

Communication—A Process of Continuous Improvement

One sure sign of a thriving organization is its ability to communicate with its stakeholders—with clients and customers on the outside and members and staff on the inside. Good communication requires a healthy exchange of information, and with today's vibrant electronic infrastructure, this exchange can be made at lightning speed in myriad ways—and often in large volume.

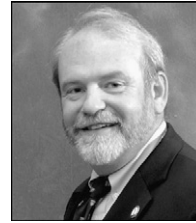
Successful organizations must be responsive enough to listen yet nimble enough to react quickly to questions, suggestions, and new ideas. At SNM, we feel it is important to adapt our methods and paths of communication to stay flexible even as we keep the information flowing.

After recent revisions and expansion of the mission and changes to the corporate look, SNM has evolved into a thriving organization with much to do. Effective communication from leadership to membership and vice versa is critical to successfully achieving our objectives. Our committees will be a primary focus in the near and longer term. The plans and proposals they produce must flow in some form to the SNM House of Delegates and board of directors for final decision and approval.

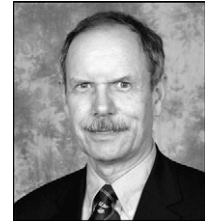
As we have engaged in expanding the mission of the society, the board has reached a point that requires us to examine the most efficient way to oversee and incorporate the work of the committees. We have begun to make a series of changes in our governance in order to improve communication paths so that board consideration does not become a bottleneck. To do this, we need to change the ways in which: (1) charges are given to the committees and other organizational units of the society; (2) information is communicated and processed; and (3) support is provided by SNM staff. We are looking at ways that will allow us to handle increased activity within the society so that we can give each initiative the consideration and discussion it deserves while still acting expeditiously, not only to maintain but also to increase the agility and flexibility of the organization as a whole.



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Toward that end, as officers of the society, we are streamlining the structure to create new channels through which information can flow up, across, and down within the society. We have created 4 “commissions” that will serve as intermediate hubs where information pauses, is thoughtfully considered, and then moves out in different directions as necessary—perhaps for further or additional consideration by other groups within or even outside of the society, perhaps back to the originator for enhancement, or perhaps to the board of directors for final consideration.

The board is reviewing, discussing, and making final recommendations on these new commissions. A more detailed description will follow in the June Leadership Update column.

As SNM transitions to a more active, more vital society, we need to adapt the communication process so that it supports rather than impedes the society's progress. It is our belief that this improved communication pathway will establish an exchange that is smooth, expeditious, and effective.

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