



**MASTERS SWIMMING ONTARIO**

**MSO Strategic Plan**

September 2003

Our Motto :

**Fun, Fitness and Friendship**

Our Vision :

**We envision pools full of Masters Swimmers having fun and forming friendships while reaping the benefits of increased fitness**

Our Mission :

**To contribute to the overall health and fitness of adults in the province of Ontario through participation in a Masters Swimming programme**

We will accomplish this by

- promoting swimming as a means of healthy exercise
- providing opportunities for fellowship, camaraderie and social interaction
- maintaining a framework for competitions
- stimulating individuals, organizations and communities to improve existing Masters Swimming programmes and to establish new ones
- assisting coaches to improve our proficiency in the pool
- creating effective channels of communication for all stakeholders
- administering membership services and recognition programmes directly to the swimmers
- deploying educational resources to increase our knowledge
- supporting clubs and other organizations that have a direct impact on the Swimmers
- affiliating with organizations whose aims include the betterment of Masters Swimming
- fostering relationships with organizations that are well suited to convey our message to the populace
- planning strategically for our future with concern for financial stability
- governing ourselves, clear in the knowledge that we know ourselves best

We will accomplish this with the basic understanding and fundamental respect of the diversity of the wants and needs of Masters Swimmers.

-----

**Preamble** – an analysis of how to effectively apply our efforts

Intuitively, the focus for a Masters Swimming Organization would seem to be the Masters Swimmer.

To align the Swimmers at the heart of MSO and all other participants with the Vision and the Mission, we must first recognize and support those who have the most direct impact on the Swimmer

- i) Clubs – which manage the facilities, provide the social structure for our fun and host (most of) our competitions, and
- ii) Coaches – who provide the workouts and improve our skills

and develop and improve those services that our organization can provide directly to the Swimmer

- i) communication – website, handbook, editorial, questionnaires, newsletter
- ii) membership – registration, meetings
- iii) recognition – excellence and participation for swimming and volunteering
- iv) education – pool clinics, dry land seminars, literature, videos

With those energies focused on the swimmer, it is easy to understand that the next circle of support should be aimed at the Clubs and the Coaches. The services that MSO provides to the Clubs include regional reps, sanction, medals, rules, software, insurance and meet management advice and assistance. MSO provides no services to the Coaches at the moment and this void should be analyzed carefully and completely.

Further, recognizing that we do not exist in a vacuum, we should cultivate productive and meaningful relationships with external bodies – be they supportive (OSOA, OSCA); affiliated (MSC, SO), public (media, marketing, sponsors) or related (medical, adult fitness).

The managerial and administrative tasks that tie the organization together are planning and finance; encircled completely by the principle of self-government.

-----



## **Strategies** – the processes by which we will accomplish our Mission

### 1. Increase the number of Clubs and the number of Swimmers

While continual membership increases are beyond the control of the Board, it is certainly possible to implement certain activities that will hopefully generate those results. A simple geographic analysis could determine areas under-served by Masters Swimming programmes. Membership demographics could be analyzed with the goal of understanding what is required to retain a higher percentage of current swimmers and of creating initiatives to attract new swimmers. And of course, new sources of swimmers should be continually addressed.

### 2. Strengthen Communication

Information is the lifeblood of any organization. It educates, it stimulates debate and discussion, it supports decisions. The flow of information to all stakeholders in this organization (swimmers, clubs, coaches, officials, volunteers, meet managers, facility managers, webmasters, media outlets and committees) shall at all times be paramount. We will continually strive to ensure that appropriate information is distributed in the most efficient manner.

### 3. Deploy Educational Resources

If the focus is returned to the swimmer then the greatest benefit to the swimmer will be education - more knowledge about health and fitness, more efficient training techniques and increases in swimming proficiency. Coaches provide continual education and that effort must be supported and enhanced. But the Board and the Committees can educate via the internet, publications, videos and perhaps most importantly, through clinics and symposiums.

### 4. Increase the number of volunteers

Masters Swimming Ontario offers a unique opportunity to swimmers - we administer and govern ourselves. A constant flow of volunteers will be necessary for our long term success. An increase in the number of volunteers (at the Club level, at the Committee level and at the Board level) will provide more insight into our sport, a better cross section of our constituency, more practical knowledge and more contacts to external organizations.

### 5. Change the Public Perception and Raise the Public Awareness of Masters Swimming

For too long Masters Swimming has laboured under the public fallacy that it is at best a competitive organization and at worst an elite organization. It is incumbent on us to find those organizations and outlets that can be utilized to change that perception. With the growing movement toward preventative healthcare MSO can present itself to the public as one of the best ways to start and/or maintain an active and healthy lifestyle.



## 6. Expand Recognition Programmes

While one of the basic tenets of Masters Swimming is self-satisfaction; recognition may be a powerful tool to motivate ourselves and to show our appreciation for others. There are many people who deserve our appreciation, from coaches to clubs to officials and all the other volunteers. And there are many reasons to recognize achievements, from organizational involvement to personal improvement to swimming excellence. Acknowledgement of our efforts and our abilities by our peers can only enhance the Masters Swimming experience.

## 7. Party Heartier

For all of the kilometers logged in the pool, for all of the early morning alarms, for all of the hours spent administering, volunteering, motivating and for all of the sore shoulders and stiff knees, we must never lose sight of the social side of Masters Swimming. The friendships we build sustain our mind, just as the workouts we swim sustain our body. Let's make sure that the swim meet luncheons continue, that the pub nights at local clubs grow and that there are more and more opportunities for social interaction outside the confines of the lane ropes.

## 8. Develop Stronger Ties With Other Stakeholders

Other organizations can affect our success positively and negatively. Some organizations can be a source of new members. Others can effectively put us out of business. Forging stronger relations with such organizations improves our SWOT position and supports several points in our Mission statement.

## 9. Provide Competitive Opportunities

Whether in a pool or in the open water, the thrill and satisfaction of competing against ourselves and the clock or against another swimmer for a medal will always be a part of Masters Swimming. We will continue to maintain the framework that allows hosts to hold well run, properly officiated, fun swim meets and open water swims for all Masters Swimmers in the province. Furthermore, encouragement and guidance will be given to all who wish to expand the opportunities for competition.

