

IDistrict F Public Relations Seminar Handout

August 10 and 11, 2024

Public Relations within the Royal Canadian Legion is becoming more important now. With the multimedia platforms now available to us there are so many areas that the organization is able to communicate with the public and the media through. With that, we also have to be more on guard and ensure that we continue to build positive relationships while creating and maintaining a positive image of The Royal Canadian Legion.

Role of the Public Relations Officer:

- Adhere to the organizational brand standards including the colours, messaging, proper use of logos etc.
- Support the mission to support Veterans, promote remembrance and contribute to the community and country
- Build strong public relationships using honest and timely communications via various mediums
- So many areas to promote Legion events, activities and programs both internally and externally
- Communicate with the Executive Committee to understand expectations and opportunities for improvement

PRO Resources:

- Dominion website: legion.ca → Branch and Command Resources → Marketing and Public Relations
 - All Branch email updates (monthly Dispatch)
 - Notable dates
 - Monthly PRO Updates
 - Legion Brand, Logo and Fonts
 - Brand manual updated February 2024 (messaging and imagery guidelines for social media)
 - Email marketing@legion.ca for Legion logo creation (need Branch number and city/town)
 - Branch Recruitment Material
 - Promotional videos
 - Email text
 - Legion Images
 - Templates, e.g. PowerPoint, business cards, letterhead
 - Public Relations Manual (2018) and Public Relations Training Booklet
 - Public Relations Resources
 - Legion Overview Presentation updated February 2024
 - Website, a guide for creating a website and tips to improve
 - Social Media Guidelines
- Dominion website: legion.ca → Branch and Command Resources → Leadership Development → Module 4: Public Relations and Community Outreach
- Ontario Provincial Command website: on.legion.ca → Member Resources → Forms & Manuals → Officers Manual → Section D, Pages 36 to 42
- Follow the Legion on social media platforms, e.g. Facebook, Instagram etc.
- District F website: rcldistrictf.com
 - Send submissions to Comrade Ellen Kocik: legion.389.havelock@gmail.com

Communications:

Creating a Communication Plan:

- Developing a communication plan helps reach goals when communicating with different audiences
 - Think about what you want to accomplish, the goal and objective
 - Who can help accomplish it?
 - Who is the message directed to?
 - How do you accomplish it?
 - Did you meet your goal and objective?

Creating Messages:

- Know your audience, what are their information needs and interests?
- Focus on audience benefits
- Pay attention to nonverbal messages as well as the words
- Message timing
- Use the media your audience finds most credible and useful
- Actions speak louder than words

Email:

- Always be professional when conducting Legion business whether through your own or a Legion email
- Respond promptly
- Don't send offensive material
- Don't use uppercase
- Think before reacting and hitting send
- Only send emails to those that need the information
- Using "Reply All"

Social Media:

- Most popular sites are Facebook and Twitter, others include Pinterest, Tumbler, Flickr and Instagram
- It's suggested to use only 1 site versus trying to manage multiple ones
- Use the site to generate two-way conversations or at the least share Branch activities
- Be prepared for fair and unfair criticism, and be mindful of thinking before reacting
- Ensure that no posts show or display alcohol

Legion Magazine:

Some examples of what is published for Branches and LA include:

- Contributions to community organizations, e.g. Red Cross, hospitals
- Youth Education programs, e.g. bursaries, scholarships, literary and poster competition
- Erection/refurbishing of cenotaphs/memorials
- Branch renovations, mortgage burnings, expansions, hall openings
- Branch 40, 50, 60, 70, 75 or 80 year anniversaries

Some examples of what is not published for Branches and LA include:

- Non-Legion function even if held at the hall
- Remembrance Day or Poppy Campaign events as the magazine covers the national ceremony
- Internal Branch, Zone or District sports competitions
- Member anniversaries or birthdays unless 100 years old or older

Last Post is published twice a year and recognizes those that have passed for the following groups:

- Canadian citizens/Commonwealth subjects ordinary members of the Royal Canadian Legion when passed
- Life members who were previously ordinary members
- Canadian war Veterans of WWI, WWII, Korean War or Gulf War and not Legion members when passed

Outside of the Legion Magazine, there are other options for having photographs posted. The on.legion.ca website has a Photo Gallery section under Member Resources. There is also the District F website: rcldistrictf.com which is operated by Comrade Ellen Kocik. Send your photos, Branch and Zone events etc. to Ellen at: legion.389.havelock@gmail.com.

Dealing with Problems and Legal Issues

- Don't ignore it and hope it goes away
- Respond quickly and tell the truth
- If the criticism is fair then explain how it will be fixed
- Show concern for anyone harmed by any words or actions, this kind of caring adds to credibility

The best way to avoid any problems is to understand potential legal issues to avoid them in the first place.

- Libel and slander laws
- Invasion of privacy
- Liability
- Copyright Infringement
- Appropriation
- Plagiarism
- Raffles, bingos and other contests

Media:

There's a great deal of information around the media in both the Training Booklet and PRO Manual. They are both found on the legion.ca website under Branch and Command Resources, Marketing and Public Relations.

Media Interview Tips (Training Booklet) and as provided by Sam Donaldson, former American TV Reporter

- If you don't want it quoted, don't say it

- Be brief and to the point
- When doing a broadcast interview, pause before answering a question. It tells the audience you are giving the question serious consideration
- Avoid acronyms and jargon the public won't understand
- Don't offer personal opinions while wearing your company hat. Be apolitical
- Don't just say "no comment." Explain why you can't comment
- Consider your body language. It can confirm or contradict what you are saying
- Don't be forced into "yes" or "no" answers to complex or loaded questions
- Don't let the interviewer throw you with silence
- Don't lose your cool. Be pleasant even if the reporter isn't
- Remember: The questions don't do damage, only the answers do

NOTES: