

American Legion Public Relations

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Facebook Page Development

- 1) Use business page vs group (group limits access & engagements, not allowed to label posts as shareable)
- 2) Follow & Share County/District/Department/National Social Media pages & websites
- 3) Use META Business Suite planner to schedule posts (up to 30 days in advance, Be The One is a great example – 1st of each month). Use of laptop/desktop computer much easier than the phone app.
- 4) Include Community Events (brat fries, blood drives, fundraisers/benefits, school events)
- 5) Add a photo!! Posts with photos get more engagements
- 6) Add videos, reels, stories for more engagements
- 7) Use event function to provide info on known, routine upcoming meetings or unit activities
- 8) Post at least 2-3 times a week
- 9) Do not post too often, quantity often forces a drop in content quality, reduces the overall value your audience receives resulting in 'audience fatigue,' and potentially loss of followers
- 10) Create a different FB page for primary or annual events (ie golf outings)

Create a Business Page in Facebook

- ▶ Decide who's FB profile the Posts's page will be run 'from'
 - ▶ Easy route, create a 'facade' FB account (there is no individual who may close their personal account and therefore close the Post's page)
- ▶ Grant admin rights to at least 2 individuals (just in case) – remove old admins as they leave the Post or step down from the FB responsibilities
- ▶ Naming Facebook Page
 - ▶ Ensure that your FB page is easy to find through a search (most Legion, SAL, and ALA Posts, Squadrons and Units are known by location vs 'long name' or Post #)
 - ▶ Ensure that it's not too similar to one that's already created. Realize that potentially every state in the nation has a Post 125, therefore it's recommended that you add at least the city name (ie American Legion Post 125 – Chilton, WI)
 - ▶ Check/double-check FB page name before you submit – you can only change the page name every 60 days

Schedule Facebook Posts

- ▶ Upto 30 days in advance using Meta Business and Planner
- ▶ 1st of the month – Be The One
 - ▶ Resources – National Legion website and Facebook Page, VA Facebook pages
- ▶ 22d of each month – Buddy Checks
- ▶ Unit/County/District Meetings
- ▶ Post & Squadron events/activities
- ▶ Major Legion dates & events (Legion Birthday, Service Birthdays, POW/MIA Day, Goldstar Family Day) utilize the Legion Activities Calendar found at <https://wilegion.org/public-relations-toolkit>
- ▶ Highlight Post members personal achievements (HS/College graduation, promotion at work, completion of a marathon) or their ‘story’ of service
- ▶ Call to Action Posts

*****Remember that you can schedule posts on FB 30 days out!!*****

Facebook Miscellaneous

- ▶ It's difficult & time-consuming to use Planner via sharing a post. Instead take a screenshot of the photo/attachment and cut and paste the written post, or share immediately
- ▶ Post/share time sensitive information immediately
- ▶ Ensure that you're posting to the correct page (Post Page vs Personal Page) – if mistake is made, delete incorrect info
- ▶ Best times for maximum engagements are M-FR 7-9 & 3-5 (TU-WE-TH are best) – generally avoid SA & SU posts (exceptions are when going live, or if important dates such as the Legion's Birthday, or the 1st or 22d of the month fall on the weekend)
- ▶ Use # and @ to get more engagements
 - ▶ # is a user generated tag which makes it possible for others to easily find messages with a specific theme or content (#betheone, #veteransupport, #buddycheck)
 - ▶ @ symbol (the social tag) in front of an account name alerts that account that you are talking about or to them (@Wisconsin American Legion)
- ▶ Delete or hide unused/old FB pages (ie when rights to an old page are lost and someone new takes over the page admin rights)

Print Media Input

- ▶ **Local Newspapers**
 - ▶ Letter to the Editor or Editorial - please remember that the Legion is non-partisan, do not give the impression that we affiliate with a political candidate or group
 - ▶ Ask for a bi-weekly or monthly column (possibly shared with the Auxiliary or SAL)
 - ▶ Let the newspaper editor/reporter know of upcoming Legion & Sons events well in advance
 - ▶ Write an article for submission after the event – mission focused activities
 - ▶ Submit photos
 - ▶ Ensure that photos are clear and well-lit
 - ▶ Identify participants – if several Post members are pictured, use something like “Legion Post 544 members met with the students of Soldiers Elementary School to discuss the history and importance of the US Flag”
 - ▶ Attach the photos to the email vs imbedding within the email

Badger Legionnaire

- ▶ Badger Legionnaire is printed every other month (Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec) each year
- ▶ Submit articles and photos in a timely manner (as close to event as possible)
- ▶ Email to: badger@wilegion.org
- ▶ Submit articles in word format, do not exceed 400 words
- ▶ Do not submit more than two articles per edition
- ▶ Articles must be sent via email only (no hard copy)
- ▶ Attach (not inbed) quality photos
 - ▶ Ensure that photos are clear and well-lit
 - ▶ No more than two photos per article
 - ▶ Include captions for the photos
 - ▶ ID individuals in photos
 - ▶ If several individuals are in the shot (“Legion members.....”)
 - ▶ Do not send several shots of the same pose (ie, five different members getting awards). Instead submit one group shot.
- ▶ Badger Legionnaire submission ‘suspense’ dates – Dec 26/Jan 27 (9 Nov 26), Feb/Mar 27 (18 Jan 27), Apr/May 27 (15 Mar 27), Jun/Jul 26 (10 May 27)

Post Newsletter

- ▶ Use simple template, limit to 1-2 easy to read fonts, at least 12 pitch font size
- ▶ Add action photos highlighting members & activities of the Post
- ▶ Possible 'sections:' Commander, Adjutant, Service Officer
- ▶ Highlight new members
- ▶ Mention anyone who has passed since the last newsletter
- ▶ Upcoming activities
- ▶ Generate a newsletter at least quarterly, but ideally every other month (more often is not a bad thing, but we're all pretty busy)
- ▶ Mail hard copies to those who don't have email (or who request a hard copy
- ▶ Note that the limit for USPS 83 cent stamps is generally three sheets of paper (after that, postage may increase)
- ▶ Ensure that the County & District Commanders receive a copy of the newsletter, also in many Counties, the CVSO requests a copy

Community Newsletters

- ▶ Village or Township
- ▶ Local Senior or Long-Term Care Facilities
- ▶ Local Historical Society
- ▶ Possibly digital copy only, or only on a website
- ▶ Who is the target audience of the newsletter?
- ▶ Ask if the Post/County could provide input
- ▶ Learn the rules (number of words, photos)
- ▶ Tell the Legion & SAL story
 - ▶ Who is eligible to join the Legion & SAL?
 - ▶ What do TAL and SAL do for the community?
 - ▶ Include upcoming activities & events
 - ▶ Share what the Post or Squadron have done recently

Public Relations Toolkit

- ▶ The Public Relations Toolkit is located on the Wisconsin Legion website: <https://wilegion.org/public-relations-toolkit>
- ▶ Items included:
 - ▶ Flyers & Posters
 - ▶ Certificates (Continuous Service, Appreciation)
 - ▶ Legion Family Applications
 - ▶ Legion Leadership Photos
 - ▶ Brochure downloads (Baseball, Softball, WALLECA, YGD etc)
 - ▶ Sample Press Release, Impact Cards, and Rack Cards
 - ▶ Legion Activities Calendar

Use of AI (ie ChapGPT & Gemini)

- ▶ **Download a copy of the Brandmark & Emblem Branding Guide from:**
<https://wilegion.org/manuals>
- ▶ **'DO NOT USE GENERATIVE AI TO PRODUCE THE BRANDMARK OR EMBLEM** Generative AI tools of any kind MAY NOT be used to create, recreate, upscale, or otherwise alter, stylize or modify the official symbols of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Riders, American Legion Family, American Legion Baseball, the Be The one initiative, The American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation, American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and Girls Nation, The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports, charities of The American Legion and any associated sub-branding. This includes any use of the Legion Marks in the visual branding of Departments, Districts, Posts, Squadrons, or programs associated with any Departments, Districts, Posts, or Squadrons. Use of generative ai products to create artwork files that include any of the brandmarks or emblems can produce uncertain results. Even a 1% variance in color, proportion, or font weight is a violation of our legal ownership of these marks.'
- ▶ **Instead produce background image and use word or CANVA to layer the emblem or brandmark (page 22-23 of the Branding Guide)**
- ▶ **AI makes errors – always check information - dates/days – US Flags (often have less than 13 stripes/50 stars)**
- ▶ **AI created images - ensure that all Legion/ALA or SAL headgear, shirt logos are removed**

Miscellaneous Information

▶ Brandmarks & Logos

- ▶ The correct order of logos or brandmarks (from left to right) is Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, Riders (based on charter dates)**
- ▶ Always use all logos or all brandmarks (not a mix)**
- ▶ When using the Legion Family logo or brandmark, do not add the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons etc. logos or brandmarks**

▶ Flag Etiquette

- ▶ Order of precedence for flags (from viewers perspective left to right): US, POW/MIA, Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, Riders, Specialty Flags (such as America 250)**
- ▶ If carrying/displaying the US Military Flags – the correct order is Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard (during peacetime)**
- ▶ US Flag always higher/larger or the same height and size as any other flags (straps on flags carriers can be adjusted, sometime the flag poles can be adjusted)**
- ▶ If in doubt, always check the Flag Code:**
<https://www.legion.org/advocacy/flag-advocacy/flag-code>

Digital Manuals

- ▶ Available at: <https://wilegion.org/manuals>
- ▶ Includes:
 - ▶ Post Officers Guide
 - ▶ Post Adjutants Guide
 - ▶ Buddy Check Toolkit
 - ▶ Branding & Emblem Guidelines
 - ▶ Flag Etiquette

Post Websites

- ▶ **Why have a website:** Acts as an official information source that complements social media pages by providing permanent, easily searchable details to include copies of newsletters, meeting minutes, and historical documents. Once built, a website requires minimal updates. Websites effectively engage Veterans and Military members allowing them to join online.
- ▶ **Legion Websites “In a Box”**
 - ▶ **LegionSites**
 - ▶ <https://www.legionsites.com/>
 - ▶ \$249 initial year
 - ▶ \$199 annual renewal
 - ▶ **Legion Social**
 - ▶ <https://www.legion-social.com/>
 - ▶ \$750 first year
 - ▶ \$250 annual renewal
 - ▶ **ALPost**
 - ▶ <https://alpost.org/>
 - ▶ \$216 annual

Please direct any questions or possible additions to this presentation to Nancy at vicecommandereast@gmail.com