



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS EVALUATION 2012

Project Goal

Special Olympics International, in partnership with the Robert H. Smith School of Business, evaluated the current internal communication climate across the Special Olympics movement. The Special Olympics Strategic Plan and 2012 Master Plan envision a more robust communications platform where Special Olympics staff, volunteers, Healthy Athletes and families can exchange information, success stories, best practices, and expertise across the movement to enhance Special Olympics' ongoing transformation from an event-based organization to a movement that empowers people with intellectual disabilities every day.

The 2012 Strategic Communications study, led by Senior Manager of Internal Communications Amy Roden and Smith MBA students Bret Liberatore, Seble Alemayehu and Oluchi Okezie examined multiple facets of internal communications across Special Olympics. The team will report to SOI leadership with a final report that includes thorough data analysis and subsequent recommendations in mid-May.

Methodology

The Smith MBA team used a variety of techniques to collect and analyze data on Special Olympics organizational culture, communication processes and technology requirements. The consulting team used online surveys, interviews with senior leadership, academic research and external benchmarks from the commercial and nonprofit sectors. The team then synthesized the collected information to establish the current organizational environment, conducted a gap analysis based upon survey results and research, and developed recommendations to link strategic communications recommendations to multiple aspects of the Strategic Plan and 2012 Master Plan.

Preliminary Findings

Although the final analysis will not be completed until mid-May, the team has identified several overarching trends from the online survey that will be addressed in the final report and presentation:

- Senior leadership is communicating the future vision for Special Olympics effectively
- Special Olympics staff increasingly leverages social media tools to perform their job functions or support awareness campaigns
- The Special Olympics Resources page is a highly utilized tool that could bring additional resources to the movement with incremental improvements and website redesign
- Special Olympics personnel across the movement expressed a near universal demand for additional success stories, photos and best practices to improve their own respective programs or functions
- Special Olympics Program, Region and Headquarters staff desire more systematic ways to share information and consolidated, documented processes for simplicity.
- Largest reported barriers to communications include organizational hierarchy, unclear points of contact, technology and local infrastructure (in descending order).