

# PUBLIC RELATIONS



## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

What is your definition of “Public Relations”?

Ask 5 people get 5 different answers let us define what it means to the AL

“In essence, the function or Public Relations is to build and to maintain a positive image of The American Legion.

Public Relations include getting support for your programs, planning them and publicizing them.

The key element is that the programs serve the public interest.

The familiarity and reputation of our name, The American Legion, are our two greatest assets

People will respond favorably to what you have to say if you have a good image

What is the image of The American Legion in your community?

Are you doing the things that matter in your community?

If your post was gone tomorrow would your community miss you?

Information is essential!

What events are being planned for what dates?

Develop a Public Relations Plan

- Research
- Planning and Decision-making
- Communication
- Action

With the 21<sup>st</sup> Century before us we need to adopt a fresh approach to telling the AL Story. We can no longer wait for the media to come calling; instead we must become our own media. This does not mean buying a newspaper company or TV/Radio station. It does mean using the vast array of communications channels to our advantage.

- Post Members are key
- Community Involvement – when we become visible outside the confines of the Post home is essential. That visibility translates into a form of communication media and can be a catalyst to recruiting.
- Internet – explore a Post web site, Post newsletter, TV, Radio, Newspapers - Advertising
- Radio, TV & Newspaper are businesses and you must pay for advertising. Cost may be minimal if used over a longer time frame
- Public Service Announcements – are free, provide a non-commercial message of interest to the community. Air at off time frames

**Textbook answer** – Previously unpublished information on a person, place or event.

**Reality** – What the reporter or news directors says it is. Judgment of what constitutes news varies from medium to medium, paper to paper, station to station.

Local news – local people

- Special events – visit by a National/Department Commander, participating in Boys State. Elections, Awards Presentation, Food Functions ( Luncheon, Dinners, Banquets)
- Local Post Meeting – a special guest speaker on a subject of public interest.
- Membership drives, anniversaries, Post social events, installations, committee services, C&Y activities.

Lead – the most important sentence, decided what the most interesting and significant information is, and then boil it down to one lead sentence.

News Peg – tie your release to a current event or item already in the news that relates to what you're writing about.

Example – suppose John Smith almost drowns while on a Legion-sponsored Boy Scout outing. Suppose further that John is on his way down for the third time when an observant Legionnaire, who is a strong swimmer, snatches him out of the water. News? Of course it is.

Will this damage the Legion's sponsorship of the Boys Scouts? If we give all the facts to the media quickly and accurately, it will not. Don't say "No Comment"

Legion side – Is how a Legionnaire's bravery and quick response saved that young boys life.

Most likely the story will be reported as a hero story or killed, as no longer news

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National PR Division Provides:

- Provides Speeches
- Speaker's Guide
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