

COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR

One of the key positions on the Advisory Council is that of the Communications Advisor so this material will cover some tips and suggestions for this position. Please remember, these are tips only and if your chapter has a system set up that is working well for you, don't change it unless you see some benefit into tweaking your current procedures.

In many cases, if you asked either DeMolays or Advisors what they see as one of the bigger problems within their Chapter, they will probably respond as a "lack of members" or "communications." Hopefully, the following information will assist in resolving some of the challenges with communications!

In most cases, it is best if the Communications Advisor organizes one or more active DeMolays to work on the communication within the Chapter. If DeMolay is truly a learning experience, what better way to learn than by doing? However, every chapter has limitations on the number of active members so you have to do what works best for you.

COMMUNICATION IDEAS: Here are miscellaneous thoughts on the various duties associated with the position of communications within the Chapter:

*** If you want to effectively communicate, you'll need to know "who" and the "how" of reaching your members, advisors, sweethearts and parents. That would mean you'll need to establish some kind of a roster, mailing list, database or other method of knowing who to reach with your communications. Here are a few ideas to help you resolve this need:

- a. DeMolay International can provide your Chapter with a roster of all of your active members and advisors. This listing only includes name, address and birthdate and degree dates. It does NOT include phone numbers or e-mail addresses. This roster must be requested by an Advisor. The Nor-Cal office can also assist you in obtaining a roster.

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- b. Create a database in EXCEL or ACCESS to list all of your members, advisors and others involved in your Chapter.
- c. This database can be used for addressing mail, sending mass e-mails, etc.
- d. Be sure to update your database on a regular basis as our youth tend to change e-mail addresses and phone numbers on a frequent basis.

*** Many Chapters publish an e-mail newsletter with current information about the activities of the Chapter. It is important that such a newsletter be published on a regular basis so that the information is current. This is a great way to announce future plans for the Chapter, recognize members for their achievements, thank people for their efforts on projects, etc. You could include information on upcoming activities and include details such as:

- a. Name of the activity
- b. Date and Time
- c. Time you are meeting to go to the activity
- d. Dress for the event
- e. Are extra funds needed before or after event is over
- f. Other details felt necessary

*** Most youth today are Facebook fans so don't forget that this is an excellent method of communication. You can set up special groups and as long as it is updated on a regular basis, it is a great way to "get the word out!" One word of caution: be sure that those using Facebook realize that privacy is sometimes an illusion and that their posts can easily go viral and can come back to haunt them. Many employers are now looking at a potential employee's Facebook account to see what they have posted. Suggest that they always err on the side of caution when posting personal comments!

*** Twitter is another great way to express your thoughts but again, we repeat the message above that those posting items need to be aware of the need to be very careful about what is posted.

*** Texting is favorite method of communication among our youth and can be very effective is getting the word out quickly about a change of plans for an activity.

*** As old fashioned as this may sound, you might also consider publishing a printed newsletter! Remember that a part of your audience may be people that may not be into the computer age so unless you send them something in the mail (an envelope with a stamp on it!) they may never know about your Chapter's activities or projects.

*** To get a different type of attention from your members or even potential, sending them a letter can be important as most youth these days receive very little mail so a letter addressed to them, could be an attention grabber! How about sending a postcard reminder before each meeting or event – it might just get the attention of the member AND his parents?

*** Many Chapters utilize a "Phone Tree" or a "Text Tree" where they either call or text their members to remind them of meetings or activities. It is important to make up a listing of who is calling who so that each and every member receives some type of reminder for each event. If calling, try not to just leave a message from a little sister or brother as those messages may not be passed along.

*** Most Masonic Lodges publish either a printed Trestleboard or they may have a website and they would probably welcome a monthly report from the DeMolay Chapter that they probably sponsor.

*** Be certain to communicate with the Masonic Family within your area. If you'd like their support, they need to be aware of what your Chapter is doing and how they can assist to insure your success.

*** When your incoming Master Councilor prepares his Term Calendar, please consider it as a "Marketing Plan." You can utilize the Term Plan to help spread the word about what your Chapter is planning for the next six months. How about the following ideas regarding the distribution of the Term (Marketing) Plan?

- a. Have copies available at the Installation of Officers
- b. Insure that all involved in your area's Masonic Family have a copy

- c. Send a copy to the Divisional and N.C.D.A. Officers
- d. Make sure a copy is sent to the Mayor and City Council of your community
- e. How about sending a copy to the Chamber of Commerce?
- f. It might be helpful to send a copy to the local Boy Scout Troops
- g. Send a copy to the Supt. Of Schools and the Principals of the schools that your members attend

Including a “cover letter” explaining the Term Plan and the goals of DeMolay would be helpful to some of these groups to fully understand the purpose of DeMolay and why they were sent a copy of the Term Plan

*** Think about setting up a website site or Facebook page for your Chapter to help with the communication within those involved with your Chapter.

*** Having a printed Meeting Agenda is also a form of communication. It is hoped that the members will take the agenda home with them so the Parents (if they are not actively involved with the Chapter) will be more aware of what is being planned in the Chapter.

*** If your Chapter has an activity that benefits your community such as a fundraiser for a local charity, be sure to provide a story and photos to the nearest newspaper. While not all stories will be used, it is a great way to spread the word regarding the community service aspect of DeMolay.

ADVISOR’S ROLE: The role of the Communications Advisor will vary from Chapter-to-Chapter. In any case, it is hoped that the Advisor will assume the role of “Advisor” and work with the young men involved to teach, inform and mentor them so they are doing the work with the Advisor’s support.