

We have talked about leadership, programs, and membership and now we are moving on to communications

To me....communication falls right under leadership in level of importance with how successful a club might be.

When talking about communication there are two things to keep in mind.



Your constituents do not know what is going on with the club unless they are HEARING from you....OFTEN!

Develop a communication plan.

Decide in the beginning of the year the usual: who, what, when, where and how.

Be strategic in your planning and make sure you know who is in charge of what communication – who is doing the newsletter, the e-blasts and other outreach. You should always be using more than one means of communication.

What should I be communicating?



- Mission of the club
- State of the club
- Goals
- Needs
- Events
- Accomplishments
- Announcements/news

General themes to keep in mind include the mission of the club, current state of the club, goals, needs, accomplishments, and of course upcoming events, announcements and other news.

Not every piece should have all of these, but these are topics to engage alumnae and inform them about the club.

How should I communicate?



- Newsletters (print/electronic)
- Eblasts
- Targeted emails
- Websites
- Social media
- Personal invitations
- Phone calls

The next step is determining HOW you want to communicate and when. There are a lot of options.....

Newsletter



- Letter from president
- Board members with contact info
- Club email and website
- Inspiring articles
- Membership information
- Upcoming events
- Photos and reports from past events
- Admission info

When talking about newsletters, we first ask ourselves electronic or print -which is an endless debate. Over the last 4-5 years, most clubs have shifted more to being “green” with your communications. We would also note that over the last 4-5 years, we have witnessed a decline in dues paying members. Is there a correlation between the two....I could not say for sure but certainly worth discussing.

We look forward to hearing your discussion on this issue, but at this time, we are still encouraging our clubs to publish at least one newsletter /year.

When planning for a newsletter, you should consider including all of the topics listed here. The president’s letter should be cheerful and make the emotional connection we talked about earlier.. You should mail your newsletter to ALL alumnae, not just dues-paying members.

And... make sure you always post your newsletters on your website.

E-blasts




- Send electronic newsletters
- Advertise events
- Give general club updates

You should use our e-blast system for sending your electronic newsletters. Although we cannot send PDFs or other special file types, we can send plain text or link to your document. Other reasons to use e-blast include event announcements/reminders, and general updates. All of our email blasts are sent through our email marketing system, Harris, and we will talk about this more tomorrow.

For event notifications, make sure you have all of the information you need in the body and that the tone is warm and inviting. Remember that this is going to all alumnae in your club area. For most clubs, we have 70-75% emails on file. You need to remember your wide-range of ages when sending an email. What might be an “entertaining” message to a very young alumna just might sound “right” to someone from 1965. Just a thought to keep in mind.

Websites



- [Chapter pages](#) through Vconnect self-service
- [Landing Pages](#) maintained by the Alumnae Association

We offer two types of websites to increase your web communications. Chapter pages through Vconnect self-service and landing pages.

Chapter page are multiple webpages behind a firewall. Safe and secure. It is a little more complicated than landing pages and needs a volunteer dedicated to learning the system and keeping the information up to date. We will have a webinar post ALC about chapter pages for those interested.

The alternative is the simple one page alumnae site. Send us the information, and it will be posted on your landing page! Sarasota is a great example. The most important part of a website is having the information up-to-date. One up-to-date page is 100 times better than a super fabulous site you built that hasn't been/cannot be updated.

Your websites need to be your HOME base for ALL club information. If your eblasts contain all the information that your website has.....you have a problem which is probably that your emails are far too long and are not being read.



A very popular form of communication today is social media. There are many social networking sites that engage alumnae of all ages. How many of you are on Facebook? LinkedIn? These rapidly growing networks are a great way to connect alumnae in your area and disperse information about club and upcoming events. Consider creating a page and actively reaching out to alumnae in the area by including the links in your newsletters, websites.

Make sure to keep it up to date and check in to see what people are talking about. Planning is necessary for successful social media communication!

Phone and “snail mail”



- Personal contact goes a long way
- Phone trees are great for events
- Snail mail makes an impact

While many are adopting new tools like social media, please do not forget our tested and true phone calls, snail mail, and personal messages. Phone and printed letters go a long way – try to do targeted outreach! People can easily delete an email or ignore a facebook post – it’s much harder to do so on the phone. Alumnae are also more likely to say yes. Many hands will make this time intensive outreach easier – recruit a group of volunteers.

Volunteer Connection



- Do it yourself, one-stop shopping
- **Request** access for
 - » Data (Lists and Labels)
 - » Emails
 - » Websites



All of you should have heard about our Vconnect self service tools for emails, lists, labels, and chapter pages. We hope all of you were able to watch the webinars before you came. Tomorrow, we will be highlighting the tools during the communication overview and the tools of the trade workshops. We encourage our clubs to take advantage of Vconnect, but remember, it is not mandatory that you use these self-service tools...we are always here to assist you.

One does not serve all



- Target your communications (mode, language, tone)
- Understand your club's demographics
- Accept that you cannot reach everyone
- You have limited resources – chose wisely

We want to leave you with a few key points about communication in general. Remember that no single communication piece will serve all your needs. Target your communications (mode, language, tone).

Understand your club's demographics and use what will be most effective.

Accept that you cannot reach everyone. If you are using at least 3 separate modes of communication, chances are your message is getting across.

Remember-You have limited resources with your time, money and volunteers – ALWAYS PLAN wisely and know that we appreciate all that you do to keep alumnae connected to one another and to the college.

Discussion



- What has been successful?
- What has not?
- How do you engage alumnae with your communications?
- How often do you
 - » Send a newsletter
 - » E-blast
 - » Update your website