



Leadership

The Importance of Follow-up (Revision date 1-12-2013)

In order to sustain ongoing loyalty efforts from members of your group, leaders must consistently participate with them through regular communication and encouragement. Also, the amount of enthusiasm demonstrated by a leader will be reflected throughout his or her group. Leaders at all levels must buy into the effort and communicate supportiveness to your members. If the leader isn't 100 percent committed, the overall effort will not succeed.

Follow-up is, in a way, like coaching. A coach provides training, motivation and keeps things positive and interesting. When working with your group you always need to remember that they are thinking, "Okay, what difference am I going to make in this effort, I'm only one?" Others may be thinking, "This is great, but I have five kids at home and four of them are on different soccer teams, so when am I going to be able to do anything?"

This is where you need to create excitement and reinforce a level of commitment needed for ongoing success. However, each participant's level of "time" may be different. That doesn't mean that they are any less committed. It simply means that the time donation from each person is different.

Members at all levels need to feel empowered and encouraged to participate. There are several ways that you can accomplish this.

Through E-mail

Are you making the best possible use of your e-mail messages? Jokes and un-verified information is a waste of everyone's time. Be sure that what you send pertains to the effort of the Tea Party and their mission. It's also helpful to remember the five e-mail commandments:

- E** – mail only those people to whom your messages actually pertain to rather than your entire e-mail list.
- M** – ake a point of responding to messages promptly.
- A** – lways use spell-check and grammar check before sending messages.
- I** – nclude your telephone number and any other contact information.
- L** – earn that e-mail should be informative and correct. Verify your information.

Remember that e-mail has a potential disadvantage – it's one-sided and lacks personality. Be sure that your receiver has the information that they need and then there should be a "call to action". What are they to do with the information that you have just sent?

Maintain confidentiality. Treat your electronic correspondence with the same respect that you do a personal letter or business correspondence. When sending an e-mail blast, use your "bcc" box for your addresses and yourself as the recipient.



Following Meetings

Most group leaders have meetings at least once a month. Some have them more frequently. No matter how often, you will never have everyone in attendance.

Within two days following your meeting send out an e-mail to the group recapping the issues that were discussed. Those who were in attendance will be reminded of the topics. For those who were unable to attend, they will still feel connected and informed regarding the direction that your group is headed.

Always mention when and where the next meeting will be held so that everyone can make plans in advance.

Sometimes you will have some in your group that may need a “real” voice to encourage them. A phone call to some, prior to your meeting, may let them know that you value their input and presence. Most will benefit from a courtesy call.

If you are leaving a message on their phone, be sure to say who you are and then provide a brief but detailed idea of what you are calling about. “We’re having a meeting on Monday, I hope that you can join us at 7:00 P.M. at our usual place. Please contact me if you have any questions.” Be sure to leave all of your contact information.

Who doesn’t like compliments? We all do. And the more time you spend with others, the easier it is to acknowledge their good deeds. It will make people feel good about themselves and improve your relationship with others. When someone in your group does you a favor, comes up with a good idea, encourages someone else or does any good deed, be sure to acknowledge it.

Follow-up with Your Lawmakers

After a Face to Face Meeting

If you have had a one-on-one appointment with a lawmaker you are going to want to follow-up with a letter of thanks. You may have said a verbal “thank you” but is that enough? No! Any time someone exerts more than 15 minutes of energy to talk to you or do something for you, a written thank you is definitely in order.

You may be asking the question, “When may a thank you note be sent via e-mail or fax?” The best answer for this is: Never. That would be like trying to give someone a hug without touching them. The aim is to show that you went out of your way to express your thanks.

Typing for 30 seconds and hitting the “send” button or deciding not to use a stamp sends the opposite message that you are trying to communicate. It is far more appropriate to key or hand-write a note and send it to the person via “snail mail”. By doing so, your “thank you” will appear to be the result of a conscious effort to articulate your appreciation, rather than a hasty attempt to cross an item off your to-do list.



Follow-up on an e-mail

You may choose to contact your legislator via their web-site to voice your concern to him or her. It's a good idea to have a strategy each time you write so that when you do multiple contacts, you have a course of action and a record of what you have already done.

Commit yourself to the process of good communication. We all like to think that we're pretty good at it but often times we are really turning off those who we are trying to influence. It may not be intentional, but it happens and we need to be alert to the problem.

How do you know if you're turning off your legislator (or the aide who reads their e-mail)? The short answer is to put yourself in the shoes of him or her. If you're being disrespected or called names, would you continue to read an e-mail that you received? Would that person's opinion hold favor in your eyes? I think the answer is "no".

When following up on a prior concern, you may want to refer back to it and remind them of what you said. It's important to let your concern be heard. You will accomplish this with multiple contacts and doing so respectfully.

An important thing to remember is that just because you contact your legislator once doesn't mean that your job is done. It takes perseverance and tenacity to see results. You can do it – day by day and e-mail by e-mail.

Never Give Up

Keep going and the chances are you will stumble onto something, perhaps when you are least expecting it. I never heard of anyone stumbling onto something sitting down.

I love the story of a high school basketball coach who was attempting to motivate his players to persevere through a difficult season.

Halfway through the season he stood before his team and said, "Did Michael Jordan ever quit?" The team responded, "No!" He yelled, "What about the Wright brothers? Did they ever give up?" "NO, sir!" "Did Kurt Warner ever quit?" They yelled back, "NO." "Did Elmer McAllister ever quit?"

There was a silence until one player had the nerve to ask, "Who is Elmer McAllister? We never heard of him." The coach replied back, "Of course you never heard of him – he quit!"