Developing a Communications Strategy
E-mail services

• Gmail - gmail.com
• Hotmail - hotmail.com
• Yahoo mail - mail.yahoo.com

Tip: Use one username and password for all accounts
Developing a Communications Strategy

- Develop an effective website
- Create e-newsletters
- Use social media
- Continue publishing print products
- Move toward a mobile world
Developing a Communications Strategy
Developing an effective website
Developing an effective website

Know your audience

- Loyal members
- Members at-risk of membership renewal
- Non-members, but eligible to become members
- Non-members, non-eligible with affinity to the Legion
Developing an effective website

Determine your content

- Static content – our mission, history
- Occasionally changing content – target dates, leadership
- Frequently changing content – news, calendar
- Interactive content – sign up, comments, polls
- Downloads – speeches, brochures

Tip: Keep your website up to date
Developing an effective website

*Set goals*

- Increase communication
- Recruit new members
- Increase attendance at events or activities
- Increase donations
- Retain the at-risk member
- Provide help to newly discharged service members
Developing an effective website

A look at Legion.org

- Keep it simple
- Manage attention
- Use effective writing
- Provide quality content
- Provide calls to action
Developing an effective website

*Website services*

- The American Legion Centennial Celebration
- Legionsites.com
- Custom solution
Developing an effective website

*Website services*

**Centennial Celebration**

- Share your post history
- Calendar of events
- Photo galleries
- Need no coding knowledge

Go to: [Legion.org/centennial](http://Legion.org/centennial)
Developing an effective website

Website services

Legionsites.com

- Free domain name
- E-mail accounts
- Create your own pages
- Minimal coding knowledge

Go to: Legionsites.com

Example Post Website
Developing an effective website

*Website services*

More on Legionsites.com

- Free upgrades
- Free technical support
- Connected to Legion.org
- View demo

Go to: Legionsites.com

Example Department Website
Developing an effective website

Website services

Custom solution

• Hosting
• Domain name
• Minimal to advanced coding knowledge

Go to: GoDaddy.com
Developing an effective website

*Website services*

What is a content management system (CMS)?

A content management system is a pre-built application that allows publishing, editing and modifying content.

- Drupal
- WordPress

Go to: Drupal.org, WordPress.org
Developing an effective website

Website services

Benefits of a content management system

• Powerful, out-of-the-box system
• Easy to add and edit content
• Easy to enable features such as polls or comments
• Easy to create multiple website administrators
• Online communities provide assistance
Developing an effective website

Website services

Cons of a content management system

• Learning curve to understand administration
• Advanced coding knowledge needed for customization
Developing an effective website

Please link to Legion.org

<a href="http://www.legion.org/">Legion.org</a>
Developing an effective website

Tell people about your website

- Google - google.com/submityourcontent
- Yahoo - submit.search.yahoo.com
- Bing - bing.com/toolbox/submit-site-url
- Legion - email cs@legion.org
Developing an effective website

Web coding resources

• Webmonkey.com - News, tutorials and reference
• W3Schools.com - Tutorials and reference
• Htmlgoodies.com - HTML tutorials and reference
• Codeacademy.com - Learn to code interactively
Developing an effective website

Monitor your website

• Google analytics

Go to:  Google.com/analytics
Developing an effective website

Monitor your website

Analytics keywords

- **Visits** - refers to the total number of visits to your website during a given period of time.
- **Unique Visitor** - refers to the number of distinct individuals requesting pages from the website during a given period of time.
- **Pageviews** - refers to the total number of times pages on your website has been accessed during a given period of time.
Any Questions?
Email marketing
Email marketing

*Why e-newsletters?*

E-newsletters are an effective means to drive traffic to your website, engage and inform your members and identify the needs of our community.

- Your members use e-mail
- Low costs
- Revenue generation
- Member retention
Email marketing

Services

- Easy to use
- Import e-mail lists
- Select templates
- Up to 2,000 subscribers
- Up to 12,000 emails / mo.

Go to: ➔ Mailchimp.com
Email marketing

More services

- Constant Contact
- iContact
- Benchmark
- Campaigner

Go to: Creativebeacon.com/the-top-10-email-marketing-services
Email marketing

*Tips*

- Subject line is **KEY**!
- Make it **Useful**.
- Make it **Interesting**.
- Keep it **Simple**.
- Link to **Web Site**.
Email marketing

*When to send e-newsletters*

Studies have shown the majority of inbox traffic and activities occur on working days – with the peak on **Thursday**. This is the top day for all metrics: percent sent, open rate and click through rate.
Email marketing

A look at our e-newsletters

Online Update

- Weekly on Thursdays
- Over 450,000 subscribers
- 30% Open Rate

Go to: Legion.org/newsletters
Email marketing

A look at our e-newsletters

Flag Alert

- Flag at Half-Staff
- Over 35,500 subscribers
- 125% Open Rate

Go to: Legion.org/newsletters
Email marketing

A look at our e-newsletters

Commander’s Message

• ~ Quarterly
• Over 450,000 subscribers

Go to: Legion.org/newsletters
Any Questions?
Social media
Social media

Tips

Online interactions with eligible non-members can become conversations and your best recruiting tool.

- Listen and respond
- Understand your goals
- Understand your audience
- Decide on platform(s) and use them
- Be professional, but be yourself
- Execute
Social media

*Characteristics*

- **Participation** - encourages contributions from everyone blurring the line between media and audience.

- **Openness** - encourages voting, comments and sharing of information.

- **Conversation** - allows you to engage in an exchange of ideas and opinions.
Social media

*Characteristics*

- **Community** - joins you with other people who share common interests, such as photography, a political issue or a favorite television show.

- **Connectedness** - is what most types of social media thrive on, making use of links to other sites, resources and people.
Social media

*Types of social media*

- **Blogs** - are articles with a personality behind them.
- **Microblogging** - is social networking with bite-sized blogging.
- **Content communities** - organize, share and discuss content.
- **Social networks** - allow you to connect with friends.
- **Forums** - are for online discussion, often around specific interests.
Blogs

*What do I blog about?*

There are a lot of bloggers on the web. Bloggers need to establish credibility to attract readers. Choose a topic you are passionate about and have a lot of experience with so you can provide value to your readers.
Blogs

Services

Blogger

- Free
- Easy set-up
- Design templates
- myblog.blogger.com

Go to: Blogger.com
Blogs

Services

**WordPress**

- Free, Premium, Business
- Easy set-up
- Design templates
- **myblog.wordpress.com**

Go to: [WordPress.com](http://WordPress.com)
Blogs

*Develop a loyal community*

- Blog often.
- Ask for blog comments. Generate discussion.
- Interact with your audience.
- Post links to your blogs in social media.
- Create an e-newsletter.
Blogs

A look at The Burn Pit

The Burn Pit

• Mark Seavey
• Loyal Community
• Calls to Action
• Fundraising

Go to: Burnpit.us
Microblogging

Services

Twitter

An online service that allows users to send and read “tweets”, which are messages limited to 140 characters.

Go to: Twitter.com
Microblogging

*Twitter terminology*

- **Followers** - are the people who have signed up to see tweets from you in their feed. People can follow you and you can follow others.

- **Re-tweeting** - is the act of forwarding another person’s tweet to all of your followers.
Microblogging

*Twitter terminology*

- **Trending topic** - is a subject algorithmically determined to be among the most popular on Twitter at the moment.

- **Hashtag** - is the ‘#’ symbol used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet. Hashtags are used as a way to categorize messages. (#veteransbenefits)
Microblogging

*Twitter tips*

- Fill out the "bio" section.
- Tweet frequently.
- Follow other Twitter accounts similar to yours.
- Customize your Twitter background and theme.
- Advertise your Twitter account in other media.
- Avoid arguments.
Microblogging

*Twitter tip*

Use [@AmericanLegion](https://twitter.com/AmericanLegion) when tweeting to target the National Headquarters account. This will allow us to see your tweet and possibly re-tweet your message.
Content communities

*Why YouTube?*

- More than 1 billion unique users visit YouTube each month
- Over 6 billion hours of video are watched each month
- According to Nielsen, YouTube reaches more US adults ages 18-34 than any cable network

Go to: Youtube.com
Content communities

*YouTube tips*

- Create compelling videos.
- Keep it short and to the point.
- Create a searchable title.
- Leverage other social media platforms.
- Review analytics.

Go to: Youtube.com
Content communities

*YouTube: Our channel*

Go to:  Youtube.com/americanlegionHQ
Content communities

*YouTube: How to share videos*

Go to: Youtube.com/americanlegionHQ
Content communities

YouTube: How to embed videos

Go to: Youtube.com/americanlegionHQ
Social networks

How to use Facebook

- Create an account
- Build a page
- Connect with members and non-members
- Engage your audience
- Influence your audience and their network

Go to: Facebook.com
Social networks

Facebook: Build a page

- Choose a category (non-profit) and a descriptive Page name
- Choose a profile image people can associate with your post
- Write a sentence about your post
- Set a memorable web address for your Page to advertise in print
- Choose a cover photo that represents and showcases your post

Go to: Facebook.com/pages/create
Social networks

*Facebook: Connect*

- Place a link on your website
- Invite e-mail subscribers
- Display a flyer at your post
- Use “suggest to friends” feature
- Place Facebook ads

Go to: Facebook.com/pages/create
Social networks

*Facebook: *Engage your audience

- Write quality posts that are relevant to your audience
- Be friendly and conversational
- Share photos and videos
- Ask questions or seek input
- Be timely by posting about current events, holidays or news
- Ask your audience to share your posts

Go to: Facebook.com/pages/create
Social networks

Facebook: Influence

When people “like”, “comment” or “share” your content on Facebook, their friends are notified in their news feeds. The more people interacting with your content the better.

Go to: Facebook.com/pages/create
Social networks

Facebook tips

• Post at least once a week
• Vary your content: events, photos, honor & remembrance
• Be friendly and conversational
• Provide calls to action
• Make it “sharable”
• Provide exclusive content they cannot find in other media
Social networks

A look at our Facebook pages

- National Headquarters
- Online Update
- Legion Riders
- Legion Baseball
- Honor & Remembrance
- National Convention

Go to: Legion.org/facebook
Social networks

A look at our most successful Facebook posts

The American Legion National Headquarters

Seventy-two years ago today, at 7:55 a.m. local time, masses of Japanese warplanes descended on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Oahu, Hawaii, in a surprise attack that drew the United States into World War II. The war eventually would cost more than 400,000 American lives. If you know a Pearl Harbor survivor, please thank him/her in one way, shape or form today. In fact, thank every World War II veteran you come across. The Greatest Generation is losing more and more from its ranks each day. Don’t wait until it’s too late to say thank you.

Photo #: NH 97308 - USS West Virginia sinks and burning at Pearl Harbor, 7 Dec 1941

70,528 People Reached

4,611 Likes, Comments & Shares

461 Likes

2,574 Comments

2,610 Shares

3,035 Likes

2,72 Comments

1,304 Shares

979 Post Clicks

662 Photo Views

11 Link Clicks

306 Other Clicks

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK:

0 Hide Post

0 Report as Spam

0 Unlike Page
Social networks

*Other social media worth mention*

LinkedIn  Google+  Pinterest
MyLegion.org is designed to connect members of The American Legion to their Post and Department leadership.

- Membership information - view member renewals
- Data change forms
- Consolidated Post Reports
- Search for expired members

Go to: MyLegion.org
Any questions?
Download this presentation

Go to: Legion.org/publications