rolls and that they need to be approached with specific strategies.

Things we address with first-time members is how we get them engaged. Engaged members tend to come back. Unless you can show them the value of their membership, they can slip through the cracks.

2.) Say hello with a personal touch

First contact with the new member should come from a member of their new local post.

The personal touch is extremely important. Most members don’t join to be only contacted by the National Organization. The local legionnaire should highlight the value that he/she has received by membership and involvement in their post and “why you want to connect with us.” Follow that up with emails about upcoming events, a monthly calendar/newsletter, and an email from the post’s commander welcoming them aboard.

Of course, never address the newcomer as “Dear Legionnaire” use their name.

3.) Don’t overdo it

After initial “onboarding” and “welcome aboard” contacts, you may want to be more hands off for a month or so. Overwhelming them can be just as detrimental as ignoring them altogether. This is why it is imperative for your Membership Committee to be actively involved to ensure you discuss new members as it can be

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difficult to determine “what is enough, what is not enough, what is too much.”

4.) Do ‘member satisfaction assessments’

You need to find out what they want to gain from their membership and what they appreciate about The American Legion around six to nine months into that first year to determine if new members recognize the value of their membership prior to their first renewal notice.

To do that, you need to develop a survey that asks basic questions. Go back to basics:

Are their needs being met?

What do they appreciate most about the Post?

What would they like to see emphasized more?

Not only will questions like these allow you to gauge member engagement, you may also be able to find a way for them to volunteer in areas they find most important. This applies to new members, long standing members, and our beloved PUFLs as well. Once they start viewing “the Post” as “THEIR Post,” your retention rates will rise.

5.) “Sell” your Post

I’ve heard people say that they’re “not a salesman.” But, when I ask if they would recommend The American Legion to their Veteran friends, most tell me “ABSOLUTELY.”

One key thing to remember is every member of The American Legion should be selling our organization and should understand that it is their job to do so, whether they are a “professional salesperson” or not.

Once you have a new member, “selling” is simply reminding them why your post was worth joining to begin with.

6.) Always stress benefits

This isn’t just the VA Benefits we can help people receive by filing claims, but the benefits of camaraderie, a sense of mission, a purpose, and positively impacting the community. These benefits can vary post to post. Just as every community has its own identity, so does each post.

Utilize your CPR to discuss how active your Post has been and where you see room for growth, improvement, or possibly redirecting efforts into something with a greater impact.

7.) Keep it local

Rather than promote national success, impact, and emphasize advocacy on broad issues keep it local during the first year.

It is extremely important to stress the local post. People like to talk and hear about their own post and what’s going on there. Building a sense of local pride and loyalty is imperative to long term retention.

That doesn’t mean you don’t address National issues or promote National objectives. There is a definite value to tying local to national, don’t miss that opportunity.

8.) Emphasize programs

The American Legion has enough programs to ensure that there is basically something for everyone. However, if your post isn’t providing and promoting programs, you’re missing out on great opportunities. A list of programs can be found at: [https://www.legion.org/programs](https://www.legion.org/programs)

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FIND IT ONLINE: myLegion.org is a FREE website designed to connect members of The American Legion to their post and department leadership.
9.) Capture data

The Consolidated Post Report (CPR) is the best snapshot we have to gather and report data—not just to national (as is required by our National Charter), but to our members and our community. The more active your post is in the community, the more reasons people will have to join, stay, and recruit their friends. And, providing a snapshot of activity can and will increase their excitement about their membership at your Post.

10.) Meet them where they are

Veterans come from all backgrounds and fill every possible role in the community upon their exit from service. Don’t expect a “cookie cutter” approach to retention, recruiting, and engagement to work. There is no “one size fits all” strategy for a successful Post Membership Program. Get to know your post membership. Understand what makes them excited, promote their passions, get involved in your community, and watch your post grow.

Submitting the Consolidated Post Report validates support to the community, state and nation!

The Consolidated Post Report (CPR) is a summary of what The American Legion posts have accomplished in their communities and an opportunity to tell the story of the post on an easy-to-fill-out form. The CPR was established in 1975 in order to assist departments in the documentation of the various activities a specific post has done during the twelve-month reporting period, June 1st through May 31st. During the 2018-2019 reporting year, 70 percent of posts reported some activity.

Throughout the reporting year American Legion post members volunteered 723,170 hours in assisting veterans at VA hospitals; 44,046 Legionnaires gave over 69,053 pints of blood; 119,930 events covered through different media outlets totaled; performed 123,638 funeral honors at a cost of $2,486,177; sponsored 1,746 American Legion Baseball teams at a cost of $4,791,444; Legion posts sponsored 1,842 Boy Scout units for a cost of $1,598,896; through various school assisted programs they spent $955,897; presented 19,697 American flags at a cost of $287,656; performed 4,415,832 community service hours while spending $5,034,407 in support of those activities; and all other donations to Family Support Network, cancer research, United Way, American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, children’s hospitals, National Emergency Fund, Special Olympics, Temporary Financial Assistance, Children & Youth programs and other various activities totaled $10,679,784.

Some very important issues about the CPR that you may not even be aware of are:

- Our federal charter requires us to submit an annual report to Congress on our activities for the year
- The CPR is a discriminator and weighs heavy on requests for National Emergency Fund (NEF) support
- Our national commander delivers a report to Congress
- Over 4,000 posts have not submitted a CPR, and have not submitted one for years.
- Over one third of all American Legion activity has not be captured and reported to Congress
- It is the responsibility of the post, district and department to ensure the CPR is submitted.
- Mylegion.org has made it simple for a post to submit a CPR
- County, district and department commanders can track CPR submission with their myLegion.org account.

All the above information is available online at legion.org/bythenumbers with graphs for use in presentations or provided for information to others in the community to show the impact across the nation.

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District Training In A Box (DTIAB) is now available online at Legion.org. Below are screenshots on how to access the information. While the link moves to what is known as Dropbox an account with Dropbox is not required to access the presentations.

Go to www.legion.org/training

How to sign up for the Training newsletter.

Arrow down to Tools and Resources and click on District Training In A Box.
Once in the Dropbox it will take you to a directory as shown below. Click on the boxes to take you to other directories and presentations.

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Online video resources

Take advantage of American Legion videos on the Legion’s Vimeo and YouTube channel. Use these tools at meetings, awareness tables, kiosks and anywhere you want to engage others about The American Legion.

Vimeo.com/americanlegion

www.youtube.com/user/americanlegionHQ

Upcoming Issue Topics:

* Auxiliary collaboration efforts
* DC office activities

Encourage your fellow Legionnaires to take BASIC TRAINING. Just send them to http://www.legion.org/alei.

Completed Basic Training

Is your department holding training? Let us know and we will publicize it! Send your training info to train@legion.org.

MISSING AN EDITION?

Go to http://www.legion.org/training/newsletters and read or download any past edition you are missing!
National training under development

ALEI now stands for “American Legion Education Institute,” the forthcoming package of advanced American Legion online coursework for Legion Family members and youth program participants. The expanded ALEI will soon offer online training, YouTube videos, LEAD training videos, lesson plans for department instructors, and assistance for department Legion Colleges.

American Legion Basic Training — only the first step. The former American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI) course was renamed to “Basic Training” to indicate it is the first step of training. The original ALEI was an American Legion correspondence course designed decades ago to give members a history and description of the organization. The new Basic Training course is better defined as an introductory training course within the American Legion Extension Institute (now the new ALEI) explaining our mission, history, programs and basic skills. It is the anchor course for future training under ALEI. Basic Training is available now and is free at www.legion.org/alei.

District Training In A Box

To effectively implement District Training In A Box modules departments should maintain a cadre of approved educators, subject matter experts, facilitators, and trainers to develop members and progress the mission of the department through training. Graduates of National American Legion College and Department American Legion College are an excellent source for this group, but many of this group could be qualified based on their knowledge or expertise on a particular subject or profession. Many essential presenters at national workshops are members of the Sons of The American Legion and the color of a presenter’s cover should never be an assumption of their ability to promote training in a department, regardless of their connection or association to The American Legion family.

National Staff is developing training on the following topics:

PHASE ONE Following modules are completed: (See page 4 for how to access)

- Membership Development / Retention, Post adjutant, MyLegion.org, Membership Recruitment, Post Leader Development, Post commander, Online Transmittal Process, Parliamentary Procedures, Mentorship, This is The American Legion, Resolutions

PHASE TWO Projected Phase Completion Date: 2020 Spring NEC Meetings

- Post Chaplain, Post Filing Requirements, Developing a Post Vision, Post Sergeant-at-Arms, Growing a Post, Running a Meeting, American Legion Etiquette/Protocol, Growing a Program, Helping Veterans and Their Families/OCW, Messaging to Your Community Fundraising, Constitution/By-laws Best Practices, Mentoring, Finance Officer, Post Service Officer

PHASE THREE Projected Phase Completion Date: 2020 Fall NEC Meetings

- American Legion Riders, Oratorical Contest, Scholastic Scholarship, Sons of The American Legion, Boys State/Nation, American Legion Baseball, National Emergency Fund/disaster preparedness, Scouting, Junior Shooting Sports, American Legion foundations (Temporary Financial Assistance, Child Welfare Foundation and NEF), Youth Cadet Law Enforcement, color/honor guard, amateur radio (TALARC), Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps

While this training has the word “district” in the title, success of this training initiative lies squarely on the shoulders of the department level of the organization.
American Legion National College Class of 2019

There were 58 outstanding members who attended The American Legion National College this year.
Watch for upcoming info for next year!

Training Events Calendar

is now active! Check out
http://www.legion.org/training/events
for training events in your area.

Are you a department or district trainer and want your event on this calendar?

Add it today!

Don’t see the training you know should be there? Contact your department training team.