



GFWC Communications & Public Relations Advancement Area Webinar Communications 101: From Club Basics to Crisis and Everything in Between

PART 1 - CLUB BASICS

Creating effective ways to communicate with your membership is crucial to the health of your club, state or region. It's important to know how your members like to receive information...in print, or electronically? You may want to survey them. Are they open to change? If not, it may be important to create a mix, of old and new.

We reviewed 3 main parts of the basic Club Communications Strategy: Newsletters, Email Platforms, and your club website. There are more like social media, text messaging and virtual meetings; some will be covered later in this document and/or in future communications.

Club newsletters are one of the most efficient methods of informing GFWC members about projects, programs, events, partnerships, and issues.

- Appoint a newsletter chairman for your club and/or State Federation.
- Identify a layout and format that works best for your membership and budget. Remember to ask your members what THEY want!
- Include information distributed from all levels of GFWC leadership.
- Always provide club contact information.

Email Platforms. There are many email marketing platforms out there! We reviewed MailChimp and Constant Contact. Be sure to research what is best for you and your club.

Club website. Your club website is the public's first AND LAST impression of you and your members! It is always open, 24/7 for all to see so please make sure it is up to date and that it contains fresh and timely content. Also – SHOW what you do for your community! Make visitors to your site want to be a part of your club!

- Appoint a website chairman for your club and/ or State Federation
- Link to GFWC.org to show that your club/State Federation is a part of GFWC.
- Develop a plan for updating the website and share the responsibilities for writing new content.
- Promote your website on social media posts and include website address in printed materials.

PART 2 – VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

There are many reasons to consider a virtual meeting for your club, district or other types of meetings. We reviewed some of the more common options available but encourage you to research your own.

- Facetime – Requires iPhone/iPad. This is very limited but allows both audio and video. Be sure your connectivity is good.
- Email –Survey Monkey and Constant Contact are two good options for taking surveys on items of interest. With the pandemic, women have been very resourceful with the use of email.
- Teams – This is a Microsoft product (Office 365) that allow visual and audio meetings. If all participants have Microsoft office accounts, this is included in the annual subscription. Cost could be a factor.
- Big Marker – This is a great solution for large groups. It allows the group leader to monitor the meeting and control video and audio. There is a cost to the product, but it is a great tool, especially for non-profit organizations!
- Facebook Live – This solution works well for a meeting. There is no cost to host this type of meeting, but it does require every participant to have a Facebook profile account.
- Zoom - This solution has proven to be very effective and enjoyable by the participants. The service can be used for up to 100 participants for 40 minutes with no cost and offers various plans that are affordable.

Housekeeping Tips for a Productive Meeting

- Remind participants that the audience can see and hear everything going on.
- Ask everyone to silence their cell phones.
- Be engaged in the meeting (resist the urge to look at your phone).
- Ask everyone to please respect the person speaking. A good rule is no one speaks for 3 seconds after the last person stops speaking.
- Consider asking everyone to mute and “raise their hand” with a comment/question.
- Utilize the chat function in a large group meeting.
- Make it fun with a theme or project idea.
- Give plenty of notice with dial-in information.
- Be considerate of the time of the meeting to include most of your members.
- Consider this type of meeting anytime to stay connected (even without a pandemic). It might just make it convenient for new and current members.
- Plan ahead for all members to have access – consider a Tech Buddy for those who need assistance.

PART 3 – CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Is your club prepared to stay connected in a crisis? The time to plan is NOW! Communication in a disaster situation may be very difficult in the beginning. Phone lines could be down, power may be out for an extended time and internet service might be nonexistent. You may have to get creative! The most important tools you can utilize in times of crisis are ones that you already use, and communication is the key:

- Email your members that have been affected. They are on ground zero and will know their needs better than anyone. They can also advise what their community needs.
- Phone-Service may be very limited in the first few days if there is major damage to infrastructure. Leave a voicemail if needed and make sure to follow up.
- Facebook-Reach out via messenger. Once you know the needs and where people should send them post on your club or state Facebook page. This is super effective because it can reach many people almost immediately and information can be updated on an as needed basis.
- In Person Meeting-Do you already have an event scheduled? If so then communicate before/during the event with all the details.

Time to Update! A crisis is a good time to take a step back and check relevant information. Make sure that your mailing address and phone number are up to date on your club website so that people can find your current contact information.

How to Help Clubs in Crisis:

- Email-Start with club presidents in the affected area or the State President
- Phone-Reaching out via phone can be the jumping off point to effective help
- Facebook-Check social media and see if club has posted. If not, there is nothing wrong with sending a message. Quick communication can be critical in a crisis situation.
- In Person Meeting- Make an announcement to members ahead of time. Collect \$\$ or gift cards. If you are near the crisis area, you may want to collect water, food, toiletries and clothing if you have the resources to deliver.

We've Received Aid – Now What?

- Form a committee to made decision and be in charge of getting to help to those in need. An alternative plan is to consult with the executive board and ask for help. If you receive goods that need to be distributed, time may be of the essence so take that into consideration. Also help may come in for several months so create a backup plan in case those you helped initially are good to go and you need to take supplies elsewhere.

In the end it is all about effective communication! Because each CRISIS is so different, good communication to and from the affected areas will be in key in making sure that needs are met! Just remember; communication is most effective when **information is up to date** whether that be via email, social medial. word of mouth etc.

PANDEMIC CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS CASE STUDY: GFWC CA

In a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, where cancellations were widespread, you need to go back to Part 1 -club basics! Make good use of EVERY COMMUNICATION TOOL: Email, Social Media, Website.

Send messages of support through state leadership and district/region leadership. Can be emailed, posted to social media or through phone calls! Point is – you need to utilize ALL METHODS OF Communication to reach the membership.

The House Don't Fall When the Bones are Good

The more prepared you are, the less challenging it will be to reach your members in a crisis. Update phone trees, email database and mailing database frequently and encourage members to follow state pages on social media.

Stay in contact with members and be sure to ask them what they want in terms of meetings, etc. moving forward throughout and after the pandemic. Many may wish to still connect remotely, and others may want to meet in-person. You'll need to be flexible to keep members engaged, active and involved with your club.

GFWC Communications& Public Relations Committee

Please reach out to any of us at any time! We look forward to bringing you more exciting ways to connect and communicate with your members and your communities this administration!

Karyn Charvat, Chairman, GFWC Great Lakes Region - karyncharvat@comcast.net

Becky Bolden, GFWC Southern Region - beckybolden11@gmail.com

Denise Cannatella, GFWC South Central Region - declodge17@gmail.com

Kathy Canzano, GFWC Mid Atlantic Region - kathycanz54@gmail.com

Amanda Guidry GFWC Southeastern Region - amandaguidry2010@yahoo.com

Eileen Hageman, GFWC Mississippi Valley Region - eileen4gfwc@gmail.com

Nancy Kalyan, GFWC New England Region - kalyangfwc@aol.com

Dori Kelsey, GFWC Western States Region - catsmeowz@comcast.net