



How to Keep Your Membership Informed

Communication with Members

Communicating effectively with your members is a critical part of your chapter's success. One of the most common reasons someone leaves a chapter is because there isn't enough communication. As you prepare to lead your chapter, be sure to form a comprehensive internal communication plan to ensure that everyone feels "in the loop" at all times.

Develop and Maintain a Membership Database

From the moment you start your chapter it is important to have an organized and accessible membership database. We recommend organizing a membership database on Google Drive in a Google Spreadsheet, or Microsoft Excel in an Excel Spreadsheet. The benefit of using Google Drive is your file is backed up and multiple people can access the database as it is updated. At minimum, your membership database should contain the following pieces of information for each member:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Email Address
- Cell Phone Number

If you're tracking this information on a spreadsheet, be sure to separate each item into a separate column for easy sorting. Designate an officer to update and maintain the membership database. This person should be responsible for adding new members and updating contact information as needed.

Develop a Membership Communication Plan

Meet with your officer team to develop a membership communication plan. Decide how often you will contact your members (weekly newsletters, biweekly newsletters, etc.) and how you will make announcements (emails, Facebook posts, text alerts, etc). Make your membership communication plan known to members at the beginning of the year so they know when and where to expect updates.



*The purpose of newsletters is to keep your membership informed about the upcoming chapter events and activism initiatives. Chapter members shouldn't have to attend the meetings to know when the next major activism event is.

Designate an Officer to Manage Communication with Members

Keeping people "in the loop" is an important task. Designate an officer to manage internal communication (this may or may not be the person who manages your membership database). This person should be responsible for announcing meetings and events, sending newsletters, and providing updates on chapter operations (everything from when your chapter is tabling to when and where meetings will take place). **Your members shouldn't have to attend a meeting to know when the chapter will be tabling or when the next big event is happening.**

Develop an Officer Communication Plan

In addition to maintaining communication with your members, your chapter will need a plan for officer communication. We recommend setting a schedule for in-person meetings (for example, every other Monday at 5:00pm). Since most people are busy, try to keep meetings to a minimum and use digital (email, text, conference calls) communication for quick announcements. When you do host officer meetings, be respectful of people's time and come prepared with an agenda. Some officer teams communicate via email, while others prefer email for announcements and Facebook groups for brainstorming and discussions. Pick something that works well for your team.

Email Tips

Email is one of the most common ways you will communicate with your members. Use the following tips and strategies to maximize your effectiveness at communicating via email:

- BCC recipients to protect privacy and prevent spamming.
- Use Gmass or Mail Merge to personalize your emails.
- Be as brief as possible (without leaving out key details).
- Use lists and bullet points to highlight key information.
- Use MailChimp (or other mass email services) for emails to longer lists.



- Be sure to send emails at times & days that you know your members will be able to read it.

Chapter Email Accounts

If more than one person will be emailing your members, we recommend creating a chapter email account. You can create a free email account at www.gmail.com. ACT for America recommends using Gmail because of the additional resources available such as Google Calendar, Google Drive, etc. Your chapter's email address should be easy to remember. For example, ACTCleveland@gmail.com.

Chapter Social Media Pages

Currently, ACT for America chapters are not permitted to create Facebook and Twitter pages on behalf of your chapter. However, ACT for America Chapters are permitted to create "Secret" invite-only Facebook Groups for chapter communication and brainstorming. If your chapter decides to use a Facebook Group they are required to use the following statement in the "Group Description" section:

"The views expressed in this group do not necessarily reflect those of the national organization ACT for America."

If you have any questions regarding this policy do not hesitate to reach out to ACT for America HQ at them@actforamerica.org