

Communications Guide



NMA's NEW
Chapter Leader Training Series

CHAPTER LEADER TRAINING

Communications Guide



NMA... THE Leadership Development Organization
2210 Arbor Boulevard
Dayton, OH 45439-1580
Phone 937-294-0421
Email nma@nma1.org Web <https://nma1.org>

Reviewed March 2019

Communications Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OBJECTIVES	1
COMMUNICATION	2
What Is Communication?.....	2
Hallmarks of Good Communication.....	2
Inform vs. Communicate... What's the difference?	3
PUBLIC RELATIONS.....	3
Your First Moves	4
Setting Goals	4
Staffing	5
Defining Your Audience	6
Turning Information into News.....	7
News Possibilities.....	7
Fact Sheet for News Release.....	8
Preparing a News Release.....	8
Submitting Stories and News Items	10
SAMPLE COMMUNITY NEWS RELEASE	12
PUBLIC RELATIONS FAQs.....	13
PUBLICATIONS.....	15
Cost-effective Publications	15
Additional Publication Suggestions.....	16
Content	16
NMA PUBLICATIONS CONTEST	17
AUDIO-VISUAL PRESENTATIONS	19
Before the Presentation.....	19

During the Presentation.....	19
After the Presentation	20
Importance of AV Aids	20
Graphics/PowerPoint Suggestions.....	21
A Checklist for Your Visuals.....	21
Presentations – Some Basic Rules	23

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

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

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.

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 – editor, photographer, reporter etc.

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.

Decide which of your audiences might be the most interested in various events. 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 your chapter newsletter, bulletin boards, special announcements at meetings, emails and texting.

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 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.

You can use one or more reporters and photographers to capture chapter activities and history.

The main thing you stress with your staff is accuracy. Names must be spelled correctly... this is very important.

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.

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.

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.

You can send out 50 emails, 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 always appeal to their interest--which, fundamentally, means self-interest.

You present the information you want them to receive in as lively and interesting a package as possible. Underscore its newness and its importance.

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.

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 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.

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.

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?

When you learn of a human interest story, pass it along--tied firmly to a Chapter activity.

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. What you do is keep the members and the community informed of the progress of this successful exercise in public service.

For your own efficient operation, better make 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.

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. Most local editors and reporters prefer getting the press release via email with an attached file. Written releases leave less room for error, and allow the writer to emphasize the points he/she 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 they receive it before 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 have photographs to use with your story, do not forget to attach them to your email.

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.

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 someone 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 no longer news and therefore not of 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.

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

SUBMITTING STORIES AND NEWS ITEMS

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.

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 day's paper, note and be warned! The surest way to miss getting into print is to miss an editor's deadline. You are there to help the editors get information for their readers. You're a supplier providing a service.

You'll get the attention you want, if the news you supply is sufficiently interesting to the paper's readers. The editor's opinion is the one that counts.

WEEKLY AND NEIGHBORHOOD PAPERS

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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 9,000 members in 38 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 9,000 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 40 affiliated chapters representing organizations such as healthcare, utilities, manufacturing, communications, government, aerospace and defense.

Media Contact:

Jim Jones, Public Relations Chair
Dexter Leadership Association
100 N. Adams Street
Dexter, Illinois 80145
Phone (office) 224-8395
Phone (home) 261-1603

For additional information, visit our website:
[Insert Organization Website]

PUBLIC RELATIONS FAQS

- Q. Tell me again how I can tell if something is newsworthy?
- A. Take a good look at it. What's new about it? 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. 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.
- 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. 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. 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.
- 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. 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.
- 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. 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. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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.

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.

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.

You can insert sub-heads to break up the type into more attractive sections to keep the reader moving stories 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.

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.

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 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. Never let promotional enthusiasm lead your publication into overstatements and misstatements.

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.

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.

Cartoons and caricatures 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.

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

B. PUBLICATIONS AWARDS

1. **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.

2. **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.
3. **Entry Submittal** - Publications Contest entries 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. Part A is self-scoring. Part B is scored by the Recognition Committee Members. Two newsletters are to be submitted for judging purposes. 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. All entries must be submitted electronically in a .pdf format.

4. **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. In space provided, please state in which copy and on what page each supporting article appears. 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.

5. **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.

6. **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 and fewer members
Group 8	Councils

ALL INFORMATION MUST BE COMPLETE, AND ON THE CORRECT YEAR'S FORM, OR YOUR ENTRY WILL NOT BE JUDGED. CHAPTERS/COUNCILS MAY ENTER IN ONE SIZE GROUP ONLY—EITHER SIZE GROUP 1-8 OR SIZE GROUP 9

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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. Get your visuals out of the way when finished.

