



Communication Strategy 2008-2011

Introduction

The main purpose of our Communication Strategy is to increase and maintain awareness of our services and functions provided, distribute information effectively, to improve accountability and democracy, to listen and learn and to enable us to explain the reasons for our policies and priorities.

Effective communication is about getting the right messages to the right audiences through the most appropriate channels at the most appropriate times. It is also about enabling communication from the widest possible internal and external sources.

We communicate with a wide range of internal and external audiences. In an increasingly media and image reliant culture, it is vital to present a positive account of our activities. Our Communication Strategy aims to meet the challenges of the next few years.

We set out the principles underlying communication both within and between ourselves and our partners, citizens and stakeholders. We include an action plan with performance targets in order to build more effective communication.

Aims and Objectives

Our Communication Strategy:

- Endorses communication as a priority strategic issue for us.
- Enables us to listen to and learn from our members.
- Demonstrates our commitment to communication to our members, our partners, the public and all other related parties.
- Reinforces our commitment to equality of opportunities.
- Builds our reputation regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Involves and provides guidance for all our staff and Committee members, and informs others of our approach.
- Supports the delivery of the vision and strategic framework of the Association.
- Includes an action plan to be implemented over the next three years.
- Will help us to recruit and retain the best staff and volunteers, and influence the perceptions of potential members and investors.
- Will be monitored annually through the development of appropriate evaluation tools and performance indicators.
- Will be updated annually.

Our Principles

- We will communicate openly, impartially and honestly with our members and partners.



- All of our communications will be clear, concise, factual and in a timely manner.
- We will make the best use of new and existing resources for communication.
- Good communications are a priority for the advancement of our corporate identity, objectives, community planning processes and effective partnership working.
- Good communications contribute to increasing understanding and building local democracy.

Responsibility

The responsibility for the successful implementation of our Communication Strategy rests with the Management Committee, Discipline Technical Committees and every member of staff.

What we intend to do to improve our communications:

- Key communicators will be selected to implement the Communication Strategy and disseminate its subsequent documentation, protocols, guidelines and toolkits to Members and staff.

Our Current Position

Our Current Audiences

We communicate with a broad range of internal and external audiences through a wide variety of channels.

Internal Audiences

Our internal audiences include:

- Members i.e. clubs.
- Management Committee members.
- Technical Discipline Committees
- Staff
- Other working groups and committees (e.g. marketing sub-group)
- Specialist groups (such as the Equality Standard for Sport Working Group).

External Audiences

Our external audiences include:

- Members of the public
- Suppliers, contractors and customers.
- Partners, local authorities, voluntary and community groups.
- Service users and non-users.
- The statutory and private sectors (such as DCAL, Sport NI, UK Sport, fitness centres).



Communication Channels

We communicate through a diverse range of internal and external channels.

Our internal communication channels include:

- Induction days, training hours and staff meetings.
- Staff briefings and staff notice-boards.
- The annual staff appraisals.
- Minutes of meetings.
- Daily contact with colleagues.
- Telephone, e-mail and written documents.
- Boards and Committees.

Our external communication channels include:

- Face to face contacts.
- Meetings and forums.
- Emails, texts and our Website.
- Letters and telephone calls.
- Our publications such as The Northern Irish Gymnast, GNI Ezine, reports and performance plans.
- The behaviour of our committee members and staff.
- Our competitions, exhibitions, displays and events.
- Our ongoing and extensive consultation exercises.
- Our contractors and suppliers.
- The media.
- British Gymnastics, Welsh, Scottish, English and Irish Gymnastics.

What we will do to improve our communications:

- Current channels of communication will be reviewed and evaluated continually.
- We will ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to internal and external communications.
- Protocols and guides will be developed for all internal and external channels of communication.
- We will explore advances in new technology to improve communications
- A 'Media Toolkit' relating to contacts with the media will be produced.
- We will include this in the staff, members' and officers' training programmes.

Consultation

Consultation is a mode of two-way communication between Gymnastics Northern Ireland, its Officers, members and the general community. We use a raft of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gain opinions and information.

What we will do to improve our consultation

Gymnastics Northern Ireland will devise and further develop a consultation strategy.

What have we achieved recently

- We have established a marketing working group



- We are appointing a Marketing Director at our next AGM.
- Devised and adopted an internet/email policy.

Towards the Future: An Action Plan for Communications

The following Action Plan is an integral part of our Communication Strategy to ensure improvement. It sets out the actions required to construct a co-ordinated, modern communications function.

Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
Undertake a comprehensive audit and evaluation of current internal communication.	BDM	Sept 2008
Undertake a comprehensive audit and evaluation of current external communication.	BDM	Sept 2008
Produce an outline plan for improving internal communication.	BDM	End 2008
Produce an outline plan for improving external communication.	BDM	End 2008
Designate key communicators to implement the Communication Strategy and disseminate its subsequent documentation, protocols, guidelines and toolkits.	Development Committee	Feb 2009
Produce a series of internal and external communications protocols, style guides and media handling toolkits for staff and councillors.	Development Committee	Feb 2009
Establish programme of media training workshops for appropriate officers and staff.	Development Committee	April 2009
Develop and promote Website.	Development Committee	Summer 2008 and ongoing
Devise and develop a Consultation Strategy.	Development Committee	March 2009
Produce and distribute an A to Z Guide to Services.	Development Committee	June 2009
Monitor the success of our Communication Strategy through locally developed Performance Indicators.	Development Committee	TBA/Ongoing
Evaluate our Communication Strategy.	Development Committee	Ongoing
Update our Communication Strategy.	BDM	Annually
Revise the internet/email policy	BDM	Annually
Develop SMS/Text messaging and devise a policy surrounding its use.	Development Committee	Sept 2009
Revise and develop the numerous contact and distribution lists held in the GNI office	BDM/AO	May 2008 and ongoing
Continue developing the brand Gymnastics Northern Ireland	Development Committee	TBA



Monitoring our Communication Performance

There are no national performance indicators designed specifically for monitoring the success or otherwise of NGB Communication activities. However, we feel it is essential to assess our communication performance as follows.

Indicator	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-2010	Target 2010-2011
Updated Communication Strategy	N/A	By March 2009	By March 2010
Number of press releases issued	4	TBA	TBA
% of staff and members who agree that GNI communicates with them well	45%	65%	75%
Number of website hits	TBA	TBA	TBA
Number of people on email/post contact/distribution lists	TBC	15% increase	20% increase