

Future Of MAPPS Committee Recommendations (11/20/14)

The Future of MAPPS Committee was selected by MAPPS President, Jeff Lower. Members of the Committee selected that regularly participated in the process included Pat Olson (Chair, Emeritus), Kelly Francis (Aero-graphics), Bret Hazell (GeoTerra), James Pardue (Tom Tom), John Antalovich, Jr. (Kucera), Hayden Howard (CompassData), Jay Arnold (Magnolia River), Jerry Skaw (Microsoft) and Brian Mayfield (Atlantic).

The committee held their final meeting on Wednesday November 20, 2014 and concluded with the following recommendations for the MAPPS Board to strongly consider as necessary changes that can be made to the organization in order to increase membership, increase conference attendance, better manage the limited budget of the organization and to re-shape MAPPS so that it survives for generations.

Conferences / Events

Conferences and events hosted by MAPPS represent a significant source of revenue and cost for the organization. The following are our recommendations to the MAPPS Board:

1. Winter Conference – Our committee recommends that the winter conference take on the following format changes:
 - a. Not held at a resort setting; instead, hold it at a conference hotel type setting (i.e. Embassy Suites in Denver, CO or Dallas, TX) – somewhere central in the Central United States (CONUS) with plenty low cost air travel and reasonable rates during the stay.
 - b. This conference would no longer be spouse / family focused; instead, it would have more of a business and technical focus.
 - c. The conference should be shortened to a 2-3 day event with two tracks. The first track (Technical) would be designed to satisfy those in the membership that wish to keep pace with the changes in technology. The second track (Business) would be designed to discuss important aspects of managing our business and growing our talent. The cost of attending would be decreased and would allow member organizations to send their senior technical, project management and/or rising stars to this business. Getting more people engaged within each organization helps MAPPS further its messaging and it also helps foster new relationships between businesses that will promote partnership and growth.
 - d. MAPPS should consider co-hosting with another professional organization like perhaps, the National Survey Society or ILMF?
 - e. Open this to non-MAPPS member firms by focusing on PDH's, CEU's, etc... This could lead to more members and more people working collectively on the issues MAPPS seeks to address.
 - f. We note that this conference is traditionally better attended than the summer conference but these changes are designed to be more inclusive, offer opportunities for more attendees at a mid-level and for more / other firms to attend.
2. We recommend that the Summer conference should stay intact with a family / spouse focus.
 - a. We don't need multiple tracks at this conference but instead, need more time to spend in the recently introduced Forums.
 - b. We feel the only modification we need to make for the summer conference is to better space out the forums.

- c. Perhaps allow 2-3 hours for forum discussions instead of 1 hour and reduce the amount of overlap between the forums.
 - d. One recommendation would be to reduce the number of presentations in favor of more time for forums.
3. Spring DC conference can be modified slightly by pushing forward at least 1 small business issue on the hill.
 - a. Other than that, the conference remains very informative and important to the members that are focused on federal contracting opportunities.
4. Recommend that the fall conference is not an annual event. Instead, view this as an opportunistic event to partner with some other event that may be going on at the same time. No need for MAPPS to commit to that conference annually.
5. At least one (1) webinars should be organized per quarter. This would save valuable dollars for MAPPS and the participating firms' money when compared to the cost of attending the fall conference.

Communications from MAPPS

Communications by the MAPPS Board and Staff to the member firms is a sore point with a lot of firms. Below are a list of recommendations that will enable the Board and Staff to better engage the membership so that everyone feels like they are both contributing and receiving value from the organization.

6. MAPPS will need a dedicated and thought-out approach to communicating and marketing the changes in the MAPPS events noted above.
 - a. We would like to recommend that Beth create and implement a strong internal (members) and external (media and prospective members) marketing / messaging plan.
 - b. Increasing the frequency and transparency in communicating topics from the board and staff to the membership is sorely needed.
7. We recognize that the MAPPS website has a content management system that is user / password protected. This system should be used to provide the following:
 - a. Minutes of all Board Meetings
 - b. After-action reports on all MAPPS conferences providing information on all significant aspects of the conference such as agendas, votes, membership meeting notes, attendance numbers, finances, etc.
 - c. Communications to outside organizations signed as official communications by MAPPS – documents signed by the President or MAPPS Staff. These could be kept in a folder accessible to all members organized by topic or date.
 - d. Open access to budgets and EOY financials for the organization to include quarterly statements for profits/loss and balance sheet.
8. We agree that when MAPPS is going to take a strong stance on a position that impacts a large number of firms, MAPPS needs to reach out to the membership for advisement / comment. Recent examples include:

- a. NGA QBS Issue (Resulted in lost membership)
- b. USDA NAIP Protest Letter (Resulted in lost membership)
- c. Pushing a certain dollar threshold for the recent increase to small business standard sizes without reaching a quorum from the small business members (many were against the size increase that was proposed by MAPPS and a lot of angst remains).

Legislative Affairs

This has been a foundational pillar of MAPPS since its inception. Our committee makes the following recommendations:

9. We recognize that the membership on the Legislative Affairs committee already has good small business representation. What we need is more direction to the committee so that small business and small program items are properly addressed. Small business represents the overwhelming majority of members and conference attendees.
 - a. We propose that there is a small business sub-committee of the Legislative Affairs committee to direct and surface legislative ideas to the larger committee.
 - b. At least one of the resultant small business and/or small program legislative issues should be in the spring conference packet for the hill visits.

General Business of MAPPS

Our committee makes these additional recommendations in order to best serve the membership of MAPPS moving forward:

10. Our group recommends that the dues structure be re-examined to charge dues based on the number of geospatial folks instead of the total number of employees (A/E firms and large integrators have been penalized and this has resulted in missed membership opportunities).
11. We recommend that MAPPS allow for an annual membership commitment in January, paying either monthly or quarterly. This could help cash flow for the firms and JMPA/MAPPS.
 - a. We would like to recommend that this process would enable the firms to pre-register staff for each of the 3 conferences and allow those registration fees into the monthly or quarterly payment.
 - b. Perhaps offering a 10% discount on conference registration by registering in January for all conferences.
12. Relative to the board nominating process, there needs to be a better education to the membership to understand how the nominations process works. Also, we need to make sure that people with interest, energy and time who wants to be engaged should be considered just as much as those that have checked all of the boxes for being on the board (PAC, Committees, Conference attendance, etc...).

Membership Outreach

MAPPS has some necessary PR to do in order to win back member firms that have left the organization or no longer participate at the same level. The recommendation below is critical:

13. The committee acknowledges that MAPPS has lost member firms and has strained relationships with a few agencies due to the strong position that MAPPS has taken on certain issues. The firms were good members and the agencies are important as future clients. We recommend the Board undertake a Program to engage with firms that have left MAPPS and with the agencies where we have had our differences. We are trying to grow the membership so let's engage both groups and work toward a common ground

MAPPS Strategic Plan

14. The task force unanimously said these goals are still relative. The only sticky / pain point is QBS. When do we support it, when does it not become a pillar for our group to stand on, etc... are key topics that need to be addressed by the MAPPS Board.