Detachment of Vermont
COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Strengthening Communication Within the Sons of The American Legion

“Information shared is information that can become action.”

30–45 Minute Leadership & Membership Training

What We Will Accomplish

By the end of this session, members should be able to:

- Understand why communication directly affects membership, programs, morale, and trust.
- Recognize where communication commonly breaks down between members, officers, committees, Squadrons, Districts, Detachment, and National.
- Choose the right communication method for the message.
- Handle disagreements directly, respectfully, and professionally.
- Leave with a simple communication plan that can be used immediately.

Start With Our Mission

Different responsibilities. One organization. One purpose.

WHY WE JOIN

We serve as members of the Sons of The American Legion to honor the service and sacrifice of the veterans through whom we are eligible.

WHY WE COMMUNICATE

Good information helps members understand the mission, know what is expected, and see where they can help.

WHY IT MATTERS

When communication fails, people fill the gaps with assumptions. That can lead to frustration, rumors, missed opportunities, and lost members.

Communication Must Move Both Ways

Leadership communicates. Members communicate. Everyone listens

INFORMATION ↓

FEEDBACK ↑

NATIONAL

DETACHMENT

DISTRICT

SQUADRON

MEMBER

Communication Is Everyone's Responsibility

OFFICERS

Keep members informed. Explain decisions. Set expectations. Follow up. Make sure official information reaches the people who need it.

CHAIRMEN & COMMITTEES

Report progress, needs, problems, and deadlines. Do not wait until a meeting—or until a problem becomes a crisis—to communicate.

MEMBERS

Ask questions. Read communications. Attend meetings when possible. Bring concerns to the right person and share ideas constructively.

Use the Right Tool for the Message

EMAIL

Best for official information, details, agendas, minutes, deadlines, and items people may need to reference later.

TEXT / CHAT

Best for short reminders, quick coordination, and simple updates—not long disagreements.

PHONE / IN PERSON

Best when the issue is sensitive, complicated, emotional, or being misunderstood.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Best for public awareness and promotion. Never assume a post replaces direct official communication.

A Simple Rule

The more sensitive the issue, the more personal the communication should become.

REMINDER	→	**Text / message**
INFORMATION	→	**Email / written notice**
COMPLEX ISSUE	→	**Phone call**
CONFLICT	→	**Direct conversation**

Listening Is Communication

Members are more likely to stay engaged when they know their voice matters.

- Listen to understand—not simply to prepare your response.
- Give new members the same opportunity to speak as longtime members.
- Ask: “What am I missing?” before assuming you have the whole story.
- Repeat back the important point to make sure you understood it correctly.
- Different opinions are not automatically disrespect.
- Leadership needs honest feedback—even when the feedback is uncomfortable.

When We Disagree

We can disagree and still work together.

1. GO TO THE PERSON

Talk directly to the person involved instead of talking about the person.

2. GET THE FACTS

Ask questions before reacting. Separate what you know from what you heard.

3. ADDRESS THE ISSUE

Focus on the decision, behavior, deadline, or problem—not personalities.

4. FIND THE NEXT STEP

End the conversation with who will do what, by when, and how you will follow up.

Discussion Scenario #1: The Missed Deadline

Take 4–5 minutes as a group.

A Detachment deadline is missed. The information was emailed to the Squadron Commander, but the Commander assumed everyone else had seen it. Members say, “Nobody ever told us.”

- Where did communication break down?
- Who had responsibility for moving the information?
- What system could prevent this next time?

Discussion Scenario #2: The Social Media Problem

Take 4–5 minutes as a group.

A member is upset about a decision and posts about it on Facebook before speaking with the Commander or committee chairman. Other members begin commenting without knowing the full story.

- What should have happened first?
- How should leadership respond without making the situation worse?
- What should our organization expect from members and officers online?

Communication Is a Membership Tool

Sometimes a member does not leave because of dues—they leave because they stopped feeling connected.

- Welcome new members personally and explain what the Sons of The American Legion does.
- Make sure members know when meetings, programs, ceremonies, and volunteer opportunities are happening.
- Contact members before they disappear—not only when their dues are due.
- Ask inactive members what would make them want to participate again.
- Thank members for what they do. Recognition is communication too.

The 5-Point Communication Plan

A simple standard every Squadron or committee can adopt.

1. **SHARE**
   Important information goes to more than one person.

2. **CONFIRM**
   Make sure the people who need it received and understood it.

3. **REPORT**
   Officers and chairmen give regular progress updates.

4. **FOLLOW UP**
   Every assignment ends with a person, deadline, and next contact.

5. **LISTEN**
   Create a clear way for members to ask questions and give feedback.

Before You Leave

Choose one communication improvement you will make

- What information are members currently missing?
- Where does information tend to stop?
- Who needs to be included earlier?
- What is one communication habit we can change this month?

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

We may have different titles and responsibilities, but our mission brings us together.

When we communicate, listen, share information, and respect one another, we become a stronger Sons of The American Legion.

HONOR • SERVICE • COMMUNICATION • TEAMWORK

Training Evaluation

1. Did you like training?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments:_____

_____

2. Is there anything you may need help with that we did not cover today?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name:_____

optional