



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Defining a Great Post



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What Makes a Great Post?

- There are over 12,000 AL Posts - NO TWO ARE ALIKE
 - Differences in size, wealth, assets, history, location, member attitudes, community support, personalities.
 - So, in general, what makes a great post?



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- Is it the size of your membership?
- Is it the number in your bank account?
- Is it the popularity of your bingo and raffles?

OR

- Is it the impact you have on the lives of your members?
- Is it the difference you make in your community?
- Is it the effect that your programs have on all involved?
- Is it the fact that your membership is growing (or at least maintaining)?



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**WHAT IMPACT IS THERE ON THE LIVES OF YOUR
MEMBERS?**



TAKE CARE OF YOUR PEOPLE

- Just as in the military, good leadership takes care of people
- Recognize those who do good things
- Submit people for the MANY awards at District and Department levels
- Submit the Post for awards (Local, Department, and National)
- Don't encourage activity simply for the sake of awards, but don't let good work go unrecognized



BUILD LATERAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Other Post Commanders, Officers, and Members
 - Find out their best practices to help your post
 - See if there are areas when you can join forces
- District Commander, officers, and committee chairpersons
 - Get to know what they do
 - Get to know them as people



ASSESS THE POST MEMBERSHIP'S ATTITUDE – BUILD INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Why should someone join your Post?
- Why should a new member renew and stay in your Post? (put yourself in their shoes and life situation)
- Why should new members get actively involved in Post activities?
- Would a woman/minority/young vet feel welcome at your Post?
- Would a woman/minority/young vet want to stay a member of your Post?



RELEVANT POST ACTIVITIES

- Your Post should have activities relevant to all members
- Members are different ages and lifestyles
- Do you have:
 - Veteran-oriented events
 - Family-oriented events
 - Children-oriented events
 - Community-oriented events
- Regularly scheduled vs. special events



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**WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES YOUR POST MAKE IN
YOUR COMMUNITY?**



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**The image of your post is what the
COMMUNITY thinks it is, not what
YOU think it is.**

**And, DEFINITELY not just what you
“want” it to be.**



DETERMINE YOUR IMAGE

- Talk to local leaders and business owners
- Talk to school leaders
- Talk to community members at local events
- Find out:
 - What they know about the Post / IF they know about the Post
 - What they think about the Post
 - How the post can better serve them and the community



BUILD LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Mayor, town council, administrator, etc.
 - Ask how the Post can better help the community
- Local business owners and leaders
 - Join the Chamber of Commerce
 - Create partnerships
 - Maybe even find Veterans along the way
- Communicate the value of the Post
 - “State of the Post” presentation



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

Is it what you expected/thought it was?

Is it what it should be?

How can you change it?



PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLKIT

- Guide to public relations in your Post
- Will answer most of your questions
- Examples of press releases, marketing materials, event planning, using photos and videos, working with local media
- Full of ideas and examples
- USE it! (<https://www.legion.org/prtoolkit>)



COMMANDER'S ROLE

- In most cases, the Post Commander should be the voice and the face of the American Legion in the community:
 - First, DO great things in and for your community
 - Then, make sure these things are PUBLICIZED and COMMUNICATED to the community



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**WHAT EFFECT ARE YOUR PROGRAMS HAVING ON
THOSE INVOLVED?**



AMERICAN LEGION PROGRAMS

Does your Post HAVE programs? Are you aware of what they are?

- <https://www.legion.org/programs>
- American Legion Baseball
- American Legion Boys State
- American Legion Boys Nation
- American Legion Junior Shooting Sports
- American Legion Oratorical Contest
- American Legion Scholarships
- American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement
- American Legion Amateur Radio Program
- American Legion Riders
- American Legion College
- National Emergency Fund
- Operation Comfort Warriors
- Temporary Financial Assistance
- Citizenship Classes
- Veterans Education and Employment
- Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
- Flag Advocacy
- Get out the Vote



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PROGRAMS DRIVE MEMBERSHIP



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IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP GROWING (OR AT LEAST
MAINTAINING)?



THE POST AND MEMBERSHIP

- Active, innovative Posts retain their members and draw new members
- Meaningful activities based around Legion values help create a positive reputation in the community
- A Post should be proud of its community, and a community should be proud of its Post
- We believe every Post activity is a membership activity –

Why?



IMPORTANCE OF MEMBERSHIP

- The Legion's great programs need funding and manpower to be effective
 - Membership provides both
- The Big Picture – the larger our organization, the more impact we have at all levels
- Each Post's goal should be growth, even modest growth



BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Great Posts have great members.
 - Great Posts are known in their communities.
 - Great Posts have great programs.
 - Great Posts grow!
-
- How? By setting and achieving goals.



SET POST GOALS

- Goals define what you want to accomplish; they define the purpose of your Post
- Goals direct attention and effort
- Goals regulate effort and motivate the need to act
- Goals make the organization persistent
- Goals help develop teamwork and planning
- People are more motivated when there are concrete, defined objectives to achieve



SETTING POST GOALS

- Membership-based goals
 - Recruiting and retention
- Program-based goals
 - Be better at what you do (not just bigger)
 - New programs
- Activity-based goals
 - New/better/different



MEETING THE GOALS

- Goals must be written and they must be visible
 - Posted on the wall
 - Published in the newsletter
 - On the website
- Talk about goal progress at meetings
- Let community leaders know your goals, if appropriate



TRACKING POST GOALS

- Keep track of where you are
 - Some goals need intermediate milestones
 - Members must be informed on how they are doing
- Hang up charts or progress reports in the Post
- Newsletter



CELEBRATE GOALS

- Celebrate and praise when goals are met
- Give special awards and recognition to those who excelled
- Focus on the positive things
- Use goal achievement as a springboard to the future – more goals



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QUESTIONS?