Marine Corps League

Public Relations and Media Relations Guide

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CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL

1000. General

A. The purpose of this Guidance is to define and communicate the policies and provide best practices and encouraged regulations for proper implementation of policies and procedures supporting the effective implementation of public relations avenues to include social media, broadcast media, print media and internal/external communications.

    1. Good judgment will govern the application of this policy in the local jurisdiction.

    2. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure Marine Corps League (MCL) members represent the best possible, consistent image when communicating with internal and external audiences, leading the way in service to community, service to our members, and to the MCL.

B. In accordance with the MCL National Administrative Manual, a National Director of Public Relations shall act as the public relations and press officer for the National Organization; and, perform other such duties as assigned by the National Commandant.

    1. The MCL National Director of Public Relations maintains a committee of MCL members dedicated and professed in various elements of public relations, media relations, desk top publishing, and more. Members of the MCL National Public Relations Committee (NRPC) are appointed by the MCL National Commandant and approved by the MCL National Board of Trustees.

1001. Mission/Purpose of the NRPC

A. The mission/purpose of the MCL National Public Relations Committee (NPRC) is to: 'Develop, promote, and maintain a positive image, through education and awareness, for the Marine Corps League (MCL) internal and external audiences via broadcast, print, and social media; and, channeling communications between MCL national leadership, its national committees, national office staff, and broad-based membership.'

B. The NPRC serves as the 'conscience' of the MCL by conveying the strengths and weaknesses, accolades and gripes while employing key messaging strategies and addressing risk management concerns.

C. The NPRC works at the direction of the MCL National Commandant, through the MCL Board of Trustees (BOT) liaison to the committee. Items of concern and/or significant importance to the welfare of the MCL shall be brought forward to the respective MCL elected national officer for consideration; the MCL National Commandant shall also be 'in the loop'.

D. Information sharing needs to works both directions – the NPRC serves as one of several portals for information sharing but shall serve as the primary source for message crafting – whether to the members or the public. The NPRC shall manage the dissemination of general communication in addition to media releases/announcements – as it all relates to PUBLIC RELATIONS.

1. The NPRC will be regimented with sharing of information critical to the MCL. The NPRC shall not disseminate any sensitive information without consent from the respective authority(ies); i.e.: National Commandant, BOT, National Executive Director/COO, National Committee chairs, etc.

2. Currently, the NPRC maintains/executes various portals of social media content on behalf of the MCL national organization and will craft and disseminate applicable news releases, media advisories and/or public service announcements on behalf of the MCL national organization. In the event of a media inquiry addressed to the MCL national office/staff/issues, the NRPC will provide guidance and/or direct traffic as applicable.

3. The NPRC does not maintain the MCL website(s), nor is the NPRC solicited for website(s) content or design.

CHAPTER 2 – WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS

2000. What is Public Relations

A. Every company [detachment] needs to do some kind of PR, whether it's creating a brand identity [the MCL brand], maintaining corporate relationships, media relations or any of the other tasks that fall under the category of public relations. So, what is PR and what do PR professionals really do? Public relations is the process of sharing information on behalf of a company or person in order to build relationships and influence public perception. Public relations professionals use a variety of mediums to create and disseminate information for their company [detachment]. They often work hand in hand with marketing, communications, or advertising committees to accomplish their goals.
   1. PR can also be used as a tool to complete many kinds of business goals and tasks such as creating brand awareness, crisis management, event management, and more.

2001. What is Branding

A. Branding is the process of creating a distinct identity for a business / organization in the mind of a target audience or consumer. At the most basic level, branding is made up of a company's name and logo, visual design, mission, and tone of voice. Branding is giving meaning to a specific organization, company, products, or services by creating and shaping a brand (a perceived image) in consumers' minds. Branding applies directly to the Marine Corps League (MCL) in what we do; how we look; how we conduct ourselves.

B. Consider a brand as the idea or image people have when thinking us as an organization, both in a practical way (e.g. "we are the only Marine Corps-specific veteran service organization") and an emotional way (e.g. "sharing camaraderie and participating in detachment events make me feel whole"). It's not just the physical features that create a brand but also the feelings that members and prospective members develop towards the MCL or our

product. This combination of physical and emotional cues is triggered when exposed to the name, the logo, the visual identity, or even the message communicated – BRANDING.

C. We use our MCL logo and MCL uniforms to create a unique brand identity, which helps distinguish us from other veteran service organizations. Our actions and mannerisms amplify that identity; especially when wearing our logo and uniform. This creates the physical identifiers of branding (which includes items such as business cards, banners, table coverings, detachment flags, etc). We boast our logo, we look sharp, we treat people with respect and dignity, we maintain a distinct mannerism – mannerisms of being a good citizen, instilled in us through boot camp.

D. Our implementation of social media is another significant method of sharing brand identity. From the name of the social media site to the content delivered; whether its Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc – we have to be consistent on pushing a holistic message of the MCL and all 'we' do – all YOU do as a detachment or department. Using the various programs available within the MCL, share how (and why) your detachment / department is supporting it. Share what (and why) you are doing to support legislative activity for veterans. Share the 'what' and 'why' of who we are!

E. Branding applies directly to the MCL in what we do; why we do it; how we look; and, how we conduct ourselves.

2002. Why is Public Relations Important

A. Public Relations is one of the most effective ways to build on marketing strategies and even create a solid online reputation. Companies that are investing a tremendous amount of time and effort into staying on top of their PR strategies, and they're seeing even larger returns with their investment into positive efforts – think event marketing.

B. Public relations is about sending the right messages to the right place and the right people, creating a stronger brand reputation.

C. Public relations is the gateway to increase your public perception and sentiment. With an effective and consistent approach that is trusted, public relations will elevate the MCL brand and return on investment within your community/region.

1. Increases Brand Sentiment

    a. Your detachment business is most likely doing some incredible things that are timely, relevant, and interesting. But without public relations to help busy journalists, reporters, or editors, they might never know about it. PR helps to tell your story, distinguish you from the other happenings, and can also provide a stream of ideas for the media who are always on the hunt for content that speaks to their audiences.

    b. From your press release or pitch, they will then produce various types of content that help to promote the MCL brand. PR helps in times of good or bad too. With the realities of online reviews, comments, and discussion websites, a detachment can face disgruntled consumers (or even members) whether it is true or not. This is where a PR campaign can help to get sentiment back in the right direction and shed light on as well as reinforce brand values.

2. Generates Leads, Sales, and Profits

    a. Effective public relations builds relations with a multitude of audiences depending on your detachment activities. From building relationships with the media, investors, government, community, customers, and/or internally (think membership and their morale), PR gets a targeted message to your preferred audiences in impactful ways.

3. Builds Credibility

    a. Consumers feel more comfortable with established brands. Online, this equates to showing a robust history of media coverage high up in the search rankings. TV segments, articles, interviews, social media posts, and more show credibility in your industry. Added to that, you can get more mileage out of these media mentions and have sales reps and business developers use this content in their follow-ups, as well as boost employee morale and future job candidates with the goodwill you've created by being active in PR.

4. Creates a Proactive Playing Field

    a. When you collaborate with an effective and consistent PR strategy, you can establish a regular daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, and/or seasonal rhythm for your PR activities. By being in the driver's seat with your PR instead of just doing it when crises emerge, you will generate lots of good press which results in a more proactive playing field. This trail of credibility and goodwill humanizes your detachment and helps in times of distress to point to the good that you do. A proactive PR plan helps you to leverage opportunities, plan for emergencies, and calculate your steps in advance.

5. Connects to Coveted Audiences

a. With so many options for PR and already jam-packed schedules, detachments and members can easily feel overwhelmed. Networking with other PR persons and your NRPC will help to identify the best use of time and investment to get on the right platforms, publications and channels, and with the right authorities and influencers to boost their brand exponentially.

b. From tailoring the message to the audience to knowing which reporters cover which topics, savvy PR people can handle all these details enabling the detachment to focus its mission. With each connection you make, your detachment stands to become a routine source for the media and others to call on, quote, and provide further insight on.

D. When public relations can be the quarterback to shine a light on your detachment, its goodwill and relevancy no matter what is happening in the community/region, your detachment has the ability to shine. As the public confidence in your brand (the Marine Corps League Brand) stands the test of time, your detachment's PR efforts create a lasting story about your detachment, its members, its services and outreach efforts. From this angle, public relations should be a mainstay in your marketing, not just a luxury when more efforts are needed or when a crisis emerges.

2003. Getting The Right Message Out

A. Get The Right Message – To the Right People – At the Right Time – For the Right Reasons!

1. Effective messaging is one of many diverse roles of a successful public relations strategy. Communicating a straightforward and consistent message is particularly important for response and follow through. What are the messages a Detachment needs to push out? Who is the audience for each message? When should messages be pushed out? Why the push?

Connect sincerely with the RIGHT AUDIENCE at the RIGHT TIME WITH THE RIGHT MESSAGE using well-chosen words, photos, and videos.

a. What is the right message?

1. Is your Detachment seeking ticket sales for a fundraising event? The message would be 'join us for fun and fundraising' – or something like that. Is your Detachment seeking new members? Well, your message could be something about how you serve your members, their families, the community, and other veterans and Marines through the diverse Detachment activities. Is your message needing to direct internal communications? Maybe for a membership meeting, or a member social? Knowing what that 'proper' message is will help ensure you and your Detachment speak with one unified voice -- consistently.

b. Who are the people for each message?

1. This depends on what that message is. There are functions and activities that are geared for the public. How can you connect your message to them? Is there a specific audience you wish to target? A message can be formatted for television or radio broadcast. It can be published in newspapers and magazines; or, pushed through social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, YouTube, and even text and email. Posters, flyers, brochures, postcards; and, especially through word of mouth are important ways to push a message. Cross promotion will assist in getting the message to your audience by speaking at other groups, organizations, and activities. Each event, each activity, each cause will have an audience cluster that you want to target.

c. When should the message(s) be pushed out?

1. It is stated that a message needs to be imprinted in the mind of the consumer at least 13 times before it begins to connect. Therefore, looking at an activity and when to push the message for ticket sales, donations needed, or membership drive, a standard marketing rule should be considered that encourages 'marketing' to be at least six weeks in front of the event.

2. When applying this rule, your message impression should be heavy for the first portion – raise awareness, push ticket sales, start the word of mouth. Maintain a steady awareness in the middle periods, but a heavy push should come again closer to the event date. If the message is for a meeting, get it to the right people well in advance and provide reminders. People are busy and the need to be reminded about events and meeting notices – timely and consistently.

d. Why?

1. What are the goals and objectives of your message? Is it to increase ticket sales? Is it to recruit thirteen new members? Is it to raise $4,000? Maybe to have members present

for a function or meeting? Your message needs to have a critical 'call to action' – what is it you want to achieve. Targeting the 'take-away' within your message will help to drive this with measurable success.

2. Take advantage of an effectively crafted message and deliver it to its intended audience. Apply a timely push of your message through necessary channels. Work for the success this will bring, with consistent use and application. With a basic principle that communication is key – get the right message to the right people at the right time for the right reasons!

CHAPTER 3 – SOCIAL MEDIA

3000. What is Social Media

A. An effective and engaging social media platform is like maintaining your own broadcasting company. When used effectively, it can enhance your 'brand awareness' marketing exponentially! Social media is not restricted to Facebook; it includes YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and others. Each portal will have their own demographic and ability to connect with the audience you are trying to reach.

B. But, what is marketing? Marketing is the activity and process for creating; communicating and delivering offerings that have value to customers. Now look at social media marketing. It is considered that the purpose of social media marketing is to build a brand and increase a brand's visibility, through building relationships and communicating with potential customers.

    1. The two seem to go hand-in-hand. But you may still be wondering, why social media? ''Social networks are one of the fastest growing industries in the world and is the greatest form of 'word-of-mouth' advertisements!''

    2. Facebook is the biggest and arguably most powerful social network in the world with 1.55 billion active monthly users. You need to be on Facebook (as a business page) and engage with your stakeholders with consistent, relevant posts.

    3. Twitter is known as the ''in the moment'' platform and boasts a respectful 255 million active monthly users. Twitter is a perfect online marketing tool for businesses that want to reach out to people (and are ready for a reply). The key is to be quick and smart, ever heard of dunk in the dark?

    4. Instagram is a visual platform designed for customers to post, share, comment and engage through digital media. As the old saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words.

    5. LinkedIn is regarded as the professional social networking site. LinkedIn largely focuses on b2b marketing rather than b2c.

6. Google +, YouTube, Foursquare, and Pinterest are other social network sites. And then there's Snapchat, the new kid on the block, who recently recorded six billion daily views.

C. Your social media platform(s) should be implemented by members (consider a Public Relations committee) knowledgeable in effective marketing and in social media as well as being 'in the know' when inquiries are asked through the platform. Implementation needs to be consistent and must be relevant.

D. And ever so important, posts 'must' be monitored for dialogue/comments showing your attentiveness and response but also address any posts that may harm the overall image of the Marine Corps League. Proper, effective, consistent, and relevant use of your social media platform(s) will increase awareness for the Marine Corps League – the Detachment, Department, Division, or the National organization as a whole. It's just one element of public relations and marketing.

3001. Facebook – The Differences between a "Profile," a "Group," and a "Page"

A. Facebook (FB) is liked by some and not liked by others but when you can create your own public portal of what your Detachment does within a community – and be able to connect within your community (through social media), it's a tool you don't want to ignore. FB provides three specific mediums (within FB) that can support this method of connection: a FB Individual Profile, A FB Business Page, and a FB Group. What is best for your Detachment to use, an individual profile, a business page, or a group?

B. Getting your Detachment active on FB is a first start to getting your name out there (on social media) and offer your supporters a chance to engage with your cause while also gaining awareness on who the MCL is, what the MCL does, and, depending on what/how you post information, WHY the MCL does it is a significant way to increase your audience. Let your community help by becoming your social media ambassadors.

C. FB Individual Profile:

   1. A FB individual 'profile page' is designed for an individual person.

   2. It allows you to LIKE other profile pages and LIKE/FOLLOW business pages.

   3. You can create events as a profile page and invite people to your event.

   4. A profile cannot do mass advertising.

   5. A profile visibility is often times restricted to only FB 'friends' who LIKE your profile.

D. FB Business Pages:

   1. The FB Page is more like a personal profile for a business, a public figure or organization. It's intended to be branded with the visual elements of the company or website that is going to be promoted and act as well as a communication channel with their fanbase. The difference between a profile page and the FB business page is that the business page is public for all on FB to see, LIKE and FOLLOW.

2. The business pages do more than promote that business, they can promote 'brand awareness.' What you post on a business page can reflect directly on your organization.

    a. When posting on a business page – always be relevant to who YOUR business (Detachment) is and, in this case, to the Marine Corps League as a whole -- remember, brand awareness.

    b. When a user connects to a page, they can instantly gain access to all news related to the brand they love and to follow it closely.

    c. The effective business pages can help build trust with the audience and increase greater awareness for the business (Detachment/MCL).

    d. Business pages can LIKE/FOLLOW other business pages and can also create FB groups.

    e. A business page can create events for the public to like/attend and can even sell tickets from those events (with other proper web-resources).

    f. A business page can also do broad-based advertising with an ability to hone-in on specific demographic(s) and geographical area(s).

    g. A business page can drive traffic to a website, as well.

3. To keep a business page active with the viewing audience, posts should be done regularly, such as daily and multiple times during the day/night. FB works off of an algorithm – meaning not every post is seen by every person who likes/follows your page. You have to remain active to be seen – and encourage likes, comments and shares to increase your audience reach.

E. Facebook Groups:

1. While pages act like a broad-based billboard businesses/organization, a FB group is like a focused message board to a closed group.

2. FB groups serve mainly as communication channels for like-minded individuals.

3. Based on their interests and goals, people join groups where they can exchange information with each other and express their opinions in a safe and moderated environment.

4. A FB group is a great tool to deliver mass communication to specific members, members and families, and even prospective members.

5. A business page or an individual profile page can create FB groups.

F. A great suggestion is to create a FB business page to promote your MCL Detachment, Department, and/or Division. Push out the information, daily, of what your do so the whole world can see! And, also, to create a FB Group that can be closed communication for your members/families and even a separate FB Group to reach/connect to all prospective members within your region – than can also showcase what/why your Detachment does.

G. FB is a great tool to connect to the masses – if it's used correctly and consistently.

The Difference Between Facebook

PROFILES

Invite Friends

- Personal Individual
- Businesses not allowed
- Invite + Maintain **Friends**
- Only **Friends** can view
- No Advertising
- Create **Pages** + **Groups**
- It is possible to have a 'Business Profile'

PAGES

Invite Likes

- Official Presence for Business or Celebrity
- Admin can be shared
- Gain **Likes** (was Fans)
- Anybody can view + Like
- Nobody needs permission to Like
- Advertising Allowed
- Pay to promote Posts

GROUPS

Invite Members

- Discussion Forum or Community for Club, Cause or Specific Purpose
- Business + Ads allowed
- Invite + Maintain **Members**
- Do not have to be Friends
- **Profiles** + **Pages** can join or post
- Open, Closed, or Secret

3002. MCL Social Media Basics

A. "Social Media" is defined as text, video, images, photos, audio, and other media generated by and shared with others via the internet or other electronic means.

B. The NPRC, and all other participants engaging with the MCL social media activity, shall approach social media in the same manner as traditional media - by using sound judgment; adhering to the MCL core values; and, following the guidelines, best practices, bylaws and all other policies, procedures, and legal standards.

    1. There shall be no deviation from the aforementioned standards.

C. The MCL and the NPRC, recognize the vital importance and encourage the use of social media to promote the brand, reputations, education, awareness, and fund-raising to accomplish the mission of the MCL.

    a. These principles were prepared for all members associated with the MCL and are applicable to all employees, members, and volunteers.

    b. These principles are to guide usage as it relates to the application of social media across all levels of the MCL, ensuring the organization is protected in the ever-changing social media landscape.

D. The NPRC maintains a social media presence in several format/platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube. Additional popular social media platforms NOT employed by the MCL include but are not

limited to: Pinterest, Podcasts, Periscope, Snapchat, and TikTok. The MCL maintains two website domains www.MCLnational.org and www.MCLeaguelibrary.org (resource portal targeting members and Detachments).

    a. When you click on either, the MCLeagueLibrary domain will appear.

    1. Currently, the NPRC maintains/executes social media content on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. The NPRC does not have access to Twitter nor the MCL websites.

    2. MCL Detachments are encouraged to engage applicable social media channels/pages/sources that fit their demographic and audience. Keep in mind the detachment audience needs to consider internal (members) and external (community).

E. When posting content on social media, the following considerations shall be adhered to:

    1. *Posting to social media, at any level of the MCL and when carrying the MCL name, will involve only fact. There is no room for opinion, hearsay, half-truth, or suspicion.*

    2. *What is posted will always serve as a direct reflection/representation of the MCL.*

    3. Primary focus for posting content is to:

        a. increase the awareness and understanding of the MCL and its missions/activities;

        b. enhance communication between internal and external audiences of the MCL and its missions/activities;

        c. promote the activities/events hosted by our local Detachments;

        d. encourage the external audience to become a member of the MCL; and,

        e. encourage the internal audience to observe/learn/connect with best practices from other members, detachments, departments, divisions and/or MCL national organization.

    4. Detachment's language/text shall always be posted/typed in the third person, this is the page for the MCL; it is NOT your personal FB page. Exceptions shall be made when a specific message is provided and all organic posts shall enhance the image and perception of the MCL, or address actions for risk management needs.

        a. Items addressing risk management shall be posted in consultation with NPRC. The NPRC will consult the MCL National Commandant and the BOT, as needed.

    5. Do not share social media posts from individual (personal) 'profiles.'

        a. Shared posts will only be from local detachments, departments, divisions, or other appropriate (MCL/USMC focused) 'business' pages.

        b. Posts from FB groups shall not be 'shared' as the Groups are often 'closed' groups; those not in the group will not be able to see the share.

    6. Social media posts/shares from individual person/profiles shall not be executed:

a. The focus is to be on the action/post of the Detachment, Department, Division, and/or MCL; that one post share may be the right motivation for somebody to join that Detachment – therefore, the Detachment activity is recognized.

b. Just like a "closed group" posts, a share from an individual person/profile may not have security settings allowing 'global' viewing of the post – meaning it is shared and nobody can see it; often times the individual person/profile post will not have 'permissions' set to 'public'.

c. In the case of the MCL social media audience, individual posts made to the MCL national social media pages have had 'reach' into the thousands and tens of thousands. Personal security repercussions can be catastrophic if a post from an individual person/profile is shared.

7. Any posts being "shared" can be enhanced with a relevant comment(s) to augment the post. These may include #hashtags (topic dependent). Hashtags are used to enhance search capabilities and notifications. (A person can 'follow' a #hashtag, just like they can follow a social media page). Current #hashtags in use by the NPRC include:

a. #DetachmentsInAction (used when sharing a post from a local MCL Detachment).

b. #DepartmentsAt Work (used when sharing a post from a MCL Department).

c. #InTheNews (used when sharing news headlines)

d. #MCLVeteransAffairs (used when a post is relevant for VA information).

e. #M4L (used when posting Marine For Life information).

f. #MemberToKnow (used when posting info of a specific member that is in the news).

g. #MarineCorpsLeague (used to enhance notifications for posts).

h. #MCL (used to enhance notifications for posts).

i. #HQMCL (used to enhance notifications for posts).

j. #EmbraceTheTribe (used to enhance notifications for posts and/or enforce a message).

k. Additional hashtags may be used pending post topic, trending hashtags, and/or desire to connect with other USMC similar audiences (eg: #SemperFi, #USMC, #OOHRAH, #ModernDayMarine, #tbt #Throwback, etc.)

8. Links associated within a post are shared identifying original source (preferred) with original content. When sharing links, be advised that unless it is 'toggled' (*seek assistance if you do not understand)*, only the linked item will be shared without subsequent language/post associated with original link/post.

9. If the post is worthy of sharing, click on the original post and share from that.

a. Don't share a share, of a share.

10. Shared posts should be timely and relevant. If it is beyond five days from original post, is it worth sharing?

11. When 'liking', 'commenting', or 'sharing' a post, be sure to know what 'voice' is being used. If you are wanting to comment as yourself, ensure the 'posting as…' identifier shows the comment is the correct representation (the business page or the individual profile). If you are commenting as the MCL, ensure your comment is relevant, professional, and tactful and addresses the post.

12. Social media messaging needs to be addressed in a timely fashion; it is not a race to see who replies first. When/if a message comes in, it shall be directed to the person who can best address the inquiry. If the FB message inquiry requires a comment from somebody without FB page admin rights, advise the person who submitted the inquiry that their question is in work as the applicable member of the PR Committee obtains a correct response.

3003. Naming Your Social Media Page

A. The naming of a social media page needs to be identifiable for the audience trying to find you. It needs to be indicative of who you are. It also needs to represent the organization in which you are a part of.

1. The NPRC is seeking all MCL detachment social media page names to maintain a consistent naming convention. As such, the NPRC is seeking all pages to be named with three distinct items: the abbreviation for the Marine Corps League "MCL," a dash, the name of the local detachment, the number of the local detachment.

   a. *Example: MCL – John Basilone Detachment, #190*

2. The NPRC is seeking all MCL department social media pages to, also, maintain a consistent naming convention. MCL departments social media page names should be very simply named with the abbreviation for the Marine Corps League "MCL," a dash, the name of the state the department represents.

   a. *Example: MCL – Dept of New Jersy*

3. Similarly, the NRPC is seeking all MCL division social media pages to include the abbreviation for the Marine Corps League "MCL," a dash, the name of the division being represented.

   a. *Example: MCL – Northeast Division*

3004. Using Social Media Tools

A. Creating Facebook Events:

1. How can an organization increase its exposure to the activities they host? Use social media; create a Facebook event for your activities!

b. Facebook Events allows users and business pages to create dedicated landing pages for their events. On your event pages, guests can learn more, RSVP, and interact with your brand and other guests.

c. Facebook events provide simple, hands-off ways for Facebook users to send invitations to their friends.

d. Because of the interactive nature of Facebook, a Facebook event can also help create a buzz about a particular event.

2. Most guests won't RSVP to an event page that says, "Details TBD."

a. Before getting started on your Facebook event, plan out the event details. What's going to happen the day of, from beginning to end? What will make it stand out? Plan out some details that will incentivize guests to come, especially if you're going virtual—no one wants to just watch a talking head for an hour.

3. Choose a creative event name - your Facebook event name can make or break your audience's interest. Get creative; try out some wordplay or choose a catchy title—but the title should also reflect what your event is all about.

4. Just like your event name, your event photo plays an important role in earning clicks.

a. Create an eye-catching design that reflects your brand and gives users insight into what your Facebook event is all about.

b. Write out an exciting description using your unique brand voice, write about what attendees can expect from the event, highlight the more exciting details at the top of your description. Get creative!

5. Share your event across social media! Once your event is published, start your promotions by sharing your event on your Facebook business page. This can be as simple as sharing a direct link to the event with an interesting caption. Don't forget a call to action that encourages your followers to learn more or RSVP.

6. Invite your Facebook friends! With all the content uploaded to Facebook each day, followers are bound to miss your event posts; ensure your Facebook friends get the message by inviting them to the event through your personal Facebook account. If you market the event well, they may invite their friends!

7. Just creating a Facebook event doesn't guarantee a growing guest list. If you want to make your next public event a success, using Facebook Events strategically is key.
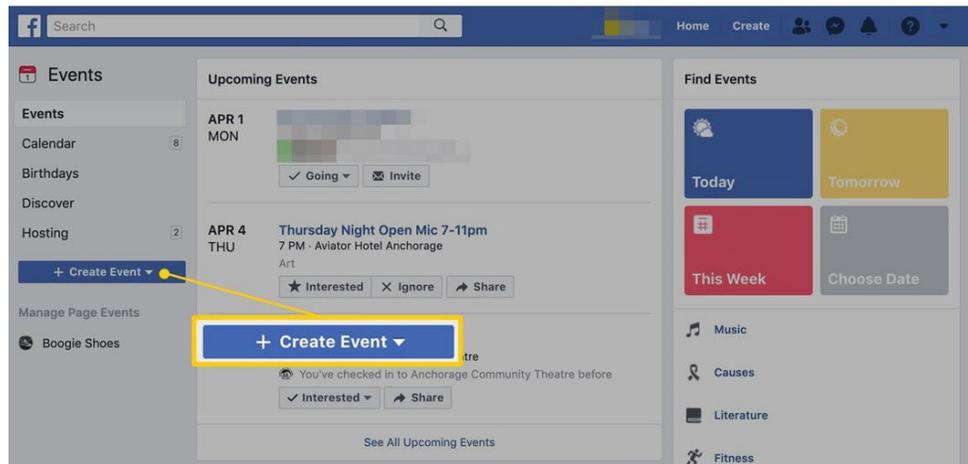
3005. Guidance for MCL Affiliations

A. Social media pages must have no less than two (2) people with full administration roles and authorities.

1. This is simply to support the legacy of the social media page in the event one person dies or departs the detachment for any reason. If only one person serves as the page 'administrator' and that person dies, the page will not have an administrator, meaning future roles cannot be assigned to the page. And, if that one person was the sole administrator (meaning there were no page editors), nobody will have access to that page for future posting and simple page management.

2. Any detachment or department that has questions following these two action steps, they are highly encouraged to contact the MCL National Public Relations Committee (NPRC) for additional guidance by emailing: publicrelations@mcleague.org.

B. It is important that everyone is aware of the implications of engaging in forms of broadcast media and social media in association with the conversations referencing the MCL (Detachment, Department, Division, National organization) and/or the person's relationship with the MCL. People must be aware that they will be held accountable for comments and posts.

1. Transparency in every social media engagement. The MCL does not condone manipulating social media by creating "fake" destinations and posts designed to mislead followers and control a conversation. Every website, "fan page", or other online destination that is ultimately controlled by a subsidiary affiliation of the MCL must ensure transparencies and accuracies.

2. Protection of constituents' privacy. We will be conscientious regarding any personally identifiable information of children or adults that we post. Best practices suggest all participants and adults in

posted photos/videos should have signed a model/media release form or otherwise approved use of their images in all broadcast and social media.

3. Respect of copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights in the social media space, including with regard to user-generated content. How exactly you do this may depend on your particular situation, so work with Detachment staff to make informed, appropriate decisions.

4. <u>Responsibility in the use of technology.</u> The MCL shall not use or align with any organizations or websites that deploy the use of excessive tracking software, adware, malware, or spyware. Nor shall it be aligned with content that will be damaging to the mission, name, or image of the MCL; this will include all activities, imagery, and references (in any form of association).

5. <u>Child protection.</u> Youth participants use social media to interact with one another, and social media can be an excellent way for MCL subsidiary affiliates to communicate with youth participants and parents about MCL activities. However, all exposure with any youth shall require 'two-deep' leadership.

    a. Two-deep leadership means that a MCL subsidiary affiliates shall limit or prohibit situations of private messaging and one-on-one direct contact by an adult with a youth participant; whether by in-person or through text messaging, email, Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat or other digital messaging platforms.

    b. As much as possible, communication between adults and youth participants shall take place in a public forum or, at a minimum, include one or more young people (or) one or more adults openly copied or included on the message or posting.

    c. MCL subsidiary affiliates shall consider carefully whether to personally "friend" or accept a "friend request" from youth participants. If so, they shall be committed to including at least one other adult from the Detachment on all correspondence to the youth participant. Youth participants can and are encouraged to "friend" the Detachment on the Detachment's social media page(s).

6. <u>Creation of social media and pre-existing rules</u>. Only MCL subsidiary affiliates are authorized to initiate and execute social media sites or domain names relating to MCL activities. The MCL subsidiary affiliates shall adhere to rules and terms of use already in place on sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, and shall feel free to create additional community guidelines for MCL subsidiary affiliates pages.

3006. Expectations for Personal Behavior in Media Relations

A. This set of key principles refers to those personal or unofficial online activities where you might speak about or refer to the Detachment or MCL in general.

1. There is significant difference between speaking "on behalf of the MCL/Detachment" and speaking "about the MCL/Detachment." Understand the difference and employ it in all communications.

2. Adhere to The MCL Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, and applicable Laws and Regulations. All MCL constituents are subject to these values and standards in every public setting, when speaking about the Detachment or the MCL in general. Other policies, including confidentiality, protection of the 'brand,' and program curriculum rights, govern everyone's behavior with respect to disclosure of information.

3. You are responsible for your actions. Anything you post that can potentially tarnish the MCL image and reputation will ultimately be your responsibility.

4. Be on the lookout for compliments and criticism. Even if you are not an official spokesperson, you are one of our most vital assets for monitoring conversations with social media. Positive or negative remarks about the MCL you believe may pose a risk, make specific note and forward to the applicable person.

5. Direct subject matter experts respond to negative posts; but ensure they do not provide additional damage to the MCL (risk management). Negative or disparaging posts about the MCL, or third-parties posts seeking to spark negative conversations will occur; unless you are an authorized online spokesperson, avoid the temptation to react. Direct the post to the applicable PR Committee member authorized to address such comments.

6. Be conscious when mixing business and personal lives. Keep in mind that posting information online can often be seen by more than friends and family; on social media, know that information originally intended just for friends and family can be forwarded on.

7. NEVER disclose sensitive information about the MCL. Be aware that taking public, online positions counter to the interests of the MCL may cause conflict.
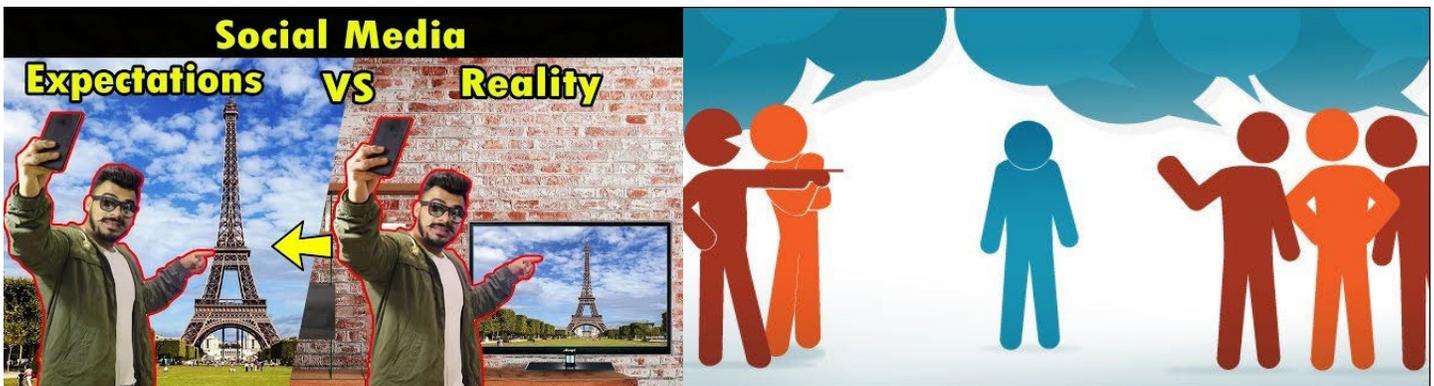
4. Statements on behalf of the MCL (at any level) can be held to the same legal standards on broadcast media, print media, and social media communications. Monitor and keep records of any sensitive dialogue pertaining to the MCL; in the event of social media, obtain a screen shot, and notify applicable MCL officials, (PR Committee, PR Officer, Social Media page administrator, and Leaderships for the applicable Detachment, Department, Division and/or national organization).

5. Ensure social media posts (including responses to comments) are accurate, not misleading, and that they do not reveal sensitive information.

6. If there is any doubt on what to post, do not post it. Seek approval from applicable authority(ies).

7. When making social media posts using another entity's content, make certain that they are credited for it in your post and that they approve of you utilizing their content.

8. Do not use the copyrights, trademarks, publicity rights, or other rights of others without the proper permissions of the holder of those rights.

9. Keep a "world view" in mind when participating in online conversations. Remember, a local post can have significant impact for the MCL network. You are responsible, not only to your local post content, but to the entire organization.

3007. Social Media Etiquette

A. Social media discussions can be brutal. The purposes for MCL social media sites are to be seen and engage. If you wish to go on about controversial issues outside the interests of the MCL, do it on your personal profile/page and NOT a MCL page. Remember, your MCL social media site could potentially be seen by the world. It would be better to not have an account than to embarrass the MCL or to post so infrequently that you appear inactive. The MCL is far from the only organization concerned with its social media image.

1. Typical standards by account administrators include deleting or blocking comments that:

   a. Are racist, sexist, vulgar, obscene, or defamatory.

   b. Personally attack others.

   c. Threaten violence or illegal activity.

   d. Violate the privacy of others.

   e. Are partisan, overtly political or totally unrelated to the topic of discussion.

   f. Are provably inaccurate.

B. Frequent social media engagement can be an extremely powerful tool in the public relations program of any MCL Detachment. From a simple Tweet such as "Open house @Detachment10 Saturday 1 pm, all invited" to an emotional Facebook plea to end the tragic suicides of so many veterans, social media has become the quick and inexpensive printing press for many of the 21st century.

C. When communicating on the internet, remember you are communicating with people and not computers or smartphones. Rules of etiquette are necessary on the internet – 'netiquette' is important to avoid consequences.

D. Stick to rules of conduct online.

1. When communicating online, remember etiquette rules you follow in everyday life. Refrain from insulting, provoking, threatening or insulting others. Respect opinions and express constructive criticism. You can be prosecuted for cyber-bullying.

E. Netiquette: Think of the person.

   1. Think of the person behind the computer; you are communicating with real people, not with a machine. Consider what/how you write, the internet doesn't forget anything!

   2. It's easy for folks to grab a screen shot of a message posted which can still exist even if the message is deleted. Before posting, read through your response - check grammar, punctuation, spelling, and tone. Don't make the other person decipher poor grammar or fat thumbs.

   3. If grammar or spelling is your weakness, use spelling aids before posting the message.

F. Present your best side.

   1. Online communication comes with certain anonymity, leading to lower thresholds for tolerance. Users will behave rudely if you disagree with them; people will leverage distant anonymity as opportunities to lash out. Don't fall into this trap and become a cyberbully.

   2. Show your best side online - remain friendly and respectful, even if you disagree.

   3. Refrain from posting with all capital letters – on the internet, this portrays shouting and is impolite.

G. Internet Comment Etiquette

   1. Treat other people with consideration and respect when commenting, whether it's on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. What means one thing to you might mean something different to another.

   2. If you see videos or posts you don't agree with, keep scrolling.

   3. If the posts continue to make you uncomfortable, step away, unfriend or unfollow, for your own sanity.

   4. Ask targeted questions; but be sure to seek out an answer yourself first. This shows you're willing to do some research yourself and help narrow down your inquiry and ask a more specific question.

   5. Don't post messages that you wouldn't be comfortable with all people seeing.

   6. It's likely that you will be providing feedback for inquiries. Strike a balance between being kind and being helpful, offer constructive criticism that is encouraging and honest.

   7. Stay on topic of the post. It isn't the place to start talking about unrelated topics.

   8. If someone helps you along your way, never miss the opportunity to follow up with a thanks of some kind.

H. A significant portion of online communication is non-verbal. People have less information about what tone you're using with the messages sent versus their abilities as face-to-face or phone call. If you want to say something positive, say it explicitly to avoid confusion. Try some magic words to inject civility in your written communication.