

**System Dynamics Society
2014 Winter Policy Council Meeting
Marketing & Communications Report**

by

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The VP of Marketing & Communications is a newly created position that figures centrally in many of the strategic goals for the System Dynamics Society (SDS) as outlined by the recent report by Kim Warren. There is already considerable interest by others in supporting marketing and communications efforts.

Accomplishments

As a new position, the main accomplishments have focused on identifying priorities for 2014 and people within and outside the society interested in helping out with marketing and communications.

Plans for 2014

The overarching goal for 2014 is to put forward a strategy to the PC for marketing and communications and enlist participation of members in both the development of that strategy and initial implementation. Four main areas have already identified as a focus for 2014:

- *Improving perception of SDS.* This includes increasing awareness of what system dynamics is, the benefits of system dynamics, and learning to effectively use system dynamics as a consumer within organizations and communities. Importantly and most immediately, we also need to counteract misperceptions of SD. Toward that end, we will be collecting and tracking “myths and facts” about system dynamics and develop a list of talking points that tweeters, bloggers, Linked-in users, Facebook users, Wikipedia editors, and so on to use to respond to myths.
- *Telling stories.* An important step for anyone considering studying system dynamics or using system dynamics is finding examples of peers who have studied or used system dynamics. We need to make these stories more visible. The Jay Forrester and Lifetime Achievement awards do a terrific job of celebrating the highest accomplishments in the field, but the very status of their achievement can make the field seem accessible to potential system dynamics. Moreover, while the stories underlying how people became aware of system dynamics and the use of system dynamics appear frequently in these narratives, we don’t have a good sense of what attracts and keeps people in system dynamics. To address this, we will need to conduct a member survey focused on how people learned about SD, what inspired them to learn/use system dynamics, and what impact they have seen in their personal and/or professional lives. The overall aim here is to get a better sense of the distribution of ways we

attract and retain users of system dynamics.

- *Improving regional communication and global professional communication.* As the SDS has developed an overall membership strategy that balances global interest with regional interest, there is a need to help improve the communication regionally and globally on what is system dynamics, what are the insights we derive as system dynamicists from models, and how we are translating those insights into impact. Efforts are already underway by other members to develop regional chapters and provide support for SDS sponsored regional meetings, so the main focus here is on finding ways to improve the communication of these efforts and opportunities. This will be pursued in consultation with VP of Meetings, VP of Membership, and VP of Chapter Activities.
- *Connecting and strengthening connections between networks.* There are already a variety of communication channels (e.g., blogs, newsletters, listservs) focusing on system dynamics. Many of these have similar aims in terms of increasing the visibility and understanding of system dynamics. The initial objective for this goal will be to complete an inventory of existing channels for communicating about system dynamics, and identify ways for encouraging cross-posting of content and recognition of efforts by various authors of blogs, tweets, etc. This would be done in consultation with VP of Electronic Presence.

Support, cooperation and resources needed as well as potential obstacles/issues

Although there is some interest and support for seeking the assistance of a person with expertise in publicity and raising the profile of system dynamics and the SDS in the media, I feel strongly that it is first important to understand where we are at and prepare the framework for members at different skill levels to succinctly and accurately convey what system dynamics is in their organizations and communities.

Instead, the focus will initially be on working with individuals who have already expressed interest in marketing and communications in the role of assistant vice presidents who could help connect the SDS with regional efforts.