

## United States Masters Swimming Executive Committee Conference Call

January 9, 2006

FINAL

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### Action Item:

1. MSP to proceed with an investigation of our tax liability in Ohio, New Hampshire and New York, cost not to exceed \$600.
  2. MSP to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2005, conference call as amended.
  3. MSP that USMS pay the merchant processing fee for Katrina donations made during online entry for the One Hour Postal Championship.
  4. MSP to ask for an overbudget request through the Editorial Committee to proceed with a survey to determine our members' preference for magazine content, cost not to exceed \$5000.
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President Rob Copeland called the meeting to order at 8:39 p.m. EST. Also present were Meg Smath, Michael Heather, Julie Heather, Tom Boak, Tracy Grilli, Mark Gill, Leo Letendre, Patty Miller and Jim Miller.

### Officer reports

#### *Vice President of Local Operations*

Julie reported that the Zone Committee had its first conference call last night. They currently have one vacancy, as Kenton Jones has resigned. Tom Boyd has agreed to take his place, and Julie has heard from three of the four LMSC chairs in the Southwest Zone (the fourth LMSC does not have a chair at this time). Rob agreed to the appointment, so Tom is the new zone representative for the Southwest Zone. Meg will make sure the online version of the rule book is updated. The committee discussed the election procedures and have come up with several areas where they will be proposing changes, including how to deal with offices with no nominations by the deadline, paperwork submitted and meet-the-candidate opportunities. They would also like to propose two educational opportunities for convention. The first would be a "keynote" talk (possibly held during lunch) along the lines of what Mel Goldstein did last year. The second would be a set of workshops (LMSC Chairs, Registrars, Marketing, etc) for delegates to attend. All the workshops would be run at the same time; delegates would only be able to go to one. They are also going to resurrect the "model bylaws and grievance procedures" project. They discussed LMSCs, and have started to determine which would benefit most by intervention and assistance, including grants to convention, mentoring, etc. Anthony Thompson has agreed to lead a project to look at LMSC and zone boundaries. Their next conference call will be at the beginning of March.

Mary Beth Windrath has been in contact with the Records and Tabulation Committee. They are currently working on the SCM Top 10. There was \$2000 left in the committee's budget and she asked her committee what to do with it. Many suggested giving the money to Mary Beth for her work on the Top 10 software. Mary Beth asked

Margaret Bayless and Julie how to spend it, and Julie used that opportunity to discuss the larger issue of payment to committee chairs for services (Julie doesn't believe committee chairs should also be contractors) and processes for obtaining bids for spending large sums of money. Julie suggested that the committee focus on goals and objectives. If we need to go through the overbudget process this year to fund a project that we can justify, we could definitely do that.

### ***Vice President of Community Services***

Mike reported that Jani Sutherland has contacted all Fitness Committee members and given them the task of an article for the Article of the Month on the website and/or a Virtual Swim. They have one new virtual swim so far, and the Virtual Swim to Worlds is in progress. Members have been sent a list of topics to think about as to how they can provide more information to fitness swimmers.

The Marketing Committee is going to start on a comprehensive marketing plan for USMS, but Mike did not know how far that has gone yet. Marketing has also been discussing what the appropriate use of the USMS booth at Worlds should be, and has a few interesting ideas.

The Planning Committee is going to continue work on governance procedures, develop measurement criteria for our mission statement/goals/core objectives, examine committee work plans to compare them to our mission statement/goals/core objectives and consider the value of developing a local assistance program.

Projects for the year for the Sports Medicine, Health and Safety Committee:

- (1) *Sports Medicine Conference at the World Championships* (the biggie). This project was initiated under Jessica Seaton and is progressing under the management of Laura Kessler, who is doing a very good job. She has assistance from Joel Stager. A slate of speakers has been identified, and further speakers are being approached. The one problem has been funding. Speedo has not responded to Laura's request to talk and the committee has passed them by and will move on to other possible sponsors. Jessica Seaton is also assisting with the conference, as is Jim Miller, Past President.
- (2) *SWIMMER Magazine*. The committee continued to be involved in generation and review of content in the magazine. There was a short review of ear problems in the last *SWIMMER*, in response to a reader question, and the committee has been asked about other questions or ideas for topics in this area. It is usually a committee member who answers the medical questions. They will also provide longer content/articles when asked. Chair Jody Welborn continues to review the health-related articles for accuracy.
- (3) *Web Site*. Jane Moore continues to ably review content for the website, checking for accuracy of information. They are also working on expanding available sports medicine-related content.
- (4) *Editorial Committee*. Nadine Day is representing the Sports Medicine, Health and Safety Committee on the Editorial Committee (as well as other areas) and will stay in touch regarding sports medicine-related materials. She will also send Jody the minutes of the meeting and contact her if issues arise.
- (5) *Research*. Research into the effect of swimming on aging, as well as health and disease, remains a major goal. Jody will work with Jessica, as the

previous committee chair, and Joel Stager to assess their current status and determine where they need to go.

- (6) *Safety*. There is still work to be done to assimilate the Safety Committee into the Sports Medicine, Health and Safety Committee. Jody hopes to have projects, including information in *SWIMMER*, about safety around the pool, inside and out. She would also like to be in contact with LMSC Safety Chairs and find out what their guidelines are and how USMS can provide assistance to them.

Mike would like Jim Wheeler, chair of the Planning Committee, to provide some information on governance and a policy manual for the Board of Directors' midyear meeting. Julie will also work on the policy manual and still needs a copy of the USA Swimming Policy Manual. Jim suggested Ron Van Pool as a contact, and Rob said he would talk to Ron about getting the manual.

### ***Vice President of Member Services***

Mark had nothing to report on the Recognition and Awards Committee.

For the Championship Committee, Short Course Nationals information reached swimmers in the current issue of *SWIMMER*. Additional information (more hotels) will be available on the website as soon as the World Championship application is finished. A policy manual is being revised and should be ready soon.

Two new coaches, Lia Obster and Sue Welker, have begun posting workouts on the USMS website for the Coaches Committee. Kris Houchins and Mel Goldstein are continuing from last year.

A subcommittee of the Communications Committee is beginning an audit of all the content of the website. The goal of this project is to examine the information currently posted on the site and determine where items need to be updated. With several thousand pages on the site, this will be a big project and is estimated to finish in March.

The Editorial Committee has been discussing foreign subscriptions for *SWIMMER*. Currently, it costs \$26 for a foreigner (excluding Canadians) to subscribe to *SWIMMER* magazine. Subscribers have been having trouble, receiving issues late or not at all. Douglas Murphy has recommended that we raise the fee to \$48. This would cover the costs of sending the magazine 1<sup>st</sup> class airmail plus the additional handling associated with 1<sup>st</sup> class mail. The Canadian price of \$22 would remain unaffected. USMS members living in foreign countries will still get 1<sup>st</sup> class mailing as part of their dues. The increased fee is an average price for a variety of countries. **MSA to charge foreign subscribers a rate to cover the average 1<sup>st</sup> class airmail and handling.** The committee has completed its policy manual, which the Board of Directors will discuss for approval at the midyear meeting. Meg will send the manual to the members of the Board so they can be familiar with it before the meeting.

The History and Archives Committee is in the process of copying all the registration records from 1986 to 1993. These are then being used to match up legacy ID's to find duplicates that need fixing.

### ***Vice President of National Operations***

Leo reported that the Long Distance Committee has been very active. Marcia Cleveland is extremely active and has involved her committee in a number of activities. Reviews of the national championship entry forms, manuals and other documents have started.

The Registration Committee has started work on gathering information for online registration from registrars on the committee. Leo spoke with committee chair George Simon about how to approach the issues facing the project. They have not yet decided on a project manager for online registration. There is \$1,200 in the budget for George and Leo to travel to the National Office to discuss requirements for online registration with Tracy Grilli and Esther Lyman; Mark may also be able to attend. Julie noted that it is critical that the LMSCs be in favor of online registration, because of potential logistical problems related to credit card processing. Tom suggested that we make this an agenda item for the midyear meeting. We will need a financial analysis of the procedure, maybe by Jeff Moxie.

Kathy Casey is defining projects for the year for the Rules Committee. USA Swimming will be reorganizing their rule book, so the committee will need to be prepared for possible major changes in our rule book as a consequence.

The Finance Committee has been quiet recently after the initial flurry of activity.

The Legislation and Officials Committees have gotten their welcome letters out. Leo has a conference call scheduled for January 10 with all of the chairs under his supervision.

### ***Treasurer***

Tom said he has processed the December payroll, processed weekly check runs and has been working with the webmaster to create a reporting form for project-related activity—he has received a first sample and given his response.

He has a proposal in hand from our auditor, Marie Caputo, to investigate potential tax liability in Ohio, New Hampshire and New York. **MSP to proceed with an investigation of our tax liability in Ohio, New Hampshire and New York, cost not to exceed \$600.** Tracy noted that, as stated in the Treasurer's section of the LMSC Handbook, LMSCs whose income is less than \$25,000 do not need to file IRS returns. If they receive a form from the IRS, they only have to check off on the form that they do not have enough income to require a return. Patty suggested we confirm this with our auditors.

Tom has been busy coordinating the midyear meeting of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, scheduled for January 26–29, 2006. He will be sending “a bunch of stuff” about the meeting soon. Margaret Bayless will also get information to us for the meeting. Meg will send copies of the Professional Management Guidelines, Financial Operating Guidelines and the current budget to all members of the Board for reference during the meetings. Tom will check to make sure the hotel has Internet access.

Tom has also been working with MBNA to create a credit card account for use with Costco for conference calls. The application has been mailed. Only Executive Committee members can authorize and set up conference calls. Because Julie has used Costco extensively in her LMSC, she will send instructions on how to use their system once everything is all set.

Tom noted that he must have copies of contracts for all USMS employees and contractors in order for him to process payroll checks.

### ***Secretary***

Meg reported that a few deadlines will be approaching in January, and she will email

reminders to the appropriate people. She reminded everyone that the minutes to the December 6 meeting have not yet been approved and distributed. **MSP to approve the minutes as amended.** Meg said she has begun preliminary work to scan the archival documents she has in her possession.

### ***Past President***

Jim said he has been keeping busy as our ASUA representative, and has been communicating with the chair of the ASUA Technical Committee to coordinate a meeting at Stanford before the World Championships. He has also been appointed to a USA Swimming task force on air quality in natatoriums.

### ***Legal Counsel***

Patty has been very busy working on contracts for our sponsors, employees and contractors.

## **Executive Director Search**

Rob and Laura Winslow participated in a conference call with one of the responders to our RFP for search firms. The RFP was sent to a group of search firms, and also posted on our website. Responses from search firms are due back by January 20, and after our search committee has narrowed it down to three or four firms, Tom will contact those firms. Then we will start working with the selected search firm and finalize our requirements. If we plan to do anything within the next two or three months, we need to publish a notice of the search for the Executive Director in the next issue of *SWIMMER*, as per PMG. Rob anticipates the announcement being 150 to 200 words. Mark will notify Bill Volckening that we'll need to make space for the announcement in the March-April issue. Jim suggested that in addition, Rob should draw attention to the announcement in his president's address.

## **Online Entries**

The applications for the World Championship and One Hour Swim were supposed to be finished by January 1, but they are still in development. Below is brief summary from Webmaster/IT Director Jim Matysek of what has been done:

- The meet is set up in the database with all the information defined for sports contested, all events per sport, days of meet, any entry constraints particular to this meet, extra items that can be ordered such as sponsorships and social events, etc.
- Accepting personal information (name, address, gender, birth date, club, etc.) into the database has been proven.
- Accepting entry information for individual events in all sports has been proven.
- Accepting orders for all of the extra items listed above has been proven.
- Displaying the various waivers and agreements and accepting a yes/no indication has been proven.
- Accepting credit card payments for this meet has not been tried, but this is accomplished via a library of functions that have been used numerous times in the past.

The major items remaining include:

- Pulling it all together. This has proven to require much more time than anticipated to just pull all the pieces together so that the "flow" of the entry process as experienced by the athlete is comfortable and works with a variety of situations (errors in input by the athlete that need to be highlighted and corrected, using the back/forward buttons on web browsers, etc.).
- Finalization of relay and team event entries. The database is all set up for accepting relay and team entries and the data structures are in place in the online entry application, but using the supporting forms for actually entering team events has not been debugged yet.
- Other smaller items still need to be debugged in the application also. Database structures and data structures within the online entry application exist for all of these, but the final steps of altering the forms in the online entry to support them and/or debugging these alterations still need to be done for the following areas: personal information questions regarding the athlete's past achievements (Olympians, world record holders, etc.); uploading of pictures for athletes and scans of ID cards; supporting multiple payments per athlete and editing of entries received; and small modifications to the method of sending out email confirmations.

Mark said he feels we need a better handle on setting priorities, as well as better communication when there are setbacks. He noted that Jim Matysek was distracted from developing the applications by massive SPAM problems.

The One Hour Postal is being run as a fundraiser for swimmers in the Southern LMSC affected by Hurricane Katrina. There will be a merchant fee for those who make donations as part of the online entry process. **MSA that USMS pay the merchant processing fee for Katrina donations.** We will explore passing the donations through the USMS Endowment Fund in an effort to make sure donations are tax-deductible. Mark will check with Doug Church to make sure donations will be tax-deductible and report back.

## **Marketing Survey**

The USMS survey done in 2001 didn't address magazine content, information that the Editorial Committee needs. The Marketing Committee would also like to obtain some hard data about our members to use for soliciting sponsors. The Editorial Committee has proposed a new survey (attached), some of which will be done in-house by Tom Boyd, and some of which will be done by an outside firm. They believe the survey can be done for under \$5000. **MSA that we ask for an overbudget request through the Editorial Committee to proceed with the survey, cost not to exceed \$5000.** Julie asked that we make sure the data is accessible after the survey is completed. We also need to know how we will use the data. In order to keep the survey from being too broad, we may conduct multiple surveys concurrently. Tom Boyd would also like to write an academic paper about the survey. Tracy noted that one of the most common questions she receives is how much different clubs charge. That might be a good question for a later survey on clubs. We will ask the Board of Directors for suggestions for potential questions. Mark will ask the Finance Committee for overbudget approval.

**New Business**

Mike suggested that we think about a new public-relations person. We will discuss that at the midyear meeting.

**Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be the midyear meeting in Houston, January 26–29.

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 p.m.

Meg Smath  
Secretary

## **SURVEY PROPOSAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In order to meet growth objectives, better serve membership and improve sponsorship revenues, USMS must better understand its members' attitudes, preferences and behaviors. The survey proposed here will provide the information necessary to identify the consumer segments within USMS and describe them according to their information preferences and needs, their motivation for swimming and their consumption habits. This information can then be used to: (1) plan strategies for improved information content in the magazine and on the website by identifying the relative size of each segment and their interests, (2) improve member services by identifying areas in which members would like to be provided with more and better information, (3) increase sponsorship revenues by providing extensive information answering the sponsor question, "what will we get for our money?" This study will be able to answer this question by providing information about Masters swimmers as consumers.

We propose collecting data via an online survey with subsequent analysis. The entire project is estimated to take months and cost under \$5,000 if we have the analysis done in-house by a USMS member. The key information areas are: USMS communications content (both content and context for preferences), services (including perceptions of current benefits and perceptions about the sources) and the consumption habits of members (including their incomes, purchases and attitudes about sponsor preference and loyalty).

A task force, including representatives from the Communications, Marketing and Editorial Committees, will design survey content. They will consult with appropriate committees and key professional staff, including the webmaster, magazine editor, sponsor liaison and Douglas Murphy editorial and marketing staff. An online survey will be administered to 10,000 USMS members (randomly selected). The response rate goal is 50%, providing a database of 5,000 swimmers. The analysis will include a cluster analysis that will identify distinct segments with data on their USMS information preferences, demographics and consumption behaviors, and reasons for swimming. This data will then be provided to the relevant committees for use in identifying areas for improvement in serving members and developing strategies and tactics for doing so.

### **Timeline:**

1. Survey design: four weeks. Completion target: March 1. Members of this task force should include representatives from Marketing, Communications, Editorial and Executive Committees.
2. Survey implementation (online set up): four weeks. Completion target: April 1. Tom Boyd, working with contractor.
3. Survey testing: two weeks. Completion target: April 15. Task force and contractor.



4. Data collection: four weeks, including a two-week follow-up message to nonrespondents. Completion target: June 1. Contractor with input from Tom Boyd and task force.
5. Analysis: six to eight weeks. Completion target, August 1. Tom Boyd and task force.

This proposal outlines the planning and execution of a national survey of USMS members. It will provide information that will enable us to identify segments within the USMS membership and develop strategies for better serving them. It will also provide information that will allow us to estimate the relative size of each segment. The information from the analysis will also provide information that, if used properly, will facilitate more and larger sponsorships, particularly with nonswimming business/products.

The project should take approximately six months from start to finish and, if started immediately, should be available in time for the convention in 2006. The timeline thus gives us until Feb. 1 to create the task force and its charge. While this work can be done at any time, the information will be best used by the relevant committees during convention, so targeting a completion date that makes the results available to committees during convention is appropriate.

### **USMS MEMBER SURVEY PROPOSAL DRAFT #4**

In order to better serve our membership and develop better and more lucrative sponsor relationships, we propose the use of survey research to collect information on our members.

#### **Survey objectives:**

1. Better serve members
2. Expand membership (not directly addressed by the first survey proposal)
3. Improve sponsor relationships

Four general knowledge areas will be addressed:

1. Content
2. Services
3. Consumption habits of members
4. Market segmentation

#### **Content**

Content includes all information disseminated by USMS, whether it is in brochures, *USMS SWIMMER* magazine, via the web or other media. We need to better understand two key dimensions:

1. Context of preferences: Our members may have differing attitudes about the value of content based on different relevant contexts. Among the possible contexts to explore are reading, usage, importance of inclusion, likelihood in engaging in word of mouth communication, anticipation and expectations. For example, members may read articles that are interesting and rate them as such, but their satisfaction may be more influenced by particular items, such as All-American lists or workouts. We must determine not only attitudes about content, but the context of those attitudes and whether they differ between segments (see segments below).
2. Content: We need to better understand not only what features and items people like, but, at a more abstract level, do they prefer a tone that speaks to average swimmers more than elite swimmers? Or do they prefer a stronger orientation toward teams versus individuals? Among the issues to be addressed regarding content are: Individual versus team; elite, average, social or fitness emphasis; and broad content areas (e.g., technique, diet, health/nutrition, safety, competitions, teams, human interest).

## **Services**

We will benefit from improved understanding of how we can better serve our membership. We also need to understand member perceptions regarding the source of current benefits. It is likely that benefits accrue almost entirely at the club level and that information gathered here will be best used to help USMS to help local teams and LMSCs to better serve their members.

## **Consumption habits of members**

Lucrative sponsorships require detailed knowledge of what a sponsor will get for its money. Sport entities that can show exactly what a sponsor gets for their investment command high rates and are able to secure many sponsors for long-term contracts. This will also help in identifying a list of marketing assets (e.g., meet signage, event sponsorships, advertising pages in the magazine or programs, website sponsorship, team sponsorship) and their value.

## **Segmentation**

USMS is made up of a diverse group of people who swim for different reasons. While some focus on functional benefits such as weight loss or making friends, others see their participation in swimming as a key element of their personality and the means by which they live out their personal values of happiness, long life, fitness and community. Further, our membership seeks different functional benefits and we need to better understand the preferences and needs of these different groups, as well as their relative size. Intuitively, it is easy to identify likely segments: serious competitive, social, fitness, triathletes, medical reasons, etc. However, we must also understand the attitudes and preferences of these segments and their relative size.

We propose a long-range plan for the use of survey methodology in achieving better understanding of how to best serve our membership.

Prior to finalizing a survey we should be able to answer the following questions about each battery of questions:

1. How will information be analyzed and used? (To be determined by the survey committee)
2. Cost (To be estimated when the bidding process starts)
3. Urgency (To be determined by the relevant parties and Executive Committee)
4. Value (Do we believe that knowing the answers to the questions will lead us to improved practices?)

**Determination of preferences for USMS content and Identification of relevant segments:**

The survey questions should be designed so that we can perform a cluster analysis on content preferences. The cluster analysis will then allow us to identify distinct groups of USMS members who differ in their attitudes and preferences for content.

Ease of analysis and consistency of format are important. We should consider including several different dimensions upon which attitude can be evaluated. One of the most common shortcomings of survey research used to predict consumer behavior and attitudes is lack of specificity. (Digression: If I ask people if they like fast food, I may get a very different response than if I ask them if they like fast food when they are taking a long trip in the car with their children.)

We should consider using some (not all) of the following contexts when asking respondents to evaluate content:

1. What do you read?
2. What do you use in your own life/training?
3. What do you believe is important to include?
4. What would you be likely to tell someone else about?
5. What do you look forward to seeing?
6. What do you expect?

Time and cost prohibit asking all of these, but we shall need to poll our officers and the people responsible for content to determine their preferred dimensions.

Possible content that we might ask about includes:

1. Stories about teams
2. Stories on elite-level swimmers
3. Stories on average swimmers
4. Stories on beginners

5. Stories about people who have transformed their lives through swimming (inspirational)
6. Workouts
7. Nutrition
8. Entry information and calendars of big meets
9. Stroke technique
10. Health

The exact questions on content should come from the Editorial Committee, the webmaster and anyone else responsible for disseminating information. The answers to what people like will differ depending on the medium, so it may be practical to only ask about the website and the magazine in the first survey.

The information from this battery of questions will be analyzed in a simple frequency analysis and as a cluster analysis. Clusters will be identified by their determinant statistics and simple means. (Determinant statistics are those responses that differentiate that cluster from other clusters). We can then identify content preferences by relevant segments.

This section should also include questions on reasons for participating in Masters swimming, similar to those from the prior survey. These responses will be used as further identifiers and descriptors of the resultant clusters.

The results of the cluster analysis will be used to estimate the relative size of each segment within USMS and to make decisions about content based on segment(s) served and importance of that content.

This section should also include measures of satisfaction with content currently provided by USMS to members. The cluster analysis will allow us to measure satisfaction by segment and then, in subsequent years, compare subsequent satisfaction measures to those taken previously to determine whether changes made as a result of the initial survey resulted in increased member satisfaction.

Survey analysis steps:

1. Survey: Task force
2. Cluster analysis: Tom Boyd
3. ID segments and then content preferences and satisfaction levels by segment: Tom Boyd
4. Determine actions to improve satisfaction: Appropriate committees
5. Implement actions: Appropriate committees
6. Conduct follow-up survey (three to five years later): TBD

7. Hopefully identify parallel segments in the subsequent survey analysis and compare satisfaction levels to those of prior survey: TBD

Measures of success should include a minimum of 10% improvement in overall satisfaction and 20 to 25% improvement for any segment that was specifically targeted.

### **Services**

We propose additional questions that ask members to evaluate the quality of services offered to USMS members. We should use the same format for these questions as we used for the content section because we want to be able to include services in a cluster analysis if we determine it is appropriate.

We suggest that Member Services develop a battery of topics for inclusion in this section. We will work to design questions with consistent format once the areas for analysis are identified. One of the key areas we recommend addressing is the LEVEL (Club, LMSC, National) at which services are delivered to most members and their perceptions about the origins of those services.

Satisfaction with services should be measured in the follow-up survey in the same way as content. Goals for improvement should be similar.

### **Consumption habits of members**

Collect descriptive statistics on members' behaviors, both as swimmers and as consumers. The information gathered in this section should be used to create a new high-quality selling tool (i.e., brochure) that WILL be used to secure new sponsor contracts. This information will have high value for our Sponsor Liaison and for the sales staff of the magazine.

The purpose of this data will be to justify sponsor relationships with companies beyond swimming equipment makers. Data collected should include the following:

1. Household size and income
2. Cars owned: type, number, purchase frequency, amount spent
3. Travel: by car and plane (other), frequency and length of overnight stays, price range of accommodations used
4. Electronics: purchase rates and amounts for computers, DVD players, cell phones, TV sets, stereo systems, PDAs, iPods, etc.
5. Preferences for major brands
6. Attitudes about brands that support Masters swimming

The measure of success for this data will be the increase in sponsorships, both in dollars and number of sponsors.

### **Costs:**

If we go with a professional research firm, we are looking at a cost of anywhere from \$5,000 to \$20,000. We recommend doing the research in-house (Tom Boyd can do the analysis and report) and hiring a contractor to do the online survey, including putting the data into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. Tom Boyd has access to the SAS data analysis software and can then do the analysis and report. Cost for a contractor would run in the \$2,000 to \$4,000 range. Tom Boyd has someone who has already agreed to do the work for \$3,000; however, he thinks the amount is negotiable. The advantage of working in-house is cost. Another advantage is having someone with high familiarity with the data in-house. The disadvantage is time. This project will be time consuming and having a single analyst working on it will extend the time to create the report from two to six weeks to four to eight weeks.

An online survey will be far less expensive and less time consuming because the data will already be formatted for analysis rather than requiring data entry, which is expensive and time consuming. The disadvantage of using an online survey is that we have membership that is not “online” and our results will be skewed to the extent that those members are excluded. The online survey also requires the creation of a database of email addresses. This proposal assumes that email addresses can be collected easily from LMSC registrars if a central database does not already exist.

### **Timeline (with responsible parties):**

1. Survey design: four weeks. Completion target: March 1. Members of this task force should include representatives from Marketing, Communications, Editorial and Executive Committees.
2. Survey implementation (online set up): four weeks. Completion target: April 1. Tom Boyd, working with contractor.
3. Survey testing: two weeks. Completion target: April 15. Task force and contractor.
4. Data collection: four weeks, including a two week follow up message to nonrespondents. Completion target: June 1. Contractor with input from Tom Boyd and task force.
5. Analysis: six to eight weeks. Completion target: August 1. Tom Boyd and task force.

### **Summary:**

This proposal outlines the planning and execution of a national survey of USMS members. It will provide information that will enable us to identify segments within the USMS membership and develop strategies for better serving them. It will also provide information that will allow us to estimate the relative size of each segment. The information from the analysis will also provide information that, if used properly, will facilitate more and larger sponsorships, particularly with nonswimming business/products.

The project should take approximately six months from start to finish and, if started immediately, should be available in time for the convention in 2006. The timeline thus gives us until Feb. 1 to create the task force and its charge. While this work can be done at any time, the information will be best used by the relevant committees during convention, so targeting a completion date that makes the results available to committees during convention is appropriate.

**Note:** An area not addressed in this proposal is the question of how we can better serve local teams and LMSCs in recruitment of new members. Although improved services, in general, should bring about an increase in membership, we must address whether or not this survey should also be used to determine ways to improve recruitment.

While valuable, the relevant population is considerably smaller and asking general membership may result in much unusable qualitative information. We recommend a separate survey targeted at coaches and local team reps to address these issues.