

PUBLIC RELATIONS

CURRENTS



TRAIN YOUR REPLACEMENT

By Virna Luke

National President Trish Ward inspired this article. Training your replacement is important, if you did not start after installation, then now is the time. As you pass the torch this Summer, you have a responsibility to help the next Public Relations Chairman, to be more successful than you were. You have done your best, to your abilities and as a leader, you have a responsibility to ensure that the next PR Chairman is bigger, stronger, better, and more amazing.

Share important documents, links, and templates to make the transition seamless, so they can continue with what has been established to work and they can concentrate on adding their own personal touch to the program.

Invite them to participate in National Zoom meetings, share news and/or messages from National, keep them in the know. Working our mission, we will all succeed.

Again, we all have a responsibility to help our officers and chairmen succeed.

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PublicRelations@alaf.org





HABITS TO CONTINUE OR START TODAY

By. *Virna Luke*

Happy New Year, I hope you have kicked off the year on the right plan for your unit's Public Relations. This is my third year as your PR Chairman, and I wanted to share some habits I have applied, to be more efficient.

When I wake up in the morning, I review my Facebook notifications and will click on each "mentioned you in a comment" or "commented on your status," I click on each one and respond accordingly. I do the same for our Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok - user @ALAuxflorida

On Wednesday mornings, I do Google search for American Legion - click News and sort by date, I will read success news stories that have been published, it gives me an opportunity to learn what the current news media is looking for. I also will share, like, repost, comment on the said news media's social media page to say thank you for sharing about the American Legion (TAL) Family and/or American Legion Auxiliary (ALA).

On the first Sunday of the month, I use the Facebook (FB) scheduler to plan out all my posts for the next two months. This includes patriotic holidays, holiday messages, reminders, weekly dinner menu, birthday postings, training sessions and information, etc. Then on the third Sunday of the month, I will revisit any outstanding posts that can be added to the scheduler.

Once my post newsletter is published (usually 5-7 days before the end of the month) on our website, I will read it and create all the flyers for entertainment, dinners, and special events. With the flyer, I will create FB event pages, once the event page is created, I will use the share button from the event page to blast to all appropriate FB groups and pages.

More eyes on my event. I will add some items that help me:

- Two Year Planner - I write everything in it (events, miles, volunteer hours, to-do lists, list of items for upcoming trips, notes from feedback, newsletter article inspirations.)
- Journal or blank spiral book - For notes, names/titles, quotes for news articles.
- Stickers and colorful pens - your planner should be fun, it will make you smile and want to use it daily.

I hope this has inspired you to create habits that work for you. More time off the computer is more quality time for you, with your family, and/or friends. If you have other habits for time efficiency, please share by email publicrelations@alafll.org.

**We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit."
— Aristotle**



ONBOARD NEW MEMBERS IN THE NEW YEAR!

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

The deadline for your unit’s membership to renew was December 31. This is a great time to start showcasing all of the benefits of being a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and encouraging your members to take full advantage of what being a member means! The ALA Academy is offering a special webinar, “Unlock Your ALA Member Benefits,” at 12 p.m. on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. Encourage your members to register and learn more about the discounts, resources and exclusive opportunities offered to ALA members. This time of year also is a great opportunity for you, as the PR Chair, to work with your Membership Chair on developing an on-boarding process for new members. Perhaps create folders and provide information about your unit (create a flyer for this) in addition to the brochures provided by National and Department. You could offer a monthly coffee hour or an afternoon wine and cheese gathering during which you and the Membership Chair introduce members to the Auxiliary, its goals and mission. Be sure to address how your members can help and be involved throughout the entire year. Taking the time to welcome and onboard new members is a great way to encourage members to get involved and renew when it comes time.



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START YOUR NEW YEAR WITH AN UPDATED MEDIA LIST

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

It's the New Year and a great time to start the year off with a fresh, updated media contact list.

Each PR Chair should consider keeping a contact list of the local reporters within their coverage area.

Store your list in a spreadsheet, like Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets, or use a printed address book.

Each entry should include the journalist's name, publication, contact details, topics they cover, and any specific information you might want to add to help you.

Some people even document when they talk to reporters to keep track of the relationship and build upon it.

With newsrooms consistently rotating reporters, downsizing or hiring, it's important to keep your media list fresh to remain effective. To do this, turn to tools like Google or LinkedIn to find the latest contact details.

Follow your media contacts on social media to learn about their latest positions, coverage and preferences. Read your local publications, listen to relevant radio shows or watch local television news stations and pay attention to the specific reporters and what they are covering.

Updating your list might take a bit of time and research, but you'll be happy in the end to have a solid list of contacts who can help you tell the story about the good work your unit is doing to help veterans and the community.



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BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WHEN TENSIONS ARE HIGH

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

As the public relations chair, it's our responsibility to help foster stronger, positive relationships within our own house – including among our unit members or with our family members (i.e. with our Legion, Squadron and Chapter). But what happens when tensions are high? Here are some strategies to consider to build stronger relationships during tough times. First, work to build trust. Be open and honest with each other. Suggest hosting regular



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leadership meetings between officers, where everyone can share their thoughts and ideas. It's important that everyone feels heard and valued. Clear, open communication channels allow for expressing concerns, sharing successes, and foster alignment on common goals. Handle conflicts with care. When issues come up, encourage leaders to listen to all sides with empathy. Look for solutions together, like a team working together to build a home. The ALA Academy offers an ["Introduction to Conflict Resolution" training](#) on how to resolve conflict in a professional, positive, and proactive manner. Training like this can give everyone the tools needed to handle tough times.

Create more transparency. As public relations chairs, we have tools in our toolbox to help tell the story about the good work that is being done. Use flyers, social media, newsletters, emails and more to spread authentic, transparent stories about the good work that everyone is doing together – as a family – to serve veterans and the community.



Finally, celebrate wins together. Even small achievements deserve a high-five. This helps keep everyone motivated and feeling good about their accomplishments. Solving tensions among people takes time and work. It doesn't happen overnight. In the end, creating a positive atmosphere where everyone feels they belong and can contribute makes the entire organization stronger.



ONLINE NETWORKING TO GROW FOLLOWERS

By Virna Luke

Most of our units are on Facebook, some are also on other platforms. How do we use our social media for online networking to grow our followers and gain recognition? Engage, engage, engage! First and foremost, connect with your followers, by building deep and quality relationships. How? Take genuine interest in their comments, feedback, ideas, suggestions, stories, and thoughts. Make your followers feel welcomed and appreciated, by acknowledging and responding to their comments and replies. Give them a like, and continue the conversation by thanking them and engaging with a caring and thoughtful message. They are contributing to the success of your social media page, the algorithms like for followers to engage.

For recognition, be a familiar face (name) with your followers, groups, pages, forums, and community groups. When someone or an organization likes or follows you, follow back. Choose people and organizations that you admire and share our mission to care for our Veterans, military and their families, children & youth, and the betterment of our communities. Within those social media platforms, in comments add your expertise, ideas, and feedback; for others to learn or be inspired. Take those high-resolution jpeg photos, they are important to solidify the relationships built with individuals and organizations. Make sure to tag people, organizations, or groups when sharing photos, new posts, and reshares. This is how opportunities will arise for collaborations, invitations to events, and opportunities to share the ALA mission. While it's social media networking, remember that there is no replacement for the human connection, kindness matters. To learn more about making the online connection, check out this [video](#).

