable three-year strategic plan; completing a full set of committee chapter manuals; launching a treasurer-in-training position; and training and investing in our volunteers.

» Reinvigorating our programming by really listening to what our members wanted. We changed the format of our annual BD Live! event to offer one-on-one client interactions; brought in a national speaker to run a half-day proposal workshop; and extended the geographic reach of our programs beyond Boston’s city center.

Our submission shares different ways we were able to Shake Things Up and give back to our members while helping them grow and prosper.
“I’ve attended several SMPS Boston programs and events this past year including the full-day Marketing Boot Camp. The education I’ve gained has provided me with valuable knowledge that I’ve been able to share with my team and ultimately, improve our materials and communications.”

KIRSTIE NORRIS, PROPOSAL MANAGER AT GPI
COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION COMMITTEES
MEMBER SINCE 2018
PROGRAMS AND EDUCATION

CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BASED AROUND THE 6 DOMAINS

Knowing program attendance was a weak point, we strategically planned our calendar to reflect Boston market trends and the six domains of practice. We focused on balancing programming to appeal to members at different career stages, offering skill building workshops, peer learning opportunities, networking and special events, and collaborative events with partner organizations. By focusing our efforts, we filled our sessions with 1,012 attendees and sold-out four events.

Offerings Across the Six Domains of Practice

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Making Certification Easy

We kicked off our annual CPSM candidate recruitment with a series of seven blog posts centered around “Why I became a CPSM,” written by CPSMs and Fellows. 16 candidates attended our first study group session, one of the largest pools we have had. However, history told us that candidates tend to start out strong, fizzle off, and eventually drop out. To combat this, we instituted a mentor program that paired one CPSM to one candidate.

The CPSM Study Group met nine times and ended with a Kentucky-Derby-themed wrap-up session with pop quizzes and a variety of prizes. To extend the reach of our study group we used Skype to allow people to join remotely. Six study group participants took the exam, with more planning to take it in the coming year.

Speaking to Diversity

Professional services marketers need to be able to appeal to a variety of cultures and identities. This can make effective communication challenging so we offered a Communications Workshop with national speaker, Kate Lucey, to help attendees understand their communication style and the communication styles of their colleagues, including how to more effectively communicate digitally. Afterwards, Kate joined us on Slack to continue conversations with attendees.

Later in the year, we hosted a virtual book club that challenged members with three days of thought-provoking discussions on diversity and inclusion. 12 members signed up for the book club and received a copy of “Blindspot: The Hidden Biases of Good People,” by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald to read before the online discussion took place.

New Approach to Programming

With competition to get attendees to events stiffer than ever, and some of our traditional topics like higher education and healthcare no longer attracting crowds, we rejuvenated our programming with new ideas and events.

BD Live! Swap | We took a unique approach to our annual BD Live! event in order to reengage attendees. Instead of a traditional panel discussion we developed a new intimate format where everyone got one-on-one facetime with five clients, each of whom were accompanied by a senior SMPS member. Attendees were able to ask up-close and personal questions on BD best practices and make new connections with future clients. Following the program, attendees and presenters gathered for a Mix@6 networking event.

Bentley Arena: A Glimpse Inside the Nation’s Most Sustainable Arena | Many of our members work outside of Boston. We wanted to extend the geographic reach of
our programs for them. This panel presentation was held in Waltham, MA on the RTE 128 office belt where many of our members work. Attendees learned what it took for this arena to achieve LEED Platinum certification.

Rebuilding For the Future: Trends in K-12 Design & Construction | In Boston, K-12 was a surprisingly untouched subject among industry organizations. We gathered a panel of clients and state agencies with representatives from independent schools and public schools for an informative discussion on securing work in this expanding market.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

According to member survey results, networking opportunities are a top reason people join SMPS Boston. We hosted events focused on establishing and developing relationships, and incorporated opportunities into all of our programming by adding on formal networking time at the beginning and end of each event.

Boston hosted 14 networking events ranging from formal events to casual networking to networking opportunities with peer organizations. New members were identified with nametag ribbons so that our board and committee directors could seek them out and help make introductions.

Formal Networking Events

Back to Business | Our signature event to kick off the program year, this event provides members an opportunity to meet the new board.

Awards Gala | Based on feedback from the previous year, we invited an emcee to host the program. Emcee and national speaker, Tim Asimos, CPSM of Circle S Studios inspired members with a short talk and then introduced the award recipients. Over 100 attendees celebrated 18 award recipients.

Holiday Party | Our annual Holiday Party is one of the premier networking events for the chapter. We had three event sponsors and 10 raffle prize sponsors, which generated $1,350 for the chapter. In addition, we invited long-time partner, Big Brother Big Sister Foundation, to join us and accept a $1,000 donation from the chapter.

Casual Networking Events

Mix@6 | These informal networking events are free for members and typically held after an educational program. We hosted five Mix@6 events in the 2018-19 program year.

CPSM/Fellows-Only Gathering | Our free CPSM/Fellows-Only event focused on developing our aspiring Fellows.
Past Presidents Receptions | A new initiative this year, we hosted two free events for the chapter’s past presidents, giving these leaders an opportunity for some higher-level discussions and networking.

New Member Networking Events

New Member Orientation | Held in November and June, attendees learn about chapter initiatives, hear from committee directors about how to get involved and learn how their membership can help them grow in their career. Because of dwindling attendance we decided to shake things up and switch to a lunch format, resulting in our first ever sold-out new member orientation.

Reception at ABX | Hosted as part of a local industry conference, attendees networked and learned about SMPS from our chapter president and Tina Meyers, representing SMPS headquarters. Attendees had a chance to win raffle prizes like webinars, a new membership, and books from past Build Business keynote speakers.

New Member Event & Cornhole Tournament | This annual event is a favorite among members and is free for new members. New members are matched with veteran members in a fun and competitive cornhole tournament. The pairing helps our newer members feel welcomed.

In addition to SMPS Boston’s networking events we partnered with NAWIC in January, BSA Emerging Professionals group in February, and NAIOP in August for networking with members from peer organizations.

TARGETING DIVERSIFIED CAREER TRACKS
FROM COORDINATOR TO CMO

We offer a wide variety of educational offerings ranging from entry-level to senior-level. Many of our programs cater to either entry to mid or mid to senior, with content that speaks to each cohort. Some of our programs this year were:

Is it Hot Enough for You? New England’s Market Forecast | In its 3rd year, the popular forecast program with Cynthia Paul from FMI drew a diversified crowd of mid to senior level professionals interested in getting critical insights on market trends.

Programming & Education for All Levels

- **35 Entry Level Programs**
- **49 Mid Level Programs**
- **46 Senior Level Programs**
- **17 Cross-Level Networking Opportunities**

Half Day Proposal Workshop | The Boston chapter hosted national speaker, Matt Handel, who delivered a proposal workshop to a sold-out room of 50 proposal writers.

Business Development Panel: From Handshake to Hired—Building a Strategy that Suits Your Style | To reach aspiring business developers we invited SMPS Boston Past President, Sarah McGillicuddy, to moderate a panel of business developers and clients who discussed how to gain trust with potential clients, best practices for BD, and how to position their firm for successful client cultivation.

Half Day InDesign Workshop: Beyond the Basics | Helping our members grow their skills, we developed a hands-on, advanced InDesign skills workshop.

Marketing Boot Camp | After a year hiatus, and due to member feedback, we brought back our annual full-day Marketing Boot Camp. To kick off the day, keynote speaker, Katie Martell, challenged attendees to break “The Curse of the Consideration Set” and earn trust to drive growth. Members had the opportunity to purchase a registration for the keynote only. The remaining Boot Camp sessions were tailored to the early career marketer, with four 45-minute sessions on Proofreading and Editing, Networking for Introverts, Social Media as Brand Building, and Understanding Your DISC Profile for Relationship Building.

Summer Walking Tour: Seaport District Parcel K | It’s important for our members to understand how a building is put together and what better classroom than a building under construction. Our sold-out summer walking tour guided attendees through a large development in Boston’s emerging Seaport District. Afterwards, everyone headed over to local brewery, Trillium, for networking.
“As a seasoned AEC Marketing Leader, SMPS continues to provide me with a vital industry network, accelerated skills, and transformative insight to succeed in today’s built environment. Whenever I can, I give back to SMPS through my contributions as a mentor and thought leader, and to the Fellows Recognition program to guide the next generation of AEC Marketing Leaders.”

KATE M. BRANNELLY, FSMPS, CPSM, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AT RATHS, RATHS & JOHNSON, INC.
SMPS BOSTON FELLOWS CHAMPION | MEMBER SINCE 1987
LEADERSHIP AND CHAPTER MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER PLAN/GOALS AND PROGRESS ON ACHIEVING THEM

Guiding the Chapter

Every summer the incoming board gathers for three days of intensive planning, leadership development, and training. To get the new board engaged early, the incoming president sent out a survey to board members to gather their thoughts on the chapter’s strengths and weaknesses, what would constitute success in the coming year, and ideas to improve the member experience. The input helped guide planning efforts and were shared with all board members.

This year’s theme was purposeful. On the first day of summer planning, Shake Things Up, was unveiled as inspiration for the board to try new ideas and to not be afraid of failure. The theme proved to be a powerful mantra embraced by all throughout the year.

Strategic Plan

The first mission of the incoming board was to develop a new three-year strategic plan. Prior strategic plans were too narrowly focused on the Boston chapter’s vision, rather than flowing from the Society’s vision and mission, and often were too dense to easily read. Our new plan centered around Business Transformed Through Marketing Leadership and fit on one page.

To further ensure our plan supported the Society’s objectives, we invited Deputy CEO, Tina Myers, to facilitate a full day of leadership training and strategic planning activities. After reflecting on prior member surveys, chapter successes and obstacles, member demographics, and member feedback, we were ready to launch into developing our goals and action plans. We distilled ideas into three overarching goals: Grow the Numbers, Increase Member Value, and Cultivate Leaders. Metrics to measure the success of the plan were developed and each committee prepared a one-year action plan to guide their activities. The strategic plan goals we set were ambitious yet approachable and we are already on our way to achieving many of them.

Succession Planning

Regular succession planning discussions led to identifying future board members early, ensuring we maintained strong chapter leadership. An abundance of applications for 2019-2020 board positions showed the success of this strategy.

Treasurer-in-Training Position

Recognizing the historic difficulty of recruiting for the treasurer board position, the Executive Committee developed a Treasurer-in-Training position. This allowed the outgoing treasurer the opportunity to mentor and provide proper training to the incoming treasurer, making the role more approachable. The rigor of training proved valuable in updating the chapter’s treasurer handbook.
Mid-year Check-ins and Exit Interviews

After introducing exit interviews last year with outgoing board members, we introduced mid-year check-ins with new board members. The mid-year check-in with our chapter president made our newest chapter leaders feel valued and provided an opportunity to make sure goals and objectives were on track to being met. The exit interviews with our President and President-Elect allowed us to review outgoing board members’ results against their goals, get feedback on how to improve the board member experience, and make sure that any information, materials, and knowledge was transferred to their successor. Both initiatives provided a forum for candid feedback and an opportunity to learn from each other and improve chapter operations.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING/MENTORING

Outside of the roles of President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President, six of our nine directors were new to the board. This created a great opportunity for an infusion of new ideas and made leadership development and training important. To kick off training and orient people to working with the board, all board members were given binders with information they could refer to throughout the year. In addition to Tina Meyers providing leadership training to the board, returning board members trained the incoming board on board management basics and expectations.

Chapter Manual

After a five-year effort the Boston chapter completed training manuals for every committee. This large undertaking paid off with our committees running more smoothly as the need for clarification on operational procedures was significantly reduced. Each director used the committee’s manual to train and provide transparency to their committee volunteers. This living document will be regularly updated to maintain relevance.

RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS’ ACHIEVEMENTS

We recognize the efforts of marketing professionals at our annual awards gala with awards in categories like website design, communications, branding, New Member of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Marketing Professional of the Year, and more. In 2018-2019 we received 26 submissions and gave out 18 awards. To judge the awards we convened a panel of 10 judges that included clients, chapter past presidents, firm principals, and respected marketers.

We have a monthly blog series that features two members and a monthly anniversary blog that recognizes member anniversaries and welcomes each new member to the chapter. We add member quotes to the anniversary blog posts, making them more personable. Members can submit their own news for publication through a form on our blog page, which we then highlight on our blog and through our weekly eflyer.

ENGAGEMENT OF PAST CHAPTER LEADERS AND EXPERIENCED MEMBERS

To keep past presidents engaged we introduced two events, one in the fall and one in the spring. Past presidents from the early days of the chapter to the present shared their lessons learned with the current leadership. Several expressed appreciation for this unique event and opportunity for them to remain connected to the chapter.

We look to past chapter leaders and experienced members to provide education to our members.

» Past President, Sarah McGillicuddy, organized a panel discussion on business development best practices.

» Senior members, including, Past President Aurora Cammarata, brought clients to participate in BD Live Swap.

» President, Valerie Puchades, taught Networking for Introverts at Boot Camp.

» Chapter Fellows became mentors to aspiring Fellows.

» CPSMs mentored CPSM candidates and provided marketing check-ins at our ABX conference booth.

» Many of our former chapter leaders and senior members became mentors in support of our mentorship program.
COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CHAPTERS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Collaborating with Other Chapters

Our largest collaborative event is the SMPS Northeast Regional Conference (NERC), hosted by nine chapters. This year, 14 of our members volunteered on NERC committees, including one member volunteering as conference co-chair. We had 91 attendees from Boston, making up 34% of total conference attendees. We sponsored the conference ($2,000) and awarded seven scholarships for our members to attend.

The chapter continued its successful relationship with the local AIA chapter, Boston Society of Architects (BSA) in its annual conference, ABX. We solicited session proposals for five workshops and reached out to our neighboring chapters to offer their members an opportunity to submit. We also partnered with nearby chapters to advertise select events from each chapter to each other's members.

Partnering with Outside Organizations

We partner with outside organizations to provide a well-rounded experience for our members and through these partnerships we also provide the expertise of our marketers to other organizations. Oftentimes these organizations reach out to us, an indication that our efforts to position SMPS as a thought leader are working. Our partnerships included:

- CRE 8th Annual CRE Young Leaders Social | This event attracted over 100 CRE members and 35 chapter members.
- NAWIC—Winter Social | In return for co-sponsoring this event, we received a percentage of the profits, $768.
- BSA EPNet | Young professionals across the AEC industries gathered for this fun, festive event to celebrate Boston's design community.
- NAIOP Cruise | 35 chapter members attended along with 115 NAIOP members.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND/OR PHILANTHROPIC ENDEAVORS

A Unique Opportunity for Members

The chapter held a design competition to benefit the BSA Foundation, a philanthropic organization that uses design to assist children, communities, and cities. Individuals and teams were invited to design a collateral piece to promote the Foundation's 2018 Legacy Circle Fundraising Breakfast. The winner and SMPS Boston were recognized via a targeted email to the Foundation’s vast mailing list of AEC firms; on social media channels; in BSA newsletters; and at the Breakfast, which the winner attended for free. This was a great way for SMPS Boston to highlight our members’ skills, provide value to a non-profit, and increase brand recognition among our target audience.

Continuing our Relationship with Big Brother Big Sister Foundation (BBBSF)

In December, we continued our long-standing relationship with BBBSF by holding our 2nd annual Clothing Drive. We increased the number of donations by 20% over the previous year with 10,000 pounds of donated clothing, from 17 AEC firms. The clothing donations equate to $10,000 for BBBSF. We presented BBBSF with $1,000 from the chapter and announced the Clothing Drive Winner at our Holiday Party.

Later in the year, with fundraising efforts at a historic low, BBBSF reached out to SMPS Boston for additional support. Through our blog, social media channels, and email the chapter asked members to donate funds and pledged to match the donations. This fundraising effort generated an additional $1,180 for BBBSF.

Feeding the Less Advantaged at Rosie's Place

In what is sure to become an annual tradition, 15 members of the Boston chapter volunteered at Rosie's Place, a non-profit that provides a safe and nurturing environment for poor and homeless women and their children. In support of this mission, SMPS donated $300 and volunteers helped cater dinner for approximately 150 women and children.
“After working with the CPSM study group to prepare for my exam—which I’m happy to say I passed!—I was inspired to take my career and my involvement with SMPS to the next level. I looked for ways to give back to the SMPS community, including joining the CPSM Committee to help my industry peers advance in their careers, writing articles for the chapter blog, and submitting my first-ever proposal to speak at our regional conference (NERC). My CPSM also helped me secure a new job where I could truly grow and flourish, and gave me the confidence to seek out networking, volunteering, and advocacy opportunities in our industry.”

STEPH TYLL, CPSM, SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER AT TIMBERLINE CONSTRUCTION

CPSM COMMITTEE | MEMBER SINCE 2017
MEMBERSHIP

RETAINING MEMBERS

This year the board and membership committee focused on personal outreach and member engagement. From new member welcome emails to Anniversary Program handwritten notes, making members feel welcomed, inspired, and supported was a number one priority.

Connecting with Expiring Members

At the beginning of each month, the membership committee reaches out to all members whose memberships are expiring. We remind them to renew and have received valuable feedback about why some have decided not to renew. From Sept. 2018 through Aug. 2019, SMPS Boston had a retention rate of 80%, an increase of 3% over the prior year.

Member-Only Benefits

The Boston chapter offers lots of free members-only perks, including educational events and free networking events. These members-only perks include: a twice yearly virtual book club with free books; a lending library of webinars and marketing related books; participating in our CPSM study group; free networking events; new member events; a ticket to our Summer Social; a reception at the ABX conference; scholarships to attend Build Business, SMPS Northeast Regional Conference and The Pinnacle Experience; and scholarships to cover the cost of becoming a CPSM or ascending to Fellow. By making these things a members-only benefit and at no cost, we provide value to our members while enticing non-members to join.

Anniversary Program

We launched an Anniversary Program this year to increase member recognition and improve retention. It began in March, with anniversary gifts mailed to members celebrating 1, 5, 10, 15 and 20+ years of membership. The biggest strategic move was the one-year anniversary gift, because our numbers show us that if we can keep a member for two years we’re likely to keep them throughout their AEC career. Through this initiative we encourage members to renew and become more active in the chapter.

Providing Opportunities to Volunteer

Members that are involved on a committee or have other opportunities to volunteer with the chapter are more likely to renew their membership. In 2018-2019, 64% of our members participated on committees. In addition to committee work, we offer members micro-volunteer opportunities, like becoming a mentor, writing for our blog, providing design services for event invitations, volunteering to staff our ABX booth, and hosting events.

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

This year we had 61 new members join the chapter. That, combined with a 3% increase in our retention rate helped us catapult from the Society’s 5th largest chapter at the start of the program year to the 2nd largest chapter by the end of the program year! Ending the year with 289 members (including 10 lifetime and student members) we are now larger than we have been in years.

Making a Presence at BSA’s ABX Conference

SMPS Boston selected speakers and topics for five workshops on marketing and BD topics for this 8,000 attendee conference put on by the Boston Society of Architects. We staffed a booth on the show floor with 24 member volunteers, had 10 CPSMs at our booth offering feedback on marketing materials, and hosted a reception. From previous years, we knew that the majority of people that attended our sponsored workshops were not members so we had a chapter leader introduce each session and talk about the value of SMPS. We had SMPS banners outside each workshop room, and put a postcard on each person’s chair with information about our booth location, the reception we were hosting,

Giving Back to Members

- 31 FREE EVENTS FOR MEMBERS
- 15 SCHOLARSHIPS
- 50 MEMBER ANNIVERSARY GIFTS
- 7 VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENTS

Handwritten notes in each anniversary gift make members feel valued and appreciated, as evidenced by the many thank you notes we have received.
and the $200 membership rebate we were offering. 71 people signed up for the reception, we reached 251 non-members through our reception and workshops, and five people took advantage of the rebate.

**Member Rebates**

In addition to offering the $200 rebate to ABX attendees, we targeted ‘hot’ events, like Boot Camp and Summer Social, with member drives and rebates. This program year, 13 people took advantage of the member rebates offered.

**NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION PROGRAM**

With attendance at a historical low for our fall orientation we needed to rethink this biannual program for the spring. The new structure turned into a lunchtime orientation with free lunch, a presentation from the board and committee chairs sharing their SMPS stories, and ended with an interactive activity where attendees got to know each other.

“Everyone in SMPS is so welcoming! They make sure to let people know that they can sit in on any committee meetings until they find the right fit for them.”

—Molly Romano, Windover Construction, attended the June New Member Orientation

The Director of Membership personally invited new members and prospective members that had signed up for our events in the current year via individual emails. Within one hour, 25 people registered. We sold out the event with 45 people attending and many staying afterwards to ask questions and to join a committee.

**MENTORING PROGRAMS**

SMPS Boston’s Mentorship Program has been a great asset to our members and can be catered to any level marketer, from entry-level to CMO. We let new members know about the program when they join and we periodically promote it in our weekly eflyer and via social media. Mentors are recruited from our roster of CPSMs, Fellows, board members, and past chapter leaders.

To increase the reach of the mentorship program, a field was added to our annual Member Survey to request a mentor. This resulted in eight applicants and brought our year-end total to 10 mentorship pairs. We tracked the progress of each pair through periodic check-ins.

**Ushering in a New Group of Fellows**

The chapter has several candidates that meet the requirement to ascend to Fellow. To help these members along, we held an event so that CPSMs could network with Fellows and find a mentor to help them prepare their Fellows application. We expect to have a few Fellows applications from the Boston chapter in the coming year because of this outreach.
“Joining the Communications Committee at the start of my SMPS membership was super helpful. The opportunities to get involved—especially in this time of abundant tech and social media—are seemingly endless. In less than a year, I’ve been given the opportunity to take over the monthly member spotlights for our blog, join our (amazing) Director of Communications in regularly posting to LinkedIn, and serve on the national Marketing/PR Committee for the 2019 Seller-Doer Symposium. It’s been a great year. I’ve had the chance to meet so many new people and I’m looking forward to my second year with SMPS Boston.”

PAUL GARABEDIAN, ASSOCIATE AT ELLANA, INC.
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
MEMBER SINCE 2018
COMMUNICATIONS

Many people have their first interaction with SMPS Boston through a social media post, blog post, or on the chapter’s website. The chapter supports the SMPS mission by promoting a rich array of educational and networking opportunities available to members and by providing original content.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

This year, the SMPS Boston website got a face lift. We incorporated the new SMPS brand identity and updated the homepage design to be more consistent with today’s website aesthetics. This earned the website 12% more users than the previous year.

Most Popular Pages

The Homepage, Careers and Upcoming Events pages continue to be the most popular, with 17%, 10% and 9% of pageviews respectively. The heavy traffic to our Job Openings page gives prospective employers access to highly qualified candidates, which in turn allows SMPS Boston to charge a premium for job postings. This year we earned over $18,000 from our job bank, which helped the chapter offset member prices for events and fund scholarships.

Blog

Members and sponsoring firms contribute to the blog on a monthly basis. This content is supplemented with recurring posts from our Chapter President, monthly recognition of new and renewing members, and posts about member benefits. Last year we delivered 100 original blog posts and added 35 subscribers. Our most popular post, What is Editorial Photography, earned over 7,400 pageviews.

This year we challenged ourselves to add several recurring blog series. These included Marketing Trends and our newly popular Member Spotlight, where we highlight two members each month. These posts gain significant traction on social media, giving our members and sponsors additional visibility.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Communications Committee implemented a new program where each platform had its own channel manager. This allowed the committee to effectively use each platform to its highest and best use. An average of 8% of our website pageviews are initiated from social sites, with nearly half of that traffic coming from LinkedIn. The Communications Committee worked with volunteers to post live from their events on SMPS Boston social media platforms to further increase engagement.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is our most successful social media channel. We continue to build our activity on our company page by posting content like job openings from our job board, event invites, member news, and blog posts. We make sure our posts include strong graphics to attract attention from our 710 followers and their networks.

Twitter

SMPS Boston tweets from @smpsbos. We publicize upcoming events, new blog posts, event photos, new job postings on our website and share news from SMPS and supporting organizations. We retweet member, sponsor, and supporter news; favorite tweets from our members; and live tweet during events. This year we re-focused on this platform with a 68% increase in tweets from the previous year.
Instagram
We achieved substantial growth and engagement this year. We shared 40 posts that promoted our events, blogs, members, and sponsors; gained 237 new followers; and ended the year with 780+ followers.

Facebook
This year we found a positive shift in engagement on Facebook due to the dedication of one of our volunteers to post more content. We shared over 400 posts, including extremely successful posts congratulating our newest CPSMs, and ended the year with 467 Page Likes.

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER
Year after year, SMPS Boston’s Friday eflyer is ranked in surveys as the favored way to find out about chapter happenings. We updated our eflyer to the new brand standards and reorganized content for better scanability. The eflyer, which reaches 1,800 people weekly, drives readers to our website to register for events, read new content on the blog, and see who’s hiring. The header graphic changes weekly and features photos of members at events to provide subtle reminders that it’s our members that make SMPS Boston great. This year we increased our average open rate from 13% to 15% and maintained a 14% click-through rate.

MARKETING MATERIALS
SMPS Boston primarily communicates through digital communications. We maintain consistency in voice among these channels and focus graphics on the people of SMPS Boston, using professional photography captured at events by our in-kind sponsor photographers. We use handouts at our events to highlight speakers, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities. We promote our larger events, the annual Holiday Party and Awards Gala, through mailed invitations. The Communications Committee reviews all marketing materials developed by others in order to maintain brand consistency.

Video
To close out the year our Chapter President worked with our in-kind videographer to develop a vlog as her year-end blog post. This popular video focused on member stories about how they were inspired by this year’s theme. We used video as part of the call for speakers for ABX 2019 submissions, and videotaped speakers at Boot Camp to create short snippets of content to use as vlogs and to promote Boot Camp in 2020.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEYS/RESULTS
Soliciting Feedback
In spring we send a survey to all SMPS Boston members. The survey solicits feedback on member benefits, communication preferences, programs, education events, and networking. The results help us plan the following year by aligning our goals and programs with our members’ wants. This year we asked pointed questions about two initiatives the board was working on and gained valuable feedback that will shape these in the coming year. 16% of members completed the survey.

Based on feedback from last year’s survey, we developed a program on the K-12 market, hosted a webinar screening on Google Analytics, brought back Boot Camp, and added an emcee to our annual awards gala.

One of our survey questions is helping us measure an objective in our 3-year strategic plan about increasing the view of SMPS Boston as a thought leader. Results showed a 6% increase in people that “strongly agree” with this sentiment.

After events we distribute evaluation surveys to attendees. From these responses, we gain insights into how we can continually improve our programming. All but one of our educational programs received a rating of at least 4.5 out of 5. Our program, Communications Workshop: A Method to the Madness—Decoding the Unwritten Language Rules We All Follow received a perfect score of 5!
“I truly cherish my friends and colleagues at SMPS Boston. It’s very heartening to know my videographer skills and my membership are valued so much that you would go to bat for me to help me get my membership reinstated after I had to let it lapse for a few months. The contacts I’ve made through donating my time and skills have been invaluable and I’m very appreciative of that.”

GLENN DI BENEDETTO, OWNER AT GREEN LIGHT N GO
IN-KIND SPONSOR / MEMBER SINCE 2015
FINANCIAL HEALTH

FINANCIAL STATEMENT/BUDGET
SMPS Boston continued its strong financial position in 2018-2019, ending the year with $173,918 in reserves. Realizing this is a larger reserve than necessary, we have been making concerted efforts to use a portion of our reserves to invest in the management of our chapter and invest in our members through reduced event registration costs, bringing in national speakers, and developing free members-only benefits. Our goal is to reduce reserves to one year of operating expense.

Financial Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>$130,387</td>
<td>$109,015</td>
<td>$21,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>$130,193</td>
<td>$109,956</td>
<td>$20,237</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross Profit</td>
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<td>($941)</td>
<td>$1,135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership Investment*</td>
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<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$5,883</td>
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<td>Net Profit</td>
<td>($20,688)</td>
<td>($15,941)</td>
<td>$4,747</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Member Investment includes scholarships, membership rebates, and speaker fees.

INVESTING IN OUR MEMBERS
The chapter continues its strong record of member investment with even more member benefits launched this year. Some of the major initiatives include:

Scholarships | We offer Build Business registration scholarships for the Marketer of the Year award winner, Chapter President, Immediate Past President, Chapter President-Elect, and two members; NERC registration scholarships for the New Member and Volunteer of the Year award winners, Chapter President, Chapter President-Elect, and three members; one The Pinnacle Experience registration scholarship for a member; and unlimited need-based scholarships to cover CPSM exam costs and application fees to become a Fellow.

Reduced Member Rates | We provide reduced rates for members at all events to help showcase the value of membership. This year we introduced further reduced rates for CPSMs and Fellows to attend educational workshops. This helps increase the visibility of CPSM certification and helps our CPSMs earn the CEUs they need.

CPSM Study Group | Not only is our CPSM study group free, but we raffle off one free set of Markendium books and have a free lending library of study materials for candidates to borrow so that the cost of study materials does not become a barrier.

Free Members-Only Events | We held free-for-members events throughout the year. These included two virtual book clubs, which included a free book; our Summer Social; networking events for past presidents; participation in our mentorship program; Mix@6 networking events (non-members can register for a nominal fee); Town Hall; and a CPSM/Fellows-only networking event.

Free for Everyone | We provided free events for nonmembers to show the value that membership can bring. These included our twice-yearly new and prospective member events and our reception at ABX.

Renowned Speakers | To give our members the opportunity to hear from non-local respected experts, we invested in several speakers, covering their speaking stipends and travel costs. Speakers included Cynthia Paul, FMI Corporation; Kate Lucey, Client Savvy; Jen Hebblethwaite, Graceworks; Matt Handal, Help Everybody Everyday; and Katie Martell, marketing consultant.

Lending Library | We have a virtual library of members-only content that can be borrowed for free. The library contains webinars, books, and industry articles.

Membership Raffles | We held numerous drawings at chapter events. This year we raffled off two new memberships or membership renewals, a webinar, multiple sets of Markendium books, books on marketing related topics from renowned speakers, and prizes donated from our sponsors like Amazon gift cards, Red Sox tickets, and restaurant gift cards.

Anniversary Program | We launched an anniversary program to recognize members celebrating 1, 5, 10, 15, and 20+ years of membership. Each month, a member with a significant anniversary received a handwritten card and SMSP branded gift to celebrate their milestone.

Town Hall
In April we held our 6th annual Town Hall and invited all chapter volunteers, past presidents, and the prior year’s
board members. The timing was held in conjunction with national Volunteer Appreciation Week. We decided to shake things up this year with a new format, including adding a “state of the chapter” address.

After the presentation, we split the 40 attendees into four groups based on their level of experience in their profession. Each group was asked to craft the ideal SMPS journey from the perspective of their peers. Breaking out the groups by experience level proved incredibly successful. It allowed our volunteers to formulate programs and benefits built solely for their professional cohort.

The evening ended with networking and a dinner reception to recognize the efforts of our volunteers. Each volunteer left with an SMPS Boston branded tote bag and a new umbrella from our event host, Autodesk. This event generated over 100 suggestions and ideas to help the chapter continue to grow.

SPONSORSHIP REVENUE

Our sponsorship program helps offset programming costs for our members and engages our community of consultants, vendors, and supporters. We generated $27,300 in corporate and event sponsorship, the same amount as last year, but below our target of $30,300. We realized we have an over-reliance on generating sponsorships from our board members’ employers and have changed our strategy to focus on consultants and vendors that serve our industry first, and board members’ employers second.

We benefited from several in-kind sponsorships including event photography, videography, graphic design, and a print sponsor. We established our first in-kind media sponsor, High Profile, an industry trade journal. Through this partnership the chapter received free advertising and weekly reposting of original content from our blog to the trade journal’s website. This increased the chapter’s awareness in the industry and provided thought leadership recognition for our members.

This year, we created a Sponsor Benefits Checklist to send to sponsors so they could better keep track of their sponsor benefits. During the year, we periodically reached out to our sponsors to ensure they were receiving their benefits and felt valued.

RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Financial Budgeting & Planning | Our financial budgeting and planning begins in tandem with our chapter planning strategy sessions in the summer. This establishes a tight connection between our chapter, committee goals, and our budget. Individual event budgets and plans are created throughout the year, which flow up to our chapter-wide budget.

Monthly Reporting & Analysis | The monthly committee report shows actuals vs. budgeted costs for all events. We provide YTD profit and loss statements for each committee and for the chapter vs. target. This allows us to identify areas where we are short vs. our target, or areas that we exceed our budget, allowing us to adjust as needed.

Identification of Alternative Revenue Generation | The chapter identifies areas where we can produce revenue beyond events and sponsorship. This year we raised $21,756 in alternate revenue—$18,988 from our job bank, $2,000 shared revenue from our ABX participation, and $768 in profit sharing from a co-sponsored event.

Promotion of SMPS Boston’s holiday party in High Profile’s popular weekly e-newsletter, a benefit of their in-kind sponsorship.