



# JOIN THE MOVEMENT



National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society  
Upper Midwest  
Chapter

## TEAM CAPTAIN TOOLKIT 2014

MSsociety.org | 800-582-5296



## Thank you for becoming a team captain!

As a team captain, you're a dedicated leader in the MS movement. You and your teammates help change the world for people affected by MS.

This toolkit is intended to help you and your team have a successful and meaningful experience this year. If you ever have questions, please reach out to us at 800-582-5296 or [specialevents@MSSociety.org](mailto:specialevents@MSSociety.org)

Sincerely, Upper Midwest Chapter staff

## Engaging people in the MS movement

### A brief guide to being an ambassador for the National MS Society

As a team captain, you'll be talking to many people — potential teammates, people at your company, family members and friends — about multiple sclerosis and your involvement with the National MS Society. In this brief guide to being an ambassador, you'll receive some tools and tricks for engaging people in the movement to end MS.

**Everyone you talk to has one thing in common with the National MS Society — YOU!**

### Connect people to the cause by sharing your story

Everyone you talk to has one thing in common with the National MS Society — YOU!

When you share your story about your connection to MS, you give people a connection to the cause. Whenever they hear about MS or a National MS Society event, they'll remember you. You have the power to educate and engage countless people in the movement by simply sharing your story!

Whether you live with MS, have a family member, friend or co-worker with the disease, or simply have a passion for the cause, you have a story to tell. Take some time to think about your connection to MS and how you can shape your story.



## Talking about MS and the National MS Society

Multiple sclerosis can be a difficult disease to describe. Below are some key messages that may help you talk about the disease. You can also use MS facts in presentations and in your personal story.

### What is multiple sclerosis?

- MS is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system.
- MS interrupts the flow of information within the brain and between the brain and the body and can make movement difficult.
- Symptoms can range from numbness and tingling to paralysis or loss of vision.
- The symptoms of MS appear because nerves in the brain and spinal cord lose their ability to effectively transmit signals.
- MS symptoms are unpredictable and vary from person to person and from time to time in the same person.

**Now that you have some of the tools you need to be an ambassador, you're ready to get to work!**

### MS facts

- More than 2.3 million people worldwide live with MS.
- MS is usually diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50.
- MS affects women two to three times more often than men.
- MS is not fatal, contagious or directly inherited.
- Thanks to advances in research, there are many FDA-approved MS treatments that can reduce relapses and slow progression for many people with MS.
- No one knows what causes MS, and there is no cure.

### About the National MS Society, Upper Midwest Chapter

- The chapter represents more than 17,000 people with MS in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and counties in Wisconsin and Nebraska.
- The chapter provides a variety of resources for people living with MS, their families, friends and care partners.
- The Upper Midwest Chapter is a nonprofit that meets the standards of all major charity review agencies. More than 72 percent of every dollar is spent on programs and support services for people affected by multiple sclerosis and MS-related research.



## Make MS Awareness Week work for you

MS Awareness Week, March 3–9, 2014, is a prime opportunity for you and your team to make a big splash! The Upper Midwest Chapter has an exclusive online MS Awareness Week toolkit with ideas and downloads to help you educate people, recruit teammates, raise money and more. You can find the toolkit mid-February at [MSsociety.org](http://MSsociety.org). Below are just a few examples for using the materials.

- Set up an awareness hour in your work/school cafeteria, lobby etc. Hang posters advertising details of the event. Provide materials about MS and its symptoms, and give people examples of how they can join your team.
- Have an information table in your local community center or mall, and ask people to join your team.
- Contact your local college or university to set up a display to recruit volunteers and participants for Walk MS or Bike MS events.
- Speak to a group of people about MS and share your story about how and why you joined the movement to end MS.
- Encourage your local MS group to have an open house where people can learn more about MS and how to Join the Movement®.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper asking people for donations or to join your team.
- Invite your legislator to Walk MS, Bike MS or Muckfest™. Better yet, ask them to join your team!

**Have an information table in your local community center or mall.**

For more information about MS Awareness Week and how you can get involved, contact Maggie at 612-335-7913 or [maggie.flanagan@nmss.org](mailto:maggie.flanagan@nmss.org).



## Team committees

It's time to make your life easier. Create a committee of dedicated teammates to help you raise more money and recruit more members! Here are suggestions on who can get the job done:

1. **Fire up your "Energizer Bunny".** This is the teammate who knows everyone, has lots of energy and loves to motivate people. His or her job is to challenge your team to recruit more teammates and can do so by coming up with as many creative recruitment challenges as possible.
2. **Hire the best salesperson on your team.** Let your natural-born salesperson lead your team's fundraising efforts. This teammate's job is to teach other team members how to set goals and fundraise and challenge them to do more.
3. **Let your trendiest teammate set the style.** Give this teammate the power to design your team T-shirt or jersey. While they're at it, let them handle the ordering and distribution of their one-of-a-kind creation.
4. **Have your team's party animal plan the fun stuff.** Your team's biggest party animal's number-one priority is to make sure the team has fun! They can enlist the help of others to take care of decorating your team tent (if applicable), making and bringing snacks, planning meeting places, making and handing out team signs or awards and so much more.

**Your committee should meet once a month for lunch, dinner, coffee or happy hour.**

Your committee should meet once a month for lunch, dinner, coffee or happy hour. Together, set goals and timelines, then ask everyone to report back to you on their progress. Your job is to help steer your committee in the right direction and give them guidance when needed. By the time your event rolls around, your committee will be proud of all it has accomplished.



## Goal-setting

Establishing a goal is an easy way to maintain motivation as well as give you and your team a benchmark for success. We encourage team captains to set goals for their teams, while keeping these tips in mind.

- **Goals should be realistic but significant.**  
If it requires hard work to attain, it'll be a source of more pride for your team.
- **Don't arbitrarily set a goal without input from the team.**  
Having them believe in the goal from the word "go" will make your job as team captain that much easier.
- **Don't forget to set both personal and team fundraising goals.**  
Lead by example. Share your fundraising goal with your team.
- **Set a goal for team size as well as collective fundraising.**  
Recruiting more team members can mean more substantial fundraising!
- **Don't keep your goal a secret.**  
Use email, team pages and even internal company intranets and newsletters to communicate goals and how close your team is to attaining them.
- **Use social networking.**  
Fundraise with Facebook through the Boundless Fundraising tool available in your online Participant Center.
- **Create internal competition.**  
If you're part of a large corporate team, have departments set their own goals for some fun internal competition.

For more goal-setting suggestions and guidelines, please call 800-582-5296 or email [specialevents@MSSociety.org](mailto:specialevents@MSSociety.org).



## How to turn your teammates into fundraisers

Even the best teams have a few teammates who frequently say:

- "I don't like to ask people for money."
- "Fundraising is too hard."
- "With the economy, it's harder to fundraise."
- "I don't know how to fundraise."
- "Each member of my family can't hit up the same family members for donations."

As the team captain, it's your job to help your teammates comfortably jump their fundraising hurdles and more. When a teammate tells you they can't fundraise, offer the responses below as encouragement to raise money for the National MS Society.

**Assure your team you understand how challenging it is to fundraise, but people with MS need our support.**

- Assure them you understand how challenging it is to fundraise, but that people with MS need our support.
- Multiple sclerosis doesn't slow down when the economy does. People with MS and their families turn to the National MS Society, and we must do everything we can to help each one of them address the challenges of the disease.
- Encourage them to cast a wide net and ask everyone they know.
- If someone can't give right now, remember to thank them for their commitment to the Society and keep them posted on your efforts. Even if they can't give today, they may be able to again in three, six or 12 months.
- Suggest they plant the seed by contributing themselves! People are more likely to donate if you have donated as well. When people see your dedication to the cause, they're more likely to give. Suggest they share with people why donating is important.
- People aren't offended when you ask for their support for a great cause. While they may not be able to donate, they won't be mad you asked. Chances are they may know someone who is affected by MS and want to help.
- Plan group fundraisers for the team. Choose an activity in which all teammates can participate, and ask your team to help you organize it. This is a great way to spread the word about your team, spend time together and raise money. You may be able to recruit more teammates as well!

- Remind your teammates to look into their company's matching gift program. They should also ask everyone who donates to see if their company has a matching gift program. Many large companies will match gifts by their employees, and this will really add up for your team.
- Remind your teammates that everyone who registers for a Bike MS or Walk MS event automatically gets a Participant Center — online Web pages they can personalize. Send emails with updates and stories about your team. Online fundraising uses less paper, costs less and raises even more money than traditional methods alone. Encourage all of your teammates to download the Facebook application for fundraising. If they aren't on Facebook, encourage them to join. Participants who used Facebook to fundraise last year raised up to 40 percent more than those who didn't.

### Volunteers can join your team too!

Do you have friends or family members who would like to further support your team and the National MS Society? Do you know people who want to be involved but aren't sure they want to participate? Invite them to join your team as a volunteer. They can support you throughout the event by helping with things like registration, rest stops or food service, and we can set them up as an official member of the team with the ability to fundraise. It's a great way to grow your team while also giving more people the opportunity to get involved with the event you love.

For more information please contact Will at 612-335-7992 or [will.ziegenhagen@nmss.org](mailto:will.ziegenhagen@nmss.org).





## Office recruiting tips

Having a difficult time recruiting new team members? Try some of these ideas to recruit people to Join the Movement®.

- Post team/event information in these places with your contact information:
  - ❖ Restrooms
  - ❖ Lounges
  - ❖ Bulletin boards
  - ❖ Elevators
  - ❖ Your cubicle or office
  - ❖ Company fitness areas
  - ❖ Above water fountains
- Use your email and voicemail message to mention your team and team Web page.
- Place an article in your company's office intranet or company newsletter. Include names of teammates and other contact information to let readers know who's participating and how they can join or contribute to the cause.
- Make announcements at staff meetings.
- Have a "new member" registration meeting and encourage each team member to recruit one more family member, co-worker, neighbor, etc.
- Set up an information table near the cafeteria to have co-workers sign up during breakfast or lunch.
- Staple event information to customer receipts and/or place information in shopping bags.
- Display a sign-up sheet — this creates positive peer pressure and encourages others to register.



## More fundraising and recruitment tips for teams

### Need more ideas? Try some of these:

- Set a higher goal for fundraising and recruiting — the more people who participate, the more money raised!
- Consider posting a visual aid to help show your success, perhaps a thermometer or graph that measures your progress. Progress charts can be found on the Fundraising web pages at [myMSwalk.org](http://myMSwalk.org) or [myMSbike.org](http://myMSbike.org).
- Get your company's executives on board. Support from top management is great motivation for people to join your team. National MS Society events promote company teamwork and morale by bringing employees together for a common cause.

**Fundraise online.  
Use your Participant  
Center to send  
emails to everyone  
you know.**

- Use matching gifts! Ask your community affairs or human resources department to make a donation and/or matching gift to your team's donation total.
- Make it personal — recruit and raise money for someone you know who has MS.
- Offer incentives to departments or team members who raise the most money or recruit the most people.
- Create challenges and kick-off parties to increase participation and team unity. Examples include: management versus staff, department versus department, your company versus vendors, or under age 30 versus over age 30.
- Have a team T-shirt/ jersey design contest. Post the entries in a public place, and let everyone vote for a winner. Inquire to see if your company would be willing to cover the cost of team shirts.
- Although it may be a company team, ask your neighbors, people at your place of worship, etc., to donate or participate. And vice versa — ask co-workers to join your friends and family team.
- Offer prizes to top fundraisers and recruiters. Ask your company or local businesses to donate prizes to the most successful team member.

## Corporate support

### Why corporate support is important to your team

1. Support from your company makes in-office recruitment easier. With permission, you can use the company email, newsletter and staff meetings as recruitment tools and post materials around the office. Encouragement from the CEO can go a long way.
2. Oftentimes, a company will cover some of the team's expenses, such as T-shirts, jerseys or registration fees.
3. Companies that allow fundraising within the office have potential for very successful fundraising events such as bake sales, silent auctions, rootbeer float and ice cream sundae sales, etc.

### Why your team is important to your company

1. By associating with a nationally recognized, high-profile nonprofit organization, your company can enhance its image within the community. In 2013, three National MS Society events made the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal's* list of Top 25 Fundraising Events.
2. Involvement helps your company promote its image as a caring corporate citizen, supportive of community issues, and increases brand awareness.
3. Your company and its employees feel satisfaction knowing that this sponsorship helps more than 17,000 people in the Upper Midwest area who live with the unpredictability of MS.
4. Your team helps boost employee morale and teamwork by encouraging involvement as a cyclist, walker or volunteer in a meaningful social activity.

### Where to start

Start with the human resources or health and wellness community relations department. Explain that you and other employees are doing something positive for a local charity and would like to receive support from the company. Participating in a National MS Society event is something employees can do to make a positive impact and build morale without costing a lot of money. Companies often choose one organization to support, so ask your whole team to talk to HR, too. If enough employees voice their opinions, change can happen and they may be willing to support a National MS Society team as well.

Reference the four points listed above when explaining the value in supporting your team. Show the list of current corporate teams who participate in our events. By joining the elite group of National MS Society corporations, your company will be identified as a leader within the corporate community.