

GMO MARKETING GUIDE



Dear GMO Official,

Your club and its members work hard to provide dressage opportunities on a local level. By affiliating with USDF, you help connect your members to the national dressage community and also provide them with additional benefits.

Prominently displaying these extra membership benefits can only make your membership drives more successful.

USDF is committed to helping you market your GMO by providing information, ads and marketing tips on member benefits for your websites and publications.

This GMO Marketing Guide will provide many resourceful tools for you to utilize to keep members involved in dressage.

MEMBERSHIP MARKETING 101

Knowing why people join organizations is crucial to creating effective membership materials. People join organizations for many reasons. The Maslow Hierarchy of Needs suggests many different levels of motivation are likely to be going on all at once. The levels that should concern your club are:

Love and Belonging

Everyone needs to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, whether it comes from a large social group, such as clubs, office culture, religious groups, professional organizations, sports teams, gangs, or small social connections (family members, intimate partners, mentors, close colleagues, confidants).

Esteem

Esteem presents the normal human desire to be accepted and valued by others. People want to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that give the person a sense of contribution, to feel self-valued, be it in a profession or hobby. Maslow noted two versions of esteem needs. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, recognition, fame, prestige, and attention. The higher one is the need for self-respect, the need for strength, competence, mastery, self-confidence, independence, and freedom.

Self-actualization

Maslow describes this desire as the desire to become everything that one is capable of becoming.

An organization needs to be well attuned to what its potential members want and to provide them with the experience that meets their expectations. Research con-

ducted by membership organizations, from retail clubs to churches, suggests that as many as 60% of the population are “non-joiners”. Many people will partake in an organization’s offerings but choose not to join. To attract “joiners”, the benefits of membership need to be tangible and clearly communicated.

Create Involvement

Many people want something more from their involvement in a club. They want to be part of an organization that shares their values and makes a difference in the community and in the world.

Make it Fun

Photos of local events and educational clinics are all a part of creating an atmosphere that is personal and enjoyable.

Create Engagement

Individuals at different levels of involvement have different needs, interests, and motivations and require appropriate communication strategies. Tailor your communications to include information for the passive as well as the active member. Passive members will pay their dues and attend some events. Active members are those who will become involved in the club’s decisions and committees. They are people who will consider running for the board and joining committees. Provide these members with descriptions of opportunities to be involved in.

The message to potential members should be that you value their participation and that they belong here!

TIPS FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE WEBSITES & COMMUNICATIONS

Content for Websites & Print Communications

- Customer focused:
 - * Provide compelling content and demonstrate why it should be important to your audience.
 - * List benefits and features of membership and tie audience needs and wants to these benefits.
- Use relevant and compelling images to grab the audience's attention.
- Get to the point quickly. Use short paragraphs. Eliminate superfluous text.
- Incorporate a call to action (example: So join now... ; Go to...).
- Make sure each page serves a purpose.
- Remove out dated information.
- Reduce duplication - less is more.
- Reduce industry jargon.

Organization for Websites

- Make things easy to find and read.
- Keep organization consistent.
 - Use breadcrumbs.
 - Minimize clicking.
 - Minimize scrolling.
 - Use Alt attributes in images.
 - Limit page length to 2 screens (articles 5-6 screens).
 - Include a way to get back home on every page.
 - Include a menu on every page.
- Provide a search for your site.
- Include your contact info on the top or bottom of every page.

Readability for Websites

- No line should be more than 650 pixels wide.
- Don't make pages too wide where you have to scroll across.
- Don't make pages too narrow.
- Make sure text is appropriate size.
- Use simple backgrounds to make text easy to read.
- Use contrasting color for your text.

- Don't bold everything.
- Don't type more than a few words in ALL CAPS.
- Never use more than one exclamation point.
- Use a spell checker!

Website Links

- Don't underline words that aren't links.
- Don't open internal links in new windows.
- Use descriptive link text.
- Explain what you are linking to.
- Never use words like "link" or "click here" as link text.

Avoid Bad Elements in Websites

- Don't distract your visitor with blinking/scrolling text.
- Don't use animated graphics.
- Don't use auto loading sounds/videos.
- Don't use pop-up windows.
- Don't use splash screens.
- Don't put text over images.
- Don't use bright colors everywhere.
- Don't use frames.
- Don't use too much multimedia.
- Don't use flash.
- Keep your image files small and clear.
- Avoid requiring plugins.
- Avoid requiring software downloads.
- Don't use too many images.

Other Website Tips

- Make sure your site has cross browser compatibility.
- Don't steal content.
- Don't hot link to images or items from other sites.
- Don't ask for permission to link to a site.
- Don't ask to exchange links.
- Use short and memorable domain.



USDF DEMOGRAPHICS & PUBLICATIONS

Members of a USDF Group Member Organization (GMO) enjoy all the benefits of their GMO and USDF through one membership process. By joining a GMO, members automatically become a member of the only national organization devoted exclusively to dressage.

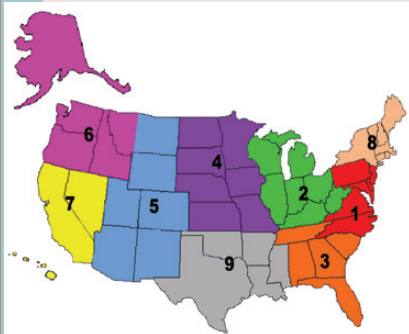
The United States Dressage Federation (USDF) is the only national membership organization dedicated to dressage education, recognition of achievement, and promotion of this Olympic discipline. USDF has more than 30 educational

programs, over 100 affiliate local or regional clubs, and more than 2,000 annual awards for excellence in competition.

USDF members are characterized by their uncommon loyalty to dressage, their horses, the Federation, and their trainers/instructors. Our members are concerned with improving the performance, training, appearance, health, and well-being of their horse and themselves, the rider and owner.

USDF membership demographics:

- USDF's 30,000 members are adult amateurs, trainers, instructors, breeders, officials, show managers, and youth
- 90% are adults with 87% over the age of 35
- 96% are female
- 28% of membership have an income of \$150,000 or more
- 78% compete with at least one horse
- 50% ride 4-5 times a week
- 97% own at least one horse
- 64% own more than one horse
- Top 3 breeds: 50% Warmbloods, 26% Thoroughbreds, and 19% Quarter Horses
- 98% read *USDF Connection* every month
- 37% own more than 5 acres of land



USDF has nine regions. Below is the percentage of members in each region:

- Region 1 = 18%
- Region 2 = 14%
- Region 3 = 12%
- Region 4 = 6%
- Region 5 = 7%
- Region 6 = 8%
- Region 7 = 14%
- Region 8 = 13%
- Region 9 = 7%

Region 10

(International) = 1%

USDF Connection Magazine

USDF Connection contains articles written by - and with - some of the biggest and brightest names in the sport, including Steffen Peters and Lendon Gray and international judges Anne Gribbons and Jayne Ayers. The magazine's advisory committee is a virtual who's who of the sport to help ensure great content, and great content ensures readability.



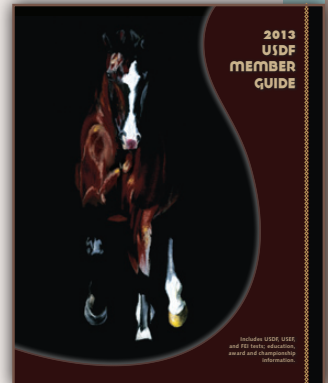
USDF Connection issue themes include arenas and facilities, showing, wide world of dressage, horse health, sport horses, adult amateurs, tack equipment and grooming, para-equestrians, and stallions and breeding.

Its departments include: Inside USDF, Heads-Up (short dressage news items), Clinics (expert training advice),

The Judge's Box (insights from dressage judges), Sport Horse Connection, Horse Health Connection, Amateur Hour (topics for adult amateurs riders), Under 21, and Freestyle Connection

USDF Member Guide

Visit any dressage show—whether it's one of nine Great American Insurance Group/USDF Regional Dressage Championships presented by SmartPak and supported by Merial, any of more than 700 USDF-recognized competitions, or a schooling show—and you'll find the *USDF Member Guide* in the hands of riders, trainers, owners, and horse-show parents. The *USDF Member Guide* includes USDF, USEF, and FEI dressage tests, Glossary of Judging Terms, plus programs, awards, and championships information.



USDF Website

The USDF website, www.usdf.org, is an interactive site where members can find all the information they need for dressage news, shows, USDF programs, competitions and clinics, dressage educational materials, horse registration, membership, and shopping.

The site is more accessible than ever before with easier navigation, a search button and all the necessary forms and documents in one convenient location.

USDF's exclusive new online learning center, e-TRAK, provides unlimited online access to articles and videos on equine health care, training, and much more!

USDF Group Members have member-only access to USDFScores.com. USDFScores.com is the official USDF source for the most accurate and complete dressage scores.

The USDF website averages over 200,000 visitors and averages over 45,000 unique visitors each month.

Source:
www.newfangled.com,
Average Website Traffic Stats
by Eric Holder.



USING THE USDF PRESS PAGE

USDF provides many resourceful tools for GMOs to utilize to keep members involved in dressage. One of these tools is the USDF press page.

We invite you to utilize the ads and press releases that USDF has created to help your GMO promote its membership and activities. The press page is located at www.usdf.org/press. (Look at the bottom of the USDF home page and click on press.) To the left is a short menu for news releases, facts and statistics, clips & photos, and logos & ads, all available for your website and newsletters.

If you need an ad in a different size, please do not hesitate to contact the USDF office at graphics@usdf.org.

Be sure to keep checking the press page as new ads, banners, and press releases are added weekly.

Web Banners

- GMO and USDF Logos
- e-TRAK

USDF's online learning center for dressage and equine education. Access hundreds of educational resources, engage in structured learning activities, and earn USDF University Program credit through one convenient location.



Like to see something else or have an idea for an advertisement, let us know at graphics@usdf.org.

MEMBER BENEFITS FOR WEBSITE & COMMUNICATIONS

As a member of _____, you also become a member of USDF, the only national organization devoted exclusively to dressage. Members of _____ enjoy all the benefits of _____ and USDF through one membership process.

LIST YOUR GMO BENEFITS HERE.

USDF benefits include:

- e-TRAK, USDF's online learning center for dressage and equine education. Access hundreds of educational resources, engage in structured learning activities, and earn USDF University Program credit!
- *USDF Connection*. Ten issues of the award-winning magazine (Newsstand Price - \$88) and access to the online version of *USDF Connection* magazine.
- *USDF Member Guide*.
- *USDF e-News*. Group Members stay in touch with what is happening at USDF and in the dressage community.
- Access to "members-only" section of the USDF website.

- **NEW:** Online and On-the -Go
- All USDF tests online
- **NEW:** Adult Clinic
- **NEW:** Trainers' Conference
- **New items added monthly!**

Print Ads

- **NEW:** Dressage Seat Medal Program
- e-TRAK
- e-TRAK Article
- USDF Member Benefits
- iPhone App
- **NEW:** Online and On-the -Go
- **NEW:** Adult Clinic
- **NEW:** Trainers' Conference
- On the Levels DVD
- **NEW:** Convention ad
- **New items are added monthly!**

Brochures and Flyers

Spectators Guide to Dressage



- Discounted rates at USDF educational events and clinics.
- Discount in the USDF store.
- Eligibility to compete without paying the USDF non-member fee.
- Eligibility for rider awards (Rider Performance Award; Gold, Silver and Bronze Medal; Gold, Silver and Bronze Freestyle Bar; Master's Challenge).
- Eligibility to compete for Adequan®/USDF Pas de Deux Year-End Awards.
- Eligibility to earn USDF University Program credit
- Representation at the USDF Board of Governors General Assembly through the GMO delegate(s).
- Eligibility for the "L" Education Program.
- GMO youth members (21 and under) are eligible for the USDF Youth Volunteer of the Year Award, and USDF Shining Star Awards.
- Discounts with USDF Education Partners.

IS SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUR CLUB? ABSOLUTELY!

More and more clubs are using social media to get in front of their target audience and members.

Reasons to Go for It!

Visibility:

Engaging in social media on a steady basis helps you achieve constant visibility with your audience. By participating in conversations, sharing daily food for thought, and making your club part of their day, you stay at the top of their mind when they start looking for a club or conversation to join.

Brand yourself as a resource:

Become the “go-to” club for that topic in your area.

Build a community:

By making your club available, reaching out to people and sharing information, you strengthen your club. You form new connections, allow community members to meet one another, and create a deeper dialogue by increasing the number of voices. You satisfy your members and potential new members need for community.

Highlight your events:

Social media offers an additional avenue to show off and talk about your events in a friendly and informal way. It makes you awesome in normal conversation without coming across too promotional! You also have the opportunity to answer questions, show benefits, and offer “how-tos” to help people get to know your club a little better.

Listen better:

Being present in social media gives you more time to listen. You can keep an ear (or eye) on what other people are saying about your club. It will also allow you to engage your current members and make sure they have the best possible experience with your club and your events, which will keep them invested.



Facebook



Update frequently but not constantly. Three updates per week are fine.

Be sure to designate a member or officer to be the administrator responsible for updating Facebook and Twitter.

Create a yearly and monthly “time table” with events, questions, and postings you might want to use. This will help your club to keep current and not overwhelm your administrator.

Pose a question to your audience.

Answer a question.

Post an e-TRAK video link that relates to your question. Highlight your club member’s achievements, both locally and nationally.

Tell a story about a member (with their permission), a horse, or an event.

Post your recent events. Post pictures of your events.

Start discussions by encouraging participants to comment about the event or post their photos from the event. Ask a question about the event. (What did you like? What would you change?)

Highlight an upcoming event. What you can learn. How much fun it will be!

Add a USDF event.

Post a video on your page and say why everyone should watch it.

Post members “Tips” on horse shows, horse health and dressage training. Create a discussion from that.

Twitter



Twitter is different from Facebook in that “tweets” are limited to 120 characters.

Twitter is more instant and meant to communicate happenings in the moment. For example, Jane Smith just scored a 70% on her Second Level test or the board just approved the theme for our banquet, Mardi Gras night.

Be sure you tell everyone on your website, newsletters and flyers to “like” you on Facebook and to “follow you” on Twitter.

USDF BENEFITS FOR GMO CLUBS

As an affiliate of USDF, your club has many opportunities that are not available to a non-affiliated club.

Benefits of Being a USDF GMO

- The opportunity to enhance your GMO's benefits package by including USDF Group Member benefits. This can be a valuable marketing tool.
- A listing on the USDF website, a direct link to your website, and direct-linked contact information to help people get in touch with your GMO.
- Access to your complete GMO roster on the USDF website.
- GMO Committee representation, which provides a platform for GMO interests and concerns.
- Educational support such as educational events at the convention (geared specifically toward GMOs) and other educational materials such as the GMO Handbook.
- Eligibility for USDF University accreditation of GMO-hosted educational programs. USDF can help promote GMO University accredited events and to provide resources.
- Access to the GMO Guide online, which contains valuable information regarding USDF affiliation.
- Networking opportunities such as the GMOPrez List (a Yahoo forum) and GMO roundtable discussions at convention to help GMOs learn from each other.
- Access to the USDF Press Page on the USDF website, which provides downloadable logos, news, and ads for use in GMO newsletters, flyers, and websites.
- Representation at the Board of Governors General Assembly and a voice in the governance of USDF.
- Ability to apply for USDF GMO grants through The Dressage Foundation Violet Hopkins Fund.
- Ability to host USDF programs such as "L" programs, Instructor Certification programs, FEI Jr/YR and Adults Clinics, etc., which provide an opportunity for your club to host national programs that directly benefit your members. Hosting "L" programs and Continuing Education Programs directly benefit GMOs by providing an increased number of better qualified judges for schooling shows.
- Eligibility to compete in USDF GMO Awards, including the GMO Newsletter, Website, and Photography Awards. Winners receive recognition at USDF's annual convention, on the USDF website, and in *USDF Connection*.
- Eligibility to nominate an exceptional volunteer for the Regional GMO Volunteer of the Year, awarded in each of the 9 regions.



- Opportunity to receive a listing of your members who ranked nationally in USDF's year-end standings.

Improved Services to GMOs

- Support for demos and special presentations.
- *GMO Officials e-News*.
- Advertise your event in the USDF e-News.



- Contact your Regional Director and, with their approval, your event can be listed in the USDF e-News!
- RSS news feed available to add to your website, which automatically populates your own website with news, photos, and other features.

How can a GMO Influence the Direction of USDF?

- Become a part of the USDF governance process by staying informed and involved.
- Become involved in the GMO Committee or contact your GMO Committee representative.
- Attend the convention.
- Become a GMO delegate to the convention.
- Contact your Regional Director or pertinent Committee Coordinator.
- Participate in discussion on the GMOPrez List, a Yahoo newsgroup for GMO officials.
- Stay in touch with USDF via the website and *USDF Connection* in order to stay informed of USDF improvements in programs and services, and to be able to take advantage of USDF benefits.

