



The Many
Facets of Leadership
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Editor's Note: *This Chairman has been concerned about the levels of communication in our Federation for a long time. We are at a point where we have members who are not comfortable with electronic communications and others who want only emails, texts, etc. How do we solve this problem, keeping ALL of our members informed and up to date on what's happening? Perhaps the information collected for this article on "Best Practices of Communication:" will provide ideas for enhancing the communication skills within our Federation. |*

Communication Best Practices Guide

Effective communication is essential in volunteer organizations because members give their time freely and come from different backgrounds, ages, and comfort levels with technology. Good communication builds trust, prevents confusion, strengthens participation, and keeps everyone connected to the mission.

1. The Golden Rule of Communication

Communication is only successful when the message is received and understood — not when it is sent.

Never assume:

- Everyone reads email
- Everyone checks websites or social media
- Everyone hears announcements the first time

Always assume: Some people did not get the message yet.

2. Use a Multi-Channel System (Never Just One Method)

Important information should be shared using **at least two methods**, such as:

- Email
- Printed mail
- Phone calls or phone tree
- Printed handouts at meetings
- Verbal announcements at meetings
- Newsletters (print or digital)



3. Keep a Communication Preference List

Maintain a simple list showing:

- Who prefers email
- Who needs postal mail
- Who prefers phone calls
- Who does not use electronic communication

This:

- Respects members' needs
- Prevents people from being left out
- Makes leadership transitions easier

Update this list at least once a year.

4. Make Messages Clear, Simple, and Action-Oriented

Good communication is:

- Clear
- Brief
- Specific
- Friendly
- Respectful

Always include:

- What is happening
- When and where
- What is expected of members
- Who to contact with questions

Avoid long, confusing paragraphs or buried instructions.

5. Repeat Important Information

Repetition is not a mistake — it is **good leadership**.

Important dates and changes should be:

- Announced in meetings
- Printed in newsletters or handouts
- Sent again as reminders
- Repeated shortly before the event



6. Use Meetings as Communication Anchors

At meetings:

- Review upcoming dates and deadlines
- Hand out printed reminders
- Summarize decisions and next steps

Do not assume everyone read the newsletter or email

Meetings are one of the **most reliable communication tools** in volunteer groups.

7. Use Phone Trees or Contact Captains

For:

- Members who don't use email
- Urgent changes or reminders

Personal outreach and care

Assign a few members to each call a small group. This builds:

- Reliability
- Personal connection
- Inclusion

8. Send Summaries, Not Just Full Reports

Many members miss key points because information is buried in long reports.

Provide:

- One-page summaries
- Highlighted key dates and actions
- Simple "What you need to know" sections

9. Create a Culture of Two-Way Communication

Good communication is not just talking — it is **listening**.

Encourage:

- Questions
- Feedback
- Clarification

Respectful discussion Members who feel heard are more engaged and more loyal.



10. Be Consistent and Predictable

Members should know:

- When newsletters come out
- How reminders are sent
- Where to look for official information

Consistency builds confidence and reduces confusion.

11. Protect Tone and Courtesy

All communication should be:

- Kind
- Respectful
- Professional
- Calm, even during disagreements

Remember: In volunteer organizations, **tone matters as much as content.**

12. Final Leadership Principle

Good communication builds unity.

Poor communication creates confusion, hurt feelings, and disengagement.



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Comments and suggestions for future topics may be sent to cfcwleadership@gmail.com