

Roles & Responsibilities

Bulletin Editor

JOB DESCRIPTION

The bulletin editor is the official publisher of the chapter's key communications vehicles. The editor's responsibilities include informing members, membership consultants and SME Headquarters of the chapter's news, activities and accomplishments on an ongoing — and timely — basis, as well as shaping and maintaining the chapter's, and the Society's, reputation. This critical position is responsible for the chapter bulletin — the most critical contact chapters make with many of its members, surrounding community and local manufacturing companies.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Prepare (with input from other officers) an annual plan for the chapter bulletin, including editorial/column responsibilities, deadlines, advertising and budget.
- Solicit, receive, organize and edit articles.
- Layout newsletter, maintaining standards suggested by [SME's bulletin content templates](#).
- Coordinate the print process, electronic distribution and/or posting of bulletin on chapter home page. If your chapter does not yet have its own home page, contact [SME's Customer Care](#) for help creating one.
- Ensure timely mailing and distribution of the bulletin (at least two weeks prior to monthly chapter programs). Remember to also mail or send your bulletin to [SME's Communications Department](#) and to the [senior chapter administrator](#) at SME Headquarters as well as local-area chapter chairs.
- Coordinate the sale and placement of advertising to generate additional income for the chapter and to finance the bulletin's publication.
- Train the next bulletin editor, sharing all your records, processes and information to ensure a smooth transition to the next leadership team.

GETTING THE JOB DONE: TIPS & DETAILS

Quick Tips

- Create an editorial calendar at the beginning of the year; it can be very helpful when assigning volunteer writers or selling advertising.
- When planning or writing, think about the three goals of your bulletin: to educate, inform and connect with (engage) members.
- Find out if your chapter can save money — and deliver information more efficiently — by publishing the bulletin in an electronic format. If not, what printer will give you the best deal?
- If you plan to print the bulletin and publish it electronically, coordinate these versions carefully so that all members receive their copies at about the same time. A key consideration is whether your readers would be able to receive it that way. Do they all have e-mail addresses and have you collected them?

- Plan your bulletin page-by-page just once, and then organize your articles consistently from month to month. For instance, always run articles on the particular topics in the same places in the bulletin each month.
- Always include contact information for chapter leaders — both telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Include the chapter's future activity schedule and try to give members as much advance notice as possible — preferably 60 or 90 days — to adjust their schedules and make plans to attend.
- Take advantage of special mail rates. As a nonprofit educational society, SME and all of its chapters are entitled to mail at these special rates; you can get an application at the post office or from www.usps.com. The Society's tax exemption information is available from [Customer Care](#).

ANNUAL PLANNING: THE EDITORIAL CALENDAR

At the beginning of your term as bulletin editor, prepare an editorial calendar for the year. This is a detailed list of article topics you plan to cover in your bulletin, presented in a month-by-month format. You can use the calendar as a basis for assigning volunteer writers to articles or attracting advertisers.

A long-term editorial calendar lists the specific articles to be published in each issue. Types of articles include:

- Feature articles: list suggested topics and lengths for feature (in-depth) articles.
- Regular features: list the topics of news you intend to cover in each issue, such as chapter news, meeting minutes, chapter announcements, future activities, etc. and each article's approximate length.
- Columns: list the names, topics and lengths of regular columnists, if any. If necessary, also list the column's frequency; some columns might not run in every issue.
- Others: list other items that might regularly appear in the newsletter, such as cartoons, photo displays, meeting calendars, etc.

A short-term editorial calendar lists the page-by-page content of the next issue. This plan changes each month. For each page, identify:

- Article topic
- Writer
- Word length
- Graphics needed (such as photos or drawings)

CHAPTER BULLETIN: MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY

It is important to maintain a consistent look and feel to each monthly bulletin, ensuring that readers know what kind of information to expect from the bulletin even before they even begin to read it, and that they know where to find the information they need...every time. Editorial policies and guidelines can help.

Editorial policies address what kind of information you will and will not publish, what form it must be in and who is responsible for approving content.

Editorial guidelines state how you intend to maintain editorial and visual consistency in the publication. Components include:

- Templates for material that is identical, or nearly identical, each month.
- Use of style guides, such as the [Associated Press Style Guide](#), is encouraged.
- Exceptions: spelling, usage and other stylistic issues that either deviate from the recommendations in the style guide and

dictionary, or are not covered by it.

- Technical guidelines, specifying the hardware and software of the system needed to prepare the bulletin.
- Production guidelines, which specify how the finished product will look. For printed materials, the guidelines include the quantity to be printed, weight and color of paper, finish of paper (matte or glossy), ink color numbers and special instructions such as DPIs, etc. (this is important for graphics and photos). For online materials, the guidelines specify how the newsletter will be uploaded to the site, where and how it will be linked to the home page, etc.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? NAMING CHAPTER BULLETIN

If you are starting a new chapter bulletin or, if your chapter's current leadership feels a name change is needed, think carefully about the name of your bulletin.

The name you choose should reflect the image you want to convey — formal or informal, contemporary or traditional. Make the name interesting enough to compel people to read your chapter news. It is a smart idea to use words like "bulletin," "news," "update" or "times" in your name.

The following examples are real:

- Manufacturing Teamwork (Chapter 19)
- The Trademark (Chapter 23)
- Fond du Lac (Chapter 45)
- Springfield (Chapter 76)
- Grand River Valley (Chapter 81)
- Monadnock (Chapter 124)
- East Texas (Chapter 126)
- The Connection (Chapter 141)
- E Tool Chatter (Chapter 162)
- Rib Mountain (Chapter 264)
- Sioux Valley (Chapter 386)
- SME Southern Times (Chapter 415)

CONTENT: EDUCATING & INFORMING

You will do your bulletin — and your readers — a big favor if you spend the first portion of your term finding out what information is — and is not — appearing in the current bulletin that meets the needs or interests of your readers. You can run a survey or call a few members to get their feedback. If you have articles that no one ever reads, month after month, find out why and fix it or just get rid of them. They can surely be replaced with more relevant items.

In addition to the traditional chapter and SME information you will provide members through the bulletin, consider including manufacturing-related information from magazines and newspapers. You can reprint information as long as it is appropriately credited. Just add a line at the end of each of those articles that refers to where it first appeared and the name of the author.

A typical bulletin might include:

- Chapter leaders' contact information (e-mail addresses, telephone, etc.)
- Articles (or calendars) on upcoming programs and events (local and national)
- A review of last month's technical program
- An article from a member on his or her area(s) of expertise
- Articles and advertisements from SME Headquarters
- Feature: Member of the Month
- Message from the Chair

Make certain to focus on upcoming events rather than ones that have already passed. One of the primary purposes of the newsletter is to generate interest and participation at these upcoming events so you can keep members engaged in your activities. Always include dates, times, locations, fees (if any) and maps, if necessary.

You can also use your bulletin to inform members about leadership actions and decisions. Working closely with the secretary will be very helpful. The chapter bulletin can be a great place to include articles about the latest decisions made by the chapter

officers at their meetings.

A great way to keep to up to date with SME Headquarters, is to subscribe [SME's RSS news feed](#). Each time SME publishes a new news item, it is added to the RSS news feed. You will then be notified via e-mail of each. These news items can then be incorporated into the chapter's bulletin.

Be creative with the layout of your bulletin. If you jazz the articles up with pictures, maps and artwork, your members may clip the articles and display them as posters!

CONTENT: MAKING A CONNECTION

Connecting members with one another and with the overall mission of the Society will help your recruitment and retention efforts and fit right in with [SME's Member Engagement Initiative \(MEI\)](#), which is designed to make SME even more relevant through more member-driven programs and products. The chapter bulletin can play a big role in helping your members feel connected to a larger "whole." Suggestions for helping people feel connected to SME include:

- Publishing letters to the editor and chapter officers, which show members the range of thought among them
- Publishing profiles of current and new members and member leaders
- Publishing photos from past events
- Think about providing biographical sketches of new members or highlighting members' outstanding achievements. These approaches will help your bulletin be perceived as a positive motivating tool for members.

ADVERTISING: LET FREE INCOME PAY THE WAY

Your (and your team's) hard work soliciting advertising can really pay off when your bulletin is, literally, paying for itself. If you have an advertising sales team, be sure they understand your chapter's advertising policy — a document that describes the types of advertisers from whom you will accept ads. Because SME is a professional society serving the manufacturing community, all bulletin ads should be relevant to manufacturing in some way.

List the contact name and information for ad sales on this document as well, so it can be given to potential advertisers as a leave-behind during solicitations.

Information you need to determine before you selling an ad includes:

- **Frequency:** how often the ad is to appear
- **Location:** whether or not the ad purchaser has a page preference and how flexible the purchaser is if you cannot place the ad on the page requested
- **Size:** full-page, quarter page, half-page, business card-size, other
- **Ad copy and overall design:** who supplies or approves it
- **Format:** what formats work (e.g., HTML, PDF, camera-ready, etc.)

For the best results, we recommend that you and/or your advertising sales team use or develop a rate sheet and a two-part advertising agreement that makes all of these specifications clear. Advertisers should retain one copy of each for their files, and you should have one you can refer to when laying the bulletin out each month.

WHO'S WHO: IDENTIFYING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Creating your mailing list early is critical to understanding your overall production costs and planning your budget. It can also be strategic; you should add to your mailing list not only current members and contacts at SME Headquarters, but also prospective members, and business and community stakeholders with whom you would like to make aware of your activities. Also consider membership consultants and their teams, member & industry relations managers, international directors, advertisers and past speakers. Local media, local colleges and universities, and nearby chapters are also worthy of inclusion on the mailing list, as are local libraries and key personnel in local manufacturing facilities.

Be sure to update your mailing list regularly, on a monthly basis, utilizing the [chapter's online rosters](#) as a tool.

IT'S IN THE MAIL: WORKING WITH U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Special Rates

As nonprofit organizations, SME and its chapters are eligible to mail at nonprofit Standard Mail rates (U.S. only) — if the material being mailed complies with strict requirements for these rates. Generally, SME chapter bulletins comply. To get the special rate, you must complete and submit an "Application to Mail at Nonprofit Standard Mail Rates," available from your local post office. If you wish to include supporting documentation, the Society's tax exemption information is available from [SME's Customer Care](#)

[Department](#) or you may choose to include other items, such as:

- A list of your chapter's activities during the past 12 months
- Chapter meeting minutes
- SME brochures

Once you are approved, ensure you do not run into problems by reviewing — and following — the rules published in the [U.S. Postal Service's Publication 417](#) before completing the first mailing. You can also get advice from local "business mail entry unit" personnel while you are designing your bulletin; this is especially important if your bulletin includes advertising (and we hope it does).

Bulk Mailing

If you mail in bulk, you will have to pay an annual bulk mailing fee via cash or check at the post office before your first bulk mailing. This gives you permission to mail a certain class of mail from a specific postal facility for 365 days. You will need two permits to mail at First-Class Mail and Standard Mail bulk rates from the same office.

You will also have to obtain a mailing permit — permission to use a particular postage payment method for bulk and/or discounted mailings. While there is no fee to apply for a permit to mail with pre-cancelled stamps or a postage meter, there is a fee to apply for a permit for mailing with a postage imprint. [Click here](#) to apply for the permit. You can also visit www.usps.com to search for answers questions you may have.

IN BLACK & WHITE: THE PUBLICATION PROCESS

Your printing and distribution process, a printer and/or a mailer, affect not only your bulletin's look and quality, but also its cost. For that reason, these decisions deserve very careful consideration.

Fixed printing costs include composition, camera-ready artwork, plates, etc. These costs will depend on the number of pages and the complexity of the publication, but will remain the same whether you print 50 or 500 copies.

Variable costs are determined by the size of your mailing list. Your "press run" includes costs such as ink, paper, run-time and binding. If your printer is handling distribution, it will also include envelopes, postage and related labor costs.

Your own local conditions will influence your choice of a printer. Here are some factors for consideration:

- **Facilities:** Is the printing and binding equipment adequate to furnish you with the quality job you expect?
- **Service:** Will you get fast service, quick pickups, accurate proofreading and proofs when needed? Will mailing deadlines be met?
- **Quality:** Will the quality of the work enhance the professional reputation of your chapter? Do samples include well-printed photos and graphics? Does the ink lie evenly or is the type lighter on some pages and darker on others?
- **Cost:** Printing prices vary widely from city to city, so an expected range would be hard to estimate for all chapters. Most printers consider bulletins "preferred" business because their publication can be counted on each month, so you may have room to negotiate on price.

Consider only reputable printers whose work you have seen or who have been highly recommended by editors of similar publications. Obtain bids from several printers, but proceed cautiously with printers whose estimates are significantly (10 to 15 percent) lower than the others as they may cut out important steps or processes, resulting in a lower-quality product than you expect.

Develop an effective working relationship with your printer by becoming familiar with how your bulletin is produced. If you do not have this knowledge already, spend some time with your printer so you better understand the process. Your efforts will be well spent.