



2012

Communications, Public Relations, Publications



Chapter Leader Training

NMA...THE Leadership Development
Organization

Chapter Leader Training

Communications, Public Relations, Publications



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Communication, Public Relations, Publications

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OBJECTIVES

The information in this manual is presented to help you to have a better understanding of Communications... Public Relations & Publications. We're not attempting to make you a subject matter expert; rather, it is our aim however, to cover areas you should know to help you conduct your chapter's communications and publication's program effectively.

Here are some suggestions to help you start planning for the year.

1. Carefully study the contents of this manual, making note of those items about which you will want more information or have a question to ask.
2. Consult with your chapter leaders to obtain information on goals and plans for the coming year. Your interest here is two-fold: You can establish your own goals and you will need to communicate this goal information to the members.
3. Examine all past chapter publications, and consider how you may improve on them this coming year.
4. Resolve NOT to handle this assignment alone, start building your team now.
5. Start planning a network of communications with chapter leaders and members.

COMMUNICATION

“Communication is so much more than mastering the art of public speaking or deftly turning a phrase in a memorandum. It is the very act of leadership. It is who you are and what you do. It is the respect and honor you pay to others.”

--Thomas J. Lee
Echoes from the Canyon

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is a lot more than words and numbers. It is anything that conveys information, creates meaning or direction, or defines our environment and existence. It is the product of what is said and what is experienced. To be successful, it must be a dialogue or conversation. Communication is the energy behind leadership, community, and work.

HALLMARKS OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

Good communication must be clear, important, honest, sense-making, appropriate, continuing, prompt, direct, candid, sincere, inclusive, respectful, consistent, and stimulating. You must know your audience, work with your resources, be accountable, and think at least one year ahead.

Know your audience

Use inclusive language and don't single anyone out. Be consistent in your description of group members. You need to consider everyone a “newcomer.” AND.. don't be afraid to repeat yourself. The more times people hear something the more likely they are to remember it.

Work with your resources

Use your website to communicate with chapter members and those you would like to attract to your chapter. Your chapter newsletter is an excellent way to keep all your members informed as well as let your company executives know about your chapter's accomplishments. In addition, having some of your articles published in your company newsletter is a wonderful way to market your chapter.

Be accountable

You should ask for and respond to feedback regarding your communications. Occasionally, conduct reader surveys to make sure your audience is receiving what they need. In addition, have periodic reviews of the methods you use to communicate. Are they up-to-date? Is there a better way of getting your message distributed?

Think at Least One Year Ahead

Plan... plan... plan!!! Keep a folder full of stories and clippings for use in future communications. This will save you time in the future when you are looking for that “special” article or message to communicate to your audience!

INFORM VS. COMMUNICATE... WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Inform	Communicate
<p>The message is key</p> <p>Imparts knowledge</p> <p>Satisfies need to know</p> <p>Enables work or projects to be done</p> <p>Can be done through print, electronic, video, i.e., impersonal media</p>	<p>The method is key</p> <p>Influences feeling</p> <p>Builds relationships</p> <p>Achieves buy-in and commitment</p> <p>Requires face-to-face personal interaction dialogue</p> <p>Results in behavior change</p>

Leaders and Communications

“Leaders articulate and define what has previously been unsaid. Communications creates meaning for people. It’s the only way any group, small or large, can become aligned behind the overarching goals of an organization.”

--Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus
Leaders

PUBLIC RELATIONS

If you are new to the position of NMA Public Relations Chair, you may be somewhat confused about the responsibilities you have accepted.

Few people agree on what constitutes "PR" -- some equate it with regular publicity visits to your neighborhood newspaper editor; others emphasize the creation of a corporate image.

Actually, a PR person can be involved in both of these kinds of activities...as well as in a broad range of plans and actions designed to enhance the public opinion of the organization.

There's a simpler way of putting it. Think of public relations as “the practice of doing something right, arranging to get caught at it, and communicating it.”

You arrange for communications within and outside of the chapter. This is a simple description of what can often be a complicated operation.

This booklet is a "How to..." guide designed to supply general principles and useful particulars so that you can deal effectively with many kinds of situations.

YOUR FIRST MOVES

Consult with each of your chapter officers and learn from them everything you can about their plans and goals for the coming year.

Consult the executive in charge of PR at your company. Seek assistance in coordinating chapter and company PR efforts where possible.

Arrange to communicate information to your members, your company executives, and to others who may be interested.

Determine exactly which audiences should receive your information.

Set your own public relations goals in the context of chapter goals. Start planning how you will achieve yours.

Examine all chapter publications with a goal of improving them--perhaps making them more responsive to the needs of the members--or more interesting--or more timely.

Start building your communications team. You will need editors, reporters, media contact representatives, photographers, production, and distribution people.

Set up a regular system of reports coming to you from all officers and committees. This can be usefully handled by passing out assignments to your staff members. Ask them to come up with information about every plan, action, and accomplishment of the chapter. Ask them to report these facts well before publication deadlines and meeting dates.

Take a long, close look at your information sources. Judge them on dependability, availability and factual reliability. Start looking for additional sources if necessary.

SETTING GOALS

You've done your homework and conferred with each of the officers and committees. They've told you their goals and plans for the coming year. You've taken notes and sent each one of them a written summary of the information as you understand it.

It will pay off. This no-nonsense approach to your PR responsibilities will accomplish two things: It will jolt any careless-with-the-facts colleague into quickly giving you the correct information. It's there on paper and with a date on it. The second benefit is that it will establish you as a conscientious news handler who will earn immediate respect.

One way for you to handle this mass of information you'll be collecting is to enter it in a 12 month, week-by-week calendar. This could be stored on your computer, or, for those who prefer a more visual approach, you could get a large year-at-a-glance calendar and mount it on your wall. This will give you a preview and a running checklist of most of the news you'll be in charge of over the next year.

Study each item and try to decide which of your audiences might be the most interested in each event. You can't start too soon in targeting the information to reach the correct audience whether that be internal or external.

You can see that many of the chapter's actions will be of significant interest to the entire community. Others will be mostly of concern to the members themselves. Your job is to present each event in such a way that it can become relevant to the largest possible number of your particular audiences.

You could do this via newspaper, TV, bulletin boards, special announcements at meetings, telephone reminders, and workshops or seminars. One of the most effective ways to distribute information to your chapter members is by utilizing your chapter's newsletter whether it be electronic or hard copy.

At this point in your planning, you should analyze and list what will be needed in the way of news stories and backup material. You work back from each event date. You note at what point in time you must have in your hands the correct information in order to meet news deadlines beforehand. At least, plan for a week's cushion.

You are both a strategic planner of the big picture, and a tactician who implements each part of the grand design. Your general AAA goal is to Arrange for Attention and Approval of the chapter's activities. Your specific goals are to get each news article researched, prepared, placed, and finally, documented.

STAFFING

From the start of your term as PR Chair, you have a choice. You can try to do the whole job yourself and perhaps do a poor job, or, you can recruit members for the PR team from the chapter membership and make your job easier.

You have to recognize that you can't be everywhere at once, attend every committee meeting, and touch every news base. You find members with special talents for communication. You want accuracy and clarity above all. You want reliable people who can talk clearly, write the facts clearly, and who can listen carefully.

Some will be reporters--bringing in or calling in the news of chapter activities. You need at least one good editor, who isn't afraid to exercise news judgment and who can rewrite raw notes into acceptable stories.

You can use one or more photographers. Today, there are many inexpensive digital cameras available that take excellent pictures for your publications whether they are hard copy or electronic. These cameras make it very inexpensive to have a pictorial record of many chapter activities.

The main thing you stress with your staff is accuracy. Names must be spelled correctly... this is very important. Trouble comes when someone assumes he/she knows how to spell a name just from hearing it pronounced. What you hear as "Custer" can really be spelled "Koester." A person can say, "My name is Johnson," when it's actually "Johnston."

Also advise them to record middle initials correctly. Addresses, ages, colleges, titles, and all names should be recorded correctly. These are vital, personal statistics which, if they are mishandled, can de-value every Public Relation point you try to make.

Any news story, letter, or announcement that makes these kinds of mistakes is guaranteed to annoy all the people concerned. They aren't kidding when they say, "I don't care what you say about me--just so you spell my name right." When you make mistakes in basic information like this, you are saying, in effect, "This individual is so insignificant, we don't have to be careful about being right." NO ONE IS INSIGNIFICANT. A careless mistake like this makes you look bad to your readers, and look worse to your victim.

Be sure to hold regular staff meetings with everybody present and contributing ideas for the continuous improvement of your Public Relation operation. Right after every major chapter event and meeting, you should conduct a staff review and planning session. This will help you judge from a public relations standpoint just how well the occasion succeeded. When you plan the next event, keep in mind any PR weaknesses found during your review to make sure they don't happen again.

In case of error be careful not to expose any one of your staff to public embarrassment. Concentrate not on "Who's to blame?" but, on "How can we improve the next time?"

Through all of your planning and organizing, you put into practice a continuous and significant factor: Motivation. You must motivate Officers and Committees to supply the information needed, quickly and accurately. You must motivate your staff with the importance of public relations--importance to the Chapter and to the Members' personal growth.

Put this in your own words. It is the motivating message you make sure that everybody receives:

"Every one of us is a Public Relations Chair, because we practice public relations with everybody we meet, work, and live with. It's the soundest way to cultivate general goodwill. Just keep in mind that we don't earn approval unless we deserve it, unless we do a good job and the world knows about it. Our PR goal is to spread the word about the accomplishments of the chapter and its members. The more people who learn about our successes, the more personal recognition each of us will get as NMA members. We're the Chapter's Triple-A team, all of us. We work together to Arrange for Attention and Approval. Now how can I be a help to you?"

You've planned, organized and motivated. Now you turn your attention to follow-up implementation and control.

DEFINING YOUR AUDIENCE

You have one story to tell -- the progress of your Chapter and its members. It's a continued story that you take care to offer with varied emphasis -- to keep it fresh and interesting, for your different audiences.

Who are they? Primarily, your own members. They should be the first to know what's going on, what did go on, and what will go on.

Your first responsibility as PR Chair is to keep them fully informed. But remember, there's no such thing as a "captive audience." If you tend to accept this illusion, think of your own actions when the commercials come on in the middle of your favorite TV shows. Are you any sort of a captive? Does anything prevent you from heading for the kitchens or the bathroom or wherever?

Don't fall into the trap of thinking you have a lock on the minds of your members just because you aim information in their direction. They can turn you off even easier than you can switch off the TV or leave the room. Somebody has said, "The biggest barrier to communication is the illusion of having communicated."

You can send out 50 letters, or put copies of your publication into 50 hands, or stand in front of 50 people and talk. but if they don't read or listen to the message, then they simply don't receive the message.

So what do you do? With any sort of information you hope to convey, you keep the recipient in mind, first, last, and always. You must never bore an individual who is so important to you. You must always appeal to their interest--which, fundamentally, means self-interest.

You don't preach to or argue with your audience. You present the information you want them to receive in as lively and interesting a package as possible. Underscore its newness and its importance. Be bright, be right, and be brief.

A famous publisher stated that the object of his journalism was to: "Present the truth, well told." This should be your purpose in all communications--to members, to management, and to all your other audiences.

Yes, upper management also needs to be informed of your Chapter's progress, and informed just as persuasively as you communicate with the membership. Your survival as a Chapter often depends on the effectiveness of your executive level public relations. This is a fact that cannot be overlooked or overemphasized. As with any other audience, when executive management sees printed or televised reports of your organization's achievements, they are usually impressed.

Now, in determining the other audiences you should reach, and how you should reach them, let that phrase "self-interest" guide you. When a particular action of your Chapter makes for progress in the community, then the whole community can be expected to take an interest in it. You deal with the general news media on this satisfactory basis.

But suppose the theme of your activity has a special significance for a particular segment of the population. In this instance, you take care to direct your information to whichever groups may be most concerned.

You have many choices: women's clubs, religious organizations, consumer groups, political parties, welfare agencies, labor unions, fraternal organizations, civic and service clubs, industrial societies, veteran's organizations, rural groups, professional associations. How do you reach them? Normally through their officers, making use of club bulletins or their trade papers and magazines.

If one of your stories gets little "play" from the general news media, look at it again. Maybe its appeal was only for one or more of these special groups. Next time something like this comes along, it's up to you to deliver it to the organizations and people most directly concerned. As a PR Chair you should become "news delivery" expert!

Be alert to opportunities that exist in the participation of your members in other groups. When one of them becomes an Officer, or is otherwise honored, let everyone know! Don't make them blow their own horn. Do it for them. It works out better for everyone concerned.

A big step in the implementation and control of your public relation operation is in this identification of the several audiences you decide to reach.

You keep them informed, interested and impressed with Chapter activities and people.

TURNING INFORMATION INTO NEWS

Relax. You don't have to be a magician in order to find news and get it known.

All you have to do is remember the simplest definition of news. "It's the plural of new."

Just find something new in the area of Chapter activities, and pass this information along generally to people in the business of publishing or broadcasting news.

You may wonder, how new it is--when your group schedules another speaker on such-and-such a date. You feel this is fairly routine, and not very new.

Each speaker is unique. He/she has his/her own name, own background, own looks and own speech topic. Your speaker begins to sound a lot newer, right?

You can, and should, step up your speaker news value in a number of ways. You can call and get a more stimulating speech title. Write a letter with five questions in it that you think will be in listeners' minds when the speech is delivered. Urge the speaker to hurry back the answers to and the comments about those questions and any others frequently run into. This gives you some usable quotes you can work into your news story.

The more well known a speaker is, the easier it is for you to get attention for them. One measurement of your PR accomplishments is the amount of media excitement you can generate for a fairly unknown

speaker. So get them to talk to you interestingly about their topic, and make sure their statements reach news outlets at a time that will do your meeting the most good.

You add one "new" to another until you have news. But speakers and meetings are by no means your only PR opportunities. Consider with a discerning eye, your officers, your committees, your members, and your chapter's special projects.

Use this new-finding approach. Everybody is a unique individual having a special point of view because of special experiences. Train yourself and your staff to be receptive for "personality news" among your associates.

When you learn of a human interest story, pass it along--tied firmly to a Chapter activity. If anybody on your staff wants to know what a "human interest" story is, say it's a story about an interesting human.

Projects that the Chapter is involved with have a life all their own--what with planning, preparations, unknown factors, unexpected developments, and finally, the excitement of the Big Day itself. You'll be amazed (and helped to ready made stories) by the things that happen. What you do is keep the members and the community informed of the progress of this successful exercise in public service.

One of the best ways to generate public interest is to ask for some kind of help. The more unusual, the better. Sometimes a project can need some sort of special "prop" or element of decoration or manpower or even livestock. One amateur acting group was working up a production of "Mame" when somebody had the bright idea that it would be great publicity to ask the immediate world for the loan of a live baby fox to appear onstage in one scene. The local newspaper printed the odd need, and believe it or not, a lady showed with a young, well-trained fox that turned out to be the star of the show.

Keep this ploy in mind. No matter how strange the object required may be, somebody is almost certain to find it. Then you have a follow-up story--with pictures!

Are you convinced there's nothing mysterious about news itself (the plural of new), or the finding and developing of it? Good.

For your own efficient operation, better make up a checklist of news possibilities and refer to it at least once a week. Something like this:

NEWS POSSIBILITIES

Elections... appointments... retirements

Visitors...speakers...consultants

Articles and speeches by members

Special awards made by Chapter

Interviews with members

Hottest Chapter project

Open Houses and dedications

Results of special drives and campaigns

Public service by members

Miscellaneous activities

NMA Council Events

Leadership Conference

Chapter Leaders Clinics

Council Meetings

NMA National Events

Annual Conference

Leadership Development Conference

Director Meetings

NMA News

Director Visits

Constitution Changes

New Programs and Courses

New Charters in Area

NMA National Projects

Awards to Individuals

Awards in Chapters

FACT SHEET FOR NEWS RELEASE

A good way to prepare to do a news release is to create yourself a Fact Sheet that contains: What... When... Where... and Who... Why... and How.

WHAT....the event that has happened or will happen.

Follow it with WHEN...telling the time, the date and the duration, if that happens to be important.

WHERE is usually significant, and should be localized to the particular building or hotel ballroom or outdoor site of action.

WHO, in many cases, is the most vital of your facts and you should put down the names of all those whose actions, statement or announcements contribute to the occasion. And here's an excellent time, right when you're jotting down your notes, to make sure you have the names right.

Finally, take WHY and HOW into consideration. How much money. How many people. How is it unusual. Why it's happening.

Here's where you look for superlatives to bring in if at all possible. "First time that Your town has witnessed a Whatever." Or, "Bigman's first public statement about dangers of Ohmigosh." When you can truthfully label your events as a first, a last, a latest, a newest or any other quality that makes it unique...you have got yourself an item of acceptable news. Highly acceptable.

Now how do you present it to news media in a form that can be used with a minimum of re-writing? What you do is use your Fact Sheet to create a News Release.

PREPARING A NEWS RELEASE

An efficient way to submit material to the newspaper, radio, and/or TV station is through a written press release. Local editors and reporters will sometimes take stories on the telephone, but it is better to have the information in writing. Written releases leave less room for error, and allow the writer to emphasize the points he wishes to stress. Here are a few basic guidelines for preparing press releases.

Ascertain the press or news deadline of weekly, daily newspapers, radio and TV stations so your news will arrive in time for publication and broadcast on the day or week you wish it to appear or be broadcast.

News releases should be word processed and double-spaced with a triple space between paragraphs. Use only one side of the page. Good side margins should be allowed, and the heading should be placed about one-third down on the first page. The date for release should be stated, and the release should be no longer than two pages.

At the end of the release, indicate from whom further information may be obtained and give that person's office and home phone number. The name of the issuing body should appear on the press release. This may simply be the library's name and address, but it might also be a committee or a subcommittee working within the library.

If you enclose photographs with your story, do not staple or tape these pictures to the release. Use paper clip.

Number and identify each page of a newspaper story following the first page, with a "---MORE---" at the bottom of each page for continuation.

The subject or lead is usually typed in capital letters and centered across the top of the release. This brief heading provides the essence of the story and also gives the editor a basis for composing the actual headline that will appear in the newspaper.

The first paragraph of your press release should contain all the elements of your story. Use the basics of journalism: who, what, when, where. Your first paragraph should be structured and stand alone. (It can also be sent to local radio stations and be used as a spot news announcement-without rewriting.

Tell your story completely, but do not include more information than is necessary. Make photocopies of your press release or send original word processed copies.

Maintain the same style when writing press releases. Paragraphs should not be divided from one page to the next. Number all pages. Choose a standard style book, such as the University of Chicago's *A Manual of Style*, and use it consistently. Have some one else proofread your press releases. Writers are not effective proofreaders of their own copy.

Reports and news releases of special events must be sent to the news media in advance or immediately following the event. Two or three days afterwards, it is not news and therefore of not interest to the press, radio or TV.

For events and displays you think would make a good picture, always ask if they could send a photographer or TV cameraman. When submitting your own pictures, glossy black and white prints should be provided and 4" x 5" is a good size.

In publicizing School Library Media Day, try to stress the local angle - what you are doing at the local library to tie in with the overall event. The use of local activities and names is of interest to your local news media. Names should include two initials or the whole first name of the person, such as

Mr. John Brown or Mr. J. G. Brown.

For special events the news media should receive a complete program well in advance of the event.

The news media are one of the best ways of reaching non-library users - the people you want to reach. A letter of "thanks" for a good story or interview is always appreciated and helps insure continued good coverage of your library activities. This letter should thank the media for the excellent way they used the information provided. A reporter particularly appreciates a letter of "thanks" or commendation that goes to the Boss.

SUBMITTING STORIES AND NEWS ITEMS

What kinds of news media you can "make" will depend, of course, on what kinds are available to you. For instance, if the nearest, big city, daily newspaper is 40 miles away, your access to it will be clearly limited.

But suppose you scan quickly through various types of publications and indicate how you may best supply news for each. This should help you operate effectively with the particular mix of communications media your community offers.

THE DAILY NEWSPAPER

If there's one fairly close at hand, this will probably be your best news outlet. In general, the smaller the daily, the better chance you have of getting your releases used. But don't let a big paper discourage you. Introduce yourself pleasantly, and be guided by what you are told.

You'll often start with the City Desk. Depending on the topic of your story, you will be directed to the department that can most appropriately use it. Of course, you have no guarantee that it will be used. But, if you take the precaution of learning when is the editor's least busy time, and show up then, you'll always get friendly treatment and probably good advice.

When the editor tells you he/she needs to have a story by a certain hour to make that same days' paper, note and be warned! The surest way to miss getting into print is to miss an editor's deadline. Don't fight

it. You are there to help the editors get information for their readers. You're a supplier providing a service. Keep that relationship in mind.

Be friendly, but don't try to trade on friendship--or the fact that your boss plays golf with the editor's boss. The most untactful and self-defeating thing you can do is to drop big names on the editor. If you should try to sandbag your way onto news pages, you are inevitably heading for embarrassment and failure.

Don't try to coax space out of an editor. You'll get the attention you want, if the news you supply is sufficiently interesting to the paper's readers - in the not necessarily humble opinion of the editor. The editor's opinion is the one that counts.

WEEKLY AND NEIGHBORHOOD PAPERS

Here's your happy hunting ground. These publications don't usually reach as many readers as the big daily, but they are well read. Because they are smaller, your story has a better chance to be seen. And often, their standards of what constitutes a news story are less demanding than those of the dailies. Give them a story which contains several local names and you'll probably score. Keep up a strong, continuing study of what the weeklies in your area like to print.

Don't overlook the "Shopping News" kind of publication that is distributed free to every residence in an area. There's less editorial space available, but when your story is used (sometimes without change) you have less competition for the reader's attention. When you adapt your news for the circulation area, your chance of acceptance goes up.

YOUR COMPANY PUBLICATIONS

Here's an excellent way to reach your members and your management. Keep in helpful touch with the editor. Don't make him/her call you for items about the chapter's activities. Keep him/her as well informed as you do your officers.

Be tactful. If, in a particular issue, space is tight and your story got cut or squeezed out altogether, don't try to go over the editor's head. When you create--from a formerly neutral or friendly editor--an out-and-out enemy....you are in for unpleasant surprises. It's really interesting how one missing or misspelled word can change the entire effect of a story. Take the pledge now. You will never give an editor any reason to regard you with anything but trust and liking.

RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWS

From your public relations standpoint, broadcast news, whether by radio or television, offers exciting outlets. As with your newspaper contacts, you deal with electronic reporters openly and honestly. But their needs differ. Where the newspaper offers perhaps two hours of reading matter, the broadcaster has only a few minutes in which to cover the day's news. So competition for news time is even stronger than the competition for news space. But when a station mentions your activities or shows a picture of your featured speaker--the results are worth your effort.

Watch these things. Don't mail in your news releases. Take them, or have them taken to the station and handed to the News Editor. Offer to bring a big-name speaker for an interview. Always give the editor several days notice of interesting, upcoming activities. This gives ample time to assign a reporter and/or photographer to the affair.

Don't overlook the special value of recorded statements for use by radio stations. If you can offer this help to a news department, be sure to mention it. Try to set up interviews by phone every chance you get.

Never forget the Public Service departments of both radio and TV stations. They're hungry for good stuff. Talk to the director of public service at each station. Offer each one of them an idea that deals with a topic of timely interest that can be arranged well in advance. They plan their schedules weeks ahead of time.

Try hard to break into broadcast. Almost anyone will admit to a feeling of special excitement when they hear (or learn of) their names being favorably mentioned on a newscast. Families, friends and colleagues all share pleasurably in the electronic event. Your broadcast PR also will win friends and influence people in upper management. It may be supplemental to your basic effort in print, but it's highly important to your success.

Your Chapter Publication

This is your direct line to your primary public, the membership.

SAMPLE COMMUNITY NEWS RELEASE

[TITLE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OXFORD, Ill., July 1 - In line with Oxford's traffic safety campaign, The Dexter Leadership Association of NMA (DLA) will assist the city recreation center for hundreds of children who might otherwise spend late afternoon hours playing in the streets.

As a further contribution to the safety crusade, the DLA, according to John W. Case, President, will help man the center with volunteer instructors.

While a small-scale experiment was conducted last spring with the afternoon playground idea, this year will be the first time Oxford has adopted the practice. The recreation center plan has been widely used in the crowded sections of larger cities to augment summer playgrounds. The city Recreation Department said the center would be opened Monday with Dexter Leadership Association members in charge.

The DLA has 300 members and comprises personnel of the Dexter Steel Products Company.

NMA is dedicated to development and recognition of leadership and management as professions and the promotion of the Competitive Enterprise System. It has approximately 22,000 members in 100 affiliated chapters across the entire spectrum of American industry and organizations in the public sector.

NMA... THE Leadership Development Association Background

The NMA is a professional leadership development association headquartered in Dayton, Ohio. The Association is a national, not-for-profit organization serving more than 22,000 customers nationwide. Members belong to company-based, in-house chapters, or are members of community chapters. An Individual Membership Program is also available.

Through the chapter-based experience, NMA provides management and leadership development opportunities to help sponsoring organizations discover, develop, and showcase leadership talent.

NMA's customers span the entire United States. Most are from nearly 100 affiliated chapters representing organizations such as healthcare, utilities, manufacturing, communications, government, aerospace and defense.

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Dexter Leadership Association

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Dexter, Illinois 80145

Phone (office) 224-8395

Phone (home) 261-1603

For additional information, visit our website:

[Insert Organization Website]

PUBLIC RELATIONS FAQs

- Q. I'd buy your AAA definition of public relations--as Arranging for Attention and Approval--but isn't this getting kind of close to the -managing news?"
- A. Not really. You don't suppress any facts or distort them. You just do something right (remember?), and arrange to get caught at it. You won't get the favorable attention that you need, unless you deserve it, unless you put it into motion a newsworthy event.
- Q. Tell me again how I can tell if something is newsworthy?
- A. Take a good look at it. What's new about it? So your speaker is a cost accountant from a town 30 miles away. Doesn't seem too exciting, does it? Your speaker is a human being, an individual, with all kinds of different experiences, and beliefs. Here's an opportunity and a challenge for you to dig behind the "cost accountant's tag and come up with an understanding of his/her uniqueness. The author of "Alice in Wonderland" was a strait-laced Victorian mathematician. Not everybody turns out to be a Lewis Carroll (his real was C. L. Dodgson) but every one of us has interesting aspects, hobbies and ideas. Find out one or two of the unexpected qualities of any speaker, and you'll have enough to sell them as newsworthy to all your publics.
- Q. But what if somebody dreams up some kind of a project that's been done a hundred times before?
- A. No problem. You can find news feature values in any group activity because new people are involved. Your solution is always to feature individuals. Report how they see the special importance of the project to which they contribute their time, energy, brains, and often, their money. As public relations chair you make sure that a sense of their personal commitment is passed along. You'll have no trouble convincing editors that this dedicated action in the public interest is newsworthy.
- Q Any other situations I should be looking out for?
- A. Think about honoring people. We sometimes accuse reporters of printing and broadcasting too many stories of crimes, disasters, and tragedies. They realize it. This works out to be a PR opportunity for you. News editors like to get stories about people being honored, getting awards, and receiving recognition for jobs well done. Look around you. You can get your Chapter some favorable attention by giving favorable attention to somebody else. In your community isn't there someone who does outstanding work? One who has made lots of contributions to the community in many different ways? You can arrange for this person to become a "Silver Knight" recipient.

You aren't restricted in your selection by rigid rules. The individual could be a civic leader who has made a profound personal contribution to inter-race relations; a high school senior who has practiced the best ethics in leadership obligations; a woman who has saved many lives by managing a community-wide program of prenatal care. One caution: When you honor

somebody, do it in all sincerity. Clearly define the award and the reasons why the person is to receive it. Don't do it just to get the Chapter's name in the paper. Do it because you believe in the importance of the accomplishment you honor.

Q. Sometimes we get into a project "I can't seem to work up much enthusiasm for." What then?

A. Ask yourself, "Is it the project, or is it me? Am I a part of the problem?" If you suspect the hang-up concerns you, then turn over the public relations assignment on this project to someone who likes the idea. Most of the civic actions that involve NMA chapters have no problem being justified. The real difficulty comes with the large number of projects that a chapter can be offered - all requiring the leadership of good professionals. Your advice to your committee chairs and officers could be along these lines: "Let's not take on every project that comes along. Let's make sure it's right for us." Other NMA chapters have done well with such activities as mass-counseling of high school seniors who are interested in leadership career opportunities. Or perhaps your group can conduct classes for hourly workers who want to move up to leadership positions.

Q. What's the best public relations move when an NMA national officer comes to town?

A. Plan ahead. You'll have time, because you will have plenty of advance notice. What you can do is arrange for an interview or two. Keep your visitor informed about what you're planning, and indicate the line of questions reporters are likely to ask. This way, your national officer comes to town equipped with information about the latest trends and ideas in the exact subject areas of editor interest. Give everybody enough advance preparation, and the reporters/editors will be happy, your NMA officer will be sensational, and you'll end up a hero.

Q. Should I make regular calls on reporters/editors--even if I don't have much of anything to report?

A. You should make regular calls on reporters/editors, but you should always have something newsworthy to report. You can do this by giving yourself deadlines to find news items. Dig until you strike gold and then tell the world about it. Tell about it before it happens, and after it happens. Speak up for the good work of your Chapter and its people. You never have to apologize for bringing in a news item. You're performing a service that's needed.

Q. How do we submit material to NMA for publication in NMA Breaktime?

A. News about unusual chapter activities is always welcome. Articles giving recognition for local achievements are recommended as well as articles featuring members. Pictures of these events or members are always welcome.

Being Public Relations Chair is one of the most satisfying opportunities in the world. The job takes a tremendous amount of hard work, but the results will provide you with personal satisfaction for years to come.

PUBLICATIONS

Who is responsible for the chapter's newsletter can vary widely from one NMA Chapter to another. In many cases it's your baby because *communication* to the membership is clearly an important aspect of public relations.

So let's assume that you, as Public Relations Chair, are the publisher of this internal periodical. Right away, don't be blinded by the word "internal". This publication can, and should, be seen by your executives, by community business leaders, and by all your news media contacts. If these influential "outsiders" do not receive it now, make up a new list immediately and start sending them the issues.

This free distribution to your company and to the community leaders will do two things for you quickly. It will establish the Chapter as a going, growing concern. And it will augment your public relations effort--by supplying news and feature tips to news outlets on a regular basis. You'll soon be getting calls from reporters, saying, "How do I get hold of this Charley Harley? Sounds like a good item." You'll soon be getting feedback from your Executives, passing along approval of Chapter projects they've been reading about.

There's a third, almost accidental benefit. When you decide to let the great outside world see your newsletter, electronic or hard copy, you must also decide to improve it. You will upgrade both its looks and its content because you know this publication represents the organization in the eyes of the important people whose approval you seek.

NOTE: Actually, your members are the most important people of all, but it sometimes takes the shock of getting a wider audience to drive home this fundamental truth.

The first act of upgrading generally has to do with looks. You want a more attractive appearance, but there will always be those who insist, "This is the best we can do with the money we don't have!"

Treat these opinionated types gently. Work with them as you examine all possible ways to bring out a piece of printed communication that will be attractive as well as low-cost.

If you aren't yet an expert on printing techniques, consult with one or more people who are. There are several ways to save when producing a cost-effective award winning publication for which you'll be proud.

COST-EFFECTIVE PUBLICATIONS

Probably the most cost effective way to produce an effective newsletter is to publish it electronically. Most chapter members have access to software that will help you produce an outstanding newsletter. Take advantage of this!! Also, you might want to enlist the help of a chapter member who is good at Word, Publisher, InDesign, or some other desktop publishing software. These can be printed for hard copies or converted to a .pdf file for electronic publishing.

If you print hard copies, the paper doesn't always have to be white! It can have color and texture.

Don't let the cost of paper always scare you into using cheap brand. For the relatively small number of copies you'll be printing, the difference in cost from one paper to another is pennies.

Ink doesn't always have to be black. A colored ink or colored paper can give you the effect of expensive publication but can be very cost-effective.

Your newsletter/publication should have a recognizable Masthead. You can have your entire year's mastheads printed in color and then print each issue in black ink which looks great; however, it is much less expensive to produce full color hard copy publications than it has been in the past.

Put an address area on the back page of your hard copy publication and save the cost of envelopes.

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATION SUGGESTIONS

You can use a "box" on a page to draw special attention to an item and to achieve a more interestingly designed page.

With long stories, you can insert sub-heads to break up the type into more attractive sections to keep the reader moving along. Or, use "hanging sub-heads" in the margin.

When you see photographs, use them as you can and insist they be interesting in themselves. Don't settle for head shots of people standing in a row... get creative and draw people to the picture.

Whatever process you settle on as representing the best you can afford with the equipment available to you, keep three goals clearly in mind. You want the publication to look friendly, readable, and responsible. It can't do the job you need done if it looks shoddy and careless.

CONTENT

Now what about the content? What sort of items and articles should you put into the publication? What editorial judgment do you apply to them?

Humanity, reality and integrity. An advertising manager once said that every good advertisement has these three qualities; and since your publication represents an advertisement for your Chapter and its members, you can apply these same criteria to it.

Use the yardstick of "humanity" to anything you plan to print and you can be sure the story won't turn out "stuffy" or sound like a computer. The story will read like one person talking to another--which is what good communication accomplishes.

Keep "reality" as a measurement of your statements in print, and you'll keep a story on track. You'll offer information appropriate to the situation and right down the interest alley of the reader. You'll tell your reader what they want to learn because you've taken the trouble to find out what is in the minds of your members.

"Integrity" is a quality an astonishing number of publications miss. All you have to do, really, is tell the truth in your previews of coming events and in your reviews after-the-fact. You don't have to call every spade a "dirty shovel," but you don't go to the other extreme by referring to a spade as "an instrument

of soil research." Never let promotional enthusiasm lead your publication into overstatements and misstatements. You fool nobody but yourself... tell it like it is, but with zest and a feeling of appreciation for the people in a growth situation.

Here are some kinds of stories and features that effective newsletters use:

"The Prez Sez" is one regular report of the Chapter President. It removes some of the formality that can be a barrier to good communication.

"What's Going On With Us?" can be a persuasive caption for a summary of committee and project activities in each issue. Reporting real progress tends to motivate those who might otherwise lag.

"Schwendenmann, Our Next Speaker" is the dull kind of head you should avoid. It stresses the programming routine and it gives no clues about the useful information Mr. S. will offer.

Report the accomplishments of your officers and committees, but don't play favorites, and keep in mind that your individual members are just as important as the current administration of the Chapter. Don't be tempted to over promote yourself either.

Cartoons, caricatures, and clipart are helpful and make the publication interesting. Try to find an artist or artists among the membership to contribute graphic skills designed to make the publication more attractive. Give recognition in return.

Make considerable use of the Question and Answer format for interviews and reports. If somebody is late with a report, get on the phone and turn the conversation into a Question and Answer piece. Use the same technique to get interesting material from an upcoming speaker.

If somebody hands in a dull article, don't feel obligated to share your boredom with the readers. You can avoid printing it by having copies made, and by listing the report as being available (along with others) under a special heading such as, "Up-To-Date Data". Your real obligation is to the reader. Spare dullness whenever possible, and encourage reader interest in every way you can.

Editorials are well read if they are timely and contain ideas for action.

Professional development is one of your major subjects. Courses being offered to members should receive prominence.

Company news is appreciated especially as it affects members' careers.

Member and new member profiles as well as social news are generally well read.

A calendar of events is useful, and should be updated in each issue.

Many publications carry short book reviews written by members on management and leadership subjects.

It may not be a legal requirement for the newsletter to carry a Chapter financial report, but it's usually a good idea to keep the members informed as to the financial status of the Chapter.

Carry news about the NMA whenever possible because you raise morale when you remind members they are part of a professional association. Use articles from NMA Breaktime. If you need them in a different format from what is on the NMA Website, just contact NMA at nma@nma1.org.

Common errors to avoid -- don't use "in" items (references to activities that set the chapter elite off from the troops)... never use items that are obviously "fillers" just to take up space at the bottom of a page... instead, keep adding to your list of interesting quotes from members using the most appropriate and topical of these. Don't have your line of type too long or too short. Readership studies show that a line containing from 35 to 40 characters is the most readable. Get your publication out on time, and distributed well ahead of the events it tells about.

One more thing -- all communication is two-way. Make sure your publication reflects this. Quote members' reactions to the last issue or to a chapter activity. Not all gripes and not all cheers. Group them under a heading "Prods and Praise," or whatever. Just make sure that many of them contain constructive suggestions and ideas for future use.

NMA PUBLICATIONS CONTEST

1007. OUTSTANDING PUBLICATIONS

- a. **Description** — The objective of the award is to recognize Chapters and Councils, in each size group that published an effective Chapter or Council newsletter. Plaques will be awarded for the best newsletter in each size group, along with second and third place certificates, at the NMA's Annual Conference.
- b. **Qualifications** — Publications are judged on NMA objectives of publicizing and promoting Chapter or Council activities, advancing the principles of NMA, promoting Chapter or Council membership, plus format, writing style, and layout.
- c. **Nomination Submittal** — Award nominations must be submitted by the designated deadline date using the approved forms made available to all Chapters and Councils. There are two parts, A and B, to the nomination. Part A is self scoring. Part B is scored by the Recognition Committee Members. Two newsletters are to be submitted. One issue must have been published between May 1 and December 31, and the other must have been published between January 1 and May 1. Fifteen copies of two separate issues must be submitted with the nomination. Chapters/councils not submitting the required number of newsletters for the committee will be excluded from being evaluated.
- d. **Review and Scoring** —

Part A — In the self-scoring portion of the entry form, a point will be awarded for each newsletter published during the Chapter/Council administrative year. Also, a point will be awarded for the publication of an article on the topics listed in Part A. To receive credit in this portion, a copy of each newsletter in which an article on the topic appears must be included with the entry. Each article must be identified with the appropriate topic number Headquarters Staff will verify the accuracy of this self-scoring portion of the entry.

Part B of the entry form will be scored by the members of the Recognition Committee.

e. **Ranking and Final Judging** – The total points earned in Part A will be added to the totals received from Part B (as scored by Recognition Committee members) to determine the total points for each entry. The NMA Staff will compile these totals and list them in descending order by size group to determine the first, second, and third place winners for each size group. These, in turn, will be submitted to the Recognition Committee for final approval.

f. Size Groups

Group 1	700 or more members
Group 2	201-699 members
Group 3	151 to 200 members
Group 4	101 to 150 members
Group 5	61-100 members
Group 6	30-60 members
Group 7	29 & fewer members
Group 8	Councils
Group 9	Electronic Publications

You can download the current Publications Contest Entry Form from NMA's website at: www.nma1.org.

AUDIO-VISUAL PRESENTATIONS

Good communications is essential to success in a voluntary organization such as an NMA chapter. Chapter leaders have to be communicators if they hope to do an effective job. One way to communicate a message to others is through presentations.

Preparation is the key to a successful presentation. You must know what your objectives are, who your audience is, how much time you have, what audiovisual aids you will be using, and what method of presentation you will be using, before you can start planning your presentation.

This section is designed to give you some practical suggestions on the use of audio-visual aids for presentations. It is not our intention to establish guidelines which must be followed rigidly. This serves as a starting point for your own "learn-by-doing" which, in the final analysis, is the best way to develop an insight into effective presentations. The only limitation is your own imagination.

BEFORE THE PRESENTATION

Understand: Be very familiar with the material you are presenting. Do the research you need to get your facts straight.

Decide: What are your objectives for the presentation? Your audience will only go away with a few key messages, so choose your objectives wisely and carefully.

Plan: Who is your audience? What type of presentation is best to reach this audience? Would activities be better than straight lecture? Think carefully as you plan out your presentation.

Practice: Rehearse your presentation. Practice using the audiovisual aids you will be using during the presentation.

Be Early: Arrive earlier than the appointed time so that you can make sure the room is set up appropriately and all audiovisual equipment is working.

DURING THE PRESENTATION

KISS: Keep It Short and Simple.

Make Your Points Strong: Get to the main conclusions and recommendations quickly.

Use Visuals: Use bullet lists, graphics, charts, and tables where possible to support your key points (make sure overhead transparencies and flipcharts have large enough pictures or text for your audience to see easily).

Make Eye Contact: Look at the audience while you talk. Don't bury your head in your notes.

Build in Extra Time: Allow additional time for your audience to ask questions and discuss points either during the presentation or afterwards.

AFTER THE PRESENTATION

Evaluate: Have participants fill out an evaluation form so you can learn what you did well and what needs improvement.

Be Kind to Yourself: Don't worry if the presentation didn't go exactly as you planned! You will improve each time you make a presentation!

IMPORTANCE OF AV AIDS

(a) How we learn:

1 percent by taste

1.5 percent by touch

3.5 percent by smell

7 percent by hearing

87 percent by SIGHT

(b) People generally remember:

20 percent of what they hear

30 percent of what they SEE

50 percent of what they SEE AND HEAR

(c) Audio-visual aids build:

Interest

Understanding

Lead to ACCEPTABILITY

(d) The goal: GREATER UNDERSTANDING

(e) Organization and association executives invariably name as their principal roadblock: communications... "getting through to people."

(f) We are dealing with people... so is everyone else. Modern advertising has conditioned people to expect full utilization of sight and sound in all approaches to them.

(g) We are competing for people's IDEAS (to develop our program of work), people's ENERGY (to give leadership through committee service), and we compete for people's MONEY (for necessary financial support).

- (h) These tough goals dictate our best use of every possible means of communication. If audio-visual aids do build interest, greater understanding, and acceptability, how can we afford not to use audio-visual techniques to the fullest?

GRAPHICS/POWERPOINT SUGGESTIONS

- (a) Simplify
- Size
 - Lettering
 - Easy to read fonts
 - Strong background color
 - Illustrations/art to break monotony
- (b) Make your visuals visual! Consider:
- Letter size
 - Letter spacing
 - Location of graphics
 - Don't overload a chart; use two if necessary
 - Keep in mind the person in the back of the room
 - Use handouts during or distribute afterwards

A CHECKLIST FOR YOUR VISUALS

1. Is Your Point Worth Making?
 - Is it essential to the understanding of your presentation?
 - Does it deserve the emphasis which a visual gives?
 - What is your objective?
2. Can It Be Adequately Verbalized?
 - If it can be verbalized, why visualize it?
3. Does The Verbal Commentary Impart Meaning To The Visual?
 - Does your visual supplement the verbal medium rather than replace it?

4. Does Your Visual Achieve Unity?
Is it free from incompatible and complicating ideas, symbols, art techniques, type faces?
5. Is It Symbolic or Pictorial?
Do you recognize the difference?
Which treatment is best for the subject?
6. Is It Visually Fluent?
Is the art functional or ornate?
Is it really one visual or several?
Are complex subjects presented in comprehensible units (Drop-ins)?
Was the art work designed for this medium, or borrowed without modification from another type of presentation?
7. Is the Visual Honest
Does it plead special interest?
Have the facts been distorted?
8. Does It Utilize All Available Techniques Which Will Improve Efficiency?
Is color used effectively? What does it contribute?
Have you considered sequential disclosure or build- up?
Have you achieved a dynamic presentation?
9. Is The Visual Intended For The Benefit Of The Audience Or The Speaker?
Have you avoided "Program Notes" and "Speaker's Outlines?"
Is your presentation a visualization or a "reading session?"
10. Is Your Visual Completely Readable By The Entire Audience?
Will there be unobstructed view of the screen? Is the font large enough?
11. How Much Effort Did You Put Into The Visual?
Is it as good as you can make it?
Have you sought criticism from others?
Have you tested the visual?

12. Has It Achieved Your Objectives?

Has your audience understood it?

Has it changed attitudes and/or behavior?

PRESENTATIONS – SOME BASIC RULES

1. Allow ample preparation time.

Take the time necessary to prepare the best possible visuals - and to rehearse them thoroughly. We expect them to work wonders for us. When they don't, we vow never to use visuals again.

2. Make your visuals visible.

Use large charts, even for small audiences. For big audiences use a big screen.

3. Simplify... eliminate details.

Avoid excessive wordage regarding a single visual. Be ruthless in eliminating all secondary details.

4. Use Color -- And More Color

Use Color, not art, for your headline. Pictures, drawings, require interpretation. Headlines should be quickly grasped. Contrast and brightness of colors give a spark to your presentation. You can make use of the psychological effects of colors, too. Use warm tones and cold tones to add mood to what you are saying.

5. Keep It Moving

The eye tends to follow objects that are moving. Every magician knows that, and in that knowledge lies the basis of his/her success. Your eye watches the hand or person who moves. Immobile objects are not noticed. Take a tip from the magician and use movement to attract and hold attention.

6. Surprise Them

Don't tell your audience what you are going to say. Let them discover the points at the proper moment. Plan your illustrations so that they are not quite what was expected. Let them gasp or applaud, but never let them take what's coming for granted.

7. Show all the key points.

Oral presentations include everything necessary to sell through the ears. Likewise, visual presentations must include everything necessary to sell through the eyes.

8. Be sincere.

Too much cleverness, and "cuteness" leaves you suspect in the eyes of your audience.

9. Don't Throw Away Your Punch Line

If you are going to show a graph, don't hold up the whole chart at one time. Rather, let the line develop slowly and be shown to your audience as you discuss the progress of the facts and figures. If the comparison between "then" and "now" is a big one, don't show them together while you are standing there talking about it. It is much more impressive and interesting to show the previous facts and slowly build up in your talk to the present situation. When you reach the proper point say, for example, "and now..." At this point reveal the present situation to your audience.

10. Keep Your Visuals In Synchronization

Visuals are produced to emphasize and highlight a presentation. If you depart from that prepared presentation you're in trouble because your visuals will no longer be coordinated with what is being said. Your continuity can be seriously distracting if, you are talking about one thing and the visual is completely different. Make sure you carefully plan and rehearse your program to avoid this pitfall. Laughter AT you instead of WITH you can easily ruin your point.

11. Have Light Touches

Even the most serious discussions can use a little brightness. Whether it is a light treatment for a cartoon, or introduction of a commonly known humorous character or incident, it serves to hold the interest of the audience and to keep the presentation from becoming "deadly."

12. Keep The Local Viewpoint In Mind

Direct your visuals to the audience. When showing national coverage, let them see where it reaches them locally. Use maps to pinpoint the location. Use mastheads of local newspapers and names of local Radio and TV stations so the audience can recognize them.

13. Dress It Up

This applies to the meeting room itself as well as the method of presentation. Make sure that the room itself is attractive. Be sure that your visuals are large enough for everyone to see clearly. Cover up any behind-the-scenes activities with screens or draperies. If you are going to show actual products or items, be certain they are lighted properly.

14. Check on the worst seats.

Center your screen or charts for the people on the extreme right or left. Mount it high enough for all to see. And move it forward, if necessary, to clear lectern, table, chairs or other obstructions. Adjust audience seating as needed.

15. Remove competing distractions.

Arrange beforehand to clear the stage of previously used aids. If necessary, call a stretch to give you time to clear the stage.

16. Check all arrangements before you go on.

Go without your breakfast, lunch or dinner if necessary, but make sure you've done everything humanly possible to prepare for a smooth presentation. Get there early and be ready!

17. Make a file copy of your visuals.

Use the roughs, or make copies photographically or otherwise, to be kept with your script. Helps in preparation, presentation, and later review.

18. Use only well-trained assistants.

If anyone helps you, they should be as well-acquainted with the visuals as you are.

19. When you are through, put your visuals away.

Your visuals are priceless to you. They are usually worthless to all other speakers. Don't be a litterbug. Get your visuals out of the way when finished.

