Communications Essentials

Organizing a Team

To organize content for any audience takes coordination from a team of people, and is nearly impossible for one person to do alone. Having a dedicated group of people working on communications for your lodge or section will significantly improve your ability to share your message with your audience.

This being said, the people communicating outwardly with your lodge will need to find some way to communicate internally to collaborate on content creation. At the national level, multiple tools are used to help facilitate this internal communication.

Slack

If your team is organized into sub-teams that specialize in different areas such as social media, written content, or photography, then Slack could be a valuable tool for you. Slack is a channel-based communication platform that organizes members into topic specific chat rooms or channels with only those people who work in a given area.

For example, if you are a member who handles only written content, you would be in channels relating to the whole team for things like announcements or discussions, and a part of any channel relating to written content. The youth or adult overseeing the team would be in every channel for the group, so they know what is going on across the team.

Slack is a tool used frequently across the Order of the Arrow, but other tools exist that fulfill a similar role. Ryver, Microsoft Teams, GroupMe and RocketChat are all alternatives with their own strengths and weaknesses that make them better or worse fits for your team. Compare them with one another to see which one will work for you.

Project Management Software

For a communications group, or any team within your lodge or section, there are going to be many projects that require smaller tasks to complete. To visualize and plan through what all of these smaller tasks are, it is important to have some sort of project management tool in place. The easiest form of this is just a well made spreadsheet that assigns tasks and deadlines to specific people and is available to all

those involved. This can help with managing the creation of content, or the planning of an event.

Spreadsheets are the most accessible form of this, and can be very flexible, but don't have some functionalities that help move projects along effectively. Project management software tools can send email notifications as reminders, integrate into your internal communications platform, or automate approval processes. These functionalities aren't always necessary, but can be very helpful for overseeing a large, multifaceted problem.

Some examples of these software tools with links to their websites are:
- [Trello](#)
- [Asana](#)
- [Monday.com](#)
- [AirTable](#)

These platforms, and others, each have their own unique features that your team can compare to find which one is right for you.

Centralized File Storage

For your lodge or section, there are bound to be many files that people need access to. Rather than sending all of your files through email, you can use a service to have centralized file storage in the cloud. This will ensure that everyone in your team has access to files, and that they can be easily found by all members. It also helps to simplify confusing version numbers, so everyone has access to the most up to date resources. Some of the most common platforms are:
- Google Drive
- Dropbox
- Microsoft OneDrive
- Box.com
- ICloud

Understanding Audiences

Just as important as the content you make is the audience that you present it to. Finding the appropriate audience will help you keep your content focused, and make it an effective tool for promoting the happenings of your lodge or section. For most purposes, the audience of your content will be to the members of your lodge or section, but it is important to be able to target specific groups within those broader populations, as well as external stakeholders and media outlets.

If you are sending out minutes from your last LEC or COC meeting, you might not need to send them to everyone on your mailing list, but instead just the members of those respective groups. Your general members might prefer to get a monthly or even quarterly update emails with the key points that are relevant to them. By the same token, if there is an announcement for a specific chapter, it doesn't need to be sent to the entire lodge.

There may be times that your lodge or section has a program that warrants broader attention from an audience outside of the normal membership. For example, if your section is running a fundraiser for disaster relief, it could still be very successful if it is kept only to the section, but it would get more attention if it was spread across the section, region, or nation through other communication channels.

Developing these audiences is another key component of managing communications for a lodge or section. Lodges have easy access to their members contact information, so they can easily make broad announcements, or call specific people, but they are still only guaranteed to have phone numbers and email addresses. Creating a following on social media takes persistence at events, announcements through other platforms, and encouragement of word of mouth sharing to be successful. Communicating with your audience over multiple platforms helps to reinforce any major messages that you are trying to share.

Each platform that will be mentioned through the rest of this toolkit has a unique demographic that is important to understand in order to use it effectively. The information provided below should give you an idea of how to target content to meet the audience of each platform. Note that the age ranges are for the general population. Refer to the suggested audience for use in the OA.

Platform	Primary Lodge or Section Audience	Average monthly users	Average age range
Facebook	Older Arrowmen	2 Billion	18-29
Instagram	Youth members	800 Million	18-29
Snapchat	Youth members	300 Million	18-24
Twitter	All	317 Million	18-29
Email (eNews)	All		

Source: https://www.spredfast.com/social-media-tips/social-media-demographics-current