

Communication Strategy

Executive Officer Rob Oerlemans

Background

Strategy 2.3 of the Organisational Plan calls for a Communication Strategy.

Clubs identified in the 2010 National survey, concerns about limited knowledge about the operations, structure and activities of the Multiple District. Annually, District Governors often complain about limited, or absent, information about Council decisions affecting their term.

Universally, the geographic diversity of the organisation, club autonomy, low cost structure, extended organisational hierarchy and annual turnover of leadership create significant challenges for the organisation to communicate effectively.

Issues

This communication strategy recommends a multi-layered approach using electronic and physical tools, to ensure that messages are delivered comprehensively, effectively and in a timely manner.

If Lions is to grow and thrive, it is important that we are all able to 'sing from the same song sheet'. Since the structure turns over annually, and since voluntary roles to guide the organisation are distributed geographically, we need to be careful and diligent in managing communication.

Most importantly, the Leadership Team needs to be unified in how it disseminates information. Through clear and consistent communication, the Leadership Team not only communicates information but also builds a Corporate culture. This is critically important since we have acknowledged through the Organisational Plan that it is necessary to deliver a new, youthful and progressive culture.

For the purpose of this strategy, the Leadership Team incorporates the Council, the Management Group and National Office. It is critical that all these individuals have current and consistent information.

The strategy comprises two important elements; the type of information to be communicated, and the key methods.

Through electronic media, new and efficient methods of communication are available to us, however it also means that the organisation is less able to control communication flows. Anyone in the Association can use e-mail, websites and social media to communicate their messages; far more cheaply than physical mail systems.

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Strategy

The strategy below, details how information will be disseminated. It relies on the active participation of the Leadership Team.

1. Communicating corporate directions, decisions and organisational culture
 - 1.1. Council Minutes
 - 1.1.1. Executive Officer distributes electronically to Council.
 - 1.1.2. District Governor briefs Cabinet on key outcomes affecting the operation of the District.
 - 1.1.3. Minutes are made available to members, electronically on request, once adopted by Council.
 - 1.2. Council Briefing Note
 - 1.2.1. The Executive Officer prepares a briefing note following each Council meeting, covering critical matters of interest for District Administrations.
 - 1.2.2. No confidential matters are included so that the document can be publicly distributed.
 - 1.2.3. The District Governor forwards an electronic copy of the Briefing note to their Cabinet, and 1st and 2nd Vice District Governor, together with any notes they wish to add.
 - 1.3. The Lion
 - 1.3.1. The Council Chairperson highlights critical decisions in his/her bi-monthly article in The Lion.
 - 1.4. National Coordinators
 - 1.4.1. National Coordinators communicate relevant material, in writing, to their Committees following the Council Meeting, with a copy to the Executive Officer.
 - 1.5. E-mail and other internet-based communication
 - 1.5.1. In order to develop a strong and unified organisation there must be an expectation that all members embrace e-mail as a method of communication. In particular, it ought to be a requirement that any member seeking a leadership role at Multiple District, District or Club level maintain an active e-mail account.
2. Lions Clubs International Decisions and programs
 - 2.1. The Lion
 - 2.1.1. LCI communicates directly to Lions through "The Lion" that they control. The Multiple District needs to support this method by encouraging members to read the magazine.
 - 2.2. E-mail
 - 2.2.1. LCI is making increasing use of e-mail to distribute information directly to members. In order to develop a strong and unified organisation there must be an expectation that all members embrace e-mail as a method of communication. In particular, it ought to be a requirement that any member seeking a leadership role at Multiple District, District or Club level maintain an active e-mail account.

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2.2.2. Personal communication

2.2.3. MD201 is fortunate to have an increased profile on the international Lions stage due to the campaign for VP Barry Palmer to achieve the role of International President. One of the likely outcomes is increased visitation by Senior Lions. The Multiple District, Districts and Clubs should be encouraged to invite international speakers to events to build knowledge about the International Association.

3. Multiple District Programs

- 3.1. Essential corporate information about the governance, structure, and principal programs of the Multiple District will be provided on the Multiple District website.
- 3.2. Multiple District Programs and Foundations and Districts will be discouraged from copying this information for use on other websites and electronic media. The preferred method of referencing the material on other electronic media will be through "linking" to ensure consistency of information.
- 3.3. It should be mandatory that any Category A, B or C Multiple District Program, and any National Foundation maintain a current website, postal box and e-mail address to provide accessibility to the membership.
 - 3.3.1.1 Policy and Constitutional review: This strategy acknowledges objective 6.0 of the Organisational Plan, with respect to a review of the Constitution, By-laws and Policy to improve consistence of information.
 - 3.3.1.2 The Multiple District Facebook and Blog sites will be used to convey information to members in a less formal setting. The collaborative nature of these tools will enable two-way conversations between Lions and is an important way to discuss new direction and create cultural change.

4. General principles

- 4.1. The Multiple District will seek to eliminate duplication of information in various publications and electronic media that leads to inconsistency of information.
- 4.2. In order to improve the quality of information and its ability to be used in a wide fora, the organisation shall work to produce information in clear, modern language.

Resources for the Leadership Team

It is reasonable to expect that the important and high-priority messages from the Multiple District be delivered consistently by the Leadership Team. Following the Council meeting, the Council of Governors, National Coordinators and National Office staff, should be promoting the decisions and direction of the Multiple District Council. In fact, if any Lion approached their Governor, the Leadership Coordinator and the Lions Customer Service Coordinator to enquire about the progress of the Christmas Cake Program as reported at Council, for example; they should be able to receive a reasonable answer.

The concern is that information is not readily available to personnel to resource these enquiries.

More concerning is the volume of information required to be absorbed and disseminated by Governors during their short year. E-mail systems, while fast a flexible, place a substantial onus on Governors to read, sort and remember critical information.

For this reason, in this business paper, we propose the establishment of an electronic management system for the Leadership Team.

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The secure electronic portal for the Leadership Team will ensure they can communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders. This portal will include:

- (1) The Multiple District Calendar of meetings and events.
- (2) 5 years archival Business Papers and Minutes.
- (3) Future Business Papers
- (4) Council Briefing notes
- (5) Council circulars
- (6) The Multiple District Constitution
- (7) The Multiple District Policy Minutes
- (8) Minutes of Multiple District Coordinating Committees

This secure portal will ensure that the decisions, directions and culture of the organisation can be delivered in a consistent, practical and meaningful way. It will simplify the logistical elements of managing communication and reduce the capacity for error.

In every sense, it will make communication simpler and clearer for our leadership team.

Rev #		Description of Change
1.0	June 2013	New document
2.0	Jan 2014	Amendment following Councils Review of Technology Strategy

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