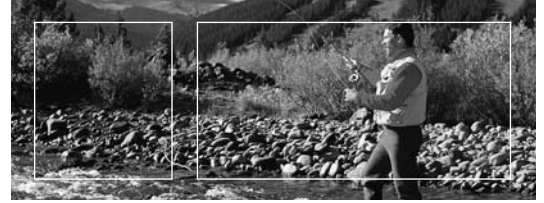


UNIT VI:

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING



SUMMARY — This unit describes proven communication techniques to help your chapter improve its community outreach and inform and educate its members. Keeping your members informed and supportive of all aspects of the League will generate volunteers and new leaders. Building the League's brand in the community will give your membership marketing efforts a boost and help to further advance our conservation mission.

External Communications

One way to measure the success of a League chapter is its prominence in the community. Have you ever talked to someone about the League and heard them say, "The Izaak Walton League! Who are they? What do they do?"

If this has happened to you, your chapter has room for improvement in its public relations efforts. Your chapter should set a goal of raising its visibility in the community and watch what happens to your membership numbers. The more people know about the League's mission, the more conservation work we can accomplish.

Public Relations

Having an effective public relations effort is the key to building the League's reputation in your community and spreading the conservation message. Unfortunately, chapters often overlook public relations in developing projects or annual plans. Here are some simple ways your chapter can launch a public relations effort.

Educate the Public — How do you acquaint the public with the League? You must let them know what you are doing. If you have nothing newsworthy to tell, your chapter may not be focused enough on the League's conservation mission. Select a worthwhile project or activity and be sure to invite the public to participate.

Units IV and V provide examples of many good conservation projects and outdoor recreation and activities. Here are a few potentially newsworthy ones:

- **Conservation Projects.** Tree planting, stream monitoring and restoration, roadside litter clean-up

Keeping your members informed and supportive of all aspects of the League will generate volunteers and new leaders.



*Let the local media
help you generate free
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- **Fund-Raising Projects.** Wild game dinner, recycling drive, field day
- **Fun Projects.** Dance, trap shoot, canoe float trip
- **Youth Projects.** Kid's fishing derby, outdoor skills clinic
- **Youth Education.** Scholarships, sponsorship for conservation camp
- **Public Education.** Hunter safety education course, wetlands workshop
- **Public Celebrations.** Arbor Day, National Fishing Week, Earth Day, National Hunting and Fishing Day

Never overlook the opportunity to promote any project that provides a service to the community, regardless of type or size. Play it up big. You should be proud of your League chapter and want the community to know about it.

Publicity and Media Relations — Let the local media help you generate free publicity and increased community support for your efforts. To do their job, reporters and broadcasters need your help, and they are not as intimidating as you might think.

The Message. To get the attention of editors or reporters, you need to offer them something newsworthy. Information is newsworthy if it is unusual or surprising, involves change, is timely and local, involves conflict, or affects the entire community. There are many ways to create newsworthy events. For example, organize a neighborhood litter cleanup, hold an Arbor Day poster contest in the schools, or present an award to a known citizen-conservationist.

Making Contact. Once you have something to publicize, make a list of all local newspapers and magazines (daily, weekly, and monthly), as well as television and radio stations. Next, take note of the editorial page writers, local news broadcasters, or reporters who regularly cover the outdoors, the environment, or community events. Also find out who manages the calendar of events section.

What Journalists Want. Legitimate, substantive news attracts journalists' attention. So in your dealings with them:

- Be clear about why your event matters and why it is important to the community. A local angle is key unless a reporter is writing for a national publication or network.
- Make sure the news is timely. Reporters aren't interested in activities from three weeks ago. Be sure that you're publicizing an upcoming event or issue.
- Remember that deadlines are important. Weekly newspapers want information several days, if not weeks, in advance. Monthly

publications work as much as two or three months ahead of time. Be aware of this and avoid calling reporters about something new when they are on deadline.

News Releases — Most journalists are very willing to hear news tips, story ideas, or announcements of events by phone or in person. However, they will usually ask you to give them written information first; that means producing a news release (also called a press or media release) to publicize an activity or accomplishment.

How to Write a News Release. It is important to communicate all the necessary information clearly and concisely. Reporters are too busy to browse through unimportant material. Keep your message short and straightforward — no longer than one page front and back, double-spaced. You may attach a fact sheet or chapter brochure with additional information, but be sure the key information is in the press release itself. Here are some points to keep in mind:

- If available, type the press release on chapter letterhead. In the top left corner, type “DATE: (Month, Day, Year)” and “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.”
- Below the dateline, type “CONTACT: (Name, title, phone number, and e-mail address of two contact people).” Be sure one of the contacts is always available. If a reporter needs a quotation or more information, he or she must be able to reach someone quickly.
- Skip a line, and then type a one-line headline that summarizes your release. Center it and type it in boldface. For example: **“Jamestown Izaak Walton Chapter Organizes James River Workshop.”**
- Skip another line and begin the first, and most important, paragraph. At the beginning of the paragraph, type the dateline — the city (in all capital letters) and the state abbreviation (not postal service abbreviation). For instance: “GAITHERSBURG, Md. — The Izaak Walton League released a new study yesterday ...”
- Your lead paragraph should cover all the basics: what is happening, who is doing it, when and where it is taking place, and why it is important to the community. Subsequent paragraphs should expand on the first, providing additional interesting information and quotations. The final paragraph should give readers the name and phone number of someone to call for more information.
- At the end of the completed release, mark with either “### ” or “-30-” to let reporters know they have reached the end.
- Skip a line and write a sentence or two identifying the chapter, the League, and their goals. For example, “The Izaak Walton League of



Produce news releases to publicize an activity or accomplishment.



America was established in 1922. Its members work to protect soil, air, woods, water, and wildlife.”

Other considerations when sharing information with media outlets include:

Quotations. People like to read what someone else has to say. In a news release, it helps the reporter write the story. They may want to interview you or the key person involved, but may not have the time. By supplying one or more ready-made quotations, (in a longer release, two or three are even better), the editor or reporter can write a story that sounds as if they did an interview. Quotations also provide an important opportunity to highlight your most important messages.

Photos. Ask your media contact if he or she would like photographs to support the article. Daily newspapers may not want photos for simple announcements. But if the story has a human-interest angle, it will help the presentation and will help you secure more space. Make sure the photo is clear with good definition. Photography requirements will vary. Weekly papers are more likely to take a photo. Both may use their own photographer if they are doing an interview. If a television station decides to cover your story, they will supply their own camera crew for video footage.

Deadlines. Observing deadlines is critical to success. When you first contact a reporter, find out what his or her deadlines are. Be sure never to talk to them about your story when they are busy and working on another deadline. Try to have your release arrive a day or two before you want the story to appear. If you are pitching to a weekly publication, send the release a week in advance of when you’d like it to appear. When a reporter calls you for information, be sure to ask for the deadline. Be courteous and respond immediately to their messages.

Note: Refer to Appendix M for a sample news release.

Interviews — Congratulations! Your news release worked and several reporters want to cover your event. You now want to be prepared to talk to the reporters. News people are very willing to learn more about news tips, story ideas, or announcements once they’ve reviewed your submitted written information.

How to Prepare for an Interview. Have all of your facts and information ready before any interviews. Reporters want specifics. Be ready to answer all of their questions, including who, what, where, when, how, and why. Here are some other points to keep in mind:

- Develop a brief statement of the League’s position on the topic you will address or the purpose of your event.

Quotations also provide an important opportunity to highlight your most important messages.

- Stick to the facts and illustrate your points with examples or anecdotes. Clearly state your views in short sentences supported by facts. Your biggest challenge in dealing with the media, particularly broadcast, is time. Before an interview, put together a few clear and concise sentences that best summarize your views.
- Remember, an interview with a reporter is not a normal conversation. You don't have to answer their particular questions, especially on broadcast. Have bridging sentences ready that will bring you back to the few key points you want to get across.
- During non-broadcast interviews, if you don't know the answer to a question, tell the reporter you will get back to him or her with the information if time permits. Or use your bridging sentences to drive your message home.

Other Media Contacts — Don't forget to look beyond the normal local media outlets for additional opportunities for publicity.

Outdoor Writers. Outdoor writers are often members of the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA) or an organized statewide outdoor writers group. Their expertise and interest in the outdoors, nature, conservation, and the environment makes the League's issues particularly appealing to them. While many write for state, regional, or national publications, often they do freelance work for local newspapers and magazines. Some have regularly aired radio shows or produce television shows, often on a local cable provider. These are the perfect contacts to invite to visit your chapter, view a project, or attend an activity or event.

IWLA State Division. League state divisions often publish newsletters and maintain a Web site for promoting information about their chapters. Get to know and communicate regularly with the state division newsletter editor and web master.

IWLA National Office. Don't forget to pass along your newsworthy information to the League's communication staff for possible inclusion in the League's magazine, *Outdoor America*, and the Web site. Articles about your chapter's newsworthy events and projects also may be sent to the National Office. If you can include good photos, the article's chance of being used in *Outdoor America* is enhanced.

Note: Refer to the current *IWLA National Directory* or Web site for contact information.

Public Relations Committee/Media Outreach Chair — If you want to build an ongoing public relations effort, consider establishing a public relations or media outreach standing committee for the chapter.



If possible, recruit a person who has some expertise in the field to serve as the committee chair.

If possible, recruit a person who has some expertise in the field to serve as the committee chair. This person will also serve as a liaison with the National Office to communicate the chapter's public relations needs and receive League news updates and the latest information on dealing with the media.

With time and a plan, your committee will be on its way to developing key media contacts in the community and generating local and regional news coverage of your chapter's activities and events.

Your committee should keep a file or scrapbook of all printed news items covering your activities and events. You should also keep a list of radio and TV coverage, including the story's title, the media outlet, and the date. This will help the committee determine which communication vehicles are most effective and what kinds of stories and activities are covered. It will also help new committee members learn the ropes and add new sources to the list. In addition, news clips will help you recruit new members and apply for grants, since they provide solid evidence of your chapter's accomplishments.

Note: Refer to Unit I — League Leadership, for more information on chapter standing committees and committee chairs.

Internet

No other innovation in recent decades has changed the way we communicate with each other more than the Internet. Today, more than 70 percent of Americans use the Internet to shop, communicate, donate, and to join charitable organizations like the League.

The medium's speed, low cost, and almost timeless capabilities allow the League, its state divisions, and local chapters to reach new audiences efficiently and effectively. For example, the Internet has proven extremely helpful in organizing events, reaching the public with information on those events and activities, and in launching grassroots campaigns.

Web sites — All League chapters are encouraged to establish their own Web sites. These sites will provide the League with a greater presence, spread our conservation mission, and help attract new members.

Benefits. League chapters with Web sites have increased membership, volunteer support, and enhanced name recognition in their communities.

Design. Even a chapter with a few members and limited computer savvy can design and maintain its own Web site. There are many easy-to-use software packages on the market and associated services provided by various Internet service providers. In addition, the League's National Office has developed a template for chapters and state divisions to use to establish their

own Websites, at no charge, using *Google Sites*. For the chapter web page registration form and design template specifics, refer to Appendix G.

Web master. The first step in establishing a chapter Web site is to designate a chapter web master. This person will serve as a liaison with the National Office to communicate the chapter's web needs and receive the latest information on managing a Web site. Once the initial Web site is launched, the web master will be responsible for maintaining the site. While one person can handle this task, it would be helpful to have one or two other volunteers involved in the initial set up and day-to-day maintenance of the site.

Maintenance. The web master should update the information on the Web site as chapter news becomes available. You'll want to keep your site fresh by regularly updating news and by posting information about upcoming activities and membership information.

You should also include links to national and state division Web sites, and to like-minded groups and businesses. Chapters are asked to notify the League's National Office when they establish their own Web sites. This enables staff to link the national Web site's chapter page with yours, further aiding potential new members. Please send your Web site information electronically to chapters@iwla.org, or contact the Chapter Relations Department by calling toll free: (800) IKE- LINE, extension 236.

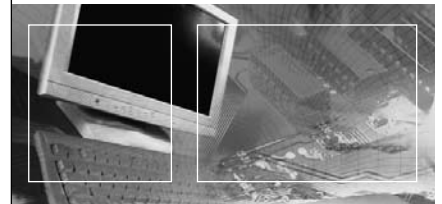
Advertising

Advertising attempts to persuade potential customers to purchase or consume more of a particular product or service. In our case, we advertise to attract new members and promote our brand of conservation.

Paid Advertising Space — Most advertisements appear in major media outlets such as television, radio, magazines, newspapers, billboards, and the Internet. Advertising is often placed by an advertising agency, but at the local level, chapters are likely to deal directly with media outlets.

Advertising can be expensive. To get more for your advertising dollars, seek and negotiate non-profit rates. If you prepay, you may receive a discount. By negotiating a package deal — running the same or similar ad multiple times — you may receive further discounts.

Public Service Announcements — Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are a different form of advertisement, designed to change people's minds about an issue, or inspire them to act. PSAs are submitted to media outlets for free placement, as space becomes available. To increase your chances of placement, you will want to create pre-made or camera-ready



The League has developed a template for chapters and state divisions to use to establish their own Websites.

Chapter bulletins, newsletters, and e-mails are the primary ways to inform chapter members about news, events, and other important information.

Keeping your members informed is essential to keeping them engaged in the chapter's work.

advertisements in a variety of sizes. Newspapers and magazines normally will provide you with the specifications for the ad sizes that they run.

In creating the PSA, you will want to get across your factual information using persuasive language and few words. Although photos are optional, the right photo can also go a long way towards conveying your message. Remember to include a contact for more information, such as a telephone number, e-mail address, or the chapter Web site.

Once again, negotiation can pay off. You might consider negotiating a two-for-one deal, where you pay for one placement, and they give you the second one for free as an in-kind service. The media outlet can claim a tax-deduction for this donation.

Internal Communications

Keeping your members informed is essential to keeping them engaged in the chapter's work. Although external media outreach efforts will also help keep your own members informed, there are several internally directed communication vehicles that can relay information to your members, such as newsletters, telecommunications, and the Internet. Below are basic descriptions of each.

Newsletters

Chapter bulletins, newsletters, and e-mails are the primary ways to inform chapter members about news, events, and other important information. A newsletter is a regularly distributed publication generally about one main topic that is of interest to its subscribers — in this case, about the League chapter. Newsletters delivered electronically via e-mail, called e-newsletters, have gained rapid acceptance for the same reasons e-mail is gaining popularity over printed correspondence.

Printed — Published and mailed newsletters are currently the most common way chapters communicate with their members. Your newsletter should provide information of interest, not only to chapter members, but to supporters, community leaders, and potential members. Sending copies of newsletters to those outside the chapter membership is a common marketing strategy.

Content and Design. Keep your content crisp and relevant to your members, the community, and goals of the chapter. For example, insert your calendar of events, award announcements, and updates on chapter projects, activities, events, meetings, and workdays. You can also promote volunteer

opportunities by placing “want ads” seeking people with certain skills that are needed for an upcoming project or repair work.

For a better mix of information, utilize conservation news recycled from the League publications, reports, and Web site. The chapter editor should sign up to receive electronic copies of the League’s media releases, action alerts, and e-newsletter, *Conservation Currents*, via e-mail.

Simple design work can be performed on a personal computer. There are various publishing, font, and graphic design software packages available, many of which offer easy-to-use design templates.

Sponsorship and Underwriting. Some chapter newsletters sell advertising space to generate income or cover the costs of publication. Like-minded groups and businesses may want to support your chapter by purchasing advertising space in your newsletter.

It is important to note that in selling advertising space, certain restrictions may apply. For example, depending on the postage rate you use to mail the newsletter, your chapter may incur unrelated business income tax. For more information on this subject, refer to Unit II — Finance, Legal, and Fund Raising, and be sure to consult with a tax accountant if you decide to move forward.

Considerations. Producing a newsletter has its own challenges and demands. For example:

- Will you have enough information to complete and produce an issue? One technique is establishing set deadline dates for chapter leaders and committees to send you their submissions.
- The timeliness of the information is important, as is regular delivery. Whatever your schedule — monthly, quarterly, semi-quarterly — members will look for it. If it doesn’t come, they may lose interest and the newsletter will lose its effectiveness.
- Printing and print production (which also involves folding, tabbing, and affixing labels) costs money and requires volunteer assistance or the use of a mail house.
- Postage costs can add up if you mail your newsletter at the first-class rate. While discounted bulk and non-profit rates can save money, they also require a minimum of 200 pieces. To obtain discounted rates, you must have a U.S. Postal Service permit and sort all items by zip code order. Contact your local postmaster or the specialized bulk rate mail clerk at a regional post office for more details.



Chapters are requested to put the League's National Office on their newsletter mailing list.

Electronic — Sending electronic newsletters (e-newsletters) to members is perhaps the easiest, fastest, and cheapest method of delivery. An e-newsletter involves the same text, artwork, and photos as found on a printed and mailed newsletter, but requires a few tweaks to prepare it for dissemination via e-mail.

For e-newsletters to succeed, you must maintain a current listing of members' e-mail addresses. In addition, for those members who do not have access to e-mail accounts, you will still need to print and mail hard copies. Remember to also post a copy of the newsletter on your chapter Web site for easy access.

Chapters are requested to put the League's National Office on their newsletter mailing list. Staff benefits from the shared information, and it improves our ability to offer more program support for the chapters' many projects and activities. Please send printed editions to the attention of the Chapter Relations Department or electronically to: chapters@iwla.org.

Note: In this fast-paced society, the use of e-mails greatly expedites communications between League staff, leaders and members. It is important to gather and utilize them locally, as well as transmit members' current e-mail addresses to the National Office for limited official League use.

Newsletter Editor. Most chapters designate a newsletter editor (with the help of additional volunteers) to oversee the writing, production, and distribution of their newsletter. The newsletter editor is typically a member of the public relations committee.

If your chapter designates an editor, please have the individual contact the National Office so we can keep them informed of the latest tips on designing and managing a newsletter.

Telephones

The Internet and e-mail are becoming the preferred means of day-to-day communications, but the telephone remains essential. Chapters should maintain a permanently connected telephone at a chapter house. In addition, they may also want to:

- Maintain an answering machine. Expect messages inquiring about how to join or requesting more information about the chapter.
- Set up assorted message blocks to guide the callers to various options for information. For example: "Prompt 1 for meeting dates and times; 2

for location and directions; 3 for hunter safety class schedule; and 4 for stream monitoring training workshop.”

- Monitor messages on a regular basis and update standard announcements.
- Change the message to announce last-minute concerns or special needs. For example: “Tonight’s meeting has been postponed due to weather until ...,” or “The Protect our Wetlands Rally, sponsored by the Izaak Walton League, will be held at the state capitol on ...”.

Phone Banks. Smaller chapters may consider setting up an organized telephone bank or calling tree, whereby members call a list of other members assigned to them to quickly relay information. For this to work, your chapter needs to maintain an updated list of members’ telephone numbers.

Marketing

Chapters should develop marketing strategies to help identify, locate, and recruit potential new members. Such strategies should be refined over time as experience reveals better ways to increase attendance at chapter activities or events and generate support for projects. Below are some suggestions for developing a marketing plan.

Marketing Plan — A marketing plan is a written document that specifies a chapter’s resources, objectives, marketing strategy, and implementation. For example, the outline of a plan to increase membership might look like this:

Resources.

- Membership officer or membership dues recipient
- Membership committee and membership marketing chair
- Chapter leaders
- Member volunteers
- Paid services from businesses and vendors
- Media

Objectives.

- Increase local membership
- Improve the chapter’s status in community
- Enhance fund-raising abilities
- Improve member retention

Chapters should develop marketing strategies to help identify, locate, and recruit potential new members.



*Approach your local
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Marketing Strategy.

- Host an open house, participate in community events, and give public presentations
- Utilize free press, paid advertisements, placed public service announcements, newsletters, and a well-maintained Web site
- Hold a contest to challenge existing members to recruit new members
- Establish cooperative activities and projects and become a conservation advocate within the community
- Become active sponsors or supporters of other conservation efforts or organizations with similar missions

Implementation.

- Establish reasonable goals with measurable objectives
- Set up a plan timeline with short-, medium-, and long-term tasks
- Cultivate buy-in and support from chapter leaders and all members
- Secure adequate funding

Note: Refer to Unit III — Membership Recruitment and Growth, for more ideas.

Of course, similar marketing plans could be developed to market and promote most chapter-sponsored events, projects and activities.

Tips on Marketing Your Chapter. The general rule in selling is that most people need to *see something three times or more* before they buy it. Therefore, the more times and different ways you sell or market your chapter's name and programs in your community, the easier it will be to gain name recognition. Below are just a few ideas:

- Posters or fliers on bulletin boards in retail businesses, grocery stores, libraries, schools, town halls, store windows, and other public places
- Fliers distributed door-to-door or by mail
- Articles in your newsletter or in other groups' newsletters
- Information on your Web site or a link back from other groups' Web sites
- Public displays stocked with information in parks, malls, storefront windows, festivals, and county fairs
- Articles, announcements, or advertisements in local or regional newspapers, journals, and periodicals. Try to include all magazines, daily and weekly papers, and even bargain tabloids.
- Radio and television talk shows or special public commentary programs

Other Marketing Options — Consider supplementing these marketing strategies with the following inexpensive and simple-to-implement marketing options.

Branding. A brand is more than a name. It is an identity associated with an organization through a name or logo. The League's brand is signified by our green and yellow bust seal. This logo has been around for more than half a century, and in some communities that have large, well-established chapters, our logo is quite recognizable. Chapters that are newer or smaller have to work harder to raise awareness of the League's brand. Start with these simple methods:

- Ask all members to display IWLA decals on their vehicles.
- Display a large metal roadside sign of the League logo at your town's entrance along with other fraternal and civic organization logos. A similar sign prominently displayed at the entrance to the chapter grounds helps people find the chapter and raises curiosity among those who pass by — maybe even persuading them to learn more and join.
- Create and distribute or sell merchandise displaying the logo, such as hats, shirts, mugs, shooting vests, patches, pens, or pamphlets.
- Include the League's logo on membership advertisements to further create and reinforce "brand image."

Library Subscriptions. For years, the League has encouraged chapters to purchase discounted subscriptions of *Outdoor America* to give to local community, school, and university libraries. It's a cheap and easy way to get word out about the League and your local chapter in the community. Every issue features news about League members doing good conservation work at the local, state, and national levels, so each subscription further educates your neighbors about conservation issues. As a bonus feature, the mailing panel on the magazine cover reads "Compliments of *your chapter's name*," so the readers can quickly recognize and connect with the chapter name.

Established Namesakes. Approach your local or state government about establishing Izaak Walton League namesakes in your communities. These Izaak Walton League landmarks become part of the community and serve as a tribute to the local chapters and their positive influence. For example, some of our chapters have:

- Renamed the city street or private drive leading into their chapter "Izaak Walton Way";
- Named their chapter grounds on local street maps "Izaak Walton Park";



- Renamed a stream that the chapter adopted and restored “Izaak Walton Creek.”

Another common approach to gaining public recognition is to ask the local government to proclaim “Izaak Walton League Day.” In addition, you may be able to promote your chapter’s name in your local community by participating in an adopt-a-highway or adopt-a-stream program. In exchange for your work removing litter and improving the environment, most state highway departments or natural resource agencies will install roadside signs with your name in recognition of your efforts.