



Program Day: Communications

Session Length: 75 minutes

Learning Objectives:

- To outline the purpose of audience, message, and medium in effective communications
- To identify ways in which your chapter, lodge, and/or section struggles with communications
- To discover success with communications and recruitment for local chapter and lodge events/initiatives by focusing on a tactical approach based off a successful national program case study
- To recognize the pros and cons of a variety of communications materials in promoting and sharing stories in the increasingly digitalized world

Required Materials:

- Flipchart or whiteboard (for broader ideas and delegate answers)
- Index cards (for individual ideas and brainstorming)
- Markers
- PowerPoint presentation file

Resources for Reference:

- Operation Arrow elevator pitch and program-specific fact sheet (in order to familiarize oneself with the 2017 program of emphasis)
- Handout on various communications methods pros and cons (in order to familiarize oneself with ideas of best practices; in no way are examples used limited to these ideas)
- Additional resources are listed at the end of this session outline

Technology:

- AV hookup for display of PowerPoint

TRAINER PREPARATION

This 75-minute session will focus on best practices to help delegates effectively market chapter, lodge, and section events. To accomplish this, the session will focus on the initiatives put in place by the Operation Arrow Marketing & Promotions Team to promote the Order of the Arrow's staff at the 2017 National Jamboree effectively to thousands of Arrowmen.

Prior to the session, the trainer should familiarize themselves with the 2017 program of emphasis, Operation Arrow, as well as the various media of communication outlined in this session. Since the training is also discussion based and interactive, the trainer should make sure to arrange the room so the delegates can feel welcome and engage in discuss about the topics presented. The trainer should also make sure that the delegates are able to hear the trainer and see both the trainer and his or her presentation materials.

While this session may seem very straightforward, the challenge of it is to gain insight from delegates experiences that will help them determine innovative and alternative solutions for increasing promotions for local events, while subsequently benefiting overall membership retention.

SESSION NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTION:

3 MINUTES

[Welcome the audience to your presentation and introduce yourself. If needed, ask delegates how the day is going thus far, and any questions or concerns they may have. Personalize and energize your introduction as necessary to the demeanor of the room.]

At this point in the conference, crew guides will be aware of the various leadership roles their delegates hold in the chapter, lodge, and/or section. Potentially organizing the room in a way that provides a mix of experience in planning, as well as marketing, events will bolster the dialogue later in the session. For example, those who have experience running a lodge communications committee may be paired with a newly inducted lodge chief who only has experience with the ceremonies and food committees.

Make sure all delegates have a means to collect ideas during the session. This can be in the form of an index card or piece of paper.

EXPLORE:

10 MINUTES

Pose the following questions:

- Why do we communicate?
- Why **don't** we communicate?
- Why is it so difficult to reach more than just the same active and engaged chapter and lodge members to attend a local event? *(Ask them to think of an example of a time in which this happened. Have them name the specific event, and any particular details that may be helpful for the discussion on how to fix this problem in the future later in this session.)*

Ask delegates to take 3-5 minutes to write down the answers to these questions.

Continue with the following overview:

Communication is vital to the success of any organization, regardless of its purpose. You may have heard the phrase, “no news is bad news.” Indeed, that’s true.

Peter Drucker once said, “the most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said.” The less we communicate, the less information we receive, the less relationships we build, and the less we are able to work together towards a common purpose. Simply, communication is the exchange of ideas. While communication has evolved over time, especially in the increasingly digitalized world in which we live, there is still no one perfect way of communicating. This often depends on a variety of factors, most specifically, the “Key 3”: audience, message and medium.

- The **audience** is the particular demographic or individuals you are trying to reach (e.g., parents, Scoutmasters, Ordeal members, etc.).



- The **message** is the piece of information you would like to distribute to those constituents (e.g., upcoming lodge picnic, change in dues price, how one can be involved in the upcoming OA in summer camp program).
- The **medium** is the vehicle(s) in which you convey this information to your constituents (e.g., social media, eNewsletter, phone call, text, website).

So, if communication is so important, why DON'T we? [Field answers from delegates and include a summary on the white board and/or flipchart provided.]

As you can see, there's also not one major reason why we don't communicate. *How do you think your fellow chapter and lodge leaders feel when they see the same individuals showing up to lodge events? Are you reaching all the individuals in your lodge if you send out a couple emails to encourage attendance at an event? How can you leverage different youth leaders in your lodge in creative ways to effectively communicate and promote these events?*

CASE STUDY (DREAM): OPERATION ARROW

25 MINUTES

Today we will start with a successful case study in communications to allow you to better understand how our national organization enhanced its marketing and promotions efforts for a national program of emphasis with so-far successful results.

Consider the **audience**, **message**, and **medium** in this case study and the importance of understanding them in order to effectively communicate.

In 2013, the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America tasked the Order of the Arrow with a renewed and heavily increased presence at the national jamboree. As the inaugural event for the Summit Bechtel Reserve, the Order of the Arrow was to provide significantly more service to the 2013 National Jamboree - more than any national jamboree in history. By the end of the jamboree, several hundred Arrowmen had provided 500,000 hours of service through four main programs: the Service Corps, Trek Guides, Indian Village, and Messengers of Peace Day of Service.

The National Executive Board has once again tasked the Order of the Arrow to recruit even more youth Arrowmen (ages 16-20) and have an even larger impact on the 2017 National Jamboree. Recognizing this massive undertaking, as well as issues with the messaging and promotion of Project 2013, the Operation Arrow leadership and the National Order of the Arrow Committee strategically formed a marketing & promotions team to meet this new demand. Since NOAC last year, the Operation Arrow Marketing & Promotions Team has added to our unprecedented accomplishments by filling nearly half of our **750 available staff positions** more than a year out from the actual event.

So, bringing the discussion back to communications, let's analyze a few of the reasons why this team has been so impressive.

Messaging: Broad strokes do not get the job done

An active Twitter account, an article in an eNewsletter publication, and a post on Facebook or Instagram every so often is necessary and effective for building the brand voice of an organization. However, there is often a disconnect between interacting with a piece of the Operation Arrow message, and actually landing on the registration page.



There are countless things demanding the attention of an Arrowman roaming the internet, and achieving the level of interest necessary to get that Arrowman on the registration page is going to take more than a Facebook post. [Provide examples of what would impede a 16-20 year old from recognizing the opportunity to serve on staff at the national jamboree.]

That is why it is necessary to pick up the phone, send a text message, have a physical presence at events, or do anything that adds a personal touch to marketing. It isn't enough to organize a lodge fellowship and make a Facebook event or send an email announcing it. Find a creative way to reach the individual personally to get them to show up.

Trainer Tip: Examples of effective communications will briefly be displayed on the PowerPoint presentation to provide tangible examples of the different media being used to communicate to Arrowmen about this national program of emphasis. This will correlate with the “gaining insight” portion of the LeaderX model. **Additionally, pass out the handout on these examples for reference in the discover portion of the session.**

The Street Team, Ambassadors, and your OA Troop Representatives

The Operation Arrow team uses the Street Team and Ambassadors to accomplish the mission of personalized marketing at the national level. The Street Team program is a grassroots group of Arrowmen spread across the nation whose purpose is to go to chapter, lodge, and section events with Operation Arrow marketing material to simply talk about the program amongst their friends.

The Ambassadors Program is a group of lodge and section leaders who are tasked with working the chapter, lodge, and section leadership to bring more formal Operation Arrow program to their events. They are the “grasstips” of the promotional program. Between these two teams, Operation Arrow promotions is able to bridge that gap and get individuals to land on the registration page at a much higher rate than ever before.

On a more local level, the Order of the Arrow troop representative is an established program already purposed to achieve this level of personality in chapter, lodge, and section event promotion.

Trainer Tip: Take a moment to get some anecdotes on the successes and failures of the OA troop representative program from the audience. Discuss the opportunity that is waiting to be exploited with OA troop representatives.

Leadership & Organization

The key to any organization's success is in how the team is structured. Particularly in a team focused on marketing, where message delivery is so critical, it is important for members of the team (and particularly leadership) follow a clearly defined path with attainable goals and well-defined tasks.

The Operation Arrow Marketing and Promotions Team is structured to achieve this exact purpose. Each initiative is lead by individuals with clearly defined tasks, and each individual is held accountable to those tasks. A well-oiled machine is critical to get the job done.



Trainer Tip: The trainer should relate this section to the National Leadership Seminar's message of integrity in leadership and in communication.

DISCOVER:

25 MINUTES

Think back to the time in the introductory portion of this session where you wrote down a time when your chapter or lodge struggled with promoting a particular event. Ask them to identify their chosen audience, message and medium. *What ways of communicating can they leverage in order to improve event attendance/membership retention in the future?*

Pose the following questions, and ask small groups to breakout and discuss these questions with one another. After about 15 minutes, have them come back together and allow for several individuals to share their ideas with the broader group.

- In which ways can the Operation Arrow promotions model assist your chapter or lodge?
- What were the “Key 3” in your experience promoting / recruiting for this event? Can they be better centered, focused, or tailored in the future?
- Using the handout of effective communications media, what ways can you better communicate in this instance for future events similar to this?

Trainer Tip: The trainer, in the spirit of time, can provide a couple local scenarios to each of the breakout groups to work on in tandem in order to best utilize the time block. Such examples include: fellowship weekend for a lodge, filling the lodge's quota for conclave, recruiting 50 lodge members staff an important council event. Make sure they identify the audience, message, and medium. Have them clearly articulate how and why they can bolster promoting the event and increase event attendance. This can vary depending on how they conceptualize the particular event. There is no “right” or “wrong” answer.

CONCLUSION:

10 MINUTES

It's imperative to note that there isn't one right way to communicate. Let's visit the two broad questions we tackled at the beginning of the session.

Why do we communicate?

It's obviously important to society, but it builds bridges between human beings, ideas, and the world. It's a fundamental process to our daily lives, and vital for the mission and purpose of the Order of the Arrow to extend far into the next century of Scouting.

Why don't we communicate?

Since communications for many is very involuntary, we sometimes don't realize when we neglect this function of our being. Take into account the audience, message, and medium of what you are trying to communicate. Are you reaching them in the most effective way possible? Why or why not? Are you stepping outside of your comfort zone to do this in fun and innovative ways?

To conclude the session, I will leave you with a quote from George Bernard Shaw: “The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Please contact Ryan Jones (ryanjones1414@gmail.com) and Michael Shostek (shostekm@gmail.com) with any questions, comments, or concerns about this training session.
- On the training.oa-bsa.org portal, there are several past resources on communications methods in chapters and lodges.
- Please visit oa-bsa.org/CTI for a Conclave Training Initiative from 2015 on effectively utilizing social media.
- More information on Operation Arrow can be found at oa-bsa.org/jamboree, [@OperationArrow](https://twitter.com/OperationArrow) on Twitter, and by emailing operationarrow@oa-bsa.org.
- Modernized resources on effective chapter and lodge communications will be introduced to the OA in the upcoming year.