

SESSION 8: Sharing your Vision

Duration: 15 minutes

Facilitator: Section Staff

Learning outcomes:

Understand how members of your lodge communicate.
Learn different methods to effectively communicate with key stakeholders.
Brainstorm new ways to ensure key stakeholders have necessary information.

Supplies: Computer, PowerPoint presentation

Introduction & opening

3 minutes

Introduce the session by first introducing yourself and outlining your experiences in the Order of the Arrow; particularly, your experience in the area of communications and/or promotions.

[read learning outcomes]

Throughout this weekend, we have talked a lot about communication. An effective lodge communication strategy will reach Arrowmen, candidates, unit leaders, and parents. This brief session will outline best practices and helpful resources regarding international communication, social media, branding, website development, and written contact.

Trainer tip: Many delegates may have attended a session about communications previously. To make this session unique and worthwhile, allow delegates to take the lead throughout the session. They should share best practices about how they communicate effectively.

Communication methods

10 minutes

As the digital ecosystem evolves, we need to communicate to each of these stakeholders differently not only in our message, but also in the method in which we communicate. We're going to walk through some methods to communicate with stakeholders electronically. As we go through each method, I'm going to ask for a show of hands to two different questions. First, I will ask you to raise your hands if you *personally* use the method to receive information. Second, I will ask you to raise your hand if your *lodge* uses this method to communicate.



Trainer tip: Ask delegates to raise their hand for both questions (mentioned above) for social media as a whole and each individual platform. Delegates should realize that different social media platforms attract different audiences.

Social Media

In the digital age, almost everyone uses social media in one way or another.

- a. Facebook: Facebook tends to attract an older audience, like parents or unit leaders.
- b. Instagram: Instagram allows us to share photos of our events, but it can be difficult to communicate with a lot of complex information. We can use Instagram to promote our organization's story.
- c. Twitter: Twitter allows us to share quick blasts of information, like a registration link or a graphic.

How does your lodge use social media? Let's share some ideas.

Website

Websites can provide stakeholders with a wealth of information, but they can also be overwhelming. It's important to effectively organize your website to make finding information as easy as possible. How many of you have ever left a website because you couldn't find the information you needed? The longer it takes someone to find what they are looking for on the website, the more likely someone is to give up. Statistically, someone is more likely to leave your website with each additional click needed.

Let's look at the OA website for example. On the homepage, there are three links front and center: what is the OA, membership info, and find your lodge. Those pages include key information for the people who are most likely to leave the website the quickest: people who don't have a vested interest in the OA yet, like candidates or even inactive members.

Email

As opposed to social media, which requires someone to like our page, emails allow us to directly reach out to an audience. To send an email to a large number of people, it is helpful to use an email marketing service. These services help ensure that your message doesn't go straight to people's spam folders, and they provide sophisticated resources to make your message visually appealing. Some even have analytic capabilities.

Two email marketing services that have been used by lodges successfully are Mailchimp and Campaign Monitor. Both are fairly easy to use and can be utilized by someone with no experience in email marketing. Mailchimp provides a free option, and Campaign Monitor offers discounts for non-profits if you contact them.



Branding

We don't need a show of hands for this one, because we know your lodges all have some type of branding. Your lodge's brand is an integral piece to how the lodge creates publications, interacts with the council, and attracts new members. Clear branding allows you to deliver a consistent message from a visual perspective. For instance, each of the slide decks in this weekend's conference uses the same theme; and the logo is used in the presentations, on your name badges, and on the patch. Using the same branding allows you to clearly identify that all of these items are part of the ACT Conference.

In-Person

While we can utilize a wide range of electronic communication methods, we can't forget to make meaningful interactions in-person with members, candidates, unit leaders, and parents. While lodge leaders may not be able to engage every youth member in face-to-face communication, that does not make it wrong to engage some youth members that way.

Slack

We are going to take the last few minutes of this session to briefly discuss internal communication. We need to be able to organize ourselves well if we want to properly communicate with external audiences.

Lodge operations can be complicated. They involve different committees or teams that specialize in different areas. Slack is a communication tool that helps organize these lines of communication. Slack, which can be used via a computer or a smartphone app, allows you to create channels to suit your needs. You can create a lodge fellowship channel that involves your event team, a separate lodge officer channel, and many more. All of these channels are hosted in one platform, and you can use a general channel to communicate information to your entire leadership team. The platform also allows you to share files and photos as needed.

What other methods does your lodge use to communicate internally?

Conclusion

2 minutes

The main takeaway from this brief session is that different audiences use different communication methods. We need to balance reaching each of these audiences while also not decentralizing our message. Effective communication is critical to the success of your internal team efforts as well as your reach to key stakeholders in your chapter and lodge.

